

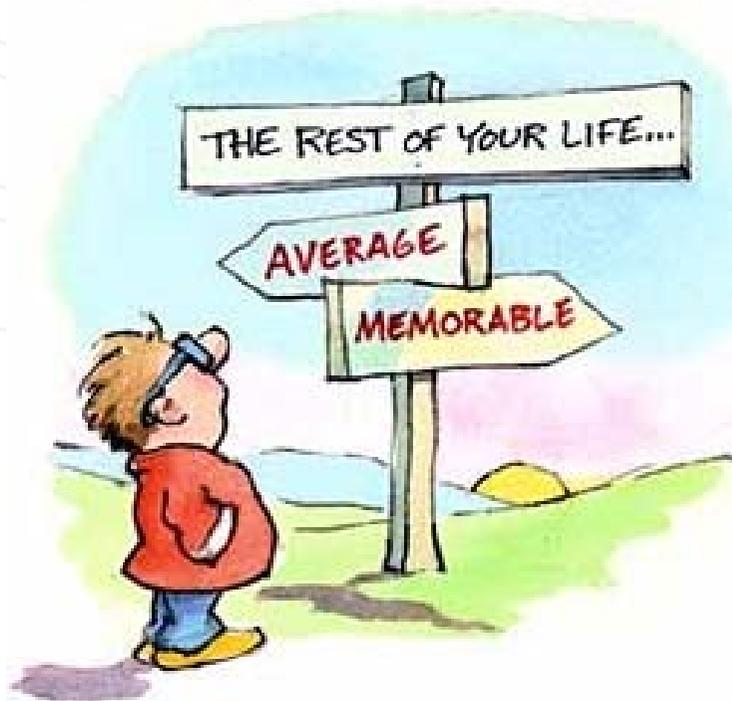


# Enhancing students' life satisfaction by implementing decision-making trainings in the curriculum

Johannes Siebert



## Impact of Decision Making



*"The only way to exert control over your life is through your decision-making. The rest just happens to you."\**  
(Ralph Keeney)

Keeney, R. (1992). Value-focused Thinking: A Path to Creative Decision Making. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.  
Source: <https://blogs.unimelb.edu.au/seconds/2017/04/01/a-guide-to-figuring-out-the-rest-of-your-life-aimee/>

## Relevance of Decision Making (Example 1)

After your successful studies at the MCI you are working already for two years

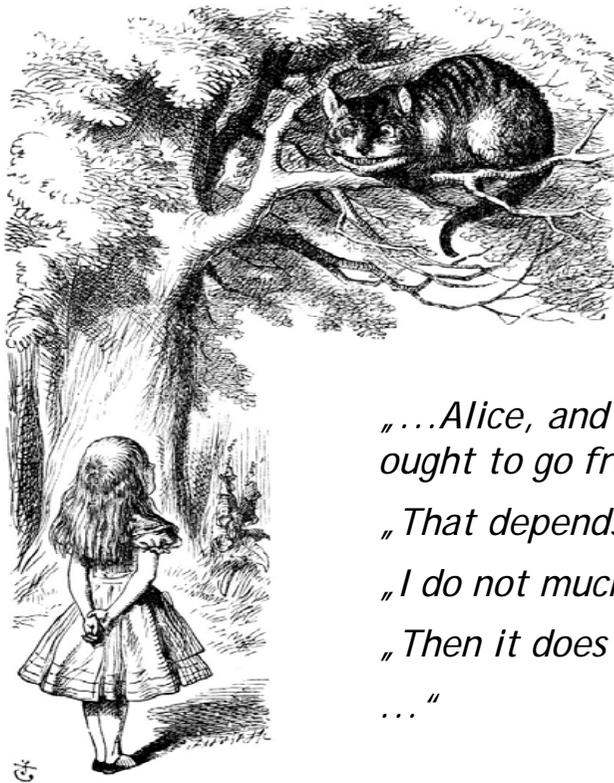
A headhunter calls you and offers you an attractive job

Which decision(s) do you have to make?



Picture source: <https://www.brama-west.de/de/pferdesportzubehoer/Fahrgeschirre-und-Zubehoer/kopfgestell-mit-scheuklappen.html>

# Impact of Decision Making



*„...Alice, and she (the Cat): “Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”*

*„That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.*

*„I do not much care where -” said Alice.*

*„Then it does not matter which way you go,” said the Cat.*

*...”*

*(Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carrol)*

Picture source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/John\\_Tenniel#/media/File:Alice\\_par\\_John\\_Tenniel\\_23.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/John_Tenniel#/media/File:Alice_par_John_Tenniel_23.png)

# Theoretical background of Proactive Decision Making

## How Should You Make Decisions?

First, articulate and understand your values that are relevant to a decision situation

Then, these values should guide your efforts in all phases of the decision-making process

