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ADVISOR CHOICE: INFLUENCES OF PERSONALITY TRAITS, GENERAL ATTITUDES AND SUGGESTED BIASES

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Abstract

While decision-making process and influences are extensively researched, linking those insights to real-life choices opens various research questions that have yet to be answered. The purpose of this paper is to examine the correlation of personality traits to advisory first-choice in two context situations: solving a financial and a legal issue. The goal is to identify individual's choices, as well as personality traits that correlate to specific advisory choice and offer theoretical and practical insights, as well as to implicitly examine the base for further research regarding the connection of personality traits and general attitudes to biases. Personality traits, value scales and advisory choice preferences were collected online and analyzed using logistic binomial regression models to determine statistically significant variables and possibility of choice prediction. Respondents' answers are also observed regarding biases occurrence, where overconfidence, anchoring, familiarity and trust biases are discussed. Although advisor first–choice models offer a correlation of the personality traits and general attitudes with moderate and high prediction, which enables specific and practical implications; they also indicate a theoretical contribution: it is not possible to outline generalization of influencing variables on similar observed choices. This can mean that two seemingly similar questions represent completely different decision-making contexts for individuals. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: Advisory Choice, Personality Traits, General Attitudes, Biases

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1. Introduction

People make choices in everyday life. However, they do not choose only over specific alternatives, they also choose how they will decide, how much time they will take to make the choice, how much and what kind of information they will gather, whom they will consult, or will they leave the decision to someone else. The latter two regard to seeking an advisor, where advisor is considered a person who advises or consults, but can also appear as a representative. A person can choose either to use or not to use advisory services. If a person chooses to use the advisor service, he must make another decision and choose the advisor. This paper offers examination of advisor choices (or not) while solving legal and financial issues.

　　While decision-making process and influences are extensively researched, linking those insights to real-life choices opens various research questions that have yet to be answered. One

of those questions is advisor choice. The purpose of this paper is to determine peoples' choices of advisor while solving legal and financial issues, to examine the influence of personality traits and general attitudes to those choices, and to observe potential biases. While the choice of advisor regarding financial issues is investigated from different perspectives (Calcagno *et al.* 2017; Francis *et al.* 2014; Hermansson and Song, 2016; Jonas and Frey, 2003), the choice of advisor solving legal issues has not yet been investigated. This research contributes to determining behavioral influencing factors on decision-making in real-life choices, namely choosing advisors for solving legal and financial issues.

Empirical data was gathered online in the period from March 2013 until May 2015 in Croatia. The survey is compiled into three sections: the first part is personality test based on Jung (1927); the second part is a questionnaire on general attitudes based on Spranger (1928); and the third part are questions for determining preferences in terms of advisory choice. The data has previously been used for the thesis, but for this paper the dependent variable is recoded and analyzed using binomial logit regression.

The influence of personality traits on decision-making and various choices is well supported by previous research (Davis *et al.* 2007; Fletcher, 1987; Kulas and Stachowski, 2012; Roozmand *et al.* 2011; Nassiri – Mofakham *et al.* 2008, 2009a, 2009b; Skare and Kostelic, 2015; Kostelic, 2017). It is expected that personality traits and general attitudes as independent variables will significantly correlate to advisory choices. Respondent answers are also going to be discussed regarding biases occurrence to create the basis for further research considering the connection of personality traits and general attitudes to biases.

The practical implication of the results can lead to improvement of advisors' client targeting strategies. The theoretical contribution derives from examining the correlation of personality traits, general attitudes and biases to advisor choice, as well as examination of the differences of decision-making context regarding the advisor choice in two fields of expertise: financial and legal.

The article is structured as follows: theoretical background provides an overview of previous research, the methodology section provides data insights and data analysis subsections, the results section represents the findings, and conclusion offers summarization of the findings.

2. Theoretical Background

In everyday life, different situations requiring informative decision occur, which force an individual to make at least two decisions: the decision that solves the issue and the decision of acquiring advice to make the decision. As regards advisor seeking, an individual can decide to deal with the problem by himself, ask for a non-expert opinion (such as from a friend), or ask for expert advice. According to Dalal and Bonaccio (2010), decision-making literature defines advice as "a recommendation concerning which alternative the decision-maker should choose", and they extend the definition in their research to recommendation concerning which alternative not to choose, the information about alternatives, and a recommendation concerning how to make the decision, along with another common form of interpersonal assistance. They find that decision-makers often prefer to receive a provision of information about alternatives. In this paper, advisor will be used in the broadest sense, including references as a representative or an agent. Two situations will be examined regarding advisor choice: solving a financial and a legal issue.

