

Career Decisiveness among International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) Students

Munira Arshad^{1*}

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the career decisiveness among students at the International Islamic University students. The sample of this study consisted of two hundred and thirty students from four faculties of International Islamic University Malaysia. It was hypothesized that local students would be more confident in making career decisions than International students. It was also hypothesized that male students would be more confident than female students in making career decisions. Using Career Decision Scale, the study found that international students have more confidence than local students in making career decisions. It was also found that males scored higher on certainty subscale than females indicating that males are more certain when making career decisions.

Keywords: *Career decision, students, International Islamic University*

Making a career decisions is one of the major problems faced by high school graduates and college students. And this issue is also considered to be one of the more pressing issues for career counselors (Korschgen and Hageseth, 1997; Heppner & Hendricks, 1995). Career decision-making is a dynamic process and many factors contribute to it.

Although many studies have been done on white American college students regarding career decision making, there are few studies conducted on other cultures. A study conducted by Okubo and colleagues (2007) focused on the career decision-making process of Chinese American youth. The purpose of their research was to understand the career decision making process amongst the low-income, urban Chinese Americans and determine how negotiating between two cultures affects the way they shape their career aspirations. A qualitative method was used and a total of eight youths participated in this study. Among them, five were born in China and immigrated to United States, one was born in Malaysia and immigrated to United States and two were second generation Chinese Americans. The researchers used semi-structured interviews that were based on literature review that focused on Asian American career decision-making process. The questions inquired about how participants explored different careers and negotiated various factors that contributed to their career related decisions. The results found that they had academic and career related pressure from their parents and this was causing confusion and worry in thinking about career related

¹ (International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia)

*Responding Author

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issues. However, as this study was conducted on a small sample size, the results cannot be generalized.

A cross-cultural study on British and Chinese students was conducted by Zhou and Santos (2007). The study explored cultural and gender differences in career decision-making difficulties. Specifically, the study aimed to find out the relationship between culture, gender, degree level and age and career decision-making difficulties. The sample consisted of 195 students from two British universities (109 British and 86 Chinese international). The instrument used was the Career Decision Making Difficulty Questionnaire and Cross-Cultural Adjustment Questionnaire. The results showed that Chinese participants reported lower readiness for career decision making than British participants. The results also showed that Chinese participants had significantly lower motivation to make career decisions, and experienced significantly more external conflicts than British participants. Analysis also revealed that female participants were significantly more indecisive than male participants in career decision-making. Overall, the study revealed that British students were more confident than Chinese international students and male students were more confident than female students about their career choice. However, as this study included students from different degree levels, the majority of which were Masters students, this may have affected the findings in some way and complex the interpretation.

In another study, Landry (2006) examined the relationship between career decision making and anxiety, worry, and personality. Participants included university students, both males (139) and females (199) with the majority being Caucasian (73%). Instruments used were Career Decision Scale, State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, Penn State Worry Questionnaire, and Big Five Personality Inventory. An analysis using MANOVA suggest that career indecision is positively related to the level of anxiety. A significant positive relation was also found between career indecision and worry. Additionally, significant negative relations were found between career indecision and agreeableness and career indecision and conscientiousness. The study also found gender differences between males and females in the sample, where compared to males, females were more certain, more worried, more agreeable, higher on the neuroticism dimension, and had higher career satisfaction. Males had higher career indecision than females. Additionally, seniors were found to be more certain in their careers and more conscientious than freshman students.

The aim of the current study examines the career decisiveness among the students of International Islamic University Malaysia. Firstly, it was hypothesized that local students would have higher confidence in career decision making than international students. Secondly, male students would have higher confidence in career decision making than female students.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants were 230 university students drawn from the International Islamic University Malaysia. There were 60 male (25.5%) and 175 female (74.5%) participants. Participant's age ranged from 17 to 32 years and above. Majority of the sample consisted of local students (70.6%) with the remaining 29.4% being International students. Majority of participants had declared their major, while only 14.9% (n=35) had not declared a major. As for the distribution of participants among the specializations, 30.6% are in Laws (n=72), 33.2% are in Economics (n=78), 22.1% are in IRKHS (Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences) (n=52), and 11. 9% are in Education (n=28).

