

The Impact of Overthinking and Decision Delay: A Study Conducted on Youth in Mysuru

1. Author Name: **Pallavi M**

MBA Student Vidya Vikas Institute of Engineering and Technology, Mysuru

Mail: manjunathpallavi45@gmail.com

2. Second author name: **Madhu Nayaka**

Assistant Professor, Vidya Vikas Institute of Engineering and Technology, Mysuru

Mail: madhunayaka@vidyavikas.edu.in

Abstract:

Overthinking is becoming a common problem among young people and often affects the way they make decisions. Many youths spend too much time analyzing different options, worrying about possible outcomes, and fearing they may make the wrong choice. This habit can lead to decision delay, increased stress, reduced confidence, and missed opportunities in both personal and professional life. The present study, “The Impact of Overthinking and Decision Delay: A Study Conducted on Youth in Mysuru,” aims to understand how overthinking influences decision-making among young people in Mysuru.

Keyword: Overthinking, Decision Delay, Youth, Decision-Making, Stress, Self-Doubt, Mysuru.

Introduction

In today's competitive and rapidly evolving society, overthinking has emerged as a common concern among young people. Youth often face numerous choices related to education, career, relationships, and personal growth. While careful thinking is important for making informed decisions, excessive thinking can create confusion and uncertainty. As a result, many young individuals find it difficult to make decisions on time, leading to delays that may affect different aspects of their lives.

Several factors contribute to overthinking among youth. Academic demands, career-related challenges, family expectations, and social influences often place significant pressure on young individuals. Moreover, the widespread use of social media exposes them to constant comparisons and an overwhelming amount of information. These factors can make decision-making more complicated and increase the tendency to analyze situations excessively.

Decision-making delay refers to the inability or reluctance to make timely choices. When individuals continuously evaluate different possibilities and worry about potential outcomes, they may postpone decisions even when action is required. Such delays can lead to missed opportunities, decreased productivity, and increased levels of stress. In some cases, it may also reduce self-confidence and make individuals dependent on others for guidance.

Mysore, being an important educational and cultural center, has a large population of students and young adults who regularly face academic and career-related decisions. Understanding how overthinking affects their ability to make decisions is important for identifying the challenges they encounter. Examining this issue can provide valuable insights into the psychological and social factors that influence youth behavior.

The present study aims to explore the relationship between overthinking and decision-making delay among youth in Mysore. It seeks to identify the causes of overthinking, understand its impact on timely decision-making, and examine its effects on the overall well-being of young individuals. The findings of this study may be useful for educators, parents, counselors, and students in developing strategies that promote confident and effective decision-making.

Another significant concern related to overthinking is its effect on mental and emotional well-being. Continuous worrying about future outcomes and possible mistakes can increase feelings of stress, anxiety, and frustration. Many young people spend considerable time thinking about different alternatives before making a decision, which often results in mental exhaustion. This not only affects their ability to concentrate on important tasks but also reduces their confidence in making independent choices.

Furthermore, decision-making is an essential life skill that influences personal, academic, and professional success. When decision-making is delayed due to overthinking, individuals may miss valuable opportunities and experience difficulty in achieving their goals. Therefore, it is important to understand the extent of this issue among youth and identify measures that can help them develop confidence, improve their decision-making abilities, and maintain better mental health. Such understanding can contribute to creating a supportive environment that encourages timely and effective decision-making.

