Cultural Influence on Students' Indifference in Marketing as Career Choice

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Abstract

Absence of specific model to ensure successful career choice and decision and different behaviors and decision processes and priorities causes the students to resort in various methods of acquiring and inquiring information. The level of influence where the information is gathered from is dependent on the relative relationship between its source and the students or career decision makers. This study would like to determine the significant factor that influence the students' career choice and which cultural dimension that manifests in the population. Samples were students' undergone various career orientation activities who have just selected their specialization. Multiple regression analysis was utilized to determine statistically significant predictor for career choice. Empirical evidence shows that in Oman context, particularly the CEBA in UTAS-Shinas, manifests collectivistic cultural dimension where predominant predictor for a career choice is Interpersonal where social responsibility is deemed influential followed by family and personal interest which makes it unique from other research findings made outside of Oman.

Keywords: *culture, marketing, career choice, factors on career choice*

Suggested Citation:
Mirano, C.E., Ines, J.C. Amodo, J.V. & Funtinilla, R.A. (2023). Cultural Influence on Students' Indifference in Marketing as Career Choice. *The Research Probe*, 3(1), 1-6.

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*This paper is presented at the 4th Northern Philippines Business Research Conference hosted by Northwestern University

Introduction

The complexity of career choice and career decision making is rooted from various models and dimensions which does not provide a one size fits all models for a successful career. Common issues among students and youths are in making decision on which career path to pursue which is based on various influences and on subjective evaluation and assessments of these influences. On the personal level, it involves self-assessments, family and peer influences and profiles of successful career professionals and other significant and relevant information. Inductively, it permeates on various physical, psychological and socio-economic factors. Carpenter and Foster (1977) developed a three-dimensional framework, in support to the tenets of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), to classify the factors that influence career choice; intrinsic, extrinsic, and interpersonal dimensions. The relative influence of various factors on the career choice of students has been found to vary across cultures (Özbilgin et al., 2005). Culture is an important determinant of how people think and behave (Hofstede, 1980). Akosah-Twumasi et al.'s systematic review of factors that influence youths career choices, identified factors which could determine the significance of culture which could influence career choice and career outcomes. Conceptualization of these studies is based on the dimension of individualism/collectivism widely used as a major dimension in examining cultural differences (Mau, 2004). Research indicates that basing cultures on individualistic versus collectivist dimensions may explain the classical differences in career decision-making among youths (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018; Mau, 2004; Amit & Gati, 2013; Sinha, 2014).

College of Economics and Business Administration (CEBA) of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) – Shinas, out of 89 students who will be selecting specializations for the current semester, only seven (7) chose marketing. Apparently, the attitude of students toward marketing specialization, being a new career option, manifests in their choice of specialization. It is hypothesized that culture might have an influence in students' choice of career. In practical sense, career decision, though it's an individual decision, involves beyond self-efficacy or the belief on physical and psychological fitness to the career choice. The socio-economic factors also play a significant factor which influence career decision. Occupation according to Brown and Associates (2002) as cited in Johnson and Mortimer (1996), is a strong determinant of persons' status within the community, earnings, wealth and lifestyles and young people follows the same occupation. Also, Blau and Duncan (1967), explained the linkage of father's occupation and son's occupation destinations. Therefore, outside forces variably

influence one's own decision. Outside forces or influencers in selecting a career choice characterizes an integration of individuals into groups which defines their membership. In Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, it specifically refers to collectivism/individualism dimension.

The theoretical framework was based on Akosah-Twumasi et al's (2018) systematic review of factors that influence youths career choices—the role of culture which shows identified career influencing factors and their distribution in cultural settings. The goal of this study is twofold: (1) to determine the predominant predictor in career choice based on three-dimensional framework developed by Carpenter and Foster, and (2) to determine the which cultural dimensions (individualism/collectivism/bi-cultural) is significant predictor of career choice that manifest in the population and which dimension is a predictor of career choice. Strategically, this study will significantly contribute in designing an appropriate career orientation approach in promoting marketing specialization which may influence and induce a paradigm shift in the students' career choice and career decisions.