Instrumentation

Career Decision Scale (CDS): This scale is one of the most frequently used instruments to assess the career decision making (Osipow & Winer, 1996). The CDS consists of two scales: the Certainty Scale, which measures one's certainty of educational and occupational choice, and the Indecision scale, which measures the antecedents of educational and occupational indecision. The Certainty Scale consists of the first two items of the instrument, and the sum of these first two items is the certainty score. A high score on the Certainty Scale indicates certainty of career choice (Thompson, 2001). Items 3 through 18 are the Indecision Scale, and the sum of the Indecision Scale items is the indecision score. A high score on the Indecision Scale indicates indecision regarding a career choice. Items 1 to 18 are all self-rated responses, and responses are made from a 4-point Likert scale, with a one indicating the item has low similarity to the respondent and a four indicating the item has high similarity to the respondent. The statements on the CDS state direct thoughts and feelings that are related to confidence in career decision-making. Item 19 is an open-ended question in which respondents can expand on or clarify prior items.

Test-retest reliability for the Indecision Scale has consistently been reported to be above 0.80. And studies have shown that CDS have construct and content validity to be consistent (Walsh & Osipow, 1988).

Procedure

Students from different department were randomly selected to be surveyed. Participants agreed to participate by signing the consent form and next they completed the CDS questionnaire, it roughly took about 10 minutes to complete the survey.

RESULT

Nationality differences

The results using Univariate F -test indicated that there is no significant difference between specialization and certainty subscale $F(3,227) = .677, p = 0.567$. However, the test indicated that there is a statistically significant difference between main effect of nationality and certainty subscale, $F(1,227) = 4.156, p = 0.043$. The means and standard deviations of scores for certainty subscale are presented in Table 4.11.

The results show the mean for international students ($M = 3.2$) is higher than the mean for local ($M = 3.0$). Thus scores on the certainty subscale for CDS are significantly and substantially associated with nationality. More precisely, international students scored higher than the local students on the certainty scale on CDS. However, there is no significant difference in the mean scores among the specializations of Law, Economics, IRKHS and Education ($M=2.9, M=3.1, M=2.9, M=3.1$ respectively).

Gender Differences

The results of Independent Samples T-test to analyze the differences among females and males showed that there is no significant difference between the males and females and the CDS overall score, $t(233) = -1.513, p = 0.13$. However, there was a statistically significant difference between males and females on the Certainty subscale, $t(233) = 2.01, p = 0.045$. For the Indecision subscale, no significant difference was found.

The mean scores for gender showed that males scored higher than females on the certainty subscale ($M=3.2$ and $M=2.3$ respectively). There was no difference between males and females on the other scale.

CONCLUSION

The goal of the current study was to examine career decision making among International Islamic University Malaysia students

Multivariate Analysis Of Variance (MANOVA) conducted to determine the difference among the international students and local students on career decision making indicated that there were significant differences between the groups on CDS. Univariate F-tests indicated that there was statistically significant relationship between nationality and CDS subscales. International students' score were found to be higher than local students on the Certainty subscale and lower on Indecision subscale. Thus the first hypothesis is rejected. However, these results are contradictory with the findings of Zhou and Santos (2007) who reported that Chinese international students having lower readiness for career decision making than British participants. The results of the present study contradicts the findings of Okubo and colleagues (2007) who found that international students who had migrated to America have high confusion and worry in thinking about career related issues. A possible explanation for the results of the current study can be that international students who come to IIUM may have already decided on their career choice before coming to Malaysia. That is because as international students, they would probably do research on possible career choices before deciding to go to a foreign country as they would not have many choices to change once they are in the foreign country. However, many local students enter universities right after graduating from high school and might not have had the chance to explore all the potential careers beforehand.

An analysis for gender differences was also conducted using ANOVA. The results indicated that there are significant differences between males and females on Career Decision Scale. It was found that male students scored higher on Certainty subscale than female students. These results are consistent with the findings of Zhou and Santos (2007). Thus the second hypothesis is confirmed. On the other hand, the results are contradictory with the results of Landry (2006) who found that females are more certain than males and had higher career satisfaction.

Although the results of the study are useful, caution must be taken as there are some limitations to the study. One of the most significant limitations is related to sample characteristics. First of all, the study is only specified to the specializations of Law, Economics, Human Sciences and Education of a single university in Malaysia. Another limitation is associated with characteristics of the measure. The participants in this study were reporting their own perceptions of their level of indecision in the self-report measures. It is unclear how accurate these perceptions were.

The discussion of limitation of study gives raise for suggestions for future research in the field. Research could also explore potential factors that lead to career decision making. Furthermore, research could also be conducted to examine the relationship between career decision making and other variables such as religious commitment.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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