

**DO INSTRUCTION AND EXPERIENCE MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN DECISION-  
MAKING AND JUDGEMENT OUTCOMES?  
THEORETICAL ANALYSIS AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS FROM A  
LABORATORY EXPERIMENT**

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**ABSTRACT** (*Work in Progress*)

Very frequently in scientific publications and research reports on decision-making, related to decision-making performance and judgment efficiency, the question has been raised to which extent problem-solving experience and instruction resp. training do have an impact on the decision-makers' and "judgers" performance resp. decision-making and judgment efficiency [1].

Interestingly, there are numerous theoretical models being developed about the cause-effect relations of experience and instruction – as the influencing variables - and decision-making and judgment outcomes – as dependent variables – in relevant publications [3, p. 89ff.].

Astonishingly, relevant empirical studies show different, even partially contradictory findings for this particular research question [1,2,5]. Moreover, it is very noticeable that the analytical and theoretical outline of the notion of experience and instruction as influencing variables on decision-making and judgment varies tremendously, pertaining to different definitions and operationalization procedures of the key terms.

In addition, theoretical propositions and empirical models about the cause-effect relation between experience and instruction/training on the one hand, and decision-making and judgment efficiency on the other hand differ enormously as far as the operationalization of the dependent variables and their relevant situational contexts are concerned.

The author of the abstract himself conducted a research project dealing with cause-effect relations of different degrees of decision-making rationality on decision-making efficiency, which included one research question aiming at the revelation of the dependences resp. interdependencies between problem-solving experience and the degree of cost-benefit-relations in decision-making processes [4]. This research project was based on a research design using a business simulation game as a laboratory experiment. The empirical findings showed a certain weak correlation between the degree of decision-making experience and the degree of decision-making efficiency in terms of the cost-benefit relations [4, p.318ff.].

Recently, a new research project was launched by the author in collaboration with a number of doctoral students, again dealing with cause-effect-relations between experience and instruction/training as the independent variables and decision-making resp. judgment outcomes as the dependent variable.

The constitutional research question of the project was formulated in terms of two main hypotheses:

- The higher the degree of problem solution experience in decision-making processes the higher the degree of decision-making performance and judgment efficiency.

- Pertinent instruction and training lead to a higher degree of decision-making and judgment efficiency.

The main goal of the research project (the research project is work in progress) is to develop a theoretical model concerning experience, instruction/training and decision making resp. judgment efficiency, to gain significant empirical knowledge about the formulated hypotheses and thus, finally, contribute to the design of pertinent decision-making mechanisms for decision making success.

The research project uses a laboratory experimental research design including a sample of post-graduate business management students studying in master's and doctoral programs. The experimentees aimed to perform challenging decision-making procedures and judgment tasks at the beginning of the study semester. In the middle of the study semester one group of the experimentees was subject to an instruction resp. training program making them familiar with various heuristics how to solve challenging decision-making and judgment problems. The reference group was not instructed in any manner.

Finally, both groups of experimentees had to repeat the decision-making and judgment task as by the end of the semester. The aim of the experimental treatment was to find out whether there could be found any differences in the decision-making and judgment outcomes before and after instruction/training within the first group and in comparison to the group without instruction/training.

Tentatively, the experimental findings indicate that instruction/training as well as decision-making "experience" do show a certain impact on decision-making and judgment efficiency, in particular as far as the increase of awareness of critical problem factors of the decision-making tasks and procedures were concerned.

The research work in progress will ultimately add another experimental treatment dealing with the "notion" of decision-making experience in relation to decision-making efficiency in more detail.

**Keywords:** decision making, experience, judgment, outcome.

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