

EMPLOYEE CAREER DECISION MAKING: THE INFLUENCE OF SALARY AND BENEFITS, WORK ENVIRONMENT AND JOB SECURITY

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Abstract

Every individual at some point will make critical career decision making in life. Making a wrong career decision will affect a person's future including feeling unhappy, job stress and eventually job withdrawal. This study examined the factors affecting career decision making among government servants in Malaysia. The population and sample were taken from three departments. The population was 140 employees and 103 respondents were identified as the sample. Convenience sampling was employed to collect the primary data. The result from several statistical analysis found that all the independent variables; salary and benefits, working environment and job security were correlated with the dependent variable that is career decision making. Therefore, from the findings, employers, especially from the government agencies, were urged to increase recruiting permanent position instead of contract employment and offering better benefits to improve employees' career decision making.

Keywords: career decision making; salary; benefits; work environment; job security

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Introduction

Career decision making is a process that every person must go through especially for fresh graduate from any education institutions (Chai, Lui, Ong & Yap, 2013). It requires deep thought and longer time of thorough research with many complications. According to labor force statistic from Department Statistics Malaysia, up until January 2018 the unemployment rate increases 0.1 percentage point (3.4%) as compared to previous month which was 3.3% on December 2017 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018). This was not good for economic growth in Malaysia if the unemployment rate increases day by day. This incident may happen because of many factors or reasons and one of the factors is when people are very demanding in choosing job until they get no chance to work in any industry. There are some fresh graduates who are very demanding in choosing job available according to Executive Director of Malaysia Employer Federation (MEF), Datuk Shamsuddin (Free Malaysia News, 2017). For example, job security is attractive in Multinational Companies (MNCs) compared to Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (Ahmed, Noor, Khan, Afzal & Reman, 2010).

Intensive career decision making process could help in reducing job-hopping rate as the current job meets employees' expectations. In that way, people should design their talent successfully as opposed to heedlessly changing occupations constantly and can influence their individual execution. Career planning helped individuals aware their intention and dreams and this process is one of the important elements in every individual's life but wrong career selection can open the door for life-long consequences (Mashige & Oduntan, 2011). This is due when a person makes wrong career decision; it will affect his individual performance, future and also organization performance. Sooner or later, people who made wrong career decision will feel unhappy, dissatisfied and even stress when they are

doing the task or job. Nevertheless, individuals need to limit their search of employment and go for a few occupations that most appropriate with their own needs. Great career decision making will allow individuals to search for job effectively, thus, can diminishes unemployment rate in this nation (Chai et al., 2013). A good career decision making is the center of achievement (Baglivio, Jackowski, Greenwald & Howell, 2014). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the factors that will affect career decision making.

Career Decision Making

Career decision making is a type of choice that requires comprehensive time of intensive research and complicated decision. In addition, "choice" means "selecting or separating from two or more things that are favored" while "career choice" involves choosing one occupation over another. Career decision-making cannot be easily matching a person to an occupation. It is a process where the person matches his or her personal needs with the field that best fits or suitable for them (Gokuladas, 2010). It also implies that individuals have gone through a decision-making process, have observed work field, have assessed their capability, have some understanding of what brings a sense of fulfillment and have examined alternatives and the likely effect of these alternatives on their self-concept. Subjective factors play a more dominating role especially for a young adult's decision to work for a company. Nowadays, new generation consider career opportunities as one of the main concerns for them even in their first job. It was observed that career planning becomes serious during late adolescence and early adulthood (Ahmed et al., 2010). Moreover, even both junior and senior in high-school students are capable of thinking about career and occupation regardless of their developmental stage (Andrea & Arianna 2017).

