Credibility in Decision Making of the Students in Choosing Engineering Domain

G. Vijay, N. Shabnam Nihar, A.Joseph Lourdu Rajah, S.Viji

Abstract—It is obvious that decision making is instrumental in everyone’s life style irrespective of colour, caste, community, belief systems, education, and designation. Everyone in the earth necessarily has to take decisions at certain juncture of personal or professional life. Wrong decisions always invite hurdles and complications that would sometimes lead to highly critical results. This paper concentrates on the credibility in the decision making of the students in choosing engineering courses. In India, right from schools, students are oriented towards medicine and engineering. It is observed that the choice of becoming doctors is being reasonable since many of the medical students settle down as doctors. Whereas, the choice of engineering courses in India is debatable since most of the engineering students are jobless. Hence it is presumed that poor decision making of in selection of the courses is the root cause for this pathetic situation of the engineering graduates.

Keywords: colour, caste, community, belief systems, education, designation, decision making, credibility.

I. INTRODUCTION

It should be noted that among the several professional skills decision making is a valuable skill that plays a crucial role in one’s career life. Poor decision making may lead to bitter experiences both in personal and professional life.

Generally decisions made by people are like: political, personal, medicinal, professional and financial decisions. Quite often, decision making is not so easy because sometimes choices are quite simple and straight forward, while most of the time choices are complex and require a detailed and more careful approach in making right choices.

Most of the time, past experiences impact decision making. Julisson, Karlsson, and Garling (2005) indicated past decisions influence the decisions of the future because people are more likely to decide in a similar way in a similar situation. However, people ignore the past experiences because of the change in their belief system and their strong desire for a particular choice.

The other factors that may also influence decision making are socioeconomic status (SES), and cognitive abilities (de Bruin, Parker, & Fischhoff, 2007; Finucane, Mertz, Slovic, & Schmidt, 2005). Age is also viewed to be an important factor that affects decision making since it is felt that cognitive functions may decline as a result of age and as a result clarity in decision making may decline as well. (Finucane et al., 2005)

II. DECISION MAKING AND PMI

A question often arises among people regarding making correct choices. Most of the people make random choices and keep grumbling over the choices made. It is expected to have a theoretical guidance or a tool that would be a significant for making correct decisions. PMI is one such simple tool that anyone can easily experiment with.

PMI (plus, minus, interesting) is a decision making tool that was developed by Dr. Edward de Bono who is a lateral and critical thinker. Through this tool one can examine ideas and concepts for making better decisions. It helps students to consider all ideas even the ideas that are rejected initially and to take their stance. (Hement Lata Sharma & Priyamvada, 2017)

III. DECISION MAKING OF THE STUDENTS TOWARDS HIGHER STUDIES IN INDIA

A student who completes tenth or twelfth standard in a school in India is facing the issue of taking decisions in the pursuit of higher level courses. It is obvious that all the students don’t get proper orientation towards higher education unless they are from an educated family backdrop.

In India, nowadays, education is viewed as just a mode of getting degrees and employment opportunities and so students don’t have broad vision about their career life. Their vision is limited to the nearest and available samples of life. Their seniors or family members or neighbourhoods influence them in choosing a course for higher studies.

“Heuristics are general decision making strategies people use that are based on little information, yet very often correct; heuristics are mental short cuts that reduce the cognitive burden associated with decision making” (Shah & Oppenheimer, 2008)

Similar to the opinion of Shah and Oppenheimer, students don’t want to risk themselves in taking decisions. They follow the readymade decisions made by others and apply the same in their life. They blindly obey to the prescriptions of the others. This attitude continues up to choosing colleges, courses, even life partners.
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IV. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

According to ‘National Employability Report’ 2016, which is based on a study of more than 1,50,000 engineering students who graduated in 2015 from over 650 colleges, 80% of them were unemployable and only 3% had suitable skills to be employed in software or product market. (Arunima Srivastava, 2017). CP Gurnani, CEO & MD of Tech, has said that 94% of engineering graduated were not fit for hiring.” The top 10 IT companies take only 6% of engineering graduates. What happens to the remaining 94%?” he said in an interview.

The authors of this research paper intended to find reasons for such kind of complaints. In India, it is observed that the choice of becoming doctors is reasonable since many of the medical students settle down as doctors. Whereas, the choice of engineering courses is debatable since the current situation of the engineering students are pathetic because many are jobless. Hence, an attempt is made in the study expecting that the poor decision making skills of the students could be a route cause.

V. METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire method is carried out in this research. Students who pursue engineering course in the workplace of the authors are selected for this study. Questionnaires were distributed and the opinions were analyzed.

VI. FINDINGS & RESULTS

(i). Whose choice?

Filled in questionnaires were collected from I year engineering students and analysed. One of the major questions in the questionnaire was ‘motivation towards choosing the course’. The responses were consolidated and given below in table: 2

Any choice of higher studies should be from the inner motivation of the learner. However, this study revealed that only 30% of the students in a classroom chose the course from their own interest and 45% of the students chose the course because of the parents’interest. 13% of the students selected because of the motivation of their relatives. The other 12% of the students did not have any other options for other courses.

In India there is culture widespread that children are not allowed to make their own choices. Parents interfere in all parameters including the dressing of their children. They are ready to invest any amount in finding a solid space for their children in their professional life. As engineers are well paid, parents motivate their children to select engineering courses. According to them earning money is the only priority in choosing the course. Moreover, students also don’t have clarity in their academic cycle, they accept to the suggestions and recommendations come from the second or third parties.

(ii) Awareness of PMI

Since, PMI is viewed to be a reliable tool for making better decisions, the awareness of it among students before choosing the course was included as one of the questioning components of the questionnaire. The responses were consolidated and given in the table: 2

Table-2: Awareness on PMI

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<th>Total number of respondents: 60</th>
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<td>No of respondents</td>
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<td>Percentage</td>
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It was found that none of the students were aware of the tool. When enquired it was found that it was not included in the syllabus. Any kind of technical or physical problems are solved today with the availability of tools. Since decision making is a psychological problem, people are not aware of psychological tools. If students had been introduced of this PMI tool, at least students would have been able to identify plus, minus and interesting criteria of engineering courses. Schools should have introduced such tools and educated the students well in advance.

(iii). Post decision making response

Post decision making responses were included in the questionnaire and responses were collected and analysed. The details are given in table: 3

Table-3: Post decision making response

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<th>Total number of respondents: 60</th>
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VII RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

It is found that there is no clarity of decision making techniques instilled among the students in schools. Students need to have good decision making strategy to avoid confusions in choosing a particular course and so they may study at ease. The students of engineering are worst affected because of this inconsistency. Hence it is recommended that the syllabus and curriculum at the higher secondary level should include the necessary decision making skills.

In addition, students should be given freedom in choosing a right course matching with their calibre. A student may be financially funded by parents but only the student has to undergo all sorts of pressures in successfully completing the course. If the students choose course from their own interest they may shine well or at least get a pass course. The students who are not able to secure a pass mark are the victims of second or third party's decision making in the academic pursuit.

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