An Empirical Assessment of Gender Based Influences on Buying Decision-Making Styles

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ABSTRACT: *This paper attempts to examine the influence of gender on the buying decision-making styles of consumers in Odisha, an eastern state of India. A total of 151 respondents from four different regions of Odisha were chosen by using the Mall intercept method. The samples were classified into males and females on the basis of gender. Exploratory Factor Analysis was carried to identify the decision-making styles. t-test was employed to compare the shopping styles of males and females. Results indicate that differences in consumer shopping styles exist among the male and female consumers. Findings can be used by retailers in targeting different segments of shoppers based on gender demography and consumer decision-making styles in order to achieve competitive advantage in the era of retail market complexity. It is recommended that males and female gender should be viewed as distinct consumer segments, which may warrant differential marketing efforts.*

KEYWORDS*: gender, males, females, consumer decision-making styles.*

INTRODUCTION

Gender is considered to be one of the most important variables that determine one's decision making styles towards buying products and services (Potgieter, Wiese, & Strasheim, 2013; Mokhlis & Salleh, 2009). Products can take on masculine or feminine characteristics (Solomon et al., 2010). Marketing researchers have argued that the gender based segmentation provides clear identification and easy access to the target segments (Darley & Smith, 1995; Meyers-Levy & Sternthal, 1991).

Gender has a significant relation with the consumers' attitudes, purchase decisions and buying behaviour (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006; Fischer & Arnold, 1994; Van Slyke, Comunale, & Belanger, 2002). Therefore, many researchers stress that gender is an important factor that determines consumer needs, wants and buying behaviour and is a fundamental market segmentation index (Mokhlis & Salleh, 2009).

Studies conducted in the Indian context on consumer decision making call for a better understanding of consumers by considering individual, situational or contextual factors (Goswami & Khan, 2015; Kumar, Vohra, & Dangi, 2016; Sharma & Aich, 2012; Tanksale, Neelam, & Venkatachalam, 2014; Verma & Rangekar, 2015). Therefore, this study is an attempt to understand consumer decision making styles (CDMS) and the effects of gender on CDMS in Odisha, an eastern state of India.

Past researches on the influence of gender on buying decision-making styles of consumers

Cultures that are high on masculinity dimension have well defined gender roles. In countries like India, with higher masculinity, males are supposed to be aggressive and dominating, while females tend to be gentle and caring (Hofstede 1980). Social role theory assumes that gender-based categorization of work generates gender role expectations, and men and women tend to comply with the traditional roles expected of them (Eagly 1987). Shopping is usually considered as a female responsibility (Buttle 1992). Most studies have reported that the primary responsibility of shopping is largely related with women (Anne et al. 2014; Dholakia, 1999). A research stated that men and women tend to vary in their choices while shopping because of the differences in their upbringing and socialization. Men do not like shopping but love having something purchased while women love shopping more than men. Men tend to buy instrumental or leisure items and women tend to buy symbolic and self-expressive goods. Women want best products for best buys or deals but men only buy what they need (Vijaya Lakshmi et al., 2017). Novel products stimulate women more than men (Tang and Chin 2007). Females are socialized for paying attention to their looks (Burton et al. 1994). Females compared to males are likely to derive more value from novelty, trendy and fashionable products(Mehta,2020). Women check for price tags more than men in shopping malls (Underhill 2005) suggesting that women will be more active seekers of price and value for money than men. Research states that men are more instrumental, utilitarian and goal-oriented in their approach preferring to minimize the time they spend in buying whereas women are more expressive and are likely to enjoy browsing and exploring the store to find products for themselves and others as well (Bem 1981). Both men and women appear to be loyal alike in spite of expectation of women developing stronger bond with brands and stores because of relationships shown to be more important to women (Noble et al. 2006).