Furthermore, there are many elements that will effect a person's career decisions (Chai et al., 2013). These factors can be automatically grouped under the category called perceptions. Perception has a critical role to play in our lives since it is going to influence our future decisions (Gokuladas, 2010). Besides that, information that have been used by youth in making decisions about their future career include attitudes and beliefs acquired during childhood, specific information provided by a number of sources like parents, siblings, other family members, family friends, peers, guidance counselors, teachers, school and public library resources, the mass media and government career centres (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). The numbers of career options/alternatives available to an individual at any given point in time are as well influenced by external factors which are the labor market, state of the economy, and many more as well as individual factors for example salary and benefits, education, family background, working environment, employers reputation, job security, attitudes and others (Tanova, Karataş-Özkan & Inal, 2008).

There are five essential career theories, which are arranged as developmental, personality or typology, and behavioral theories. For instance, Ginzberg's General Theory of occupational choice, Super's Developmental Self Concept Theory, Holland's Personality Theory of Vocational Choice, Roe's Early Determinants of Vocational Choice, and Social Cognitive Career Theory (Gati, Landman, Davidovitch, Asulin-Peretz & Gadassi, 2010). Ginzberg's theories suggested that the developmental leading to vocation decision includes the truth factor, the impact of the instructive advancement, the passionate factor and individual qualities. The reality stage has three sub-stages which are exploration, crystallization and specification. In the exploration stage, the adolescent begins to limit decision in light of individual premium, aptitudes and capacities. Next, occupational choice is made in the crystallization stage. Lastly, in the specification stage, people will set themselves up with the goal that the vocation objective can be proficient (Lim, 2013).

The Relationship between Career Decision Making and Salary and Benefits

Salary is a fixed amount of money or compensation paid to an employee as a return for task accomplished by their employee in the organization (Heathfield, 2013). An employee was paid a salary look forward and required to complete a job task given by their employers in return for the salary. An employee can receive salary at any frequency. Usually, salary will be paid by an employer

on a monthly basis instead of daily, weekly or piece-work basis (Chai et al., 2013). It also includes bonuses and incentives for the employees (Hui, 2013). According to the Herzberg theory, salary is necessary as a continued existence because it disputes in contradiction of employee disappointment. Salary is one of the payment obligations by a company or organization to the employee, which affects the employee short-term and long-term financial position for the company and also individual (Wen, Yang, Bu, Diers & Wang, 2018). If there is any increase in pay and benefits given by an organization, the employers will target the financial reward towards the high performers (Pay and Benefits Magazine Feb, 2016). Other than that, compensation can be resolved in various ways, for example, market pay rates for employees performing comparable work in comparable enterprises. Besides, pay could be given by an individual employer in the association and it is additionally influenced by the demand condition, which is the measure of individuals accessible with particular specialized aptitudes to perform particular occupations (Heathfield, 2013).

On the other hand, benefits may include medical, dental, and/or disability insurance, vacation, paid sick leave, pension and others that are provided by the employer to their employees in addition to salary (Moy & Lee, 2002). At the same time, benefits may comprise of Employment Insurance (EI) and Unemployment Insurance (UI) (Haslinah, 2016). Before this there was no conservation protection accessible in Malaysia. The foundation of joblessness protection in Malaysia would help in pleasing business benefits and in addition up skilling and retraining programs (UI) money benefits are given to jobless people. What more, the jobless and their families will be more successful and productively ensured against destitution and UI will encourage returning to employment fast. Moreover, there are medical benefits offered by organizations or association in The United States known as State Workers Compensation (WC) programs. It gives cash benefits and takes care of restorative expenses for their laborers who are harmed or turned out to be sick at work (McInerney & Simon, 2012). Health and safety issue are essential components for business change and research suggested that administration that cannot oversee safety, cannot manage other functions (Chai, 2013). As we know, every organization and company will have their own department on safety and health to make sure that all their workers working in safe condition. There are examples of scenario such as poor housekeeping, many unscheduled equipment breakdowns, lower employee morale and high turnover and ultimately increased the cost (Kazi, 2017).

