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DECISIONS AND DECISION MAKING STRATEGIES IN ADOLESCENTS

Abstract

The period of adolescence is the period when the person is biologically mature, identifies him/her as a personality, begins to gain ground in the society and being in the process of preparation for the profession. For this reason; the decisions, which are taken in an adolescent time, have been expressed by many authors as a critical period for the development of skills and decision making. Adolescent decision making occurs as a result of the mutual and complex impact of many variables. Adolescence is a stage that it is the peak point of crazy life and complex period. Our young people face many developmental problems during this period. It is seen that young people face many problems in this period considering the problems in the schools where they study, academic, professional, social and psychological problems, competitive environment and different programs. Strategies and styles that the individual uses in his/her decision-making approach and decision-making behavior are becoming increasingly important today. Adolescence is a crucial stage

of decision-making, most of the young adolescents are not able to predict the outcomes of alternatives in this decision-making ability and they fail to produce ideas. The decision and the decision making strategies are examined in this report. In this context, literature search is performed and from this point of view, it is tried to reach distinctive results.

Key words: Decision making in adolescents, decision making, decision making style.

1. Introduction

Modern education as a system of socialization and personal development is constantly looking for new ways to ensure personal growth of individuals. In particular, at the level of an organism, the need for professional self determination is associated with the need to survive, to ensure own existence and support own vital activity and vital activity of future generations (Pomytkina, 2016:17). One of the urgent problems of the students' development is preparing them for making responsible decisions in adolescence.

Decisions made during adolescence period, it can improve the future living conditions or it can create a situation that is not the case (Mann, Harmoni and Power, 1989).The dynamics of how people make decisions has received attention for a long time. During the period from the cradle to the grave, the individual is faced with problematic situations that require him/her to make decisions on an ongoing basis. In order to reach to the target, the decision is to choose the most appropriate appearance from the various possible forms of action that may be possible according to the possibilities and circumstances. The individual needs to be assisted to acquire appropriate and effective decision-making skills in order to he/she is able to get a satisfaction from his/her life and to improve him/her. There are a number of factors that affect decision-making behavior. Personal and social conditions of the individual influence the decision-making behavior. In the most general sense, decision making can be defined as the most appropriate choice from the presented or available alternatives. When we look at the definitions of decision making, we often take the precaution of "*making an appropriate choice among the options*" (Ersever, 1996; Eldeleklioglu, 1996; Deniz, 2004, Avşaroğlu, 2007).

The problem of making decisions by adolescence is not enough developed and needs to be clarified and scientifically substantiated.

According to Schwaneveldt and Adams (1983); Adolescents have a restricted world (cited by Tunç, 2011:16). To the issues of making decision are devoted the works of foreign and domestic scientists and practitioners (Sarı, 2008). Making decisions in adolescence can shape, widen or even limit the life. It is very important to understand that how the adolescents are determined to face with the difficult problems and challenges in this period.

2. Purpose and Significance

Adolescence is a developed period individual has the skill to make decisions and beginning to take responsibility for many issues. Making a decision means to determine the purpose and manner of action. The strategies and styles, that the individual uses in his/her decision-making approaches and decision-making behaviors, are becoming increasingly important today.

3. Method

In this study is performed literature review.

3. Conceptual Framework of The Study
3.1. What is decision making?

Decision-making behavior is defined in different ways. Some of these definitions are as follows: Deniz (2004) ; Eldeleklioğlu (1996); Ersever (1996) & Avşaroğlu (2007), defines the decision-making behavior as "*Choosing the most appropriate one from the available options to meet this need in case of necessity*"; Kuzgun (1993), defines the decision-making behavior as, "*when there is more than one way to take an object that is thought to be needed, it is a breath of fresh air remedy*" ; Bağırkan (1983) defines the decision-making behavior as, "*determining the option that the most appropriate result can be obtained by evaluating one or a series of problems that must be finalized in all dimensions*"; Candangil (2005:20), defines the decision-making behavior as, "It is event that begins with the realization of the situation that needs to be decided and determines when and how the individual will judge the situation"; Etzioni (1992), defines the decision-making behavior as "logic and values"; Janis and Mann (1977) defines decision-making behavior " is the act of solving the conflict that is taking place during the choice process and reducing stres"; Haris (1998), defines

the decision-making behavior as, "*A series of operations including selecting the most suitable one by reducing the ambiguities between options,*" and Scott (2003), defines the decision-making behavior as, "*it is a section activity among the probable possibilities*" (cited by Candangil, 2005:21). Decision making is a process of making a choice from a number of alternatives to achieve a desired result (Eisenfuhr, 2011). This definition has three key elements. First, decision making involves making a choice from a number of options—the school district can carry more or less inventory of school supplies and the math department can choose the Macmillan or McGraw-Hill math series. Second, decision making is a process that involves more than simply a final choice from among alternatives—if the school district decides to renovate the existing high school rather than build a new one, we want to know how this decision was reached (Lunenburg, 2010:2).

