
Moderating Effects of Big Five Personality between Self Efficacy and Career Choice among College Students

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Abstract: *The moderation effects were studied in present research which comprised of variables: big five personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness) and self efficacy on Commitment to Career Choice (Vocational Exploration and Tendency to Foreclose). The sample (N=400) comprised of BA third year college students (natural science and social science) of Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Following tools were used: NEO PI short form, Career decision making Self Efficacy Scale and Commitment to Career Choice Scale. Moderation was carried out as per Hayes process 2.0 model 1.*

The study yielded following results. Neuroticism and Conscientiousness significantly moderated the relationship between Career decision making Self-Efficacy and Career Choice.

Openness to Experience significantly moderated the relationship between career decision making self efficacy and Tendency to Foreclose. Whereas, Extraversion and Agreeableness were found to be non significant moderators of the relationship between Career decision making Self Efficacy and Career Choice (Vocational Exploration and Tendency to Foreclose).

However, this study makes a positive contribution to research and enhances awareness about how Big five personality as a moderator between the relationship of career decision making self-efficacy beliefs and Commitment to Career Choice (Vocational Exploration and Tendency to foreclose). Therefore, throwing light on how active one is in seeking a career, therefore increasing chances for achieving commitment to career choice.

Keywords: *Career, big five personality, self efficacy beliefs, moderation, career choice*

1. INTRODUCTION

Career Decision Self Efficacy

Taylor & Betz (1993) described the concept of career decision-making self-efficacy as an extent to which the students show self-efficacy with respect to their abilities. Taylor (1990), Career decision-making self-efficacy has been measured using the task domains of planning, accumulating occupation-related information, selecting the goal, problem solving and self-appraisal. Self-efficacy is a belief in a person's ability in specific scenarios such as believing in their capability to perform a task or learn given information". (Gao, Lochbaum, & Podlog, (2011). The history of self efficacy begins with Bandura (1997). One of the major concepts in his theory is self-efficacy. One of the prominent theories of self efficacy is **Social cognitive theory** highlights the importance of two other capabilities: self-regulation and self-reflection. People regulate their behaviour by developing standards by which they evaluate their actions. In fact, people not only regulate themselves and their actions but also reflect on their experiences and their own thought processes. Through self-reflection, Individuals monitor themselves, analyse past events, and determine subsequent actions through reflection. Researchers have supported the significance of self-efficacy to career development. They have emphasized the meditational role that self-efficacy plays between prior achievement and career selection, as well as the independent contribution it makes to the selection of college courses, majors, and career alternatives when combined with other motivational variables (Hackett & Betz, 1989; Lent et al., 1991, 1993).

Big Five Personality

Maddi (2006) has emphasized that “Personality is a stable set of characteristics and tendencies that determine those commonalities and differences in psychological behavior (thoughts, feelings, and actions) of people that have continuity in time and that may not be easily understood as the sole result of the social and biological pressures of the moment.” The Big Five structure does not imply that personality differences can be reduced to only five traits. Rather, these five dimensions represent personality at the broadest level of abstraction and each dimension summarizes a large number of distinct, more specific personality characteristics. (John, 1999). These are: Neuroticism (calm, not neurotic, not easily upset), Extraversion (talkative, assertive, energetic), Openness to Experience (intellectual, imaginative, independent minded), Agreeableness (good-natured, cooperative, truthful) and Conscientiousness (orderly, responsible, dependable).

Career Choice

A career choice is important because it determines your success in the next stages of your life, according to Nugent (2013). Career does not only determine individual's personality but also pattern of income and concepts in life. Career a French and Latin origin, word defined as the occupational, commercial or industrial activity that a person may adopt during his educational life or in some other part or till his death.

Self Concept theory:

Super (1990) proposed following stages of career development, manifested in career choice.