The basic benefits that accessible in Malaysia are Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and SOCSO (Gunasegaram, 2012). There are two different portion of contribution for EPF such as for employees who receive wages or salary of RM5,000 and below, the portion of employee's contribution is 11% of their monthly salary while the employer contributes 13% and for employees who receive wages or salary exceeding RM5, 000 the employee's contribution of 11% remains, while the employer's contribution is 12%. The Government has set up the EPF, a social security organization that are responsible to provides retirement benefits to private sector's employees and non-pensionable public service employees (Chai, 2013). EPF savings are meant for retirement and it comprises of the employee's and employer's shares of the contributions for every month salary or wages plus the yearly dividends (Rajoo, 2015).

The Relationship between Career Decision Making and Working Environment

Good working environment will lead to a good decision making in an organization, which resulting in gain the number of job satisfaction among employees (Dejendran & Farid, 2013). Reduction of efficient communication with the management and employees will affect the the increase quitting intentions among employees in the organization (Simons & Jankowski, 2007). Other than that, working condition can be characterized in tremendous classifications, for example, the physical settings in an association, attributes of employment, organization features and settings. For instance, the physical settings in the association or organization; outline of an open-design office would have effect on the social communication among the representatives in the workplace. The representatives would have better correspondence with all subordinates and consequently, can manufacture better relationship (Chai et al., 2013). Furthermore, Moy and Lee (2002) defines working environment as the conditions relating to the job environment of the workers. These may include working hours, paid

holidays, safety, rest periods, free uniforms and others. Some of the company offered paid holiday for their employees or workers to make sure that their employees have work life balance. They can get some rest and release their stress. Besides that, some organization provided free uniform for their workers for example workers in manufacturing industry. Some survey findings showed that an individual placed greater importance on working environment in selecting their career (Chong et al., 2013).

However, if the working environment is good in the organization, all the employees can give the best performance and enjoy their career as well. In light of these recent consequences, work environment has assumed more important as determinant of the decision processes made at work by every member of the organization. The effects of environmental factors on the decision-making processes assume particular importance in relation to the organizational aims (Dejandran & Farid, 2016). With these points in mind, we can state that the capacity to manage negative environmental conditions and take advantage of positive environments is an important workplace competence for consistency in decision-making and, ultimately, for better performance (Chong et al., 2013). While deciding the career decision all the environmental components must be considered.

The Relationship between Career Decision Making and Job Security

According to Moy and Lee (2002), job security is defined as a condition where an employee would less worry being fired or sacked by their organization because they have protection against loss of employment. Job security is also defined as a condition where an employer offers assurance to employees that they will be protected from damages result, which would lead to dismissed by the organization (Gelinias, 2005). On the other hand, Probst (2003) defines job security as the degree of one's perceived level toward stability and also continuity of a job. Thus, individual would look for organization that will provide them with higher level of job security. In addition, job security refers to giving stable and unthreatened jobs for employees to maintain the continuity of their employment. Meltz (1989) defines job security generally as an individual stay employed with the same organization with no diminution of seniority, pay, pension rights, and others. Another way of viewing job security is through its reciprocal, job insecurity, which refers to an employee's negative reaction to the changes concerning their jobs (Stacks, 2013).

In addition, by giving generally anchored occupations can enable employer to guarantee workers participation and lift their activity fulfillment. Sengenberger and Wilkinson (1995) have influenced a refinement between three inter-related parts of work-based security: job security (the chance of proceeded with work in a specific occupation with a similar boss in association), employer security (proceeded with work in an alternate occupation and additionally area with a similar business), and employment security (which includes the possibility of changing employers). However, the indeterminate idea of the job security will influence laborer mentalities and practices. Consistent with this, job insecurities have been related with a couple of various health related, attitudinal, and behavioral outcome (Lyon, Filmer & McDougall, 2010).

Based on the discussion, we offer the following hypotheses:

- H₁ There is a relationship between salary and benefit and career decision making*
- H₂ There is a relationship between working environment and career decision making*
- H₃ There is a relationship between job security and career decision making*

Methods

Research Design

The type of research design used is a correlation study which it involves two variables that move simultaneously which are dependent and independent variables. The number of populations is 140 employees and according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), this study needed to choose a total of 103 samples from several divisions. Data was analyzed by SPSS analysis statistics methods such as

descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis.

