| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Group Dynamics and its Influence to Decision-Making Processes of Psychology Students

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| **ABSTRACT**

This research examines the impact of group dynamics on the decision-making processes of psychology students at specific post-secondary institutions in China. This research seeks to examine the impact of various factors within group dynamics such as communication patterns, leadership styles, cohesion, and conflict resolution that affects the quality of decision-making among psychology undergraduates, acknowledging the essential role of group interactions in academic settings. A quantitative research approach was utilized, including a standardized survey administered to 300 students enrolled in psychology programs at several universities. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression approaches were employed to evaluate the data and discern significant correlations between group dynamic characteristics and decision-making outcomes. The results show that good group cohesion and good communication make decision-making more faster and more accurate. On the other hand, unresolved disputes and bad leadership make it harder for students to make good decisions. The study also shows how individual variances in personality factors can change these correlations. These findings emphasize the significance of cultivating positive group dynamics to enhance collaborative decision-making in educational contexts. The research enhances the body of knowledge in social and educational psychology by presenting empirical data from a Chinese setting, yielding insights for educators and administrators seeking to refine group-based learning and decision-making methodologies. The ramifications for curriculum development and prospective research trajectories are examined.

| **KEYWORDS**

Group dynamics, decision-making, psychology students, group cohesion, leadership, communication, and conflict resolution

Introduction

Group dynamics, which are the ways that people in a group interact with each other, have become a major area of study for understanding how people make decisions, especially among psychology students in college. This research examines these dynamics in specific tertiary institutions in China, seeking to elucidate their impact on decision-making processes.

In recent years, there has been a significant rise in research examining the social and emotional foundations of decision-making in educational settings. Wang, Liu, and Xiao (2025) illustrate that adult attachment theory and Bowen's family systems theory provide robust frameworks for comprehending professional decision-making among Chinese university students. Their research underscores the significance of emotional regulation, self-differentiation, and social support in influencing students' decisions, revealing the intricate relationship between individual psychological development and social resources. Cultural elements are still very important in these processes. For example, China's collectivist culture promotes communal ideals that affect group

cohesiveness and peer connections, which in turn affect the results of decision-making. Wang et al. (2025) discovered that stable attachment favorably influences decision-making efficacy by fostering self-differentiation and the utilization of social support, which are essential in Chinese cultural contexts characterized by significant familial expectations and group cohesion.

Peer Interaction

Peer interactions also appear as a significant factor affecting academic and decision-making outcomes. BMC Psychology (2024) utilizes the self-system model of motivational development (SSMMD), based on self-determination theory, to clarify the influence of peer relationships on motivation, engagement, and, ultimately, academic success among Chinese junior high students. The model underscores the significance of relatedness and social context in augmenting intrinsic drive, a point that is likely to resonate with tertiary psychology students as well. Good relationships with peers help you learn by watching others, control your own behavior, and make decisions with others, all of which are important for doing well in school and being a good group member.

Additionally, there has been a rise in group activities designed to promote empathy and resilience. A 2025 study by Frontiers in Psychology found that college students' empathy levels go up a lot when they do group activities. This is closely related to group cohesion and making good decisions. These findings exemplify an increasing trend towards the incorporation of psychosocial therapies in higher education to enhance student performance.

Even while these patterns seem encouraging, there are still problems that make it hard to see how group dynamics affect decision-making. One major problem is the conflict between wanting to be free and the urge to follow group rules, especially in China's collectivist society. Wang et al. (2025) assert that emotional fusion—excessive emotional dependence within groups—can result in diminished autonomy and inferior choice quality, as students may refrain from articulating disagreeing perspectives or novel ideas due to apprehension of upsetting group cohesion. This tension is further increased by inefficient leadership within groups, unresolved disagreements, and poor communication, all recognized as deleterious to decision-making processes in student groups (BMC Psychology, 2024).

Also, college students' ability to make professional decisions typically diminishes since they don't get enough help and guidance. This gap signifies a pervasive issue in higher education, where initiatives designed to enhance psychological empowerment and practical decision-making skills are either inadequately developed or insufficiently customized to meet student needs, thereby neglecting the unique challenges arising from the convergence of cultural expectations and personal aspirations (Wang et al., 2025; Frontiers in Psychology, 2025).

Personality Traits and Emotional Maturity

Another complicating issue is the heterogeneity in individual personality traits and emotional maturity, which lessen the influence of group dynamics on decision results. For instance, students who have insecure attachment styles or poor self-differentiation may have a harder time making decisions as a group. They may hesitate, avoid conflict, or rely on small social support networks, which makes the group less effective (Wang et al., 2025).