Financial advisor choice is well substantiated with previous research up to a certain extent. Calcagno *et al.* (2017) investigate the investor relationship to financial advisor and find that the investors' financial literacy and trust level are relevant for giving in control over decision-making. Francis *et al.* (2014) examine firms' choice of the advisors (in mergers and acquisitions) and find banking relationships have significant yet limited influence on a firm's choice. While previously stated research regards to investors, and firms, Hermansson and Song (2016) examine financial advisory effects on individuals' saving behavior and find that young customers

and customers with low wealth show the biggest change in saving behavior. Jonas and Frey (2003) conducted experiments and found that advisors provided more balanced information than individual decision-makers; but in presenting information to clients, agents represented more of the information supporting their recommendation, while individual's friends presented the information in a more balanced way. Although the research is not focused on the advisor choice, it offers interesting insights that might play a role in advisor choice. Due to a lack of similar scientific research, a professional study is used for reference: Grimmer (2016) provided insights into choices of experts or friends for advice. 20 questions were asked to 500 respondents, with an emphasis on trust and level of investment. Grimmer (2016) found that the perceived level of investment is a key factor in which individuals trust when making decisions. They also analyze results in relation to one another, and find that "average person's bias toward or against an expert or a peer is dependent upon a number of factors (in no particular order): relative size of the investment, length of our decision's consequences, relative size of the knowledge gap, level of perceived fun involved, decisions affecting our health, the power of word of mouth, the power of social media, trustworthiness of the expert, trustworthiness of our peers". Considering financial issues, only 20.87% of the respondents chose friend for advice, while the rest chose an expert advisor. Unfortunately, they do not examine the choice of lawyers.

To the best of our knowledge, there is no known research regarding the lawyer choice, and the overall research regarding attitudes toward lawyers is scarce. Chui and Cheng (2015) examine attitudes toward lawyers among young people in Hong Kong and find that students had more favorable perception of lawyers and the justice system than youth offenders and youth-at-risk. Rose (1998) discusses why lawyers have triggered so much "antagonism and controversy", observing the longstanding hostile attitudes toward profession. Abel and Lewis (1988) find the ambivalence in public attitudes toward legal profession. On the one hand, the public finds them untrustworthy, but respect verdicts and those who have used lawyer services are very satisfied.

Related research concerning advisory choices investigates the topic from different perspectives. For example, an experiment designed by Li *et al.* (2017) shows that virtual peer advisor empowers users mostly through evoking emotional resonance from them, whereas virtual expert advisor is better at empowering users through cognitive channels. Gino *et al.* (2009) examine the similarity between the source of advice and the person making decision and reveal that information received from a different advisor is more heavily weighed than from a similar advisor in judging others' actions, but information from a similar advisor is more heavily weighed than from a different advisor in judging one's own. According to Rader *et al.* (2015), the effects of forming an independent judgment prior and after receiving advice reveal that dependent participants adjusted away from advice. They also find classic anchoring paradigms and push-away effect present and individuals adjust from median advice. Anchoring bias regards to people's estimation based on initial value that is adjusted to lead to final answer (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). Totterdell *et al.* (2008) examine individual differences in people's propensity to connect with others: making friends (strong ties), making acquaintances (weak ties), and joining others (bridging ties). The propensity to connect has indicators of "personal adjustment including support received, attainment, well-being, influence, and suggestion-making", as effects beyond major personality traits. Although that research is not closely connected to advisor choice, it indicates traits and biases regarding the propensity to connect, and as such, may be an indicator for choices of friend versus expert advisor. Tversky and Kahneman (1991) examine risk aversion regarding the reference point, and they find there is large disparity often observed between the minimal amount that people are willing to accept to give up a good they own and the maximal amount they would be willing to pay to acquire it. This can be related to the perceived price which a person is willing to pay to solve a problem. Huang and Chen (2006) examine herding effect and find that consumers' recommendations influence individual's choices more effectively than expert recommendations. Although researchers examine online shopping, it would be interesting to check if the results extend to advisor choices. The last three of the mentioned researches introduce traits and biases as influencing factors or effects regarding individual choices.

This paper will examine influence of personality traits and general attitudes in advisor choice, but it will also try to determine whether some of the biases occur. Biases are often referred to as systematic errors which individuals do, and an observation of such fallacy in perception and reasoning leads to the conclusion that a bias has occurred. However, in order to confirm a bias, both the research question and results have to be in line with the theory. According to Govier (1992), distrust represents a lack of confidence and/or suspicion of each other's intentions and abilities, while trust refers to open-ended expectations regarding other persons' intentions and abilities. Hsiaw and Cheng's (2017) research pointed out the expert distrust bias. They find that disagreement about credibility drives disagreement about substance and first impressions of credibility have a long-lasting impact on disagreement, while confirmation bias (as well as its opposite) arises endogenously. Familiarity bias is an extent of availability heuristics (Tversky and Kahneman, 1973) that denotes ease of recalling familiar events or assigning higher probability to familiar events according to Ashcraft (2006). One of the most commonly observed bias regarding individual decision-making is overconfidence bias (Benabou and Tirole, 2000; Hoffrage, 2004). Overconfidence bias arises when a person's perception of capability to make judgement/ decision/ assessment, or accuracy of assessment/ decision, is higher than objectively perceived.

