

## **Determinants of Working and Further Study Intention: Discovering Statistics Graduates Future Planning and Readiness**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Prior studies indicate that student's intentions to further study or working after graduates are very important in their career decisions. This study examines students' path after they have completed their current studies. The aim of this study is to explore the short-term and long-term plans of final year students in UiTM Kota Bharu Kelantan after graduates. Two objectives were highlighted in this study. The first objective is to examine whether there exist significant relationship between characteristics of students and their planning to work or further study. The second objective is to determine factors that significantly influenced students' intention to work or further study. There are 160 students in UiTM Kota Bharu Kelantan was selected which involve final year students in Statistics from semester five until semester seven. The data were obtained from online questionnaire and were analyzed through SPSS. The result shows that there is no significantly relationship between characteristics of students and their planning to work or further study. Besides, all factors listed are significantly influenced students' intention to work or further study.

*Keywords: Further Study, Characteristics, Plannning, Intention, Work*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The education sector offers a variety of higher educational programmes as well as professional and specialised skill courses that are comparatively priced and of excellent quality. In fact, the Malaysian government has policies to encourage both public higher education institutions and private higher education institutions to become involved in the provision of tertiary education and, indeed, has ambitions for establishing Malaysia as a regional centre for education in South East Asia (David and Anne, 2007). Prior studies indicate that student's intentions to further study or working after graduates are very important in their career decisions. In the context of higher education in Malaysia, a noticeable trend has been the increasing competition among universities and higher education institutes to attract students both locally and internationally (Sohail et al., 2003). Therefore, it is important to study the factors influence the students' intention to further study or working.

In Malaysia, there are many educational institutes either in public or private sector. The developments of all educational institutions including all foreigner students in Malaysia

lead to significant rise in the number of undergraduates. This increasing number has caused in a competition for job opportunities among new graduates (Gallagher J, 2013). Plus, there are a few in numbers of training centres for post-graduate and it is an important concerns for the graduates those who wish to practice further specialization in their field. Thus, it is important to understand their planning, motivation and expectation to make a better life in future with attached in terms of their interest to ensure the unemployment can be reduces. Unemployed persons in Malaysia are increased to 461 thousand in September 2015 from 378 thousand in October 2014 (Mellisa C., 2015). It is a disorder that indirectly give few impacts towards final year students when thinking about their future. Discovering these students future planning and readiness is very crucial. Several things are thought to help those final year students to draw their bright future. Students can choose either to further study to higher level or straight enter the career world as a fresh graduate worker.

Thus, two objectives were highlighted in this study:

- 1) To examine whether there exist significant relationship between characteristics of students and their planning to work or further study.
- 2) To determine factors that significantly influenced students' intention to work or further study.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Unemployed persons in Malaysia are increased to 461 thousand in September 2015 from 378 thousand in October 2014 (Mellisa C., 2015). Discovering these students future planning and readiness is very crucial. In this paper, factors influence students' intention to further study is investigated. This is because, according to S.H. Lau (2009), students entering institutions of higher education today are very different than those of previous generations. Also, students' intention to jump into working field is investigated.

As times goes further, after graduating high school, choosing a college or university in local or abroad is a critical decision for students who plan to attain higher education. Physical characteristic, personal influences cost of education fees and social influence the students' choice and persistence towards a high education (S.H.Lau, 2009) is attributes affecting a students' choice decision making. According to literature, which college is student want to attend is less concerning than cost of education (S.H.Lau, 2009). It means that financial issues are quite important that need to be considered. Especially for those who are intent to further study abroad, cost is the major consideration. The main reason is undergraduate studies are mostly funded by families (P. Kakkad & T.P.M.Nair, 2015). There is significant negative relationship between tuition increase and enrolment showed by Cabrera and La Nasa (2000).

In the other articles stated that 78% of students decide to study at postgraduate level (higher level) were based on courses fees (Titchiner.R, 2013). It shows that most students really concern about the expected cost that they may pay along the duration of their study period. 38.5% of Malaysian household belong to low income class (Statistics Department, 2012). 38.5 % is a large amount of percentage and represent about ten million of Malaysian. They are known to be more sensitive to price, then low-cost institutions are more likely to attract low income students (Larry.L & Paul.T, 1987). The other factor is content and structure of degree program. Suitability of the program is the most crucial factor, as students will accept any level of the other factors (S. H. Lau, 2009). Flexibility and length of the program, and program entry requirements seems to be most important criteria. Studies that focused on the variables that influences students' selection of tertiary institution (S. H. Lau,

2009) pointing a wide range of choice criteria. Webb's study found that length of the program is one of the important elements.

