

## Staring at A Career Crossroad: Exploring Choosiness Behaviour Among Malaysia First-Time Job Seekers

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**Abstract:** The present study aims to investigate the factors that affect the choosiness behavior in career decision making among public university graduates in Malaysia. Self-administered questionnaires distributed to 330 undergraduates at public and private universities in Malaysia. Subsequently, data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings indicate that attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control were positively significant with choosiness behaviour in career decision making. At the end of this paper, forward a few suggestions and recommendations based on the findings.

**Key words:** *Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, Choosiness in Career Decision Making*

### INTRODUCTION

Malaysian higher education system has gradually moved its focus from catering to the small groups of academic elites to one which caters for a mass Higher Education (HE) system. According to [1], there are currently 20 public universities, 19 private universities and close to 500 other post-secondary institutions that offering a range of HE qualifications compared to the year in the 1960s which Malaysia was having only one public university catering for HE needs.

[1] also stated that there are more than 700,000 students have attended post-secondary education; 44% of them have been attending public institution while another 49% of student attended the private institution and the rest of student studied abroad. Besides, this Malaysian education in that particular HE was generally viewed as a key factor guaranteeing which upward social mobility [1]. Thus, fierce competition overcomes in securing limited government scholarships and places in public HEIs, where the fees are substantially lower than those of private institutions. \

[2] stated that the economic condition of Malaysia was heightened by the positive business activity level that across the broader of Asia region in addition with help from the national government program could drive all the local business activity thus could fuel the job

opportunities for employees across all the key industries. Nevertheless, MOHE has also stated that this issue of the increasing unemployment levels among the local graduates has remained high on the agenda of the Malaysia government [2].

Students from IPTA have a higher number of unemployed, which is 26,776 students compare to the students from IPTS which is just 24,804 unemployed students [2]. Besides, it also shows that the number of unemployed student from IPTA was increasing in 2017 compared to the number of unemployed in 2016 with 1,972 students. The number of unemployed university graduates in 2017 was 102,440 people [2].

[3] stated that employer has voice their dissatisfaction about the supply of good quality graduates were limited. Thus, the growth of unemployment among graduates was due to the mismatch between demand and supply [3]. Employer argues that the unemployment of graduates was due to the graduates itself as most of them were lack of generic skills, poor command of English, poor attitude, serious inadequacy in terms of work-related competencies and demanding higher salaries for an easy job and were unwilling to work hard and start according to ranks in order to gain experience [3].

According to [4], the student who studied in information system ranked job opportunities as the highest factors while those finance students were ranked

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with long-term earning as the most important factors. The same goes to the business student which tend to choose the company that offered high payment, high job security, enjoyable job and pleasant working environment as they were well versed in that particular field [4]. Some of these fresh graduates believe that they have the right to being choosy in selecting a job and seek out a position which meets their expectation. [5] has found that 11% of employers think fresh graduates are looking for a higher salary offer than the offered salary. [5] also have stated that most student who has chosen to be a dentist was also because the work comes with good financial benefits and prestige status. Thus, it shows that graduates nowadays were being picky in selecting the job as they prefer to have a high-paid position.

Sibson (2011) stated that there are limited studies in this area conducted in Malaysia. Thus, this research has been conducted to identify the factors of theory planned behavior which would influence the career decision making among public university's graduates and find out how the results of the study would make a difference for Malaysian than other countries.

Besides that, many research papers conducted in Malaysia mainly focused on the course of studies rather than those graduates itself perspectives. Therefore, this study has been conducted to determine those public university graduates itself in their career decision making. Lastly, through this study, it could help in solving problems by reducing fresh graduates' unemployment rate.

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

Career decision making is a type of decision made by an individual which requires extensive time consumption through complex decision and research [6]. Career decision making was not simply matching a person to an occupation. Individuals all around the world were generally concerned about their future, and this concerned could be expressed in diverse manners of career decisions making [6].

There were many influences which could impact a person's career decisions such as the influences from the person's family, friend, lecturer and others. From a cognitive-behavioural perspective, career decision making can be described as a problem-resolution process which been used when choosing between sociooccupational alternatives and continue to receive a great deal of attention in psycho-educational research [7] and [8].

Besides, career decision making aligned with the adaptability dimension, which is control. The control in

this context defined as the need of the individual itself to exercise some influence on the formation and the environment of the career matters that concern them [7], [8].