Besides the biases, personality traits and general attitudes, as psychological variables, influence behavior and decision-making processes. Personality traits represent a relatively steady and permanent combination of all individual's characteristics and forms unique behavior pattern that denotes the individual's adjustment to environment. It is also used to predict the individual's behavior, and Davis *et al.* (2007) identified the link between personality traits and flawed decision-making. The most commonly used models are five-factor model and Myers – Briggs Type Indication model (MBTI). Furnham (1996) found that four out of five traits from five-factor model correlate to MBTI model. The fifth trait is neuroticism. The MBTI assessment model is appropriate for assessing personality traits for non-psychiatric population. Murray (1990) criticized the MBTI model claiming that in some cases, it might show preferences instead of traits. That critique has not been empirically proven, and the use of MBTI assessment is still widely spread. The assessment relies on Jung (1971) personality typology. Examined personality traits have contrasting poles, namely extraversion – introversion, intuitive – sensing, thinking – feeling and perceiving – judging. The traits are expressed in different amounts for each individual, and the combination of the traits creates personality types. That typology will also be the backbone for a part of this research.

General attitudes describe the general pattern in the individual's responses to environment. Thereat, the intensity of each attitude and the hierarchy of attitudes are clearly defined. The most commonly used classifications are Rokeach's (1973), Schwartz's (1992) and Spranger's (1928). Rokeach's classification contains some of the elements already included in personality traits, and Schwartz's (1973) classification emphasizes the cultural differences. Spranger's (1992) classification regards to individualistic, theoretical, traditional, social, economic and aesthetic general attitudes. The last classification is most commonly used due to its simplicity and universality, so it will be used for a part of this research.

3. Methodology
3.1. Data Insights

The data has been gathered online, using the questionnaire based on Jung typology and MBTI test, as well as value scales for implicit measurement of general attitudes. The questionnaire part of general attitudes examination is based on Spranger's (1928) classification which enables determination of general attitudes by scaling values. The data was gathered from March 2013 until May 2015 in Croatia. During that time, 349 persons approached the survey, while only 244 complete questionnaires were collected by the end. Given that the questionnaire was distributed online, the conclusions should be made only for the population that uses or has access to online

services. Data analysis from the first part of the survey provides the types of personality and value scales expressed as relative frequencies, while the second part examines preferences of advisory choice. The data has previously been used for the thesis, but for this paper the dependent variable is recoded and analyzed using binomial logit regression.

Given that the dependent variable is binomial and measures if a first-choice preference occurred or not, it can be demonstrated in terms of relative frequencies.
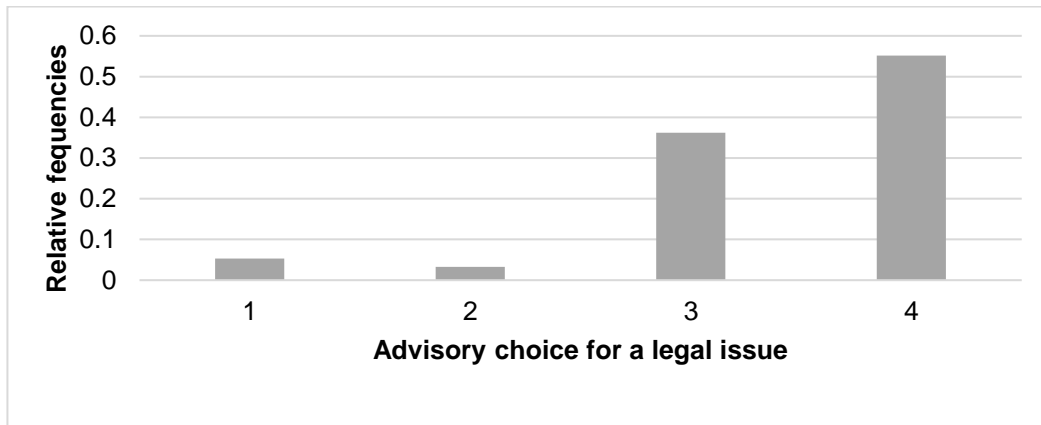