Next, the most part under the control of the institution are fixed characteristic including college size, campus environment and good quality of faculty members. According to Lau (2009), external factors that influence a students' intention to study at a higher level is fixed college characteristic. The student demand a comfortable environment to make sure that their good academic performance could maintain with the best facilities provided. According to H. S. Lau (2009), most students critically concern colleges placed relatively close to their homes that present no unusual financial or academic interference. In the decision making process, physical environment of the service production formed as an important element. Price *et al.* (2003) found that facilities are considered as a relevant factor in influencing the students' selection of the institution in which they will pursue their studies when provided with a high standard. Other physical factors influencing the student' high education choices through auxiliary services are library facilities (S. H. Lau, 2009), availability of computers, library facilities, availability of quiet areas and availability of areas for self-study (Price *et al.*, 2003).

Another factor is value of education. Prospective that students have of the institution are the academic reputation and the image of the institution are the sum of opinions, ideas, and impressions (S. H. Lau, 2009). According to Ivy (2001), their view of the reputation and picture of the institution are set up from word of mouth, past experience, and marketing activities of the institutions. As a result, very often the opinion of the institution's excellence goes beyond its actual quality (S. H. Lau, 2009). Based on past studies, a positive image can strongly influence the decision to attend an educational institution (S. H. Lau, 2009). According to Krampf & Heinlein (1981), Lin (1997), Mazzarol (1998), Soutar & Turner (2002). Eventual students also consider the positioning of the institution within the ranking of academic organization.

Student decision to further study is usually influenced by individuals with personal or social ties to the students. Parents, family members, and peers had the largest influence on students' college aspiration (S. H. Lau, 2009). According to research conducted by S. H. Lau (2009), family, friends, peers, teachers, counselors and college recruiters will contribute in influence on the students' decision. As the level of parental encouragement increase, student achievement also increased (S. H. Lau, 2009). Family support is very affected in students' decision making. Since friends and peers have the same mentality with students', their opinions, encouragement, and ideas are really counted by students who have intentions to further study. Opinions of friends and former students counted seriously when deciding between colleges. Research by S. H. Lau and Wagner (2009) showed that students with peers with no college plans influence the willingness of students to make college choice.

During final year, teachers usually conduct a program that related to further study. Students are high expected to depend on information about college from counselor (Leslie *et al.*, 1977). There are findings by researches towards influence of high school personnel on the college choice of minority students (S. H. Lau, 2009). Research implies that few students are more likely to discuss with counselors about their decision. All of these results were combined and it can be seen clearly that the factors that may influence students' intention to further study are cost of education, degree(content and structure), value of education, physical aspect, facilities and resources, and people (family, friends ,peers and teachers) influence.

According to online dictionary (2016), readiness means a condition that someone being fully prepared for something. Analyze readiness for students' intention to further study is very crucial to be made. This is because the entry skills and prior knowledge of the level of student's possession skills is indeed to be measured.(R. Lang, J, 2008). This research

interested on study the research skills, writing papers skill and quotes skill since statistical field related to all those skills and postgraduate study requires a more complex level of investigation and study. Besides, according to R. Lang, J, (2008) the attitude towards content is also essential to be measured. Many students may be having intention to further study but we want to measure their attitude towards postgraduate study, how many of them have knowledge and considered about their postgraduate courses. Being prepared for the information of postgraduate assignment will assist students in their studies (Massey University, 2016). The higher the education level, the complicatedness and level of difficulty also increase. Students need to prepare their mental and physical in order to carry the more responsibility as postgraduate students.

Self-efficacy defined as someone's attitude about their capability to produce selected level of performance that applies influences over events that affect their lives (Bandura, A., 1994). In this research, self-efficacy needed to determine students' capabilities to organize, motivate, performance and behavior towards their intention to further study. According to Yalcinalp, S. (2005), self-efficacy is related only to a particular group with specific skills of a people at a time. The statement that students develop about their academic capabilities help determines what they do with the information and skills they own and explained the reasons why students' academic outcome differ even though those students have similar skills (Ersanli, C.Y., 2015). Researcher intends to measure students' capabilities to motivate themselves and perform postgraduate study with their research skills, availability of time, and knowledge. Students' who are motivate themselves capable on fulfills any given task more than those who less confident (Ersanli, C.Y., 2015). Researchers agree that higher level of self-efficacy really helpful on students' preferences to overcome difficulties on complete postgraduate study. To sum up, students' readiness is important to identify their level of preparation in order to further study at higher level. For self-efficacy ideas on determine how students believe, think and motivate themselves will produce different level of capabilities on complete their postgraduate study.