For a quantitative research, this study used the questionnaire with close-ended questions. The questionnaire was designed and structured in three sections which are section A, B and C. Section A asked for the respondents' demographic background of gender, age, race, marital status, department, years of work and designation. For section B, the items measure for career decision making and the nine items were adapted from Chai et al. (2013). The last section is section C which is for independent variables questions and it involves three factors affecting career decision making such as salary and benefits, working environment and job security. The questions for section C were adapted from Chong et al., (2013). The variables assessed by five Likert scales which 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Table 1. Cronbach Alpha's value

Variables	No. of item	No. of Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
DV : Career decision making	9	1	0.628
IV1 : Salary and benefit	4	-	0.804
IV2 : Working environment	4	-	0.847
IV3 : Job security	4	-	0.823

Reliability test were conducted to measure the consistency of the instrument used. Table 1 show the summary of reliability value of each variable. From the table it shows that working environment has the highest value which is 0.847 and it is indicated as good. While, the second highest was job security that represent 0.823 which also indicated as good. Next, is salary and benefits that shows 0.804. The lowest value of Cronbach's Alpha was career decision making or dependent variable that shows 0.628 (acceptable).

Result and Discussion

Table 2. Demographic Background

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	51	49.5
	Female	52	50.5
Age (years)	19-25	6	5.8
	26-32	26	25.2
	33-39	33	32.0
	40-46	19	18.4
	47-53	15	14.6
	54 and above	4	3.9
Race	Malay	97	94.2
	Chinese	1	1.0
	Indian	2	1.9
	Others	3	2.9
Marital Status	Single	42	40.8
	Married	61	59.2
Years of working	Below 1 year	8	7.8
	1-4 years	29	28.2
	5-8 years	40	38.8
	9-12 years	19	18.4
	13-15 years	6	5.8
	16 years and above	1	1.0

Table 2 describe the demographic background of 103 respondents participate in the study. Firstly, for gender category it was found that majority of the respondents were comes from female which was 52

respondents (50.5%) while for male was 51 respondents (49.5%). Then, for age category it was found that the highest percentage of age was from 33 to 39 years old which represent 33 respondents (32%). The second highest was from 26 to 32 years old that represent 26 respondents (25.2%). However, the lowest percentage was 3.9% from age 54 and above and represents 4 respondents. Next, in terms of race the majority of the respondents were Malay by 94.2% which is 97 respondents. The other percentages were from other races such as Chinese, Indian and the percentages were 1% and 1.9% respectively. However, there were 3 respondents from other ethnic such as Kadazan and also Bajau that shows 2.9%. In addition to that, most of the respondents were married that was 61 respondents (59.2%) and the rest of respondents were single which 42 respondents (40.8%). Lastly, for years of working in the organization it was found that 40 of the respondents that has worked in the organization about 5 to 8 years which was 38.8%. The second highest frequency was 29 respondents that has worked in the organization about 1 to 4 years by 28.2% and followed by 19 respondents that have worked in the organization about 9 to 12 years which was 18.4%. Finally, the lowest percentage was respondents that has worked in the organization about 16 years or more and represents only one respondent.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Analysis

		Career Decision Making	Salary and Benefits	Working Environment	Job Security
Career Decision Making	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
Salary and Benefits	Pearson Correlation	.456**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
Working Environment	Pearson Correlation	.427**	.443**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
Job Security	Pearson Correlation	.566**	.536**	.454**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N = 103