Figure 1. Advisory choice for a legal issue

Note: 1 = a friend who had a similar legal issue, 2 = the lawyer who is an acquaintance, 3 = reputable lawyer, 4 = you know the best, and there's also the Internet
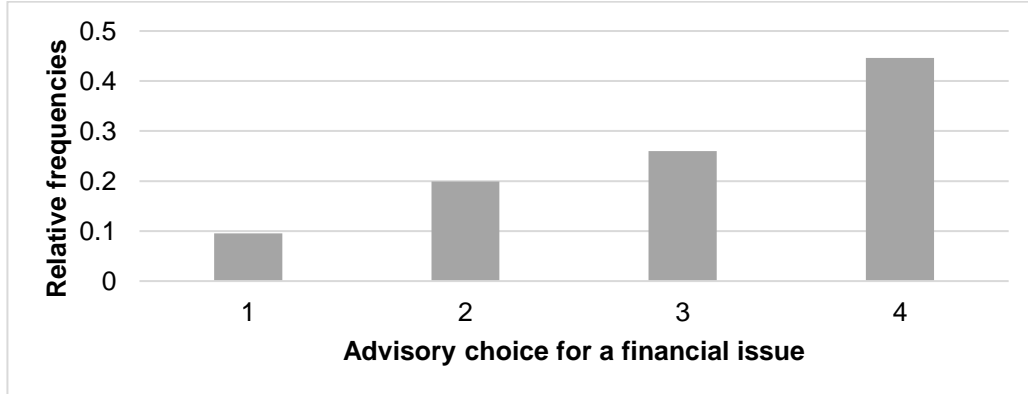**Source:** Author's own preparation.

Figure 2. Advisory choice for a financial issue

Note: 1 = an acquaintance who had a similar financial issue, 2 = search the data on the Internet and find a solution on your own, 3 = financial advisor, 4 = personal banker
Source: Author's own preparation.

The figures show relative frequencies of advisory choices for a legal issue (Figure 1) and a financial issue (Figure 2). It is interesting to notice that 55.14% of participants' first choice was to solve the legal issue by themselves or using the Internet, while only 19.91% of participants chose an equivalent option for solving a financial issue. This could indicate either that the individuals overestimate their knowledge of solving a legal issue on their own, or distrust experts, or value their privacy highly, or all stated, which can lead to a conclusion that overconfidence bias occurred (Benabou and Tirole, 2000; Hoffrage, 2004). However, given the previous research of expert distrust (Hsiaw and Cheng, 2017) and hostile attitudes toward legal profession (Rose, 1998), more plausible explanation is anchoring bias (Rader *et al.* 2015; Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). The explanation regarding their concern for privacy can be discarded as Barth and Jong

(2017) and Morando *et al.* (2014) found that attitudes regarding privacy and behavior (especially online) create discrepancies, namely privacy paradox. However, the difference of relative frequencies shows that lesser respondents show the same heuristics when deciding on using help for dealing with the financial issue. Hence, it is not possible to derive a general bias other than anchoring bias based on negative attitudes regarding legal profession. If any generalization for both legal and financial issue would be proposed, it would be the bias of distrusting experts – as the bias is based on previous knowledge (including anchoring bias) and learning (updating belief), it leaves more room for speculation that respondents have higher distrust into legal experts.

5.35% of the respondents' first choice was to consult a friend with a similar problem regarding the legal issue, while 9.52% chose to address the issue first to an acquaintance who had dealt with a similar financial issue. Those choices can be related to familiarity bias toward a familiar person in opposition to an unfamiliar expert.

3.29% of the respondents chose to refer to the lawyer who is an acquaintance, which can be related to the choice of the personal banker who was the first choice for 44.59% of respondents. In both cases, the referenced person was an expert whom they had previously met. It was expected that familiarity and recollection will play a role in those choices, but given the discrepancies, it could serve only as an explanation for a personal banker-choice based on the previous research represented in the theoretical framework.

36.21% of the respondents' first choice was a reputed lawyer, while for 25.97% the first choice was a financial advisor. In this situation, the odds change in the lawyers' favor, which can be explained either with the unfamiliarity to the concept of financial advisors or distrust.

The biases linked to first-choice-advisor decisions are not consistent throughout the change of the context. The inconsistencies in the choices point out that there are no general biases that could explain the differences, so further analysis is required.

3.2. Data Analysis

Personality traits and general attitudes are represented as combined relative frequencies of the specific traits, while choices of advisor preferences act as a binomial variable. Appropriate analysis of choice measured as binomial (binary) variable is binomial logit regression (Louviere *et al.* 2000; Greene and Hensher, 2010).