Review of literature

Raio, Konova, and Otto (2020) examined the influence of stress on decision-making and found that increased stress levels can affect decision speed and judgment. Their study highlighted that psychological pressure often interferes with effective decision-making among young individuals. **Li, Wu, Zhang, Wang, and Shi (2020)** explored the role of emotional intelligence in adolescent decision-making and reported that emotional factors significantly influence how young people evaluate choices and make decisions. **Sutil-Martín and Rienda-Gómez (2020)** studied decision-making among Generation Z and found that cognitive processes and information handling play an important role in shaping decision behaviour among youth. **Phillips-Wren and Adya (2020)** emphasized that information overload, uncertainty, and complexity can reduce decision quality and create difficulty in making timely decisions. **Weinrabe and Hickie (2021)** reported that emotional dysregulation affects adolescent decision-making and may contribute to hesitation and delayed choices in challenging situations. **Icenogle and Cauffman (2021)** reviewed adolescent decision-making research and concluded that social, emotional, and cognitive development strongly influence the quality and speed of decisions made by youth. **Bentivegna, Flouri, and Papachristou (2023)** found a significant relationship between decision-making ability and mental health among adolescents, suggesting that poor decision-making is associated with psychological difficulties. **Brown (2022)** observed that excessive thinking and self-doubt often reduce confidence and increase hesitation in making important academic and career decisions among young adults. **Sharma and Verma (2023)** identified academic pressure, fear of failure, and social expectations as common factors contributing to overthinking and delayed decision-making among students. **Kumar and Singh (2024)** highlighted that overthinking negatively affects mental well-being, leading to stress, anxiety, and reduced ability to make timely decisions. The study emphasized the importance of developing healthy decision-making strategies among youth.

Statement of the Problem

In today's competitive and technology-driven environment, many young individuals experience difficulty in making timely decisions due to excessive thinking and continuous analysis of situations. Overthinking has become a common behavioural issue among youth, often leading to hesitation, uncertainty, stress, and delayed decision-making. These delays can negatively affect academic performance, career planning, personal relationships, and overall well-being.

Despite the growing awareness of mental health and decision-making challenges, there is limited research focusing on the impact of overthinking on decision-making delay among youth in Mysore. Understanding the factors that contribute to overthinking and examining how it influences decision-making behaviour is essential for addressing this issue. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the relationship between overthinking and decision-making delay among youth in Mysore and to identify its effects on their daily lives.

Need for the study

In recent years, overthinking has become a common issue among young people, affecting their ability to make decisions confidently and on time. Many youth experience stress and uncertainty while making academic, career, and personal choices, which often results in delayed decision-making. Understanding this behaviour is important because it can influence an individual's productivity, confidence, and overall well-being.

The present study is undertaken to examine how overthinking affects decision-making among youth in Mysore. It aims to identify the factors that contribute to excessive thinking and understand its impact on daily life. The findings of this study may help create awareness about the consequences of overthinking and provide useful insights for improving decision-making skills and mental well-being among young individuals

Objectives of the study

- 1.To explore the extent of overthinking among youth in Mysore and understand its occurrence in different aspects of their lives.
- 2.To study how overthinking influences decision-making behaviour and contributes to delays in making important choices.
- 3.To examine the key reasons behind overthinking, including educational demands, social pressures, and concerns about future outcomes.
- 4.To evaluate the effects of overthinking on the emotional well-being and self-confidence of youth, particularly in relation to stress and independent decision-making.

Hypothesis

Null hypothesis

There is no noticeable influence of overthinking on the decision-making behaviour of youth in Mysore. Decision-making delay occurs independently of overthinking levels.

Alternative Hypothesis

Overthinking plays a significant role in influencing the decision-making behaviour of youth in Mysore. Higher levels of overthinking are associated with greater decision-making delay.

Research methodology

This study follows a quantitative research approach to understand the impact of overthinking on decision delay among youth in Mysuru. The study focuses on collecting numerical data and analyzing the relationship between the two variables.

Research design

The research design used in this study is **descriptive research design**. It helps to understand the current level of overthinking and decision delay among youth in Mysuru. This design is suitable because it collects information about respondents' thoughts, feelings, and decision-making behavior without influencing their responses. It provides a clear picture of how overthinking affects the ability of young people to make decisions.

Sampling method: Convenience sampling was used to select respondents based on their availability and willingness to participate.

Sources of data collection

- **Primary Data:** Collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to the respondents.
- **Secondary Data:** Collected from research articles, journals, books, websites, and previous studies related to overthinking and decision-making.