3.2. Remarks on Decision Making Concept

Declarations of decision-making behavior have been concentrated in the industry, in the choice of profession, international relations, military and administrative fields, education, and particularly in the development process of individuals. The level of enrichment of individual decision-making skills is also related to his/her personality traits and socialization processes. The quality and quantity of the decision can vary according to the individual development periods, environmental variables and the characteristics of the decided conditions. The situation that needs to be decided should be given on significant issues, then it becomes more important to predetermine the results and to tend towards to most possible target (Kuzgun, 1993). Multiple-choice decision-making processes reveal more difficulties for the individual. His/her situation can cause stress conditions in the individual. At the same time, this decision-making complexity negatively affects the individual's decision-making (Deniz, 2004, Avşaroğlu, 2007).

Decision-making theoreticians evaluate the effective decision making as a multi-item process which describing and commentating various options in order to reduce this contradiction starting with the distinction between the situation of the person and the situation he / she is aiming to identify; choosing, making a movement plan, making the necessary movements, assessing the results of the

movements, processing information about the effectiveness of the movement and storing feedbacks (Korkut, 2004).

3.3. Decision Making Processes and Stages

The decision-making process should be considered as an internal mental activity of a person, should be mentioned, that any   activity is predetermined by the actualization of needs as at the level of an organism, and at the levels of the individual and personality (Pomytkina, 2016:15). Decision making behavior is treated as a process consisting of successive phases. Kuzgun (1993) stated that the following three conditions must be presented in order to emerge decision-making behavior. These are:

1. The existence of a difficulty that reveals the need of decision making and this difficulty is being felt by the individual

2. Having more than one choice to remove this difficulty

3. The individual has the tendency for one of the options.

Gelatt (1989) mentions the concept of "positive uncertainty" in the decision-making process. Decision making is consisted of three parts such as information, processing and selection. Individuals need to constantly develop and re-examine their knowledge in order to be able to make decisions. When an individual feels to make a decision, decision making process starts. The researchers separate the phases of decision-making process in three parts. These are:

1. **Pre-Decision Period:** First of all, there is an existence of a conflict situation. This conflict leads a tension which drives to the decision-making in the individuals.

2. **Decision Period:** After adapting to the decision situation, in that period the individual compares all available options with the ideal one and begins to eliminate other options.

3. **Post-Decision Period:** The individual makes an evaluation and interpretation of the situation that arises as a result of the application of his/her decision.

Adair (2000) collects the five steps that can be used in the decision making process.

1. Determining the problem(purpose),
2. Collecting the necessary information,
3. Constituting the appropriate options in order to reach to the result,

4. To make decision,

5. Applying the given decisions and evaluating the results (Ersever, 1996; Eldeleklioğlu; 1996; Deniz, 2004; Kesici, 2002; Avşaroğlu, 2007).

The individual tends towards to the highest positive and lowest negative values among the choices, if that person is blocked than this blocking can lead that person to anxiety and an individual may face a conflict situation. This situation makes it difficult for individuals to make healthy decision-making. The conflict occurs when it is necessary to choose among the incompatible situations or to choose between the action lines. Hence, being blocked or fear of being blocked causes a concern and individuals experience difficulties in the decision-making process (Atkinson at all., 1999).

3.4. Decision-Making Styles and Strategies

One of the challenges of understanding human problem solving is the sheer variety of decision making strategies that people employ to solve a particular problem (Taatgen, 2011:152). In the decision-making process, there are some styles that vary according to the individuals. These styles can be observed both cognitive and behavioral. Decision-making styles of individuals are closely related to characteristics of individuals. According to Scott and Bruce (1995), the individuals collect information during the decision-making process and the individuals base on previously established cognitive styles for dissolving both concepts and information to assimilate this information. According to Payne, Bettman and Johson (1993), in the decision-making process, individual characteristics are caused by the amount of data collected and evaluated by decision-making speed. Individual features and loading styles affect the individual's decision-making style; According to Mann, Harmoni and Power (1989), the researchers, who deal with cognitive aspects of decision making, talk about nine structures in terms of choice, understanding, creative problem solving, compromise, result evaluation, correct choice, reliability, stability and bonding (cited by Deniz, 2004).