The dependent variables represent outcomes of consulting first-choices: a friend who had a similar legal issue (O_1), the lawyer who is an acquaintance (O_2), reputable lawyer (O_3), no one - you know the best, and there is also the Internet (O_4), an acquaintance who had a similar financial issue (O_5), no one - search the data on the Internet and find a solution on your own (O_6), financial advisor (O_7), personal banker (O_8).

Given that the dependent variables are binomial variables (the choice occurred or not), they will be analyzed using binomial logit regression. Binomial logit regression enables prediction of the choices based on selected independent variables. Prediction models are stochastic probability models, so they involve a certain amount of inherited randomness which arises from imperfect information, as well as the inability to model their effects on the outcome.

The model outcomes are structured as follows:

$$O_i = \begin{cases} 1 & if\ the\ i-th\ person\ made\ a\ choice \\ 0 & otherwise \end{cases},\ i = 1, \dots, 8.$$

Hypothesis for each model are set as:

$H_o \dots p_i = \hat{p}_{oi}(O_i = 1)$
$H_1 \dots p_i \neq \hat{p}_{oi}(O_i = 0)$.

Based on a standard probability threshold, the hypothesis interpretation is as follows: if $\hat{p} \geq \tilde{p}$, then $O_i = 1$, else $O_i = 0$.

The logit equation can be stated as:

$$O_i' = \ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta_1(i-e) + \beta_2(n-s) + \beta_3(t-f) + \beta_4(j-p) + \beta_5 t + \beta_6 i + \beta_7 e + \beta_8 tr + \beta_9 s + \beta_{10} ek \quad (1)$$

or, in terms of probability, it is:

$$\hat{p} = \frac{e^{\beta_1(i-e)+\beta_2(n-s)+\beta_3(t-f)+\beta_4(j-p)+\beta_5 t+\beta_6 i+\beta_7 e+\beta_8 tr+\beta_9 s+\beta_{10} ek}}{e^{\beta_1(i-e)+\beta_2(n-s)+\beta_3(t-f)+\beta_4(j-p)+\beta_5 t+\beta_6 i+\beta_7 e+\beta_8 tr+\beta_9 s+\beta_{10} ek}+1} = \frac{e^{O_i'}}{e^{O_i'}+1}.$$

To assess the models, log likelihood test is going to be used and confusion matrix will be discussed.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of the binomial logistic regression are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. First-choice models

	O1	O2	O3	O4	O5	O6	O7	O8
i-e trait	−0.0144 (0.7792)	0.0027 (0.7356)	−0.1745 (0.2323)	0.1844 (0.2265)	0.1371 (0.058*)	−0.0552 (0.6439)	0.0838 (0.5263)	−0.2268 (0.144)
n-s trait	−0.0264 (0.723)	0.0416 (0.0016***)	0.0217 (0.9245)	−0.4232 (0.0764 *)	0.08999 (0.4884)	−0.1188 (0.5479)	0.0462 (0.8311)	−0.0309 (0.9031)
f-t trait	0.1051 (0.1385)	0.0358 (0.0098 ***)	−0.0835 (0.6755)	−0.2947 (0.1596)	0.1684 (0.118)	−0.1399 (0.4035)	−0.0975 (0.6)	0.0384 (0.8593)
p-j trait	−0.0481 (0.5461)	−0.0011 (0.9307)	−0.3003 (0.1952)	0.4025 (0.0996*)	0.1019 (0.4242)	0.1398 (0.4716)	−0.0614 (0.7679)	−0.2389 (0.338)
Theoretical general attitude	−0.0024 (0.9724)	−0.0219 (0.0609*)	−0.1239 (0.55493)	0.1858 (0.3822)	−0.2097 (0.0568*)	0.0558 (0.7443)	−0.3946 (0.0456**)	0.4447 (0.0521*)
Individualistic general attitude	−0.1438 (0.0156**)	−0.0139 (0.2874)	0.47 (0.0364 **)	−0.1651 (0.4416)	0.0614 (0.6221)	−0.4821 (0.0031***)	0.4381 (0.0309 **)	−0.1063 (0.6344)
Aesthetical general attitude	−0.0285 (0.652)	−0.0177 (0.1583)	0.2135 (0.2728)	−0.033 (0.8686)	−0.0743 (0.4825)	0.0426 (0.787)	−0.3242 (0.0753*)	0.2059 (0.3255)
Traditional general attitude	−0.0718 (0.3988)	0.0015 (0.9112)	0.021 (0.9305)	−0.0476 (0.85)	−0.1897 (0.1511)	0.2021 (0.3162)	0.1349 (0.5387)	−0.3346 (0.2022)
Social general attitude	0.0195 (0.7782)	−0.0262 (0.0839*)	−0.2853 (0.1673)	0.1776 (0.4081)	−0.1691 (0.1241)	0.0299 (0.8575)	−0.4445 (0.0209**)	0.3753 (0.0841*)
Economical general attitude	0.0962 (0.1235)	−0.0148 (0.2017)	−0.236 (0.1673)	−0.0113 (0.9562)	−0.1931 (0.1062)	0.0881 (0.5765)	0.175 (0.3355)	−0.3033 (0.1591)
f(beta'x) at mean of independent vars	0.225	0.179	0.482 (0.2538)	0.498	0.294	0.4	0.439	0.498
Likelihood ratio test: Chi-square	10.6915 [0.3821]	29.9738 [0.0009]	9.3782 [0.4966]	9.6772 [0.4693]	11.8075 [0.2981]	7.8863 [0.6399]	18.9947 [0.0403]	11.9365 [0.2893]
Uncentered R-squared	0.11	0.43	0.03	0.03	0.08	0.03	0.07	0.04
Correctly predicted 1	0	3	4	105	0	1	7	45
Correctly predicted 0	230	234	147	40	209	184	166	98
Predicted 1 Actual 0	0	1	8	69	0	1	5	30
Predicted 0 Actual 1	13	5	84	29	22	45	53	58
Number of cases correctly predicted	230 (94.7%)	237 (97.5%)	151 (62.1%)	145 (59.7%)	209 (90.5%)	185 (80.1%)	173 (74.9%)	143 (61.9%)