- a) Growth stage: corresponds to psychological life stage of childhood and pre-adolescence. The development of abilities, interests and attitudes is taking place at this time. The exposure to different types people, occupations and activities helps them to acquire experiences and information which influence differentiation of his abilities, interests etc. However, his choices are fantasy based.
- b) Exploratory stage: is marked by the tentative stage of choices. Here the adolescents consider the feedback they receive from environment i.e. school, parents, teachers and peers, etc and this feedback helps them to translate their own self conception into a choice later on.
- c) Establishment stage: is a transition period wherein reality is testing. The choices are made which is also informed to an implementation of the self- concept. This is the trial stage, where some individuals may make smooth entry while others may have extended. Trial depending on the reality of their self-concept, those with unrealistic self-concept may flounder for long time before establishing in a career and advancing in it. Thus, the trial stage continues and proliferates into the establishment period. The trial leads to finally settling down in a career with commitment to stay and advance in it.(Super, 1990)
- d) Maintenance stage: begins around the age of 45 years. By this time most of the individuals have got a status and position as a worker.
- e) Decline stage: is characterized by the deterioration in the energies of the individual. Here main task is to adjust to this new situation of reduced work activities but work continues. (Super, 1990)

2. THE CURRENT STUDY

Career choice and planning has become important as globalization, and current vocational choices have created an unprecedented war for talent.

The importance of career decision-making and commitment is so widely recognized that prominent associations (e.g., National Career Development Association, National Association of Colleges and Employers) have added this component as part of their principles for conduct and development of competencies. Even the Australian and Canadian Departments of Education have revised their career development guidelines to address decision making issues. Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education commissioned a revision of its National Career Development Guidelines in 2003 to (among other things) “broaden the scope and application by providing the target audiences with easily accessible career development information, learning

activities and strategies that lead to informed career decision-making and lifelong learning". The ability to continually evaluate and decide upon career options is clearly a demand characteristic for the workforce of tomorrow. In the Indian education system students are required to make goals regarding qualifications and career path choices at the end of high school i.e. tenth grade and narrow down their choice by the twelfth standard. They are also expected to be aware of career options at this stage. This is a period of transition and stress. This sets the tone for their future path and decisions once made cannot be changed easily. Therefore this study aims to contribute to existing knowledge about career development during college days in the urban Indian context.

Every important decision in an individual's life is influenced and guided by internal and external factors. Decision to career choice is a big problem among BA final year, MA final year and even in 10th standard where the student struggles with subject choice.

The present research is remarkably different as with these variables together scanty research has been conducted in overseas and in India. The topic of the present research is interesting also. Career choice also provides the endurance necessary to cultivate business networks and professional relationships. Career choice can also lead to a potential for greater income and higher self-esteem. Finally, the business world is no longer an assemblage of discrete and secure positions. Today's job climate is dynamic and perpetually altering.

As per the demographic facts of our country above 65% of the population is the youth. Therefore, this study can contribute to the future research and show impetus to reforms associated with education at the college or university level.

3. METHOD

Objectives:

1. To examine Neuroticism (dimension of Big Five Personality) as a moderator of relationship between career decision making self-efficacy and commitment to career choice (Vocational Exploration and Tendency to Foreclose).
2. To study Extraversion (dimension of Big Five Personality) as a moderator of relationship between career decision making self- efficacy and commitment to career choice.
3. To assess Openness to experience (dimension of Big Five Personality) as a moderator of relationship between career decision making self- efficacy and commitment to career choice.
4. To examine Agreeableness (dimension of Big Five Personality) as a moderator of relationship between career decision making self-efficacy and commitment to career choice.
5. To examine Conscientiousness (dimension of Big Five Personality) as a moderator of relationship between career decision making self-efficacy and commitment to career choice.

Hypotheses:

1. The relationship between career decision making self efficacy and commitment to career choice would significantly be moderated by Neuroticism.
2. The relationship between career decision making self efficacy and commitment to career choice would significantly be moderated by Extraversion.
3. The relationship between career decision making self efficacy and commitment to career choice would significantly be moderated by Openness to Experience.
4. The relationship between career decision making self efficacy and commitment to career choice would significantly be moderated by Agreeableness.
5. The relationship between career decision making self efficacy and commitment to career choice would significantly be moderated by Conscientiousness.

3.1 Participants and Procedure

The sample of the study (N = 400) comprises of Bachelors final year students (male and female, 200 each) from Jamia Millia Islamia campus. The age range of students was 19 to 21 years. For data collection, head of the departments were contacted for their consent. They introduced the researcher to students and directed them to fill the questionnaires. Subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. It was a non-probability convenience sampling in which participants were taken from natural and social science faculty. The social science category included students from departments of Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Economics, and BA programme. The natural science category included students from Bio science, Bio-technology, Mathematics, Geography, Architecture, Mechanical Engineering and Chemistry. After the data collection a vote of thanks were made to all the professors who helped in the survey. Following Ethical considerations were made:

- Informed personal consents of the college students were sought
- Only the willing respondents were selected
- Confidentiality of the responses was maintained.

