

ПСИХОЛОГИЯ ПРИНЯТИЯ РЕШЕНИЙ THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DECISION MAKING

Данная работа посвящена исследованию психологии принятия решений. В ходе исследования рассматриваются механизм принятия решений, а также факторы, влияющие на процесс принятия решений. В работе приводятся результаты анкетирования, подтверждающие теоретические предположения. Данное направление психологии является достаточно актуальным и перспективным, и результаты исследований в этой области могут найти широкое применение в различных сферах деятельности человека.

The ability to make decisions is regarded as a vital skill for an individual as a member of society. The work of managers, of scientists, of engineers, of teachers and of many other professions is largely work of making decisions and solving problems; and nothing is more important for the well-being of society than that this work be performed effectively and that we address successfully the many problems occurring at the national level, a the level of business organizations and our individual lives.

The objectives of our research were to understand how human mind makes decisions, to identify the factors influencing decision making process and to see how the results of our research may help to improve our decision-making capabilities.

Decision making is generally defined as cognitive process of identifying and choosing alternatives, a process leading to the selection of a course of actions among variations. Having analyzed the literature on the subject we have marked out three factors influencing decision making: 1. Time Perspective, 2. Personality Factors (Rationality and Risk Readiness), and 3. Human Heuristics. A questionnaire was held, involving 68 students and teachers of Foreign Languages Faculty. The respondents were offered two inventories: Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory and Personality Factors Inventory addressing the correspondent factors indicated above.

The time dimension, despite being one of the most powerful factors affecting decision making, is often neglected by researchers. Time Perspective and its influence on decision making were already viewed in detail in our previous work [1], that is why we will only point out major results of the questionnaire analysis.

The majority of respondents, 76%, has revealed a disposition to Future. Those scoring high on this Time Perspective tend to “foresee” the consequences and probable outcomes of present decisions and actions. So their decisions are characterized as weighed and thoroughly thought out. Second come respondents with Past Perspective orientation – 15%. The dominant influence comes from the past, from recollecting analogous situations, thus making a decision depends on previous experience, either negative or positive. A small proportion of those interviewed, 9%, have Present Time Perspective. Present-oriented individuals act with little concern for the consequences, thus their decisions are often impulsive and spontaneous.

Personality Factors Inventory addresses two personality traits - Rationality and Risk Readiness. The inventory was meant to identify how an individual makes decision, what he/she is guided with. The results of the questionnaire show that the majority of respondents, 60%, displays a distinct disposition to rationality, which means that they employ information search when making decision. Rationality is viewed as readiness to think over one’s decisions and act with a fuller orientation in the situation. 29% of those interviewed demonstrate Risk Readiness, which is viewed as readiness to actualize one’s intellectual and personality potential when making decisions under uncertainty and also readiness to self-control over one’s actions. This personality trait is viewed as positive, as it shows person’s willingness and determinacy to act

according to his/her principles despite possible failure and low chances of success [2]. The research also revealed that the two factors are not incompatible – 11% of the respondents displayed a disposition to both factors. The actions of an individual can be characterized as both rational and containing risk factor. Rationality can characterize different actions, including risky ones and a person can be more or less rational depending on the degree of his/her risk readiness.

People often have to make decisions under conditions of uncertainty and while making decisions they commonly employ general heuristics, or rules of thumb, that lead to significant biases or systematic errors in their judgments. We distinguished three main types of heuristics employed: Representativeness, Availability and Framing [3]. The first factor leads to classifying situations according to their representativeness: the more object X is similar to class Y, the more likely we think X belongs to Y. Availability is understood as frequency assessment of a class by the ease with which instances can be brought to mind: the easier it is to consider instances of class Y, the more frequent we think it is. The third factor that causes biases in probability assessment is Framing: the way in which an uncertain possibility is presented may have a substantial effect on how people respond to it. Changing the description of a prospect should not change decisions, but it does (Prospect Theory, Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). All the heuristics mentioned above are quite effective, but often lead to predictable, systematic errors and biases. Understanding the nature of these biases might help to decrease their effect and ensure healthy decision making.

The analysis of the factors influencing decision making enables us to have a deeper understanding of how decisions are made and to look at the process of making decisions from different sides. Depending on what time perspective individuals live in, their decision making models vary a lot. Disposition to rationality or risk has also an impact on how a person approaches decision making under uncertainty. Understanding the biases caused by employment of certain heuristics can help us to avoid possible errors and misjudgments.

The data received from the study can be put to use in a wide variety of applications. Cognitive psychology can inform many areas of research, theory, and practice that do not now properly incorporate its insights. Development of decision making tools might find extensive application in business and government organizations. Working out a system of testing for professional diagnostics may be applied in recruitment. A system of psychological trainings helping to overcome certain biases may be of use at an individual level. These are just a few examples of how the results of the research can be applied.

This work has by no means exhausted the areas in which exciting and important research can be launched to deepen understanding of decision making and problem solving. In our further research we plan to enlarge program of empirical studies, involving direct observation of behavior at the level of the individual and the organization, as simple questioning does not seem to be sufficient. We also plan to find correlation between the factors mentioned in the work, as there are some suppositions about their interdependence. Perhaps the examples that have been provided are sufficient to convey the promise and significance of this field of inquiry today.

ЛИТЕРАТУРА:

1. Панфилова А.А., Валиева Ф.И., Временная перспектива и ее влияние на принятие решений и успех, Сборник тезисов по материалам XXXV недели наук, СПбГПУ, 2006.
2. Корнилова Т.В., Психология риска и принятия решений, М: Аспект Пресс, 2003.
3. Herbert A. Simons and Associates, Decision Making and Problem Solving, National Academy Press, Washington, DC, 1986.