These difficulties present several opportunities for focused educational interventions and program creation. Improving leadership abilities in student groups, teaching them how to resolve conflicts, and encouraging good communication can all help groups work together better, which can lead to better decision-making. Wang et al. (2025) propose stage-specific interventions, including psychological empowerment for early university students and practical resource supply for older students, to mitigate developmental disparities among learners.

Furthermore, utilizing technology-enhanced learning environments presents intriguing opportunities for the real-time monitoring, feedback, and support of group interactions. These kinds of platforms can help people think about their actions and make changes while working together to make decisions, which can help them learn to control their emotions and be aware of them.

There is also promise in creating curricula that clearly include ideas like emotional control, getting social support, and learning how to be different from others. These abilities can help students deal with the conflicting pressures of group conformity and individual autonomy. Studies on resilience programs through group dynamics have already demonstrated that they can help children do better in school and feel better about themselves (e.g., Open Psychology Journal, 2022).

Also, the increased focus on psychosocial variables in esports and other areas that are focused on young people gives us information about motivation, teamwork, and performance psychology that may be used in schools to make collective decision-making more exciting (ScienceDirect, 2025).

Research Objectives

The study aimed to investigate the impact of group dynamics on the decision-making processes of psychology students at selected tertiary institutions in China.

Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

1. To ascertain the primary group dynamic characteristics which includes communication patterns, leadership styles, group cohesion, and conflict resolution as shown by psychology students in tertiary institutions.

2. To evaluate the correlation between various group dynamic elements and the decision-making efficacy of psychology students.

3. To examine the extent to which individual characteristics, including personality traits and emotional control, affect the impact of group dynamics on decision-making processes.

4. To assess the impact of positive group cohesion and efficient communication on the quality, efficiency, and accuracy of decision-making among psychology students.

5. To examine the detrimental effects of unresolved conflicts and inadequate leadership within student groups on decision-making results.

6. To give teachers and school leaders advice on how to improve group dynamics to help students learn how to work together to make decisions in psychology class.

Methodology

Research Design

The study utilizes a quantitative research design, suitable for examining the relationships among measurable variables, including group dynamic factors (communication patterns, leadership styles, group cohesion, conflict resolution) and decision-making effectiveness among tertiary psychology students in China.

In this scenario, 300 psychology students from selected tertiary schools are given a structured questionnaire as part of a quantitative survey procedure. This method allows for the gathering of standardized data, which can then be used to methodically look for patterns and relationships. The study can look at how strong and what kind of relationships there are between certain group dynamic characteristics and decision-making outcomes by using statistical methods including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression modeling.

The quantitative design enables the objective assessment of constructs associated with group dynamics and decision-making efficiencies, thereby facilitating hypothesis testing regarding positive or negative influences and the moderating effects of individual differences, such as personality traits or emotional regulation. This design enhances the generalizability of outcomes within the chosen group and offers empirical information for educators and administrators to guide policy and practice.

The structural design mitigates subjective bias by utilizing numerical data, while analytic rigor is guaranteed through statistical validation. In certain analogous studies, supplementary qualitative methodologies (e.g., reflective practices or focus groups) are occasionally employed to enhance understanding of group processes. However, for this study, the selection of a quantitative framework corresponds with the objective of delineating clear, evidence-based correlations between group dynamics and decision-making efficacy within a culturally specific context.

Participants and Sampling

The participants of the study consisted of 300 psychology students enrolled in selected tertiary institutions in China. These students represented the target population because they are the direct subjects experiencing group dynamics in educational settings relevant to this research.

To ensure the research findings are valid and generalizable within the population of psychology students, proper sampling techniques were applied. The list or representation of psychology students from the selected tertiary schools formed the sampling frame to ensure the sample is drawn from the correct population segment.

Given the quantitative nature and size of the study, convenience sampling is applied that made the data gathering easier and more practical. Students were selected based on availability or willingness to participate. Survey instruments were disseminated whilc students were attending a specific class within the campus area.

A sample of 300 psychology students is statistically adequate for quantitative analyses like correlations and regression while capturing variability in group dynamics and decision-making behaviors. This size balanced practical constraints with the need for meaningful statistical power.

Participant consent was obtained to ensure voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses, in line with research ethics in educational settings.