Limitations of the study

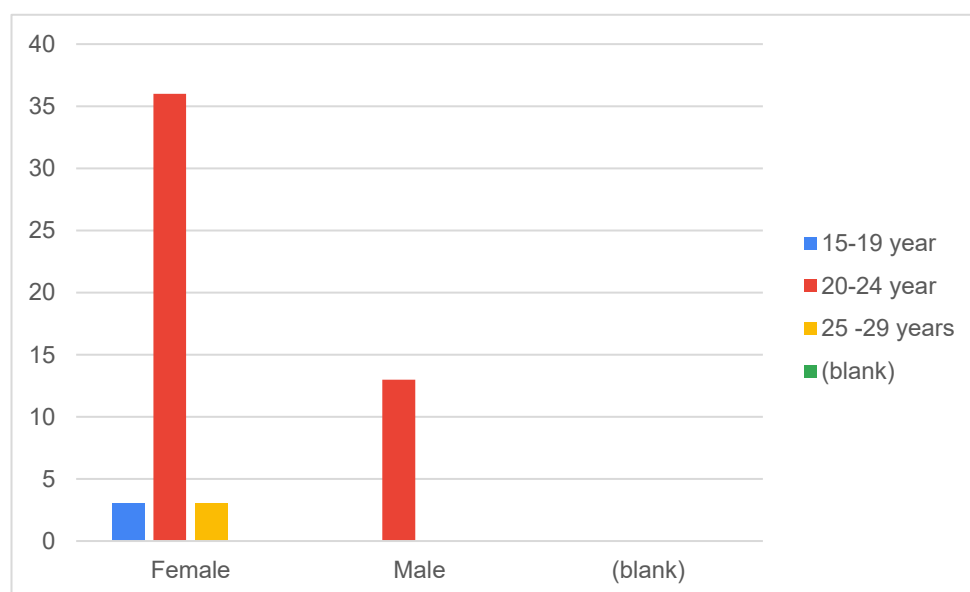
- The study was conducted only among youth in **Mysuru**, so the findings may not represent the views of young people in other cities or regions.
- The sample size was limited, which may affect how widely the results can be generalized.
- The study is based on responses collected through a questionnaire. Since the data are self-reported, some participants may not have answered every question honestly or accurately.

Data analysis

Count of 1.Age	Column Labels			
Row Labels	15-19 year	20-24 year	25 -29 years	Grand Total
Female	5.45%	65.45%	5.45%	76.36%
Male	0.00%	23.64%	0.00%	23.64%
Grand Total	5.45%	89.09%	5.45%	100.00%

Analysis

The table shows the distribution of respondents based on **gender and age**. Among the total respondents, **76.36% are female** and **23.64% are male**. Most of the respondents (**89.09%**) belong to the **20–24 years** age group. Only **5.45%** of the respondents are in the **15–19 years** age group, and another **5.45%** are in the **25–29 years** age group. No male respondents were found in the 15–19 and 25–29 age groups.