Note: 1. a friend who had a similar legal issue (O_1), the lawyer who is an acquaintance (O_2), reputable lawyer (O_3), no one - you know the best, and there's also the Internet (O_4), an acquaintance who had a similar financial issue (O_5), no one - search the data on the Internet and find a solution on your own (O_6), financial advisor (O_7), personal banker (O_8); $O_1 - O_4$ refer to solving legal issue; $O_5 - O_8$ refer to solving financial issue. **2.** Reported values for independent variables are slopes at the mean and p-values for statistically significant variables in the brackets. P-values are denoted with: *, ** and *** for statistical significance at 10%, 5% and 1% level, respectively.

Source: Author's own preparation.

Three of the eight models presented in Table 1 show high prediction level (>90%), while the rest of them demonstrate moderate prediction level. For most of the models, LRTs point out

that the null-hypothesis should not be rejected and $\hat{p} \geq \tilde{p}$ and $O_i = 1$ is true. For O_2 and O_7 the null-hypothesis should be rejected at 5% significance level, hence $\hat{p} < \tilde{p}$ and $O_i = 0$ is true. Given the predicted and actual cases from the confusion matrices, it can be noticed that the models predict $O_i = 0$ with higher accuracy. Most of the mis-predicted cases are the ones predicted to be 0, but whose actual values are 1.

It is interesting to notice that traditional and economic general attitude appears not to be significant for any of the models. However, omitting statistically insignificant variables (using sequential elimination of variables using two tailed p-value) leads to the same or lower prediction rates of the models.

The model of choosing a friend who had a similar legal issue managed to correctly predict 94.7% of cases, and individual general attitude is a statistically significant variable with negative slope at the mean. The model of an acquaintance who had a similar financial issue-choice correctly predicts 90.5% of cases, with introversion-extraversion personality trait and theoretical general attitude as statistically significant variables. Introversion-extraversion personality trait has a positive slope at the mean, which means that the extraversion pole leads to the choice of an acquaintance who had a similar financial issue, which can relate to familiarity bias (Tversky and Kahneman, 1973; Ashcraft, 2006). The theoretical general attitude has a negative slope at the mean, which means that the more conspicuous this attitude is, it is less likely that the person's first-choice will be an acquaintance. Although it was expected that the same traits and attitudes will appear to be significant in O_1 and O_5, the results show that there are no overlaps in significant variables. It can mean one of the followings: either two seemingly similar questions represent completely different decision-making contexts for individuals, or no consistent bias can be noticed in decision-making regarding the acquaintances/ friends.

The model of choosing the lawyer who is an acquaintance (O_2) highlights intuitive – sensing and feeling – thinking personality traits, as well as social general attitude as statistically significant variables. With positive slope at the mean, sensing and thinking poles of the two traits lead to the first-choice of the lawyer who is an acquaintance, while more expressed social general attitude leads to the opposite choice. The model of choosing personal banker (O_8) points out to theoretical and social general attitude as statistically significant variables, both with positive slopes at the mean. An overlap in social general attitude can be noticed for those two choice models, but the variable has opposite slope sign in each model. There is no overlap in other variables. Although the models point out significant traits for each choice, it is not possible to determine consistent bias or trait in this decision-making based on the personality traits and general attitudes.