Gender and consumer buying decision-making styles

Through an online survey with 186 respondents from New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata and Chennai a study identified 5 decision-making styles in Indian context namely brand and quality consciousness, value for money and planned purchases, fashion-impulsive-recreational shopping, confused by over-choice and brand loyalty. Male consumers were found to be more brand conscious and quality conscious than females for international apparel brands such as Guess, Zara,Mango,Calvin Klein,Tommy Hilfiger and Esprit(Claudio De Mattos et al.,2015)
Another research in Tamilnadu found that both males and females revealed the common factors of Quality Consciousness, Brand consciousness, Brand Loyalty, Variety seeking, Recreational & Hedonistic Consumers and Price Consciousness. In addition, two factors namely, confused by over choice and harried shopper was valid for men. Three factors namely, Novelty & fashion consciousness; Store loyalty and store image consciousness and Impulsive, careless consumers were confirmed for female shoppers (Jaidev, U. P. and Amarnath, D. D., 2018). An examination of the decision-making styles of Generation Y men and women revealed that except impulsiveness, seven of the original styles of CSI (Sproles and Kendall 1986) were common to both the genders .The results indicated that women appear to view shopping as a recreational activity and love to spend more time in shopping than men, women were found to be more price oriented and more novelty/fashion-oriented than men. This study further suggested that both millennial men and women were equally brand loyal (Mehta, 2020). A study reported young working women in Chennai to be recreational, quality conscious and brand-conscious for apparels. This recreational consciousness may be to break away from their busy work- life schedule that they go shopping for relaxation. Single women were found to be more fashion-conscious and impulsive, careless than married women. Working women were aware of best-selling brands and preferred big stores offering specialty brands .They were not brand loyals as they looked for variety in apparel products (Sasirekha, 2020).

Decision-making of Consumers and consumer style inventory (CSI)
Consumer decision-making is a process by which consumers identify their needs, collect information, evaluate alternatives, and make the purchase decision (Sasirekha, 2020). These actions are determined by psychological and economic factors, and are influenced by environmental factors such as cultural, group, and social values. Decision-making styles are crucial for understanding consumer shopping behavior and for developing successful marketing strategies (Mitra Saleh et.al, 2017). Decision-making styles have been mainly viewed as a relatively enduring consumer personality that seldom changes even when applied to different goods and situations.
To understand the consumer decision-making style Sproles and Kendall (1986) posit that consumers' decision-making style refers to a consumer's general approach and mental orientation towards shopping and choosing a product or store. They proposed that the consumers approach the market place with a specific kind of attitude. A consumer may adopt composition of more than one style to come to a buying decision. Based on extensive studies, Sproles and Kendall (1986)

developed a Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) entailing eight dimensions of decision-making that were used as heuristics by customers to arrive to a buying decision. The authors used closed-ended questionnaire comprising of total 40 items/questions to assess the decision-making styles of 482 high school students in the USA towards personal products (i.e., clothing, cosmetics and hairdryers). Based on the analysis of responses related to affective and cognitive orientations, the authors validated and finalized the 40-items CSI consisting of eight dimensions namely, Perfectionism/high quality Consciousness, Brand Consciousness, Novelty-fashion Consciousness, Recreational-hedonistic Consciousness, Price and 'value for money' Consciousness, Impulsiveness, Confused by over-choice and Habitual, Brand loyal orientation. According to Sproles and Kendall (1986), identifying such characteristics help in understanding an individual consumer style which can be used to further influence them.

Table 1. Description of Eight Consumer Decision-Making Styles

Perfectionism/ high-quality consciousness: This style is concerned with quality. Consumers with this decision -making style will not compromise with products classified as 'good enough'.
Brand consciousness: This style is concerned with getting expensive and well-known brands. Consumers with this style believe that the higher the price of the product the better the quality. These consumers also prefer best-selling advertised brands.
Novelty- fashion consciousness: Consumers possessing this style tend to seek out new things. This style reflects a liking of innovative products and a motivation to keep up to date with new styles and fashion trends.
Recreational-hedonistic consciousness: Consumers with this style view shopping as being enjoyable. Consumers with this style enjoy the stimulation of looking for and choosing products.
Price and "value for money" consciousness: The style is concerned with getting lower prices. The presence of this style means that the consumer is conscious of sale prices and aims to get the best value for their money.
Impulsiveness: This style describes a shopper who does not plan shopping and appears unconcerned with how much he/she spends. Consumers with this style can regret their decision later.
Confused by over choice: This style reflects lack of confidence and inability to manage the number of choices available. Consumers with this style experience information overload.
Habitual, brand loyal orientation: Consumers possessing this style do shopping at the same stores and buy the same brands each time.

