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AMONG THE DIPLOMA STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY IN MARA UNIVERSITY
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THE INTENDED SECTORAL CHOICE AND PERCEIVED CAREER
STRATEGIES AMONG THE DIPLOMA STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY IN
MARA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, KEDAH

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Business Management in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science
(Management), Universiti Utara Malaysia

by

Kong Lai Kuan

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ABSTRAK

Kajian ini mempunyai empat tujuan. Objektif pertama adalah untuk meninjau kecenderungan sektor pilihan pelajar diploma kepada enam sektor-sektor utama, iaitu syarikat-syarikat multinasional, industri kecil dan sederhana, menjalankan perniagaan profesional sendiri, menjalankan perniagaan sendiri, sektor kerajaan atau organisasi bukan kerajaan. Objektif kedua cuba meninjau faktor-faktor penting yang membentuk aspek-aspek kerjaya dan keputusan kerjaya pelajar diploma. Objektif ketiga adalah untuk menilai tanggapan strategi mereka pada masa depan, dan diikuti oleh objektif keempat yang bertujuan mengkaji hubungan antara strategi kerjaya dan sektor pilihan.

Kajian ini penting memandangkan pada masa kini kadar pengangguran siswazah adalah tinggi, tetapi maklumat mengenai bagaimana pelajar diploma membuat keputusan mengenai kerjaya masa hadapan adalah terhad. Kajian ini merupakan kajian populasi yang dijalankan di kalangan pelajar diploma semester akhir di UiTM, cawangan Kedah, pada semester Jun 2003–Oktober 2003. Teori yang menjadi rangka penyelidikan ini adalah berdasarkan “Social Cognitive Career Theory”. Ia merupakan satu kajian kuantitatif di mana pembolehubah bersandar adalah sektor pilihan manakala pembolehubah bebas adalah latar belakang, faktor-faktor sosial, kriteria pekerjaan yang lebih digemari, kawalan dalaman, dan strategi kerjaya. Frekuensi, perbezaan nilai min, ujian “Pearson chi-square” dan ujian Korelasi Pearson digunakan untuk menganalisis data.

Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pelajar lebih cenderung bekerja di syarikat-syarikat multinasional. Dalam aspek kriteria memilih kerjaya, gaji yang lumayan menjadi kriteria terpenting, manakala latihan yang baik ialah faktor yang paling kurang pengaruh. Dalam aspek faktor sosial, ibu bapa dan keluarga terdekat disenaraikan sebagai faktor sosial yang paling berpengaruh, sebaliknya kaunselor univerti paling tidak berpengaruh dalam pertimbangan pilihan kerjaya pelajar. Ibu bapa juga merupakan model peranan yang paling berpengaruh sebaliknya pengurus dan penyelia merupakan pembolehubah yang paling tidak berpengaruh dalam mempengaruhi sektor pilihan pelajar. Ujian hipotesis menunjukkan bahawa lelaki lebih berkemungkinan menjalankan perniagaan sendiri berbanding dengan perempuan. Mereka yang mempunyai pengalaman bekerja dalam membantu perniagaan keluarga lebih berkemungkinan mendirikan perniagaan sendiri pada masa depan. Dapatan juga mencadangkan bahawa semakin tinggi aspirasi akademik pelajar, semakin besar kemungkinan mereka bekerja di syarikat multinasional, diikuti dengan menjalankan perniagaan sendiri dan mendirikan perniagaan profesional. Bagi mereka yang mempunyai kawalan dalaman tinggi, kecenderungan mereka bekerja di sektor kerajaan atau/dan perniagaan kecil dan sederhana adalah lebih tinggi. Walaubagaimanapun, pemilihan sesuatu sektor tidak ada hubungan dengan mana-mana strategi kerjaya. Malahan, prestasi akademik, bidang pengajian dan strategi kerjaya tidak ada hubungan dengan sektor pilihan pelajar. Seseorang harus berhati-hati dalam membuat generalisasi dapatan kajian ini untuk tempat yang lain kerana dapatan kajian ini hanya terbatas di UiTM, kampus cawangan Kedah sahaja.

ABSTRACT

This research has four objectives. First objective is to investigate the intended sectoral choice of the diploma students among the six major sectors, namely multinational corporations, small and medium-sized enterprises, setting up own professional business, setting up own business, governmental sector or non-governmental organizations. Second objective tries to explore the important factors shaping the career-related aspects and decisions of the diploma students. Third objective is to explore the perceived career strategies in pursuit of future sectoral choice, and followed by the fourth objective is to examine the relationship between career strategies and intended sectoral choice.

This study is important looking at currently the unemployment rate of the graduates is high and yet little information is available about how undergraduate students make decisions concerning their future careers. It is a population study which is conducted among the UiTM final semester graduating diploma undergraduates in the branch campus of Kedah, during the semester June 2003-October 2003. The theory underpinning this research framework is based on the Social Cognitive Career Theory. It is a quantitative research that the dependent variable is sectoral choice while the independent variables are demographic, societal factors, job criteria preferences, locus of control, and career strategies. The frequencies, mean values differences, Pearson Chi-Square test, and Pearson Correlation test are used to analyze the data.

The results suggest that the students would prefer most to work in the multinational corporations. In the aspect of job criteria preferences, top of the list is the attractive salary, while good training is the least influential factors. In the aspect of societal factors, parents and close family are the most influential factors while university counselor is the least influential factors in the students' consideration of career choice. Parent and close family members also are the most mentioned role models while manager and supervisor are rated as the least influential role models. The hypotheses testing showed that males are more likely to set up their own business than females. Those have prior working experience in helping family business are more likely to set up their own business later. The findings also suggest that the higher of the students' academic aspiration, the greater of the students' preferences to work in multinational corporations, followed by setting up own business and setting up own professional firms. For those who have high locus of control, the greater their preferences to work in government sector or/and small and medium-sized enterprises. However, a person's choice of a particular sector has no relationship with any career strategies. Nevertheless, academic performances, area of studies and career strategies have no relationship with students' sectoral choice. One has to exercise caution to generalize the findings to other settings as the present research findings are only limited to UiTM, Kedah branch campus.

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ABBREVIATION

CGPA	Cumulate Grade Point Average
CSI	Career Strategies Inventories
DBS	Diploma in Business Studies
DIA	Diploma in Accountancy
DIB	Diploma in Banking
DIDE	Diploma in Arts and Design
DIM	Diploma in Information Management
DPA	Diploma in Public Administration
GOVT	Governmental Sector
LOC	Locus of Control
MBA	Master in Business Administration
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SOB	Set Up Own Business
SOPF	Set Up Own Professional Firm
TWA	Theory of Work Adjustment
UiTM	MARA University of Technology

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, economic recession not only brings effect to the organization but it has also affected the pace of change in the world of work and career, especially those who have just graduated or going to graduate. Furthermore, rapid expansion in the sector of higher education and the increasing graduate population has led to great concern about graduate unemployment. This phenomenon has also received considerable press coverage and much attention from the public over the last few years.

Youngsters are confronted with the need to make a choice when they are about to leave full-time education and some even felt that this is a crisis because they are unable to decide (Gothard, 1985, p7). Due to economic recession, companies are downsizing and restructuring. Now the opportunities for career development are subtler, and graduates are struggling to find them. Schumpeter (1976) warned earlier, that the expansion of higher education proceeds faster than the development of the labour market's capacities to absorb the graduates so produced, leading to unemployment or underemployment and potential political instability (cited in Morley, 2001). Therefore, Hawkins and Winter (1996) comments are relevant when they remind that "*more graduates are filling non-graduate positions with large*

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