Scott and Bruce (1995), Philips, Pazienza, & Ferrin (1984), describe the decision-making styles as learned habits and they talk about five types of decision-making style. These are:

1. **Rational decision-making style:** In the case of decision

making, it is necessary to select the most suitable alternative for the situation by researching and analyzing the situation that the individuals should decide.

2. **Intuitional decision-making style:** In this style, individuals decide internally with their emotions and intuitions during the decision-making situations.

3. **Dependent decision-making style:** In this style, individuals decide according to the recommendations and directions of others in decision making.

4. **Avoidant decision-making style:** In the case of decision making, the individuals try to move away from the decision in order to not to decide.

5. **Spontaneous decision-making style**: In the case of decision making the individuals make a decision according to the moment and the condition of the person.

Considering the researches about decision making styles, it seems that the most appropriate style for effective decision-making is the "rational decision-making style" (Bacanlı, 2000).

3.5. The Factors That Affecting Decision Making Behavior

During the period from the cradle to the grave, the individual is faced with problematic situations that require him/her to make decisions on an ongoing basis. The quality of the given decision depends on the developmental stage of the individual and on the characteristics of the situation which should be decided (Sarı & Yaycı, 2013; Çolakkadıoğlu, 2012). In order to be able to make decisions, the individuals need to constantly develop and re-examine their knowledge. In individual decisions, the person feels the existence of a single problem and takes into account the options which can be appeared for the solution. While the person doing so, the individual refers his/her own memory, knowledge, values and the information of some sources when if it is needed. The social factors are influential in individual decisions. The number of dimensions of individual information options are also important while making decisions. Multi-optional decisions, bring more difficulties for individuals (Shioh, Koren ve Zakay, 2001). According to Develioğlu (2006), in case of making decisions, if the person is under certainty or uncertainty then this situation directs to the decision. According to Cooper (2000), all the circumstances surrounding the problem that

requires decision making constitute the environmental factor.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

Decision making is a dynamic process and the individual plays an active role in this process. The final decision of the individual is shaped by personal and environmental factors in this process. While some individuals in the decision-making process think that control over decision-making behavior is in their own hands and the others think that this control is determined by the environmental factors (Deniz, Arı, Akdeniz, & Özteke, 2004). The individuals decide on different substances. Understanding what the decision-making is related to, can help the individuals to make much better decisions. Understanding the decision-making process is important because of the practical merits of explaining the process. One of main reasons for the individual differences in the process is the decision-making style. The priority interest in decision-making is to how the individuals can decide that the individuals base on (Clemen and Reilly, 2001; Çolakkadıoğlu, 2012).

Decisions made during the adolescences have implications that can be effective throughout the life of the individuals on their health, profession, psychological adjustment and social acceptance. Adolescence is a period when individuals face personal decision-making and problem-solving situations. These decisions in general can be listed such as choosing of school, profession, friends and spouse, etc. There are a number of factors that affect the decision-making behavior of the individuals. The personal and social conditions, in which the individuals are in it, influence the decision-making behavior. The consensus about the decision making is that the decisions depend on the beliefs, desires and needs of the individuals. According to Adair (2000), the best thing that can be done for people is to make the best decisions in terms of conditions and information and also to make new decisions about problems which can cause possible troubles.

The adolescents should be raised and prepared for these rapid developments and changes, they should have certain information about basic professional knowledge and they should be aware of the problems that they will face in their life. In addition to that appropriate opportunities and environments should be provided for the adolescents who can be informed about occupational

opportunities and can express their own potentials in accordance with their own abilities, beliefs and values. In our country, the adolescences constitute the most socially determined part of society with their socio-economic cultural structure, strong and problematic aspects, future anxieties and anticipations. Therefore, it is inevitable fact that the students encounter various problems during this process (Üre, 2010; Tatlılıoğlu, 2010). The individual needs to be assisted to acquire appropriate and effective decision-making skills in order to he/she is able to get a satisfaction from his/her life and to improve him/her.

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