Source: (Sproles and Kendall, 1986)

Since its development, the CSI has been widely tested in cross-national contexts to assess its generalizability. Hafstrom et al. (1992) applied the CSI on a sample of 310 college going students in Korea; Durvasula et al. (1993) using a New Zealand sample found substantial support for its applicability; Lysonski et al. (1996) conducted a multi-country comparison of consumers from the

USA, New Zealand, India and Greece; Mitchell and Bates (1998) applied the CSI on consumers in the UK; Hiu, Siu, Wang, and Chang (2001) investigated Chinese consumers' decision-making styles; Walsh et al. (2001) tested the CSI on German consumers; Tarnanidis, Owusu-Frimpong, Nwankwo, and Omar (2014) tested it on Greek consumers and Nayeem and Casidy (2015) on Australian consumers. Despite some of the minor issues, the CSI has received overall support from these studies.

Research gap

There have been limited studies on understanding the influence of gender on consumer decision-making styles by using Sproles and Kendall scale(1986) in Indian context (Claudio De Mattos et al.,2015; Vijaya Lakshmi et al.,2017; Jaidev, U. P. and Amarnath, D. D. , 2018; Mehta R., 2020; Sasirekha, 2020).

Thus, this study, is an attempt to address the gap and validate the applicability of Sproles and Kendall Consumer Style Inventory scale in the sub-cultural milieu of Odisha.

Objectives

The proposed study aims to explore the buying decision-making styles of male and female consumers in Odisha and investigate the influence of gender on buying decision-making styles.

In this study, we investigated the role of gender in explaining differences in the consumer shopping styles in order to help broaden the understanding of consumer behavior. Of primary interest in this research was whether male and female consumers would vary systematically in their decision orientations towards shopping.

Research framework

The present study investigates the influence of gender on consumer decision-making styles .The relationship between predictor and criteria variables is shown in Figure 1.

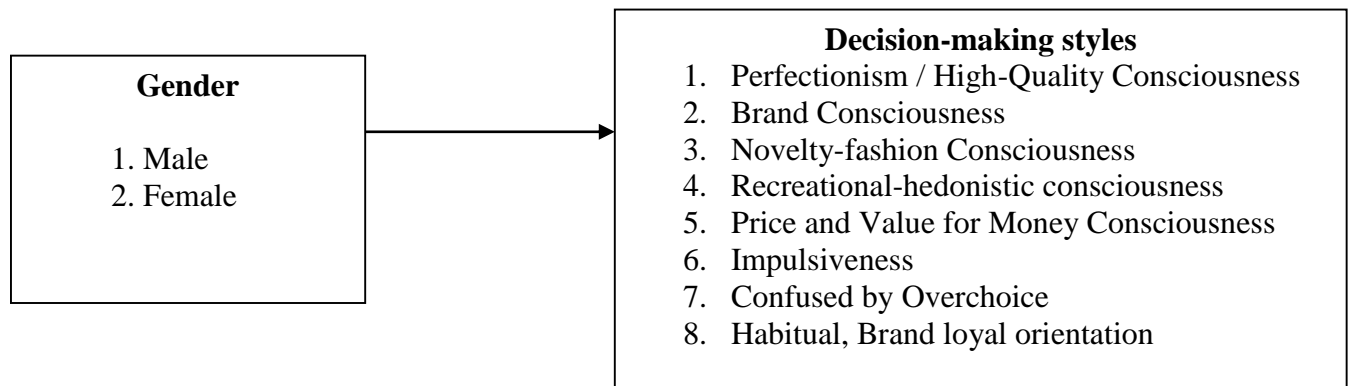| Gender	Decision-making styles
1. Male 2. Female	1. Perfectionism / High-Quality Consciousness 2. Brand Consciousness 3. Novelty-fashion Consciousness 4. Recreational-hedonistic consciousness 5. Price and Value for Money Consciousness 6. Impulsiveness 7. Confused by Overchoice 8. Habitual, Brand loyal orientation

Figure 1.Proposed framework

Research Hypothesis

H1: Gender has no significant influence on buying decision-making styles of consumers in Odisha.