Methodology

Respondents are students of UTAS-Shinas, CEBA who are moving to diploma second year who have just chosen their specialization and both purposive and population sampling was used. The data were collected through online with a response rate of 97% or 86 out of 89 students. Survey questionnaire was used to collect data and its reliability is established with a Chronbach's alpha of 0.942. Data will be analyzed using multiple regression analysis and other statistical techniques with the aid of SPSS v26. Face validity was used to establish validity through assessment of 3 Human Resource experts from the CEBA. Constructs were designed based on Akosa-Twumasi et. al. (2018) systematic review of factors that influence youths career choices.

Findings

The data were analyzed based on the demographic profile of the respondents. Both male and female students responded that financial remuneration are very influential in making career decisions with the highest mean of 4 and 3.98, respectively. It is followed by job security (3.81), personal interest (3.75), self-efficacy (3.70) and outcome expectations with a mean of (3.61) are among the top 5 based on the overall mean.

The variables identified were grouped to form the three-dimensional framework and were analyzed based on gender. Empirical analysis shows a slight difference where males are more of

intrinsic with a mean of 3.75 while female is more of extrinsic with 3.79. As expected, after multiple regression analysis, intrinsic, extrinsic and interpersonal variables are statistically significant predictors of career choice with $F(3, 82) = 37.437, p < 001, R^2 = 1.0$ at $p < 0.05$. Predominant variable which predicts career choice is interpersonal with the highest beta ($\beta = .397$) rather than intrinsic and extrinsic with $\beta = .384$ and $\beta = .383$ respectively. Empirical results also show that among the interpersonal variables, statistically significant predictor for interpersonal variable is social responsibility with a calculated beta of ($\beta = .420$) followed by family support with ($\beta = .398$).

Moreover, when the variables were grouped to determine the cultural dimension that manifests in the respondents, results showed that male respondents are geared towards collectivism with a mean of 3.45 while on the other hand female are more of a bicultural. Generally, the population characterize being an individualistic with a mean of 3.5533, with a very slight difference of being bicultural with 3.5502.

Multiple regression analysis is used to determine if the cultural dimension is statistically significant predictor of career choice. Individualism, Collectivism and Bicultural are statistically significant predictors of career choice with $F(3, 82) = 39.814, p < 001, R^2 = .999$ at $p < 0.05$. Predominant variable which predicts career choice is collectivism with the highest beta ($\beta = .804$) rather than individualism and bicultural with $\beta = .015$ and $\beta = .185$ respectively. Moreover, family support is statistically significant predictor for collectivism with beta ($\beta = .188$) followed by personal interest and outcome expectation with the same beta of ($\beta = .150$).

Conclusion:

Analysis made from the data shows that the characteristics of Omani students in terms of career choice is influenced by cultural dimension particularly collectivism where students manifest significant influence of family in making career choices. This is in consonance with the study of Gokuladas (2010), Kim (2016), Yamashita et. al. (1999), and Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa, (2006) that students' career choice and decision is influenced by parents and family members. However, it also reveals in other studies that in counties which is predominantly collectivistic, Cheung and Arnold (2014) found that Chinese students are strongly dependent on teachers, followed by peers and less of parents. Fan et. al. (2012) also found that Hong Kong students were more accommodating of opinions of others in the social environment. Though they are in a collectivistic cultural setup, in Oman context, different interpersonal variables tend to be more significant than the others. In this case, aside from influence of family, personal interest and

outcome expectations are the most valued rather than of their social environment. Furthermore, results suggest the indifference of students to marketing as their career is due to lack of information and awareness and on the existence of successful marketing career in their community. New program offerings with lack of success exposure to influencers in the society tends to influence career decision makers or students to be cautious in choosing a career caused by uncertainties due to lack of information and tangible proof in a collectivistic community. Thus, locus point is on influencing the influencers to achieve a paradigm shift on their perspective about marketing.

Declaration

The proper authorities have authorized the authors to disclose the name of the university as subject of the study. However, this study does not receive any financial funding or grant from the university hence, there is no conflict of interest.

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