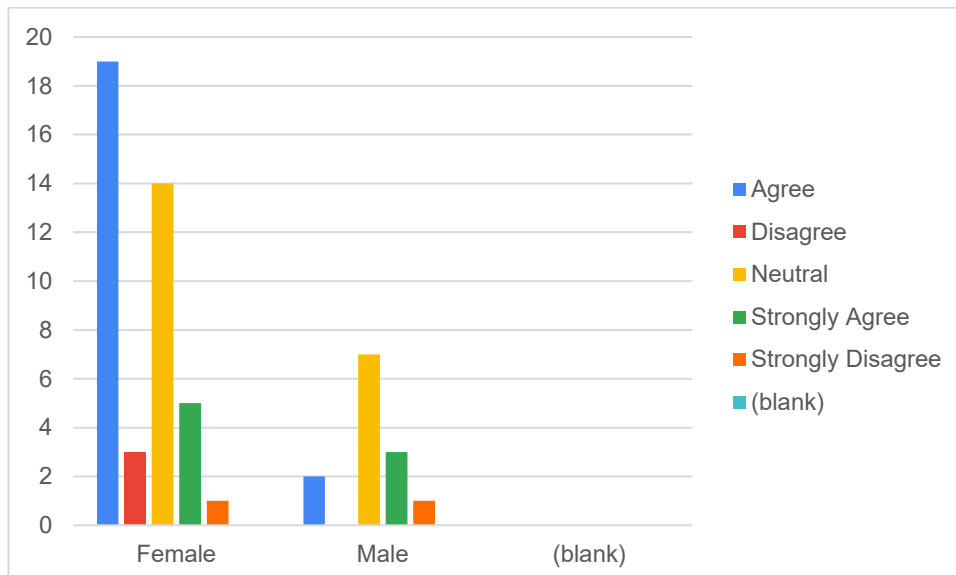
Interpretation

The findings indicate that the study mainly represents **female youth aged 20–24 years** in Mysuru. This shows that the majority of the participants are young adults who are likely to be pursuing higher education or beginning their careers. Since most respondents belong to the 20–24 years age group, the study's results mainly reflect the experiences and decision-making patterns of this age group.

Count of 6. I find myself replaying past conversations or situations in my mind long after they have occurred.	Column Labels					
Row Labels	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Grand Total
Female	34.55%	5.45%	25.45%	9.09%	1.82%	76.36%
Male	3.64%	0.00%	12.73%	5.45%	1.82%	23.64%
Grand Total	38.18%	5.45%	38.18%	14.55%	3.64%	100.00%

Analysis

The table shows respondents' opinions on whether they replay past conversations or situations in their minds long after they have happened. Overall, **38.18%** of the respondents **agree** with the statement, while **14.55%** **strongly agree**. Another **38.18%** remain **neutral**, **5.45%** **disagree**, and only **3.64%** **strongly disagree**. Among female respondents, **34.55%** **agree** and **9.09%** **strongly agree**, whereas among male respondents, **3.64%** **agree** and **5.45%** **strongly agree**.



Interpretation

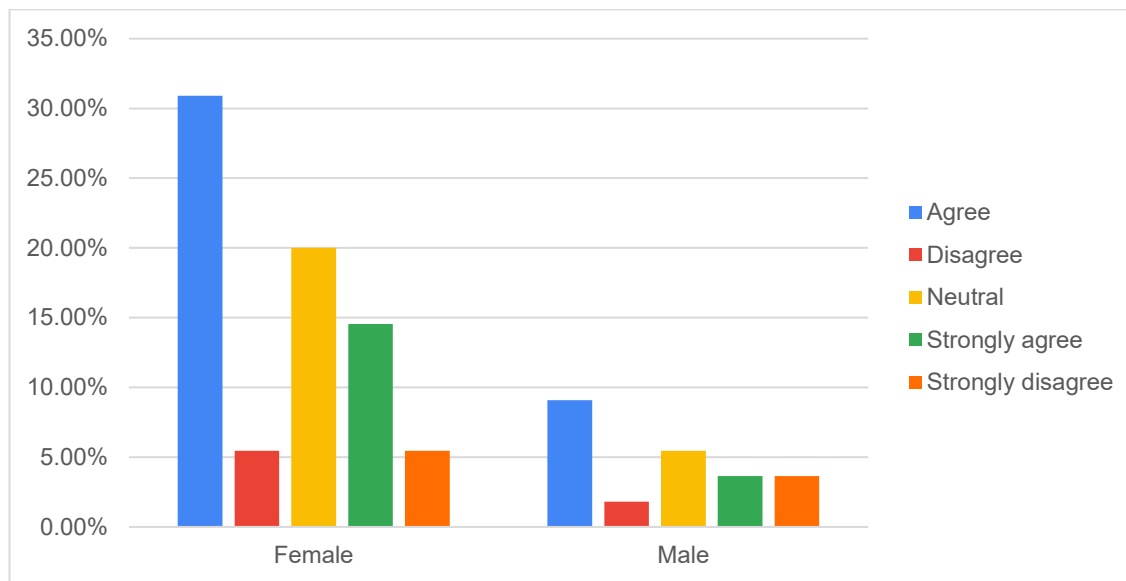
The findings indicate that many respondents tend to think repeatedly about past conversations and situations, which is a common sign of overthinking. More than half of the respondents either **agree or strongly agree** with the statement, suggesting that replaying past events is common among the youth in Mysuru. This behaviour may contribute to delayed decision-making, increased stress, and reduced confidence. However, a considerable number of respondents remained neutral, indicating that this experience may vary from person to person.

