

**Abstract 26:**

**Decision making styles and associated factors among students in the Jaffna National College of Education**

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**Background and objectives:** Decision making is a specific executive task, but not all are fortunate enough to take truly successful decisions. In the realm of education, teachers play a vital role in shaping the minds and future of students. The ability to make effective decisions is crucial for teachers to create an engaging and impactful learning environment. This study aims to determine decision making styles and associated factors among students of Jaffna National College of Education.

**Methods:** An institution-based descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among students of the Jaffna National College of Education. Proportionate stratified sampling method was used to select the sample from two batches; stratification was performed by batch and gender. The required sample size was 386. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire, which included an open-sourced decision style inventory that assessed analytical, behavioural, conceptual and directive decision-making styles. Range of scores that could be achieved for each decision-making style was from 20 to 160. Data were entered and analysed using SPSS software.

**Results:** The study involved 383 participants aged 21 to 27 years, with a mean age of 23.8 years. The majority were female (78.1%), first-year students (59.3%), who had studied non-science subjects for their G.C.E Advanced Level (62.7%), and were currently pursuing non-science subjects at the Jaffna National College of Education (76.2%). The mean scores for the analytical, behavioural, conceptual, and directive decision-making styles were 82.42, 87.89, 64.37, and 65.35, respectively. A statistically significant decline in the behavioural decision-making style was observed with increasing age ( $r = -0.113$ ,  $p = 0.027$ ). Females had a higher mean score for the directive decision-making style than males ( $p < 0.001$ ). Statistically significant differences between females and males were not observed in other decision-making styles.

**Conclusions and recommendations:** While each decision-making style has its distinct pattern, behavioural and directive are the most consistently used across the sample. When students are older, there is a shift away from the behavioural style of decision making. Men lean towards analytical and women towards directive style of decision making. The implications of the different decision-making styles on teaching and learning in the school environment needs to be further explored.

**Keywords:** Decision making styles, Analytical, Behavioural, Conceptual, Directive, Teachers