The model of reputable lawyer-choice (O_3) points out only one statistically significant variable, that is, individual general attitude. The variable has a positive slope at the mean, hence more expressed individual general attitude leads to the choice of a reputable lawyer. The model of financial advisor choice (O_7), points out individual, aesthetic and social general attitude to be statistically significant. While the first one has a positive slope at the mean, the latter two have negative slopes at the mean. The overlap of statistically significant variables for those two models can be detected in individual general attitude. This means that some of the specific characteristics for individual general attitude, or all of them, play a role in choosing reputable lawyer and financial consultant.

The model of choosing no one and solving legal problem on their own (you know the best, and there is also the Internet, O_4), indicates intuitive – sensing and perceiving – judging personality traits as statistically significant variables, where the first one has a negative, and the second one has a positive slope at the mean. This means the more intuitive and more judging poles of the traits are expressed, the individuals' choice is more likely solving the problem by themselves. The model of choosing no one for solving a financial problem (no one - search the data on the Internet and find a solution on your own O_6), points out the single statistically significant variable: individual general attitude which has negative slope at the mean. It seems

that the conceptual difference of solving a legal or financial problem triggers different traits that influence the choice of individuals to solve this issue on their own.

Individual general attitude turns out to be significant in four models: it has positive influence for choosing reputable lawyer and financial advisor, and negative influence on choosing a friend with a similar legal issue and solving a financial problem on their own. The positive influence of the individual attitude appears in two similar choices and has already been discussed. Given that individual general attitude denotes a set of characteristics, such as: gaining control, prestige, power, respect, etc.; the negative influence of this attitude denotes that the persons who have individual general attitude highly set on a value scale would not choose to solve a financial issue on their own or consult a friend with a similar legal issue – probably, because that interferes with their value set. Given the results, another observation regarding the biases has to be made: it appears that the choice of the experts does not relate to trust, but to individual attitude and related values.

Social general attitude appears significant in three models: with positive influence on choosing a personal banker, and with negative influence on choosing the lawyer who is an acquaintance and choosing a financial advisor. Given that social general attitude implies altruism, benevolence, good relations, etc., it makes sense that highly expressed attitude can correlate to the choice of the person they have met before, such as a personal banker. This can be related to trust (Cheng and Hsian, 2017) and familiarity bias (Ashcraft, 2006) up to the extent that persons that have highly expressed social general attitude will also more likely demonstrate familiarity and trust bias. However, it is harder to explain the negative correlation to choosing the lawyer who is an acquaintance. The reason can be the lack of the acquaintances who are lawyers, or poor opinion about those lawyers whom they have met which relates to anchoring bias.

Theoretical general attitude is significant variable for choosing an acquaintance who had a similar financial issue (negative influence) and choosing a personal banker (positive influence). The findings might be interpreted as an extension to Jonas and Frey's (2003) conclusion about advisor's vs. friend's information presentation. Theoretical general attitude denotes values such as knowledge, information, etc., so positive correlation to personal banker as an expert source of information is in line with those values, while negative correlation to choosing an acquaintance who had a similar financial issue can mean that they do not value such source or their presentation of information and knowledge.

Intuitive-sensing personality trait is a significant variable in two models: choosing the lawyer who is an acquaintance and solving legal issue on one's own. Sensing pole of this trait denotes characteristics such as preferring concrete facts, tangibility, pragmatism, empirical, conventional, preferring tested and experienced on their own. Choosing the lawyer who is an acquaintance seems like a pragmatic choice. However, the last stated characteristic creates an unexpected twist, given the negative correlation to solving legal issue on one' own. This means that the more intuitive pole of this trait is expressed (conceptual thinking, inventive, seeking patterns, hypothesize, idea – oriented, imaginative, resourceful), the more likely is the choice of solving a legal issue on one's own. The more expressed intuitive pole might indicate that the person enjoys solving conceptual problems, but can also be observed in relation to overconfidence bias (Benabou and Tirole, 2000; Hoffrage, 2004).

The trait of introversion-extraversion is significant for choosing an acquaintance who had a similar financial issue, where more expressed extraversion pole leads to the outcome of 1. Extraversion trait denotes the set of characteristics such as: sociability, immediate, initiative, demonstrative, easy to get to know, reveal information about oneself, seek popularity, prefer a wide circle of friends, lively, etc. Stated characteristics can explain the choice of an acquaintance and relate to familiarity (Ashcraft, 2006), trust bias (Cheng and Hsian, 2017) and propensity to connect (Totterdell *et al.* 2008).