Data Collection Instruments

For this quantitative study, structured survey questionnaires were developed to capture data on group dynamics and decision-making processes. The design and application considered the measurement of group dynamics variables which are validated multi-item scales to quantify aspects such as communication patterns within groups, leadership styles observed or experienced, levels of group cohesion, and conflict resolution approaches. These were adapted from established psychological scales to ensure reliability and validity.

In the assessment for decision-making processes, the researcher employed scales that measure effectiveness, accuracy, efficiency, and quality of decision-making within group contexts. This included self-report instruments where students rated their experiences or objective measures related to group decision outcomes.

In the individual differences, the researcher incorporated standardized assessments for personality traits, emotional regulation, or attachment styles that may moderate the relationship between group dynamics and decision-making.

Likert-scale items composed of 4-point scale is used to quantify attitudes and perceptions, facilitating statistical analysis. Combining closed-ended questions provided structure data suitable for quantitative methods.

Further, the researcher conducted a pilot study with a small subset of the population to validate instrument clarity, reliability, and cultural relevance, adapting items as necessary. The survey was distributed via online platforms that made it more accessible and convenient. These steps were taken to ensure anonymity, encourage honest responses, and minimize missing data.

Results and Discussions

The research gathered quantitative data from 300 psychology students at several tertiary institutions in China. The analysis concentrated on essential group dynamic factors such as communication patterns, leadership styles, group cohesion, and conflict resolution, and their correlations with decision-making processes, particularly effectiveness, accuracy, and efficiency.

The sample included an equal number of males and females from each academic year. The average scores on measures of group cohesion and communication were high, which means that most students were in groups that were rather good. Leadership styles indicated were largely transformative and democratic, whereas unresolved conflicts were recorded at low to moderate levels.

The inferential statistical results in terms of correlation and regression analyses revealed substantial positive associations between group cohesion and decision-making effectiveness ($r = .52$, $p < .001$), as well as between effective communication and decision-making accuracy ($r = .47$, $p < .001$). Leadership type significantly influenced decision-making efficiency, with democratic leadership associated with quicker and more precise decisions ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < .01$). On the other hand, disagreements that weren't addressed were linked to lower decision quality ($r = -0.41$, $p < .001$).

The researcher used interaction terms in regression models to explore how personality traits and emotional regulation affected each other. The results demonstrated that students exhibiting high emotional regulation experienced a diminished

detrimental influence of conflict on decision-making performance. Certain personality qualities, such as conscientiousness, similarly enhanced the beneficial impacts of group cohesion on decision-making results.

Further investigation showed that groups with strong ties and good communication were more likely to work together and make decisions in a democratic way, which led to better results. Groups that weren't very cohesive and didn't have good leaders often showed signs of group-think, which made decisions less effective and put people under pressure to conform.

It is apparent that the results of the study are consistent with the current literature on group dynamics and decision-making in educational settings, offering culturally pertinent insights into Chinese tertiary psychology students. In agreement with Wang, Liu, and Xiao (2025), who stressed the significance of emotional control and social support in Chinese student groups, this study demonstrated that group cohesion significantly enhances favorable decision-making results. When people in a group feel close and encouraged, they are more likely to share their thoughts and be open to criticism, which makes things more accurate and efficient. Effective communication also turned out to be just as important. This backs up what BMC Psychology (2024) found on how peer interactions might increase relatedness and intrinsic motivation. These findings highlight the socio-emotional aspects of group dynamics as crucial factors facilitating effective collective decision-making.

The beneficial impacts of democratic leadership styles on decision-making efficiency and accuracy align with evidence linking participative leadership to increased group satisfaction and improved outcomes (Frontiers in Psychology, 2025). Leadership that promotes inclusion and collective accountability seems essential in mitigating interpersonal tensions and facilitating constructive discourse. This is especially crucial in the context of Chinese collectivism, where group harmony is important yet individual contributions must still be used well.

The detrimental correlation between unresolved disputes and decision quality corroborates prior findings from ERIC (2021) and other social psychology research, which emphasize the detrimental impact of conflict on group efficacy. According to Wang et al. (2025), conflict that is not managed by strong leadership can silence dissenting voices and stifle creative thinking, which can lead to poor decision-making. However, emotional regulation was discovered to minimize this effect, suggesting that instructing pupils in emotional self-management could alleviate the detrimental consequences of conflict.
The findings of this study concerning personality moderators align with evidence from attachment theory and personality psychology, indicating that individual characteristics significantly influence the translation of group processes into outcomes (Wang et al., 2025). Students who are very diligent and good at controlling their emotions are more likely to stay engaged and be resilient when working in groups, which improves the group's overall performance even when things go tough. This complex perspective underscores the necessity for customized solutions that recognize individual heterogeneity within group settings.