The hypothesis presented above is general and the study proceeds by initially identifying the major consumer decision-making styles prevalent among Odisha consumers considering gender aspect. Since the Consumer Style Inventory provides an overall picture of the decision-making styles of consumers, it would be interesting to identify the consumer decision-making styles of males and females and the influence of gender on each of the identified decision-making styles.

METHODOLOGY

Research Instrument
This research was quantitative in nature involving a purposive sampling technique. The sample size was 151. Data was primary in nature and collected through Mall intercept method. A close-ended structured questionnaire was administered to collect the primary data regarding buying decision-making styles of consumers. Respondents were asked to mention their gender. The CSI developed by Sproles and Kendall was employed in this study with some minor dropping of four statements owing to validity-reliability issues. All the statements were measured on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from Strong Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). According to Sproles and Kendall, the reliabilities of CSI Scale ranged from 0.48 to 0.76.

Data Sources
The self-administered survey was undertaken and purposive sampling technique was used. Data was collected from 151 respondents belonging to different regions of Odisha namely Bhubaneswar,Berhampur, Sambalpur and Bhadrak. The sample consisted of 83 Males(55%) and 68 Females(45%) and mall intercept method was used for data collection. The data after being collected was analyzed using SPSS (version 20) and then Exploratory Factor analysis was carried. t-test was applied to find out the variations across gender as decision-making style is concerned.

Data Analysis

Reliability Test

Cronbach Alpha was used to assess the internal reliability of the 36 scale item of the questionnaire. (Out of the 40 original items of CSI, 4 items having factor loadings less than 0.4 were dropped). Cronbach Alpha coefficient was found to be .714 and since it is greater than.7 Cronbach Alpha ideal therefore the scale items possess a satisfactory internal consistency and hence reckoned

statistically reliable.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

It is a data reduction technique that allows simplification of the correlational relationship between continuous variables. Exploratory factor analysis is being used to examine relationships among key interval scaled questions and assesses the data suitability.
The Barlett's test is significant (p < .05) and KMO value is .735 which is greater than .6 , hence the factor analysis is appropriate and meets the two criteria of assumption.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.735
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2406.608
	Df	820
	Sig.	.000

Bartlett's Test of sphericity and KMO Test for sampling adequacy were found appropriate, thereby supporting the appropriateness of data/scale items for factor analytic modeling. The Principal component analysis was employed for factor extraction and orthogonal form of Varimax rotation was applied on principal component solutions. The variables whose factor loadings were greater than.50 were retained. Factors with Eigen values greater than one were extracted. The eight factors explain 58 % of variance.

Table 2: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.286	24.589	24.589	7.286	24.589	24.589	3.540	16.493	16.493
2	3.205	7.818	32.407	3.205	7.818	32.407	3.242	7.907	24.400
3	2.644	6.448	38.855	2.644	6.448	38.855	2.817	6.871	31.271
4	2.363	5.764	44.619	2.363	5.764	44.619	2.784	6.789	38.060
5	1.868	4.556	49.175	1.868	4.556	49.175	2.572	6.273	44.333
6	1.341	3.270	52.445	1.341	3.270	52.445	2.020	4.926	49.259
7	1.233	3.008	55.453	1.233	3.008	55.453	2.007	4.758	54.017
8	1.159	2.828	58.281	1.159	2.828	58.281	2.004	4.264	58.281
9	1.154	2.814	61.095						
10	1.076	2.624	63.719						
11	.990	2.416	66.135						

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12	.949	2.315	68.450							
13	.900	2.196	70.646							
14	.868	2.116	72.762							
15	.837	2.041	74.803							
16	.784	1.913	76.716							
17	.744	1.815	78.531							
18	.737	1.798	80.329							
19	.711	1.733	82.062							
20	.675	1.647	83.709							
21	.661	1.613	85.322							
22	.631	1.539	86.861							
23	.602	1.496	88.357							
24	.554	1.269	89.626							
25	.534	1.243	90.869							
26	.507	1.045	91.914							
27	.495	.998	92.912							
28	.440	.947	93.859							
29	.409	.919	94.778							
30	.388	.908	95.686							
31	.361	.881	96.567							
32	.334	.814	97.381							
33	.312	.761	98.142							
34	.271	.662	98.804							
35	.258	.629	99.433							
36	.233	.567	100.000							

Component Matrix

The varimax rotation was done to extract the decisional style factors of the consumers belonging to the three religious sub-cultures. The eight factors were extracted by observing the rotated component matrix.