Choosiness can be defined as the efforts of an individual invest in job assessment [9], with a definition without defined operational criteria. Based on the journal related to the factor affecting choosiness behavior among graduates causes unemployment, different authors have a different context, which means a different place to collect hypothesis testing.

According to [10], choosy or choosiness behavior can be referring to as the sensory ability of the individuals to assess the potential alternative job that fulfils their needs and wants. This statement supported by [9] where it stated that most of the women were very choosy as they feel that most of the graduates with the best result were women rather than men. Besides, these graduates sometimes were very choosy when applying for their job as they were expecting the job offer to come with a package: a good pay, convenient working location, no shift, no work beyond 6 pm and so on, with everything handed in a silver platter. Whereas, the employer is putting 'working experience' as a pre-requisite to get a job.

Besides, most of this educated person and was the first-time job-seekers were being choosier than other as they are competent than others thus they can be choosy in selecting job [11]. Graduates stated that they were being choosy in accepting and selecting the job as previous graduates that were directly accepting job given were not satisfied with their job as what been promised by the company and what the graduates receive were different. Thus most of the graduates nowadays being too choosy in accepting and selecting the job as they were afraid that what been faced by the previous graduates might be faced by them (Says, 2017).

An attitude refers to an individual's general feeling of favorableness towards several stimulus objects. A person would automatically acquire their attitude towards that particular objects once they beliefs about that object. Each of the beliefs has the object to some features and the person's attitude to the object acts for a function of their assessment toward the features [12].

[13] analyzed that the intentions in the attitude of students founded on a significant influence of the attitude toward behavior toward the intention. It is also emphasizing that when a person tends to feel competent in several aspects of the career, they are more likely to develop a positive attitude towards that particular career [13]. Next, a student who began the career search process earlier has positive attitudes and higher levels of

self-efficacy towards the career search process [14]. Besides, in their research, [14] has stated that their study shows an association statistically significant between when students begin planning for career decision and their positive attitude. Graduates nowadays tend to look at those factors relating to their attitudes, personal disposition, and their characteristic as determining their labour market trajectories.

Career is a lifelong process consisting of continuous decision-making incidents that are influenced by holistically. That is, decision-making is not based solely on interests or traits, but also on such things as family influence, peer influence, market pressures, and societal expectations [15]. Many researchers have challenged the subjective norm on stating the relevancy in predicting graduates' career decision making. Some of this researcher found that subjective norms were significant with the career decision making towards fresh graduates [15 -17].

According to [18], it has stated that both parents and graduates believe that their first job should be the one that provides that initial payoff for all the stress, planning and shared goals that they endured all this time. Besides, students usually have some unclear decision about the work they wanted to go with once they graduate and would always seek advice from other people such as friends, parents, and professors [18].

The individual must have control over performing a behavior if the intention to perform that behavior is to be recognized [19]. [19] stated that several theorists have proposed that having a high sense of personal control will relate positively to an individual's career decision-making process and work satisfaction. [20] has also stated that those who are more adaptive invest in career decisionmaking, lead to a positive attitude towards career planning and career exploration and have been more satisfied with their decision. They would also become more confident in each decision made and would always believe in their abilities to succeed. A person should always make a decision based on their confidence in doing that job and must have the interest to go through the working world. [19], [20] also stated that a person that makes a career decision based on interest might lead to high job satisfaction.

**METHODOLOGY**

Self-administered questionnaires were developed and distributed to 330 undergraduates in public universities in Malaysia based on convenient sampling. The questionnaires were distributed by hand to the respective nurses. The measurements were utilized based on five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". Additionally, the Statistical

Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to assess the goodness of measures and to test the hypotheses for this study.

The measurement instrument to measure choosiness behaviour in career decision making, attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control were measured using the instrument developed by [21], [22] containing 36 items with each of the variable consists of 9 items. The reliability coefficients for this instrument is 0.89, 0.77, 0.69 and 0.72 respectively.

**FINDINGS**

Based on the study by [23], the variable's reliability shows the strength and conformity of the method for measuring concept and helps to evaluate the goodness of a measure. According to [23], the result of reliabilities that less than 0.6 are considered to be poor, 0.6 to 0.8 acceptable and those that over 0.8 considered good.