The study adds something new to the literature by looking at these events in the context of Chinese higher education, which is known for its collectivist principles and academic constraints. The equilibrium between group conformity and individual autonomy represents a significant conflict, wherein proficient leaders and unified groups facilitate the navigation of these cultural dynamics to enhance decision-making. These findings corroborate the theoretical frameworks proposed by Wang et al. (2025) regarding the interaction of culture, attachment, and group dynamics.

The results show that there are a number of things that can be applied which are:

Curriculum and Program Development. Adding training in group dynamics to psychology programs could help people make better decisions as a group. This training should focus on communication, conflict resolution, and democratic leadership.

Leadership Development. Promoting transformational and democratic leadership styles within student groups can enhance decision-making quality and mitigate adverse conflict outcomes.

Emotional Regulation Training. Giving students the skills to control their feelings might help stop group performance from going down because of disagreement.

Recognizing Individual Differences. Programs should be aware of the different personalities of their students and tailor their support to help each one get the most out of group work.

The quantitative design facilitated extensive generalizations, however, the dependence on self-report surveys may induce bias. Subsequent research may integrate longitudinal designs and observational techniques to more effectively elucidate temporal dynamics. Additionally, investigating qualitative features of group encounters and moving beyond psychology students to other disciplines and cultures would deepen understanding.

Conclusion

The study reveals that group dynamics significantly influence the decision-making processes of psychology students in China's tertiary institutions. Positive group dynamics, such as cohesion and effective communication, improve the quality, accuracy, and efficiency of decisions. Democratic and transformational leadership styles foster inclusive and effective group decision-making, while unresolved conflicts and poor leadership can negatively affect the process. However, individual factors like emotional regulation can moderate the impact of conflict. Personality traits like conscientiousness and emotional regulation also play a role in group performance. The study emphasizes the importance of considering individual psychological factors and cultural context when interpreting group processes.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusion of this study:

Based on the findings and existing literature on group dynamics and decision-making, the following recommendations are proposed to optimize the decision-making processes of psychology students in tertiary institutions:

1. Foster Positive Group Cohesion and Communication. The teachers should encourage children to work together on projects and activities that will help them trust each other, feel like they belong, and respect each other. The teachers should also set up systematic communication training programs to educate students how to listen well, present their thoughts clearly, and give constructive feedback.

2. Promote Democratic and Transformational Leadership in Groups. Teachers should teach student leaders and group facilitators how to be democratic leaders who encourage participation, respect different points of view, and make sure that everyone has a fair say in decisions. The teachers should also hold workshops on leadership development that focus on how to deal with disagreement, control emotions, and motivate others.

3. Implement Conflict Resolution Mechanisms. The teachers should provide the students with conflict resolution frameworks and negotiation skills tailored for academic group settings, enabling them to handle disagreements constructively without impairing decision quality. The teachers should also encourage the use of anonymous feedback and voting systems during group decisions.

4. Integrate Emotional Regulation and Personality Awareness in Curriculum. The teachers should come up with modules or interventions that help students understand and deal with their feelings when they are among other people. Teachers should also need hold seminars to raise understanding of personality variations and how they affect group work. This will help students understand different ways of working and improve teamwork.

5. Optimize Group Size and Composition. The teachers should make groups with optimal numbers to balance different points of view with the ability to handle discussions and decision-making. The teachers should also use stratified sampling of group members based on several attributes including academic year, gender, and personality to get the best interactions and decision-making.

6. Leverage Technology for Enhanced Group Decision-Making. The teachers should utilize digital platforms that allow anonymous idea contribution, real-time polling, and structured feedback to reduce social biases and encourage equitable participation. The teachers should also implement collaborative tools that monitor and prompt reflective group practices to improve awareness of group dynamics and foster metacognition among students.

7. Encourage Reflective Practices and Continuous Improvement. Teachers should have students do regular group reflection exercises in which they critically look at how they make decisions and how they interact with others to find ways to improve. The teachers should also encourage peer coaching or mentorship programs that help people build their group abilities and emotional intelligence over time.

8. Tailor Interventions to Cultural Context. Teachers should create curricula that respect and include Chinese collectivist cultural norms, focusing on group harmony while also promoting healthy disagreement and critical thinking when making decisions. The

teachers should also give facililtators of students training the sensitive information to different cultures so they can see and deal with how culture affects group dynamics and student behavior.

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