Count of 8.I constantly analyze the hidden meanings behind what people say to me.	Column Labels					
Row Labels	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Grand Total
Female	30.91%	5.45%	20.00%	14.55%	5.45%	76.36%
Male	9.09%	1.82%	5.45%	3.64%	3.64%	23.64%
Grand Total	40.00%	7.27%	25.45%	18.18%	9.09%	100.00%

Analysis

The table presents respondents' opinions on whether they constantly analyze the hidden meanings behind what people say. Overall, **40.00%** of the respondents **agree** with the statement, while **18.18%** **strongly agree**. **25.45%** of the

respondents are **neutral**, **7.27% disagree**, and **9.09% strongly disagree**. Among female respondents, **30.91% agree** and **14.55% strongly agree**, whereas among male respondents, **9.09% agree** and **3.64% strongly agree**.



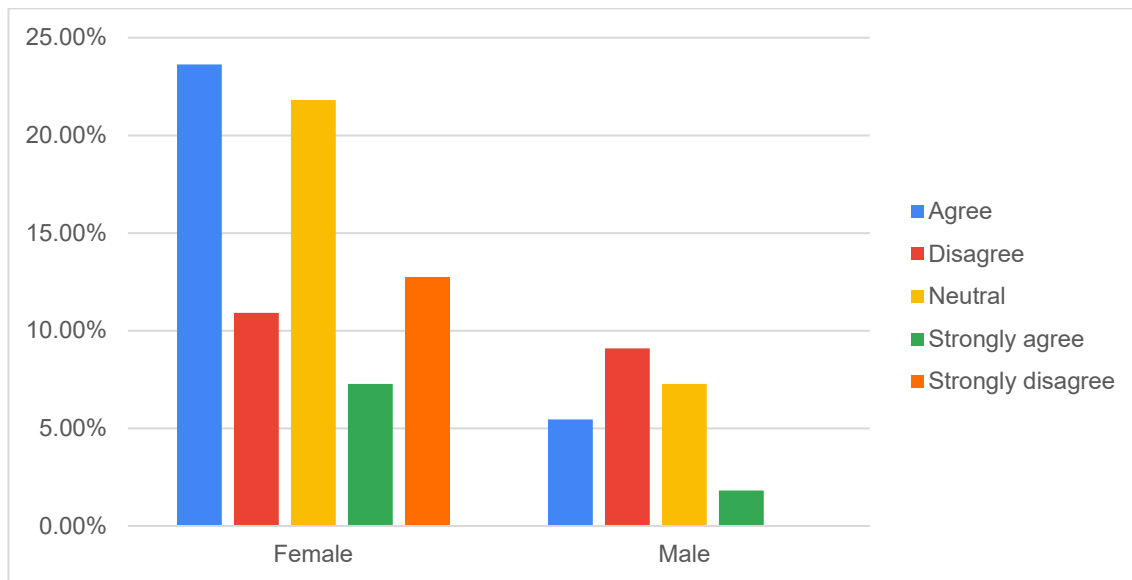
Interpretation

The findings show that a majority of the respondents tend to look for hidden meanings in what others say. This suggests that many young people overanalyze conversations, which is a common sign of overthinking. Such behaviour may lead to confusion, unnecessary stress, and delays in making decisions. At the same time, some respondents remained neutral or disagreed, indicating that not everyone experiences this behaviour to the same extent.

Count of 13.I frequently miss deadlines or opportunities because I take too long to make up my mind.	Column Labels					
Row Labels	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Grand Total
Female	23.64%	10.91%	21.82%	7.27%	12.73%	76.36%
Male	5.45%	9.09%	7.27%	1.82%	0.00%	23.64%
Grand Total	29.09%	20.00%	29.09%	9.09%	12.73%	100.00%

Analysis

The table shows respondents' opinions on whether they miss deadlines or opportunities because they take too long to make decisions. Overall, **29.09%** of the respondents **agree** with the statement, while **9.09% strongly agree**. Another **29.09%** of the respondents are **neutral**. In contrast, **20.00% disagree** and **12.73% strongly disagree**. Among female respondents, **23.64% agree** and **7.27% strongly agree**, while among male respondents, **5.45% agree** and **1.82% strongly agree**.