Obtained scores were coded in SPSS software, as per the dummy coded variable (gender and faculty). Female was coded as 0, males as 1 and natural science as 2 and social science 3. The normalcy of data was checked according to Shapiro Wilk's Criteria. It was found that the p values were non-significant thus, inferring that the data is normally distributed. Also, data was showing no multi-collinearity. Hayes Process 2.0 was used and analysis was run according to specified model number 1.

3.2 Design

A non experimental research design was used to explore moderation effects of big five personality on the relationship of self efficacy and career choice in college students. Non-experimental research is used when the researcher wants to observe relationships between variables without controlling or manipulating the variables in any way.

3.3 Measures

Demographic Questions

Participants were asked to provide basic demographic information (age, gender, highest level of education completed, employment status, relationship status, and socio-economic status. Socio –economic status was informed to the researcher by the student's subjective evaluation of their family status.

NEO Five Factor Inventory

The test was developed by Costa, Jr. and McCrae (1987) for use with adult (17+) men and women without overt psychopathology. It is a 60-item short-form of the NEO PI-R and assesses Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), Openness to Experience, Agreeableness (A), and Conscientiousness (C). The NEO five factor inventory is a measure of the five major domains of personality as well as the six facets that define each domain containing 12 items per domain, (total of 60 items). The domain scales show internal reliabilities which range from .87 to .92. Test retest reliabilities are all above .75. Validity data is extensive.

Career decision making self-efficacy Scale

This scale is a 25-item short form CDESES-SF by Betz, Klein et al., 1996 are popularly used to assess career decision self-efficacy. Reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .78 to .87 for subscales, and from .93 to .95 for the total scores across samples. In terms of validity, the CDESES-SF correlated significantly with career certainty and indecision.

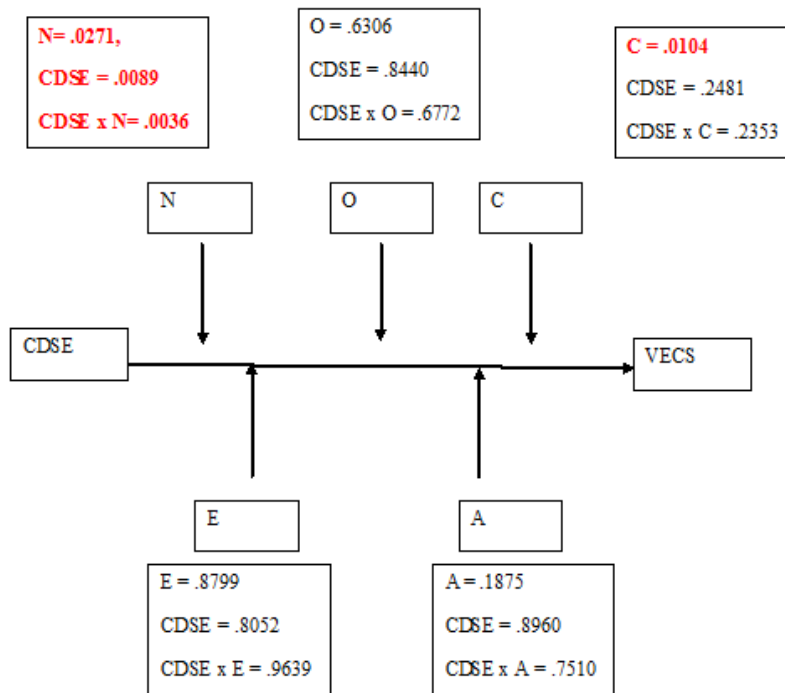
Commitment to Career Choice Scale (CCCS)

The Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS) by Blustein et al., 1989 includes a 19-item Vocational Exploration and Commitment Subscale (VECS) and a 9-item Tendency to Foreclose Subscale (TTFS) Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .92 and .91 for the derivation.