Table 3 shows the summary of the correlation analysis of the three independent variables salary and benefits, working environment and job security to the dependent variable that is career decision making. Pearson correlation analysis was employed. From the analysis it was found that all independent variables have significant relationship with dependent variable at 0.01 levels (2-tailed). According to the Guilford's Law, salary and benefits has moderate correlation ($\rho = 0.456$) with career decision making. This relationship was significant at 0.00. It proofed that salary and benefits has as direct, positive impact on employee's career decision making. Indeed, Chong et al., (2013) note that pay was one of motivating factor in career decision making when measuring job selection preferences of accounting students in Malaysian universities. Next, working environment also has moderate correlation ($\rho = 0.427$) with the dependent variable. This result was supported by Chai et al., (2013) in studying perception among undergraduates in Klang Valley towards the factors that influence career decision making and it shows that when the company has a good working environment the employees would have more interaction with other subordinates and thus, can build relationship more easily and effectively. Lastly, the job security too has moderate correlation ($\rho = 0.566$). On the same note, Chong et al., (2013) found that job security was an important factor in attracting Generation Y in making career decision, the graduates prefer to work with companies are sure of being able to keep their job.

Table 4. Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.612a	.375	.356	.31368

a. Predictors: (Constant), IV3, IV2, IV1

Table 4 shows the value of R square was 0.375. It proves that 37.5% of career decision making were influenced by the salary and benefits, working environment and job security. However, another 62.5% of the variance in the dependent variable was not explained by the independent variable in this study. It shows there were other independent variables which were not included in this study and might influence the dependent variable.

Table 5. Anova Test

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.844	3	1.948	19.798	.000b
1 Residual	9.741	99	.098		
Total	15.585	102			

a. Dependent Variable: DV

b. Predictors: (Constant), IV3, IV2, IV1

Table 5 shows that the F value was 19.798 and the significant value ($p = 0.000$) below than 0.05 significant level. It means the F value is significant. This ANOVA model shows that the three independent variable (salary and benefits, working environment and job security) are significant in explaining the dependent variable which was career decision making.

Table 6. Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.204	.250		8.824	.000
Salary and Benefits	.111	.065	.166	1.705	.091
Working Environment	.109	.058	.173	1.868	.065
Job Security	.259	.064	.398	4.053	.000

a. Dependent Variable: DV

b. Predictors: (Constant), IV3, IV2, IV1

Table 6 shows the result for IV1 (salary and benefits) was 0.91 (9.1%), which was above the significant level which is 5% significant level and it means that salary and benefits was not significant. Hence, explained that salary and benefits was not related with dependent variable. Besides that, the variable for working environment (IV2) was not significant. It is because the p-value is 0.065 (6.5%) which was above the significant value 5%. It similar to the first independent variable means not related to the dependent variable. For the last independent variable which was job security, the p-value was 0.000 (0%) below than significant value 5%. It means that the independent variable was

related to the dependent variable and related to the dependent variable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study aims to examine the factors affecting career decision making at one of a public organization in Selangor, Malaysia. The findings showed that all the research objective and research questions in this study were answered. All independent variables in this study which are salary and benefits, working environment and job security were correlated with the dependent variable that is career decision making. Some recommendations were made for the future studies and organization. The agency should offer permanent employment rather than offering them as contract workers. This is because the workers or staffs tends to work with the company that represents a steady work, no layoffs and sureness of being able to keep their job. Permanent staffs will be retained in the company while contract workers are just temporary. It will help the company itself to operate more efficiently without always searching for fixed term workers. Next, the agency should provide the staffs with any training related to their job for example leadership skill and prepare them for higher position hence can increase employee retention in the organization. The reason is majority of respondent would like to work with a good boss who is considerable and fair. By giving them training it could also increase their commitment and belongingness. In addition, the company can give their Pekerja Sambilan Harian (PSH) an overtime payment so that it can help them to increase their standard of living because some people will use the overtime payment to pay their loans and expenses such as housing loan, car loan and other expenses. Besides that, the agency also can provide some benefits to PSH like sick pay and overtime. According to the result, it shows that most of the respondents would choose any occupation in which they could earn as much money. In other words, they will find job that will offer high salary or more benefits.

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