

Construction and Validation of the Emotional and Personality related Career Indecisiveness Scale (EPSCI)

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Abstract:

The use of appropriate instruments for data collection is a crucial aspect of any research as inappropriate instruments run the risk of providing invalid and uninterpretable data. Hence, utmost care needs to be taken for ensuring the usage of most apt instruments and wherever necessary such instruments should be carefully crafted. This paper reports the development of one such instrument, Emotional and Personality Related Sources of Career Indecisiveness Scale, designed to unearth the emotional and personality related factors responsible for career indecisiveness among adolescents living in institutional care. It entails an elaborate discussion on all its aspects including its need, purpose and procedure of construction. The EPSCI scale is based on the theoretical framework presented by Saka et al. (2008) which bifurcates the emotional and personality related factors in three categories i.e. pessimistic views, anxiety, and self-concept and identity which are further sub-divided in 11 categories.

Key words: *Career Indecisiveness, Institutional Care, Adolescents, Scale Development*

1. Introduction

Personality is a complex construct which has been defined in numerous ways by different psychologists. Some theorists like Allport consider it a dynamic concept which is ever-evolving while others like Eysenck consider it more or less a stable organization of one's temperaments, intellect and physique (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003). The understanding of personality and the appropriate ways to assess it vary with the vantage point one chooses to take. However, in either case, personality comprises such characteristics that make each person different from the rest. It encompasses all thought patterns and emotions which lead us to behave in certain ways. Therefore, personality has a major effect on all life decisions including career decisions and the problems which one may face while encountering them. Similarly, the effect of emotions in the decision-making process has been recognized by many researchers (Ekman,

2007; Gilbert, 2006; Keltner et al., 2014; Lazarus, 1991). Emotions are often a driving force behind major life decisions for many people. They shape the landscape of our mental and social lives (Nussbaum, 2009). It is widely accepted that career decision-making (CDM) difficulties that emanate from emotional and personality related sources are one of the most substantial problems that students face (Amir & Gati, 2006; Amir et al., 2008; Gati et al., 1996). Problems grounded in an inner or emotional cause have been affirmed as more severe as compared to problems caused by an outer cause (Gati, Amir, & Landman, 2010) and are viewed as having significant influence over one's CDM and the counselling process required to alleviate them. Such problems incapacitate a person to arrive at a convincing decision and therefore, warrant lasting interventions.

Though everybody faces some difficulty in taking career related decisions at some point yet there are certain sections of the population who are more vulnerable to such problems. Adolescents who live in child care institutions due to numerous causes whether due to social factors or personal factors (Silva & Ribeiro, 2012) are an example of such sections. These adolescents face more difficulties in their career choice because of lack of familial support. Many studies, both from India and abroad, have demonstrated that adolescents in institutional care face many emotional and personality related issues including attachment problems, anxiety issues, lower self-esteem and lower emotional intelligence among many others. The emotional problems of adolescents in institutional care along with the complex nature of career indecisiveness emanating from emotional and personality aspects build up a strong case for studying career indecisiveness among adolescents in institutional care.

2. Taxonomy of Emotional and Personality related Sources of Career Indecisiveness

Saka et al. (2008) presented a theoretical framework for illustrating and analyzing various emotional and personality components of CDM difficulties and the interrelations among them. They acknowledged that career indecisiveness was a chief problem affecting varied facets of people's lives. They enriched the career literature with a broad theoretical framework for emotional and personality related CDM difficulties, that substantially addressed issues which were reported to be associated with career indecisiveness in prior researches. They divided this framework into three broad variables: pessimistic views, anxiety, and self-concept and identity and adverted that the source of career indecisiveness lies amongst these variables only (Saka et al., 2008; Saka & Gati, 2007). After analysis, they further bifurcated these three factors in 11 categories. Gati et al. (2010) also investigated this model by investigating its relationship with various personality measures and confirmed the taxonomy. These various dimensions and sub-dimensions of this taxonomy are discussed hereunder:

2.1 Pessimistic views: After reviewing the studies concerning pessimism, and emotional and behavioural reactions, Saka et al. (2008) defined pessimistic views as “negative cognitive biases and perceptions”. This dimension includes the following three sub-dimensions:

- *Pessimistic views regarding the world of work*: It refers to negative perceptions about the work-domain.
- *Pessimistic views about the process*: It refers to a person's low CDM self-efficacy i.e. when one doubts one's competency of successfully completing the CDM process.
- *Pessimistic views about one's control*: It denotes one's external locus of control in the CDM process and its outcomes.