Working after graduate is one of the future plans that students can decide to choose. 52% of 103 040 students are intends to get a job within 6 months after graduating based on Titchiner.R (2013) research. According to Rashid *et al.* (2013), factors that aspire students to work are financial stability. Some of those students are have intention to further study but need to consider their plan because of additional financial burden for their post-training. College of Dentistry at Ajman University of Sciences & Technology is a private dental school. Thus, is an additional financial burden because dental graduates have to pay for future training in the private sector (Gallagher, 2013). The other factor is gaining professional experience. Students aim, as a fresh graduate, it is very important to gain experiences, increase every skills needed, and learn to be a multitasked person. Research by Gallagher (2013) stated that more than half of the students who expressed their desire to train in government centers justified their selection relating to gaining professional experiences. According to Young. R *et al* (2009), the demand for prepare self with skills needed to gain professional experiences was also reflected in UK study and the demand also a potential concern for most new professionals.

Standard of living is one of the influence attribute that students concern to make decision to work after graduating. For those students who are in higher education (etc. Masters and Phd in Malaysia) and in professional field (etc. medic, dentist), they will attracted by financial benefit and status relation to their job (Gallagher *et al.* , 2007). For those students who are have intentions to work after graduate but unsure to involve in what kind of sector, they can perform personality test to help them make decision. Personality type also an important factor that influence students to work as their future plan. More than 70% of the students are influenced by personal interest when making career choice (Edwards &

Quinter, 2011). Studies of the students of Federal University of Technology, Udoudoh (2012), reported that 79.2% of the respondents are confident of the bounce personality trait can have students career choice and 65.2% thought personality traits can direct to a good career choice. All of these results were combined and it indicates that factors that may influence students' intention to work after graduation are financial stability, gaining professional experiences, standard of living, and personality traits.

An important part for students who seeking for any job is they must acknowledge where the current state of their job search progression. The purpose of job readiness is to assist students identify their work interests and job skills and set them on the right path towards finding the right job. According to Wagner, J.O (2006), job readiness skills are a set of skills and manners that are necessary for any job. Nowadays, company expect graduates to be prepared with common skills such as problem-solving skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, consistent learning attitude and be educated team players who are able to deal with difficult problems and handle complex situations in the workplace (Kwok, Gujral, & Chan, 2014). Researchers agrees to nature that students must possess development and improvement of appropriate skills and being able to define job titles for the positions they want to apply. Career decision self-efficacy was originally defined by Taylor and Betz (1983), as a person's belief that they have the ability to fulfils effectively the tasks related to decision making in relation to their career (Presti, A.L., Pace, F., Mondo, M., Nota, L., Casarubia, P., Ferrari, L., & Betz, N. E., 2012). The questionnaires constructed to identify students' motivated about their self-appraisal where students can define confidently about their abilities, decision in occupation their professional experiences and career goal (Career Assessment Questionnaires, 2016). For occupational information, students are encourage to seek information about the salary they might paid, what are the employment trend in a few years ahead by asked someone who work in the same field or find information from library. Goal selection defines about selection of work that relates to students' field of study, their lifestyle and their interests. According to Career Assessment Questionnaires (2016), in job preparation and career development, who applying or building a career, third-party skill assessments, personality typing, resume review, interview training and public speaking are various skills required. These skills can be applied for planning section, students acquire to make a plan of their goals for 5 years ahead, prepared an excellent resume and successful in managing the job interview process.

As a conclusion, students' readiness is important to identify their level of preparation in order to success in getting a job they interest to. For self-efficacy ideas on determine how students believe, think and motivate themselves will produce different level of capabilities on giving the best performance during interview and after being employment.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study is limited only to the final year students in statistics at UiTM Kelantan. The sample population drawn from the list of students from semester five until semester seven in March 2016 until July 2016. The information that the study gathered is strictly depends on what were given by the respondents. A descriptive survey design has been used to describe the characteristics of factors that influence to further study or work. The chi square test has been used to know the association between independent variables such as readiness and self-efficacy with their intentions. Regression analysis was used to make a prediction of the continuous dependent variables through one or several predictor variables for determining the factors that significantly influence students' intentions. Pearson's correlation examined

whether there is a significant relationship between factors and student intentions. It also would determine the strength and the direction of the relationship.

