

Personal preferences for rationality or intuition

Cilia Witteman^{1*}, John van den Bercken¹ and Laurence Claes²

Abstract

We address the question whether there is a relation between a learned general preference to respond to judgment or decision situations either rationally or intuitively, and personality characteristics. Intuitive responses are fast, based on affect and experience-based associations and given automatically, and rational responses are slow, based on rules and given after deliberation. We hypothesize that people with an open personality may be more intuition-minded, and that conscientious people would prefer to respond more rationally. We examined two self-report questionnaires that measure individual differences in decision making style preferences, and we administered a personality questionnaire. We found clear evidence for the independence of the two reasoning styles. A possible binary structure in intuitive processing (automatic versus affective) is suggested. We found a conscientious personality characteristic to be related to a preference for rational and not intuitive information processing, and openness to be related to both decision making preferences.

Keywords: personality, rationality, intuition, decision making style, REI, PID, Big Five

¹ Diagnostic Decision Making, Behavioural Science Institute, Radboud University Nijmegen, P.O.Box 9104 (6th floor), 6500 HE Nijmegen, The Netherlands

* Corresponding author, C.Witteman@socsci.ru.nl

² Catholic University Leuven, Department of Psychology, Tiensestraat 102, 3000 Leuven, Belgium