2.2 Anxiety: It denotes the influence of anxiety on particular aspects of the CDM process. This dimension includes the following four sub-dimensions:

- *Anxiety about the process*: This sub-dimension denotes stress and anxiety before the CDM process or anxiety induced by perfectionism about the CDM process.
- *Anxiety related to the uncertainty involved in choosing*: This sub-dimension denotes insecurity regarding future, anxiety about being undecided and anxiety due to ambiguity.
- *Anxiety about the process of choosing*: This sub-dimension denotes perfectionism about the process of making a choice, concern about leaving out on other prospective alternatives, fear of selecting an inappropriate alternative and uneasiness regarding accepting responsibility of the choice.
- *Anxiety about the outcome*: This sub-dimension denotes concern about the consequences of implementing the choice i.e. being fearful of disappointment in the chosen career.

2.3 Self-concept and Identity: It denotes one's sense of one's own personality. This dimension includes the following four sub-dimensions:

- *Self-esteem*: This sub-dimension denotes the perception one has about one's own worth in general and in career-related aspects in particular.
- *General anxiety*: This sub-dimension denotes the presence of trait anxiety i.e. when someone has a proclivity towards being anxious or in other words the case where anxiety is a consistent attribute of the personality and not just an emotion.
- *Uncrystallized identity*: This sub-dimension denotes problems in arriving at a steady identity which makes it difficult for a person to demonstrate coherent opinions, ideals, likings and aims in general and clarity of career choices, career aspirations, career interests and career objectives, in particular.
- *Conflictual attachment and separation*: This sub-dimension denotes complications in relationships with important people in one's life which may stem from unwarranted criticism, discontentment and lack of support or to an individual's need for approval from significant others. Such issues are understood to negatively influence a person's CDM process and choice.

This taxonomy imbibes all major emotional and personality related factors which affect career indecision and hence, this model was adopted to delve in to the career indecisiveness faced by adolescents in institutional care. Instead of general personality measures, this framework takes in to account such constructs which are specifically linked to career indecision.

This makes this model more relevant for studying career indecision among adolescents in institutional care as the results of a study conducted by Gadassi, Gati, and Dayan (2013) have also indicated that overall personality variables are less important in the CDM process than personality-related variables specifically linked to the CDM process. Though a corresponding scale, Emotional and Personality-related CDM Difficulties scale, was also developed by Saka et al. (2008), the researcher could not locate the manual or guidelines for interpretation of its freely available internet version. Further, it was not validated on Indian population especially on adolescents living in institutional care. As no other adequate and appropriate instrument to assess the emotional and personality related sources of career indecisiveness (EPSCI) could be obtained, an EPSCI scale was developed.

3. Purpose of the scale

The primary objective of the scale is to bring out the EPSCI in adolescents in institutional care. It is expected to play a pivotal role in early detection of probable career issues by identifying adolescents who are at risk of career indecisiveness.

4. Process of scale construction

4.1 Planning of the scale

The inability to locate a suitable instrument for assessing the EPSCI in adolescents in institutional care through review of relevant related literature like journals, books, psychological and educational laboratories, internet and other authentic sources led to the development of the scale. Further, as discussed earlier, the scale adopted the taxonomy set forth by Saka and Gati (2007) which takes into account all such emotional and personality related variables which were reportedly associated with career indecisiveness.

a. Target population: The scale is designed to assess the career indecisiveness because of emotional and personality related factors faced by of students of Grade IX and X between the ages of 14-18 years living in institutional care.

b. Type of test items: A Likert-type scale with the following five options were given to the participants to express their agreement with each statement

Strongly disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly agree

4.2 Construction of the scale

This phase included the following steps:

a. Writing statements for the first draft of the scale

The deductive scale development approach was used to create an item pool. As per Schwab (1980), this approach is used when the theoretical definition of a construct is used as a guide for creation of items unlike the inductive approach which is useful while exploring an unfamiliar phenomenon (as cited in Hinkin et al., 1997). A variety of available standardized instruments like Indecisiveness Scale (Germeijs & De Boeck, 2002), Attachment Questionnaire for Children (Muris, Meesters, van Melick, & Zwambag, 2001), Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale

(1959), Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) among many others were consulted for the varied dimensions and sub-dimensions of the scale.