4. RESULTS

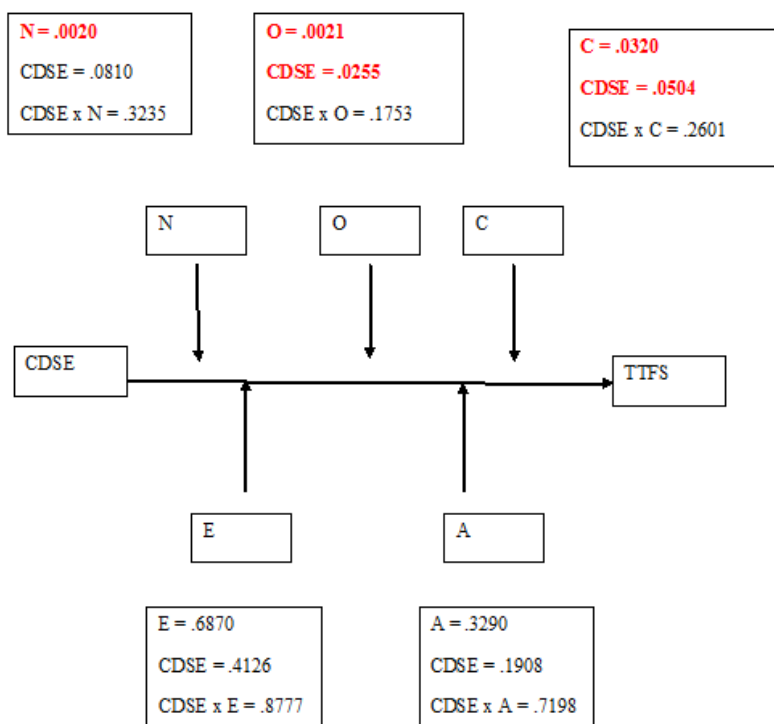
MODEL 1: showing main effect and interaction effects of Big Five Personality with respect to Career Decision Making Self Efficacy and Vocational Exploration.

Note: red values shown are significant <.05



MODEL 2: showing main effect and interaction effects of Big Five Personality with respect to Career Decision Making Self Efficacy and Tendency to Foreclose

Note: red values shown are significant <.05



CDSE – Career Decision Making Self Efficacy

N- Neuroticism

E – Extraversion

O – Openness to Experience

A – Agreeableness

C – Conscientiousness

VECS – Vocational Exploration

TTFS- Tendency to Foreclose

5. DISCUSSION

The moderation effects were studied in present research which comprised of variables: big five personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness) and self efficacy on Commitment to Career Choice (Vocational Exploration and Tendency to Foreclose). The sample (N=400) comprised of BA third year college students (natural science and social science). Following tools were used: NEO PI short form, career decision making self efficacy scale and Commitment to Career Choice Scale. Moderation was carried out as per Hayes process 2.0 specified model number 1.

Hypothesis 1: The relationship between self efficacy and commitment to career choice would be significantly moderated by Neuroticism.

Neuroticism is the significant moderator of relationship between self efficacy and career choice (vocational exploration and Tendency to Foreclose) ($p = .0271$, CI = -2.22 to -.134; $p = .0020$, CI = .2852 to 1.266).

Hypothesis 1 has been proved here.

The interaction between career decision making self efficacy x Neuroticism predicting vocational exploration was significant.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between Self efficacy and commitment to career choice would be significantly moderated by Extraversion.

Extraversion has been found to be a non-significant moderator between career decision making self efficacy and career choice (vocational exploration and tendency to foreclose). Hence, completely disproving the hypothesis 2.

Contrary to expectations, extroversion did not significantly contribute to vocational commitment among Chinese graduate students. Thus this study supports the above stated result (Jin, Watkins & Yuen, (2009)).

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between Self efficacy and commitment to career choice would be significantly moderated by Openness to Experience.

Obtained results indicated that Openness to Experience is the significant moderator of the relationship between career decision making self efficacy and tendency to foreclose ($p = .0021$, CI = .2851 to 1.278). Thus partially proving the hypothesis 3.

Openness to experience is related to the tendency to foreclose, Jin, Watkins & Yuen (2009). Hence supporting our results.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between Self efficacy and commitment to career choice would be significantly moderated by Agreeableness.

Table shows that the relationship between Career decision making self efficacy and career choice was not significantly moderated by Agreeableness. Hence, hypothesis 4 is not accepted.

India is considered to be a collectivist culture and research related to especially within a collectivist-oriented culture, personal career choice has been found to be mainly influenced by family involvement rather than intrinsic

interests (Tang, Fouad, & Smith, 1999). It is likely that the tendency to trust and cooperate with others is helpful in creating safe and constructive interpersonal relationships, which assist agreeable individuals in keeping open to career input, either ambiguous or contradictory, from different sources. The research supports our results because country like India, self efficacy is determined through believes and confidence arraying from family. But this manifested assumption into reality is going through a breakthrough. Career choice and planning has become important as globalization, and current vocational choices have created an unprecedented war for talent (Smith, 2011).