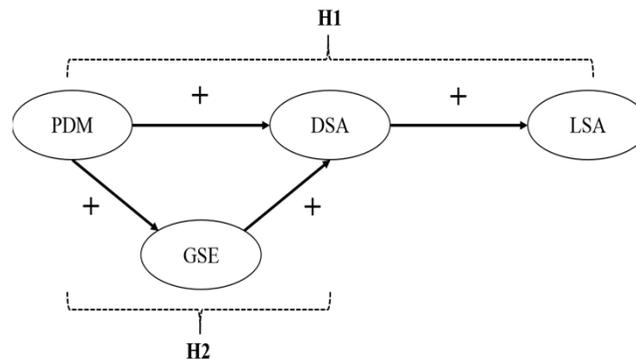
- Determining what is important
- Allocating time and effort to and on a decision
- Selecting decision opportunities
- Creating alternatives
- Identifying needed information
- Evaluating alternatives
- Communicating with others



This is **Value-Focused Thinking (VFT)**

# Explaining Life Satisfaction with Proactive Decision Making

- Research question: What is the role of proactive decision-making in explaining life satisfaction?
- We assume that *proactive decision making (PDM)* will positively influence *life satisfaction (LSA)* (H1). Specifically, we hypothesize mediated relationships:
  - H2a: Decision satisfaction (*DSA*) will positively influence *LSA*, such that it mediates the effect of *PDM* on *LSA*;
  - H2b: General Self-Efficacy (*GSE*) will positively influence *DSA*, such that it mediates the effect of *PDM* on *DSA*.



PDM explains **35,6%** of the variance of life satisfaction

Siebert, JU; Kunz, R; Rolf, P 2020, "Effects of Proactive Decision Making on Life Satisfaction", *European Journal of Operational Research*, 280(1), 1171-1187, [doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2019.08.011](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2019.08.011)

## Improving Proactive Decision Making in Decision Making Courses

Factor	Time	Study 1: United States <i>N</i> = 578		Study 2: Germany <i>N</i> = 106		Study 3: Austria <i>N</i> = 237		Control groups <i>N</i> = 178		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Time	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Initiative	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	4.65	1.16	4.56	1.14	4.71	1.10	<i>t</i> <sub>0</sub>	4.62	1.15
Initiative	<i>t</i> <sub>2</sub>	4.60	1.23	4.64	1.10	4.63	1.22	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	4.61	1.14
Improvement	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	5.90	.94	5.44	.95	5.48	.95	<i>t</i> <sub>0</sub>	5.47	.93
Improvement	<i>t</i> <sub>2</sub>	5.90	.95	5.51	.97	5.57	.91	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	5.41	.93
Skills	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	5.25	.80	5.13	.60	5.23	.68	<i>t</i> <sub>0</sub>	5.33	.64
Skills	<i>t</i> <sub>2</sub>	5.40	.79	5.40	.67	5.47	.68	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	5.30	.65
Objectives	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	5.49	.88	5.65	.60	5.64	.78	<i>t</i> <sub>0</sub>	5.70	.78
Objectives	<i>t</i> <sub>2</sub>	5.62	.84	5.81	.73	5.70	.83	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	5.70	.78
Information	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	5.41	.93	5.17	.86	5.17	.96	<i>t</i> <sub>0</sub>	5.32	.89
Information	<i>t</i> <sub>2</sub>	5.51	.89	5.37	.93	5.38	.93	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	5.26	.93
Alternatives	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	5.04	.99	4.82	.82	5.06	.80	<i>t</i> <sub>0</sub>	5.23	.75
Alternatives	<i>t</i> <sub>2</sub>	5.20	1.00	5.07	.85	5.30	.80	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	5.18	.79
Radar	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	5.07	.99	4.88	.91	5.05	.87	<i>t</i> <sub>0</sub>	5.07	.92
Radar	<i>t</i> <sub>2</sub>	5.28	.88	5.33	.85	5.48	.82	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	5.17	.89
Decision satisfaction	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	6.68	1.42	6.80	1.15	6.91	1.23	<i>t</i> <sub>0</sub>	6.89	1.25
Decision satisfaction	<i>t</i> <sub>2</sub>	6.97	1.41	7.12	1.19	7.22	1.01	<i>t</i> <sub>1</sub>	6.94	1.18

Proactive decision making skills can be trained while proactive personality traits remain stable

# Conclusions

- Key limitations: we used self-evaluation and subjective measures
- Participants
  - **Improve their proactive skills** (Objectives, Information, Alternatives, Decision Radar)
  - while their personality traits (Improvement and Initiative) remain stable
- Proactive Decision Making explains **39,6% of the variance of life satisfaction**



We **recommend schools, colleges, and universities to include decision-making courses in their curricula** and individuals to participate in these courses **to improve their proactive cognitive skills and to increase satisfaction with their decisions and lives**

## Issues for the discussion

1. (More details on the research)
2. Importance of measuring the training/learning effect of students for colleges, business school, universities, etc.
3. Combining research and teaching, the ultimate win-win
4. Implementing decision-making courses at your school
5. Nudging decision makers at your school to improve teaching quality and learning effects