Cronbach's Alpha for choosiness behavior (DV) is 0.725. The independent variable is attitude (0.858), subjective norms (0.896) and perceived behavioral control (0.849) which was greater than 0.70, indicating the acceptable value. Therefore, the value of Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients of the independent variables in this study concluded as reliable.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect whether the three independent variables, which are attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control have any significant effect towards choosing behaviour in career decision making. Based on the multiple regression analysis, it is found that attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control have significant positive effects towards choosing behaviour in career decision making, as shown in Table 1. Therefore, all of the hypotheses in this study are accepted.

Table 1. Relationship between Independent Variables and Dependent Variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.371	.128		10.690	.000
Attitude	.413	.037	.515	11.248	.000
Subjective Norms	.056	.025	.094	2.219	.027
Perceived Behavioral Control	.157	.037	.198	4.282	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Choosiness Behavior

## DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis had tested, which is the relationship between attitude and choosiness behavior in career decision making. The outcome shows that there is a significant relationship between attitude and choosiness behavior in career decision making. Similar to [24] found attitude is important to determinant in selecting a job. The attitude is an element of an exchange or transaction that takes place between two parties to obtain something offered by another party. Attitude factors were the most influencing factors toward the choosiness behavior of graduates in career decision making as most of these graduates feel that they deserved to get what they want.

[25] has also stated that attitude of the graduates was most significant influence in career decision making as most of the graduates' attitude were focusing on having better job security, good working environment, greater authority which all of this were one of that human needs and wants and were also important to increase motivation among new workers. Thus human resource management should use the best and right tools to develop the required working environment.

Job security, authority, working environment, promotion and managerial quality, an opportunity for advancement, and the relationship would influence an individual's attitude. [26] have stated that having authority and power is the best factors to motivate people to work in an organization. Besides that, it has also approved that successful, well-respected managers were often lean towards those power need tendencies.

Other than that, this attitude could also be the benefit of increasing the individual's experience and seniority position. The company could apply reward as to motivate the employees who achieved the best result and change the perception and the attitude of graduates in being too choosy in selecting the best working environment only but not focusing on the advantages received in that particular company.

The second hypothesis tested, which is the relationship between subjective norms and choosiness behavior in career decision making. The outcome shows that there is a significant relationship between subjective norms and choosiness behavior in career decision making. The subjective norms also are known as the influence received by a person from their surroundings such as their family, friends and other. Throughout the study, it

shows that subjective norms were significant in career decision making among graduates.

According to [27], this study suggested that graduates who were choosing their careers were perceived to be influenced most often by teachers and parents. Most students nowadays decide their course of studies based on their parents and teacher advice and preferences. Students have a great desire to poses high social status in their future lives, and the occupation should reflect their status.

Interconnection with family members is important when related to influencing career paths as graduates' career decision making are not largely influences by their faculty, parents and employer or co-workers that are in the same field of work [27].

The third hypothesis tested, which is the relationship between perceived behavioral control and the choosiness behavior in career decision making. The outcome shows that there is a significant relationship between perceived behavioral control and choosiness behavior in career decision making. Based on the result studied, the researchers found that there is a significant relationship between perceived behavioral control and choosiness behavior in career decision making.

[28] has stated that this career choice influenced by personality, self-concept, interests, cultural identity, role model and socialization. Perceived behavioral control has also included believed, personality, academic achievement, selfconfident, work experience, aptitude for the subject matter and the subject matter interest.

Graduates nowadays were believed to be easily influenced by external factors such as work experience and a person's life when they make career decision [29]. Graduates with work experience will most influence their perceptions of the working environment, which can reach effectiveness. [29] also stated in their study that the interest will be one of the major factors in career decision making. Therefore, perceived behavioral control is important to influence undergraduates in career decision making.

## CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, the study has fulfilled its objectives to examine the relationships between Attitude, Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control and the choosiness behavior in career decision making among public universities graduates in Malaysia. It also indicates that which factor has the greatest and least

impact on the career decision making among public universities graduates in Malaysia. Besides that, researchers have recommended some ways to improve their future related researches. It also serves as a guideline to other researchers to identify the factors that will influence career decision making among public universities students. Lastly, this research can help fresh graduates in career decision making and employers can identify the trend and factors that are important to fresh graduates in career selection.

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