## **EMPIRICAL RESULTS**

Table 1 below shows the relationship between personality types and student's option with their plan to do after graduation, further study, funding further study, being employed and which sector to being employed. In general results, there are no significantly relationship between personality type with their plan to do after graduation, further study, funding further study, being employed and which sector to being employed since the all p-value more than 0.05.

**Table 1: Summary of Results Due to Relationship Between Personality Type with Planning After Graduation**

<b>Relationship Between Personality Type with Students Option</b>	<b>Chi-Square</b>	<b>P-Value</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
Personality Type * What do you plan to do after graduation?	10.618	0.779	Not significant
Personality Type * Option to Further Study	9.312	0.748	Not significant
Personality Type * Option to Funding Further Study	47.898	0.155	Not significant
Personality Type * Option for Being Employed	31.836	0.375	Not significant

Although studies of the students of Federal University of Technology, Udoudoh (2012) reported that 79.2% of the respondents are confident of the bounce personality trait can have students career choice and 65.2% thought personality traits can direct to a good career choice, the results of this study do not support the previous study. There is no significant relationship between characteristics of students and their planning to work or further study. Furthermore, the following table shows the encouragement, self-efficacy and readiness and option as the factors that affecting statistics graduates future planning and readiness.

**Table 2: Summary Results of Pearson's Correlation Analysis**

<b>Relationship between Variables</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Intention Further Study * Encouragement to Further Study	0.666	0.000
Intention Further Study * Self-efficacy and Readiness	0.678	0.000
Intention Further Study * Option to Further Study	0.042	0.798
Intention Seek for Employment * Encouragement Seek for Employment	0.528	0.000
Intention Seek for Employment * Self- efficacy and Readiness	0.630	0.000

The results of Pearson's correlation shows relationship between determinants of working and further study intention with statistics graduates future planning and readiness. Based on further study results, there are significant relationship between further study intention with encouragement to further study ( $r=0.666$ ,  $p\text{-value}<0.05$ ) and self-efficacy and readiness ( $r=0.678$ ,  $p\text{-value}<0.05$ ). There are no significant relationship between further study intention and option to further study since  $r=0.042$  and  $p\text{-value}=0.798>\alpha=0.05$ . Regarding to seek for employment results, there are significant relationship between intention to seek for employment with encouragement to seek for employment ( $r=0.528$ ,  $p\text{-value}<0.05$ ) and self-efficacy and readiness ( $r=0.630$ ,  $p\text{-value}<0.05$ ).

In specific, the relationship between the further study intention with encouragement followed by self-efficacy and readiness and option can be seen above. From the results, the value of the Pearson's correlation for encouragement and self-efficacy and readiness is 0.666 and 0.678 which indicates that there is moderate positive linear relationship between further study intention with encouragement and self-efficacy and readiness. Besides, there is indicates that weak positive linear relationship between intention and option to further study since value of Pearson's correlation is 0.042.

Furthermore, the relationship between intention to seek for employment with variable encouragement and self-efficacy and readiness would also can be seen from the given table. From the results, encouragement has a moderate positive linear relationship with the intention to seek for employment since the value of correlation is 0.528. On the other hand, intention to seek for employment and self-efficacy and readiness also have moderate positive linear relationship with  $r$  value is 0.630.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings on this research, there is no significant relationship between personality types with the components of students plan to do after graduation, further study, funding further study, being employed and which sector to being employed according to the chi-square test. On the other hand, even though the entire attribute correlate moderate positively with intention to further study and working, only attribute option to further study is significant weak positively of intentions. It is well recommended for students who are intent to further study at higher level to increase their readiness and self-efficacy in order to prepare

their mental and physical. This is because as students go through the higher level of education, all the analysis and research level of difficulties would also be increase. They need to be fully prepared to help them to complete and finish their study on time. As for student who are intend to seek for employment after graduation, they have to increase their readiness and self-efficacy in term of searching for jobs. They need to have sufficient knowledge in their job interest, possess many skills related and ready to learn something new. Students must have clear goals selection to prevent them from being one of those unemployment undergraduates. Family members also may help in making the right decision either to further study or to seek for employment. So, this will also help in increasing their readiness and self-efficacy towards their intentions.

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