Table 3: Rotated component matrix (Orthogonal rotation)

ITEMS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Getting very good quality is very important to me		.737						
When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or the perfect choice		.740						
In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality		.734						
I make special effort to choose the very best quality products		.678						
My standards and expectations for products I buy are very high		.688						
I shop quickly, buying the first product or brand I find that seems good enough		.729						
The well-known national brands are best for me	.713							
The more expensive brands are usually my choice	.818							
The higher the price of a product the better its quality	.813							
Nice department and specialty stores offer me the best products	.695							
I prefer buying the best-selling brands	.643							
The most advertised brands are usually very good choices	.621							

Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me				.726				
I keep my wardrobe up to date with the changing fashions				.566				
I usually have one or more outfits of the very newest style				.633				
It's fun to buy something new and exciting				.684				
To get variety, I shop different stores ad chose different brands				.670				
Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life					.706			
I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it					.553			
I make my shopping trips fast					.618			
I buy as much as possible at sales prices			.643					
The lower price products are usually my choice			.738					
I look carefully to find the best value for the money			.760					
I should plan my shopping more carefully than I do								.779
I am impulsive when purchasing								.640

Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not								.694
I take time to shop for carefully for best buys								.638
I carefully watch how much I spend								.699
There are so many brands to choose from that I often feel confused							.628	
Sometimes it is hard to choose which stores to shop							.720	
The more I learn about product, the harder it seems to choose the best							.672	
All the information I get on different products confuses me							.599	
I have favorite brands that I buy over and over						.612		
Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it						.687		
I go to the same stores each time I shop						.602		
I change brands I buy regularly						.679		

INTERPRETATION OF FACTOR MATRIX TABLE

As evident from Table 2, it is found that 8 factors extracted together account for 58.28 % of the total variance (information contained in the 36 original variables).Hence, we have reduced the

number of variables from 36 to 8 underlying factors.

The Table 3 depicts the rotated component matrix which aids in interpreting the factor matrix easily. The items 7,8,9,10,11 and 12 are clubbed together and form the first factor which explains 24.589 % of variance. Hence, the first factor is termed as "Brand Consciousness". The second factor explains 7.818 % of variance and the items from 1, 2,3,4,5 and 6 are collated to form the second factor called "Perfectionism/High Quality Consciousness". The third factor explains 6.448 % of variance and it includes the items from 21, 22 and 23. These accumulated items form the third factor which is "Price/Value for Money Consciousness". The fourth factor explains 5.764 % of variance and the items amalgamated under this factor are13, 14,15,16 and 17. This factor is "Novelty-Fashion Consciousness". The fifth factor explains 4.556 % of variance and it is termed as "Recreational-Hedonistic shopping Consciousness". The items 18,19 and 20 are assembled together under this factor. The sixth factor entailing items 33, 34, 35 and 36 explains a variance of 3.270 %. This factor is called as "Habitual-Brand Loyal orientation". The seventh factor explaining a variance of only 3.008 % comprises of items 29, 30, 31 and 32 and termed as "Confused by Overchoice". Items 24,25,26,27 and 28 aggregate together to form the eighth and last factor "Impulsiveness" explaining a small variance of only 2.828 %.

Thus, for objective one, the purchase decision-making styles emerging from factor analysis are Brand Consciousness, Perfectionism/High Quality Consciousness, Price/Value for Money Consciousness, Novelty-Fashion Consciousness, Recreational-Hedonistic shopping Consciousness, Habitual-Brand Loyal orientation, Confused by Over choice and Impulsiveness.

Hypothesis Testing on the basis of differences in consumer decision-making styles across gender

To address the second objective, t-test was conducted to demonstrate the difference between the shopping styles of consumers across gender.