An attempt was made to frame statements that were brief, clear and unambiguous. Overlapping of dimensions was also avoided. The statements were written in English. A blueprint was prepared to determine the number of statements to be framed for each sub-dimension, which was revised with each draft. The blueprints of all drafts have been presented in table 1. Both positive (P) and negative (N) statements were included in the first draft. Directions were also framed for the participants.

Table 1

Blueprint: Draft 1- EPSCI

S. No.	Dimension	Sub-dimension	No. of items Draft 1	No. of items Draft 2	No. of items Draft 3	No. of items Final Scale
1	Pessimistic views	Pessimistic views regarding the world of work	24 (13P+11N)	13 (N)	11 (N)	3 (N)
2	Pessimistic views	Pessimistic views about the process	22 (11P+11N)	13 (N)	11 (N)	3 (N)
3	Pessimistic views	Pessimistic views about one's control	22 (11P+11N)	14 (N)	11 (N)	3 (N)
4	Anxiety	Anxiety about the process	22 (11P+11N)	13 (N)	11 (N)	3 (N)
5	Anxiety	Anxiety related to the uncertainty involved in choosing	23 (11P+12N)	15 (N)	11 (N)	3 (N)
6	Anxiety	Anxiety about the process of choosing	23 (11P+12N)	15 (N)	11 (N)	4 (N)
7	Anxiety	Anxiety about the outcome	22 (11P+11N)	12 (N)	11 (N)	2 (N)
8	Self-concept and Identity	General anxiety	22 (11P+11N)	13 (N)	11 (N)	3 (N)
9	Self-concept and Identity	Self-esteem	23 23 (11P+12N)	12 (N)	11 (N)	3 (N)
10	Self-concept and Identity	Uncrystallized identity	23 23 (11P+12N)	14 (N)	11 (N)	2 (N)
11	Self-concept and Identity	Conflictual attachment and separation	24 23 (11P+13N)	14 (N)	11 (N)	3(N)
Total			250	148	121	32

is in agreement with the sub-dimension to which it belongs as well as the overall scale. These item-total correlations were calculated both sub-dimension-wise and with the total score to establish the appropriateness of the items. Only items whose product moment correlation was more than 0.3, with both the particular sub-dimension and the total score were retained. This resulted in removal of 89 items as shown in table 2. According to Crocker and Algina (1986) the item's contribution to the total in the item-total correlation is not an issue when all items are scored the same way and the test form is suitably long preferably 25 items or more. Since here the number of items was high i.e., the corrected item-total correlation was not calculated.

f. Preparation of the final scale

After removing items based on the results of item analysis, the final scale comprised of 32 items. The final scale is presented in Appendix 1.

4.3. Standardization phase

a. Validity

Content validity denotes whether the items sufficiently measure the content domain of the variable being assessed without any overlapping with the content-domain of other variables. Such validity can be improved by adopting rigor in the process of developing the items. "It is a non-statistical type of validity that involves the systematic examination of the test content to determine whether it covers a representative sample of the behavior domain to be measured" (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997, p.114). In order to establish content validity, the instrument was given to twelve experts and accordingly 28 items were removed from the scale. Modifications were also made to 15 items.

Face validity, also known as representation validity, is the degree to which an instrument is subjectively considered as covering the concept it contends to assess (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). In other words, an instrument has adequate face validity if it "looks like" it assesses what it is supposed to assess (Holden, 2010). Face validity was established by conducting a pilot study and taking expert opinion, as described earlier. As the face validity should not be so high that the participants understand what is being measured and adjust their responses accordingly (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012), the statements in the final EPSCI were mixed up purposefully so as to avoid any clubbing of statements relating to one dimension at one place.

b. Reliability

An instrument is considered highly reliable if it provides similar outcomes under the same conditions. The reliability of the EPSCI scores in the standardization phase was examined using the split-half method.

Under this method, an instrument is divided into two halves and then the scores of these two halves are correlated (Mishra, 2017). This method escapes the difficulty of developing alternate forms which the parallel-forms method faces by treating the two halves of a measure as alternate forms (Murphy & Davidshofer, 2005). Since the final scale had 32 statements, two halves of 16 statements each were taken by splitting statements on the basis of odd-even. The

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