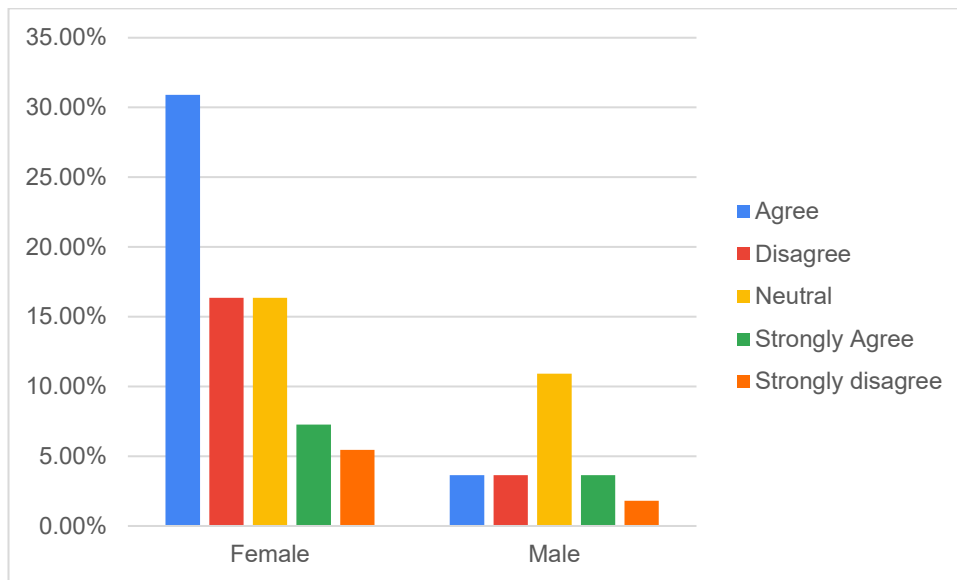
Interpretation

The findings suggest that a considerable number of respondents feel that taking too long to make decisions causes them to miss important deadlines or opportunities. This indicates that decision delay is a common issue among many young people and may affect their academic, personal, and career growth. At the same time, a significant number of respondents remained neutral or disagreed, showing that this problem is not experienced by everyone. Overall, the results indicate that overthinking and delayed decision-making can have a negative impact on the ability of youth to act on time.

Count of 14. I prefer to pass the responsibility of decision-making to others whenever possible to avoid the pressure.	Column Labels					
	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly disagree	Grand Total
Female	30.91%	16.36%	16.36%	7.27%	5.45%	76.36%
Male	3.64%	3.64%	10.91%	3.64%	1.82%	23.64%
Grand Total	34.55%	20.00%	27.27%	10.91%	7.27%	100.00%

Analysis

The table shows respondents' opinions on whether they prefer to let others make decisions to avoid pressure. Overall, **34.55%** of the respondents **agree** with the statement, while **10.91%** **strongly agree**. **27.27%** of the respondents are **neutral**, **20.00%** **disagree**, and **7.27%** **strongly disagree**. Among female respondents, **30.91%** **agree** and **7.27%** **strongly agree**, whereas among male respondents, **3.64%** **agree** and **3.64%** **strongly agree**.



Interpretation

The findings indicate that many respondents prefer to pass the responsibility of making decisions to others, mainly to avoid stress or pressure. This suggests that overthinking and fear of making the wrong decision may reduce confidence in making independent choices. However, some respondents remained neutral or disagreed, indicating that not everyone depends on others for decision-making. Overall, the results show that decision pressure influences the confidence and decision-making behaviour of many young people in Mysuru.