Consumer Decision-making style	Gender	Mean	D.f	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Brand consciousness	Male	2.99	149	2.53	0.50
	Female	2.34			
Perfectionism / High quality consciousness	Male	3.42	149	2.97	0.49
	Female	3.29			
Price Consciousness	Male	3.61	149	21.45	**0.037**
	Female	**3.93**			
Novelty-fashion consciousness	Male	4.15	149		

	Female	**4.26**		27.58	**0.035**
Impulsiveness	Male	3.97	149	2.68	0.51
	Female	3.74			
Recreational- Hedonistic shopping consciousness	Male	3.82	149	24.78	**0.036**
	Female	**4.09**			
Confused by Overchoice	Male	**3.21**	149	27.39	**0.035**
	Female	2.53			
Habitual-Brand Loyal orientation	Male	3.45	149	34.28	**0. 028**
	Female	**3.68**			

Interpretation:

From the t-table, it is evident that p<0.05 for the five factors namely Price consciousness, Novelty-fashion consciousness, Recreational- Hedonistic shopping consciousness, Confused by Overchoice and Habitual-Brand Loyal orientation. It indicates that statistically significant differences exist among the decision-making styles of male and female consumers. Female consumers were reported to be more price-conscious, novelty-fashion consciousness, recreational-hedonistic and brand loyals than males. This finding of women being more price-conscious and novelty-fashion consciousness echoes the findings of studies made by (Mehta, 2020). Further, the finding that women exhibited greater preponderance towards brand loyalty than males is in tandem with the findings of (Bakewell and Mitchell,2006).Males scored higher for confusion due to overchoice than females. This finding corroborates with the results of the study made by (Kwan et al., 2008; Yasin, 2009).Females were found to be more recreational-hedonistic shoppers, this finding supports the findings of (Seyyed Ali Moosavi Kavkani et al., 2011; Anic et al.,2012).

Both male and female consumers were brand conscious shoppers exhibiting high quality consciousness and impulsiveness at equal levels as p>0.05. This finding is analogous to the findings made by (Mitchell and Walsh, 2004). Thus, owing to the above findings, the null hypothesis, H1: Gender has no significant influence on buying decision-making styles of consumers in Odisha is rejected. Therefore, it can be inferred that Gender has a pre-dominant influence on the decision-making styles of the consumers in Odisha.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to assess the influence of gender on buying decision-making styles of consumers. Exploratory factor analysis was undertaken to determine the decision-making styles and t-test

results indicated that striking similarities and dissimilarities existed among the decision-making styles of male and female consumers.

Marketers and retailers should realize the importance of gender while designing the marketing-mix. They should treat males and females as heterogeneous markets. An increased emphasis should be laid on improving quality, fashion-novelty and brand awareness building among consumers by stocking fashionable, trendsetting and up-to-date products with reasonable pricing. Brand familiarity can lead to brand loyalty and keep confusion at bay. Mall owners should offer pleasant ambience, entertainment and other services to the shoppers who can flock in malls with their family and friends for socialization or leisure pursuit. The store personnel should be able to help information-seeking consumers. Marketers can adopt various loyalty programmes to accentuate the penchant of brand loyal consumers. For price-conscious consumers, marketers should provide products at affordable price-ranges, easily available in the stores in malls. Visual merchandising, store atmospherics and promotional signage may also stimulate impulsiveness among shoppers. Retail stores should pay more attention towards designing the store in a way that it provides highly arousing environment employing warm colored interiors, lights and fast music tempo with entertainment and browsing facilities to effectively cater to women. Further, stores targeting men should design their layout in such a way that facilitates easy navigation for men and saves their time. These stores should also invest in facilities that ensure fast checkout.

A clear understanding of decision-making styles of male and female consumers may be warranted for marketers to predict the consumer needs and formulate effective strategies.The study has certain limitations. Firstly, it gives suggestive evidences rather than conclusive demonstration that such a kind of variation in decision-making styles exists. Secondly, the sample size chosen was also small. Thirdly, the study was restricted within the geographical boundaries of Odisha. It is suggested that further studies can be made to investigate and verify the explanatory role of gender towards the decision-making of males and females.

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