The trait of feeling-thinking is significant for choosing the lawyer who is an acquaintance, where more expressed thinking pole leads to this choice. Li *et al.* (2017) showed the relation of

advisor choice to emotional and cognitive channels, where the first arises from communication with peer advisor and second one, with expert advisor. The thinking pole of this trait denotes characteristics such as: non-personal, seeking impartiality, objective analysis, truthfulness, cause and effect, respecting principles, precision, challenge, seeking discussion, seeking evidence, orientation to outcome, etc. The choice of the lawyer who is an acquaintance could be perceived as the most efficient choice, but can also occur due to a possibility for discussion and higher involvement in solving the issue.

The trait perceiving – judging appears to be significant for choosing to solve the legal issue on one's own, and the more the judging pole of the trait is expressed, the more likely is that this choice will occur. That relates to Rader *et al.* (2015), as they found that anchoring paradigms and push-away effect affects individual judgment away from the advice. Judging trait is the set of characteristics such as: orderly, structured, dislike divergence, plan, create solid plans motivated by discipline, seeks routines, creates lists, plans specific activities, records sub-tasks, organizes, etc. The positive correlation of this trait can make sense, considering that the involvement of other people would likely interfere with the order and plans of these individuals and create disliked divergences. In addition, the influence of sensing trait on this choice has been previously discussed. This means that the previously offered explanation using anchoring bias has to be reconsidered. What seemed to be an anchoring bias, based on the theoretical background, now seems to be the extension of judging and sensing traits. The characteristics of both traits might better fit the explanation of the overconfidence bias than the anchoring bias.

Aesthetical attitude is highlighted as significant for the choice of financial advisor, and its influence is negative for the choice. Aesthetical attitude is not all about the beauty, but also about valuing comfort, pleasantly spent time, etc. The negative correlation of this attitude could be explained if the individuals perceive the choice of financial advisor to be unpleasant or causing discomfort.

5. Conclusion

While decision-making process and influences are extensively researched, linking those insights to real-life choices opens various research questions that have yet to be answered. One of those questions is advisor choice. The aim of this paper is to investigate people's first choices of advisor while solving legal and financial issues, examine influence of personality traits and general attitudes, as well as observing potential biases. While the choice of advisor regarding financial issues is investigated from different perspectives, the choice of advisor solving legal issues has not yet been investigated. This research contributes to determine influencing factors on decision-making in real-life choices, namely choosing advisors for solving legal and financial issues.

Although the presented models offer a correlation of the traits and general attitudes with high prediction rates for most of the choices, they also indicate that it is not possible to outline generalization of influencing variables on similar choices. It can mean that the two seemingly similar questions represent completely different decision-making contexts for individuals.

The respondents' answers are also observed regarding biases occurrence, where overconfidence, anchoring, familiarity and trust bias are discussed. For example, while the choice of solving a legal issue on their own appeared to be related either to anchoring bias based on hostile attitudes towards the profession (established in previous research) or distrusting experts, the correlation to perceiving - judging and intuitive - sensing traits pointed out that overconfidence bias is a more plausible explanation. Despite expectations, the choice of reputable lawyer and financial advisor appear not to have any relation to trust (in experts) bias, given that the correlation showed that individual general attitude has a positive influence on those choices. Social attitude and extraversion trait have positive influence on the choice of the personal banker and acquaintance, respectively, which can be related to trust and familiarity bias. Stated findings have practical implications, as advisors can use them to improve their client targeting strategies. For

example, legal experts should build up positive public image and emphasize the search for clients among persons with individual general attitude high on a value scale. That is also true for financial advisors. The personal banker – choice points out that the potential clients would seek advice from the expert whom they have met earlier. There are still many people who prefer to solve legal issues on their own, and as their choices arise from personal characteristics and overconfidence bias, lawyers' improvement of their public image might have little impact on that choice. Also, one of the options to reach to the people who prefer to solve legal issues on their own is to provide online advices (clients will search for necessary information online, but they would still perceive that they have solved the problem by themselves). Both financial and legal experts should create a wide circle of acquaintances and build up public image.

Although the findings upgrade existing research regarding linkage of psychological variables (personality traits and general attitudes) to biases, further investigation of that area is necessary. Interesting theoretical contribution derived from the results implies impossibility to outline generalization of influencing variables on similar observed choices in two fields of advisors' expertise: financial and legal. The important theoretical finding of this research is observed relevance of decision-making context. Such finding indicates that if science wants to describe real-life decisions, the decision-making context must be taken into consideration.

The findings should be used up to a certain extent – given the sample limitations, they are valid for Croatian population that uses or has access to online services. That opens a possibility for further research and cross-country validation of the results. As connection of personality traits and general attitudes to biases is only implicitly assessed, a further research is necessary to directly and explicitly examine that link.

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