Spss per test

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	55	5.5
	Excluded ^a	944	94.5
	Total	999	100.0
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.412	3

Variables Entered/Removed			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	7. When faced with a minor issue, I tend to imagine the worst possible outcomes. ^b	.	Enter

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.331 ^a	.109	.092	1.065

a. Predictors: (Constant), 7.When faced with a minor issue, I tend to imagine the worst possible outcomes.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.381	1	7.381	6.504	.014 ^b
	Residual	60.147	53	1.135		
	Total	67.527	54			

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.905	.514		3.707	.001
	7.When faced with a minor issue, I tend to imagine the worst possible outcomes.	.374	.147	.331	2.550	.014

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The categories of 1.Age occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The categories of 2.Gender occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The categories of 3.Current Educational/Professional Status occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The categories of 4.Locality within Mysore occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The categories of 5. Average Daily Screen Time (Social media, news, entertainment) occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Findings

1. The majority of the respondents (76.36%) were female, while 23.64% were male.
2. Most respondents (89.09%) belonged to the 20–24 years age group, indicating that young adults formed the largest group in the study.
3. A large number of respondents agreed that they often replay past conversations and situations, showing that overthinking is common among youth.
4. Many respondents reported that they analyze the hidden meanings behind what others say, reflecting a tendency to overanalyze everyday interactions.
5. A considerable number of respondents stated that they take a long time to make decisions, which sometimes causes them to miss deadlines or valuable opportunities.
6. The study found that some respondents prefer to leave important decisions to others to avoid stress and the fear of making the wrong choice.
7. Fear of failure, self-doubt, and excessive thinking were identified as common factors contributing to delayed decision-making.
8. Overall, the findings show a clear relationship between overthinking and decision delay among youth in Mysuru. Higher levels of overthinking were associated with greater difficulty in making timely and confident decisions.
9. The study also indicates that overthinking can affect academic performance, career choices, personal relationships, and overall mental well-being.
10. The findings suggest that improving self-confidence, emotional resilience, and decision-making skills can help reduce overthinking and encourage faster, more effective decision-making among young people.

Conclusion

This study concludes that overthinking has a significant impact on decision delay among youth in Mysuru. The findings show that many young people spend a great deal of time thinking about past events, analysing different possibilities, and worrying about the outcomes of their decisions. As a result, they often take longer to make decisions, miss opportunities, or feel less confident about their choices.

The study also found that fear of making the wrong decision, self-doubt, and the pressure to make the "perfect" choice are some of the main reasons for delayed decision-making. While not every respondent experienced the same level of overthinking, a large number reported behaviours that indicate overthinking affects their daily lives.

Overall, the research highlights the importance of developing self-confidence, emotional resilience, and effective decision-making skills among young people. Encouraging healthy thinking patterns, stress management, and timely decision-making can help reduce the negative effects of overthinking and support better academic, personal, and career outcomes.

Suggestions

1. Youth should avoid overthinking and try to make decisions with confidence.
2. Regular practice of meditation, exercise, and mindfulness can help reduce stress and improve mental well-being.
3. Colleges and educational institutions should organize workshops on stress management and decision-making skills.

References

1. Beilock, S. L., & Carr, T. H. (2005). *When high-powered people fail: Working memory and "choking under pressure" in math*. *Psychological Science*, 16(2), 101–105.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0956-7976.2005.00789.x>
2. D'Zurilla, T. J., & Nezu, A. M. (2010). *Problem-Solving Therapy* (3rd ed.). Springer Publishing Company.
<https://www.springerpub.com/problem-solving-therapy-9780826115292.html>
3. Lyubomirsky, S., Tucker, K. L., Caldwell, N. D., & Berg, K. (2003). Why ruminators are poor problem solvers: Clues from the phenomenology of dysphoric rumination. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(6), 127–140.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.6.1273>
4. Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (2000). The role of rumination in depressive disorders and mixed anxiety/depression. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 109(3), 504–511.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-843X.109.3.504>
5. Sirois, F. M. (2014). Out of sight, out of time? A meta-analytic investigation of procrastination and stress. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 56, 117–122.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2013.08.022>
6. Steel, P. (2007). The nature of procrastination: A meta-analytic and theoretical review of self-regulatory failure. *Psychological Bulletin*, 133(1), 65–94.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.133.1.65>
7. American Psychological Association. (2023). *Stress effects on the body*.
<https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/body>
8. World Health Organization. (2022). *Mental health: Strengthening our response*.
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>
9. Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
<https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780374533557/thinkingfastandslow>
10. Ellis, A., & Dryden, W. (2007). *The Practice of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy* (2nd ed.). Springer Publishing.
<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-0-387-26375-8>