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between Self efficacy and commitment to career choice would be significantly moderated by Conscientiousness.

Results show that Conscientiousness significantly moderate the relationship between Career decision making and career choice (vocational Exploration and Tendency to Foreclose) ($p = .0104$, $CI = .3057$ to 2.28 ; $p = .0320$, $CI = .0548$ to 1.209).

Regarding Hypothesis 1 and 5 neuroticism and conscientiousness were observed to be the most significant predictors accounting for vocational commitment, while their effects were further partially mediated by career decision self-efficacy. These findings partly replicated Wang, Jome, et al. (2006) research with non-Caucasian students. That is, negative or unstable emotions tapped by neuroticism hindered vocational commitment directly and indirectly by reducing career decision self-efficacy.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study examined 5 hypotheses directed at evaluating the moderator effect of Big Five Personality on the relationship of Self Efficacy and Commitment to Career Choice (vocational exploration and tendency to foreclose). While data were collected from a single location (Jamia Millia Islamia campus) as a population of convenience. Process 2.0, model 1 had been incorporated. What is especially noteworthy about this study is that the findings extend the literature beyond career decision, which dominates the empirical landscape. Out of 5 hypotheses, (1, 5) fully accepted, (3) partially proved and (2, 4) fully rejected. Following results were obtained:

- Neuroticism and Conscientiousness significantly moderated the relationship between Career decision making Self-Efficacy and Career Choice.
- Openness to Experience significantly moderated the relationship between career decision making self efficacy and Tendency to Foreclose.
- Whereas, Extraversion and Agreeableness were found to be non significant moderators of the relationship between Career decision making self efficacy and career choice (vocational Exploration and Tendency to Foreclose).

7. LIMITATIONS

1. Qualitative research method could also been incorporated.
2. Confirmatory factor analysis could also been carried out as scales are all from outside Asian Community.
3. Cross cultural studies should also been incorporated as to make the research more coherent, clear, intensive and exhaustive.
4. Further, limitations of the study included that the participant sample was primarily third year college students in their early 20's, most likely looking for the first time their chosen field of study. Therefore their past performance jobs are not present as the criterion for their success in future career choice. Because, past performance accomplishments may tend to be a stronger source of career self-efficacy for later adults who have often more job experience. Participants from different age groups should also be targeted.
5. Caution should be used when generalizing these results to non college populations.

6. Another potential drawback of this study was that all surveys were given at one time which can have an effect on method variance and consistency.

8. IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

8.1 Practical Implications of research:

1. The results of the present study can be used for the development of theoretical models and an effective career counseling program for this cultural group.
2. This current study made efforts to conceptualize the importance of personality trait for matching the career choices in college students.
3. It can also be used to educate teachers, counselors, parents, and professionals in this regard.
4. Deciding whether going to college and which college major to matriculate in is one of the most important life decisions and perhaps the first important life decision for students in Western industrialized countries. Therefore, in Indian context it is important to define your personal priorities, make yourself more valuable to your employer, create your own definition of success and attain it and further, this study promotes the need for counsellors who would be helping clients particularly college students.

8.2 Theoretical Implications:

1. The results of this study contribute to the career psychology field because they provide knowledge about the match of personality, sources of self efficacy and optimistic thoughts and their prediction of vocational exploratory activities and tendency to foreclose.
2. It is also be important to clarify the relation of career self-efficacy to other important variables, such as career adjustment, vocational interests, career indecision, career salience, work values, and occupational outcome expectations.
3. At a minimum, what has been learned from linking classic theories with prominent research models is that decidedness is a dynamic and multidimensional concept. Still, no agreement exists as to the exact number of dimensions for career decidedness. This deficiency has led to more thorough examination of developmental and other influences to better understand the construct.
4. Personality, a widely studied variable considered to play a critical role in the dynamics of career decidedness. Clarifying the role of personality in career decisions is especially important since the development of personality is thought to precede and possibly contribute to the formation of identity and other interests. The general finding has been that higher anxiety and a lower sense of self correlate positively with career indecision While some recent investigations have conceptualized career decidedness as “being inversely related to career indecision”, much of the overall knowledge about the construct has come from examining factors that play a role in preventing commitment to a career decision (e.g., low identity, lack of clarity with vocational interests, low self-efficacy and high anxiety).

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