

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Effect of Gender and Location on Career Indecision among Management Undergraduates in Sri Lankan State Universities

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Introduction

Career Indecision has been seen as one of the essential and focal subjects of career psychology, which has caught the consideration of numerous scientists because of its money related and mental costs (Osipow, 2009). Therefore, most researchers revealed career decision-making related problems are leading to arise career indecision (Lock, 2009). Career indecision is a negative status refers to an inability to select a career goal or having selected a career goal, to experience significant feelings of uncertainty about the goal (Callanan and Greenhaus, 2010). According to the Sri Lanka scenario, Management undergraduates record the significant percentage (around 20%) from total Sri Lankan undergraduates and it has gradually risen. (University admission handbook, 2017-2018). As a creating nation like Sri Lanka, there is a tremendous interest in managerial experts to offer help for financial development and adding to the achievement of unstable business conditions (Liyanage, 2013). Graduates passing out from state universities could be considered as an important asset with regard to uplifting the country's economy (Ukil, 2016). Graduates' contribution to the enhancement of the knowledge workforce is massive. Their caliber at the strategic business level is a major determinant in the growth of

the state as well as private institutions. However, the issue at hand is, the current economic situation of the country has not expanded in order to create value-added employment opportunities for graduates. Therefore, graduates do not motivate to take correct decisions regarding their career prospects. Thus, the research question of this study is to identify whether there is any significant impact on career indecision based on gender and geographical location. In order to find out the answer to the research question, the general objective is to identify the impact on career indecision based on gender and the geographical location.

Problem Justification

Graduates who passed out from the universities is considered as a significant resource for the economy in the long run (Brown et al., 2013). When considering the unemployment statistics in Sri Lanka, it is 4.6% (Department of Census and Statistics, 2018). Since career indecision is a complex issue that experiences a high level of uncertainty regarding one's career choices and impacts on the overall growth of the economy (Lopez and Ann-Yi, 2006). According to Herr, Cramer and Niles (2004), 50% of university students experience career-related problems, some of which are associated with students being undecided about various career options, causing anxiety in university students (Gati et al., 2000). The severity leads to lifelong consequences for the individual's vocational future, psychological and physical well-being, social acceptance, ultimately overall quality of life (Mann, Harmoni and Power, 1989). When considering gender, many differences can be identified among males and females especially in cognitive abilities. The poor female labor force participation and high female unemployment rates (Department of Census and Statistics, 2018) do may necessarily mean the indecisive nature of making career decisions. It could be other pressures from culture and society. With regard to the geographical location of the universities, most people have a perception that facilities and the quality of the

graduates may higher be based on proximity to the capital city of the country. When analyzing the university rankings, it is apparent that metropolitan universities are higher in the rankings. Thus, based on the facts given above, the problem statement of the study is to identify whether there is any significant impact on career indecision based on a gender-wise segregation as well as the physical location of the universities, among management undergraduates in Sri Lanka.

Methodology

In order to achieve the research objective, a descriptive research design based on the quantitative approach was used. This research is a cross-sectional and approach that was deductive as testing an existing theory to confirm if the theory was applicable in the research context through data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results. The target population of this study included all the Management undergraduates in Sri Lankan state universities. Exact samples of 345 respondents were from the four state universities such as the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, University of Colombo, University of Ruhuna and University of Sabaragamuwa based on convenient sampling. In this study, the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and the University of Colombo categorized under the metropolitan universities and the University of Ruhuna and the University of Sabaragamuwa categorized as the rural universities. The self-administered questionnaire has been used as a primary data collection tool for this study.

Hypothesis 1– The student being a male or a female has a significant impact on being career indecisive,

Hypothesis 2 – The geographical location of the university has a significant impact on career indecision.

Findings

T-test has been used to test the predetermined hypotheses. When observing the group statistics, there was a difference between males and females with regard to career indecision. Thus, high mean value (Males 2.9816) represents high career indecision. The low mean value represents (Female 2.6874) low career indecision. When reviewing the significance values of the independent sample t-test, the significance of t value in equal variance not assumed was 2.408 and significance is 0.017. It indicated as less than 0.05. It ensures a statistically significant difference in career indecision between male and female undergraduates. Therefore, career indecisiveness among the male undergraduates was higher. Hypothesis 1 is supported according to the analysis and this fact was beyond the findings of previous studies.

When considering the results of the geographical location, T-test was carried out. Observing the group statistics, the mean values of rural universities (2.7234) were high when comparing to metropolitan universities (2.224). When reviewing the significance values both rural and state universities are exceeding 0.05. Therefore, the researcher identified the geographical location of the university has an insignificant impact on career indecision. Hypothesis 2 was not supported according to the findings and ensures the proximity to the capital city or level of resources and facilities in the university do not account for students to be indecisive when taking their career-related decisions.

Conclusion

The objective of this study is to identify whether there is any significant impact on career indecision in light of state university management undergraduates in Sri Lanka when it comes to the segregation of the target population based on gender as well as the geographical location of the state universities. Based on the findings gender had a significant impact, while geographical

location is was not significantly impact career indecision. Further, study results revealed that males are more indecisive and geographical factors do not define the indecisiveness of the undergraduates. These research findings could be beneficial to design the career counseling programs in the Universities, Higher Educational Institutes and the Schools of the country.

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