

**A STUDY ON STUDENTS' CHOICE OF AN ACADEMIC AREA**



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## 2. Letter of Offer (Research Grant)

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Surat Kami : 600-RMI/DANA 5/3/VCSP (8/2014)  
Tarikh : 12 Disember 2014

Profesor Madya Dr. Siti Noor Hayati Mohamed Zawawi  
Ketua Projek  
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Puan

**KELULUSAN PERMOHONAN DANA KECEMERLANGAN (VCSP) 12/2014**

Tajuk Projek	: <i>Factors Influencing Students' Choices of Academic Programmes</i>
Kod Projek	: 600-RMI/DANA 5/3/VCSP (8/2014)
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Dengan hormatnya perkara di atas adalah dirujuk.

2. Sukacita dimaklumkan pihak Universiti telah meluluskan permohonan kertas cadangan puan untuk dibiaya di bawah Dana Kecemerlangan VCSP (Projek Khas Naib Canselor).

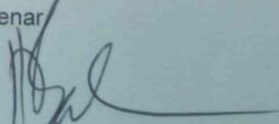
3. Bagi pihak Universiti, Institut Pengurusan Penyelidikan (RMI) mengucapkan tahniah kepada pihak puan kerana kejayaan ini dan diharapkan usaha ini dapat memangkin kemajuan Universiti Teknologi MARA khususnya kepentingan semua.

4. Pihak puan diminta untuk mengisi borang setuju terima projek penyelidikan dan perancangan semula bajet dalam tempoh dua (2) minggu bagi tujuan mengemas kini maklumat. Borang-borang penyelidikan Dana Kecemerlangan VCSP boleh dimuat turun di laman sesawang RMI (<http://rmi.uitm.edu.my/formtdownload.html>). Bersama ini disertakan tatacara ringkas pengurusan projek penyelidikan untuk rujukan dan perhatian pihak puan.

Sekian, harap maklum.

**"SELAMAT MENJALANKAN PENYELIDIKAN DENGAN JAYANYA"**

Yang benar



**PROFESOR DR HADARIAH BAHRON**  
Penolong Naib Canselor (Penyelidikan)

: Dilampirkan

## **5.2 Enhanced Executive Summary**

Higher education environment has become increasingly competitive and institutions have to entice for students' enrolment. Liberalization of Malaysia government policy in the higher education sector has increased the number of the higher education institutions and enrolment of students both in public and private higher education institutions. Nonetheless, the higher education institutions are faced with difficulties in recruiting the right and number of students. Thus, this study was aimed to identify the important factors that have an influence on students' choice of an academic programme and area. The data were captured using a questionnaire and only 1107 data were analysed using the SPSS software. The results from the descriptive analyses show that the students preferred most the science and technology academic area and the most important factor is the job prospect followed by the having an interest in the programme, while the important persons not surprisingly the parents, followed by the teacher that the students considered important in deciding the academic programme. The results from the Chi-Square tests show there is a statistically significant association between fees and preferred academic area; and between having an interest in the academic programme and preferred academic area, while all persons have no statistically significant associations with the preferred academic area. Finally, the male students differed significantly from the female students in terms of preferred academic area, however coincidentally, both the female and male students preferred most the science and technology area. The findings would be beneficial to the higher education authority to plan strategically and to improve on the marketing strategy for recruiting students that could align the interest of the students with that of the higher institutions and the government.

## **5.3 Introduction**

It is the aspiration of the country to become a developed nation by the year 2020. However, there are nine challenges that have to be addressed before Malaysia can achieve her objective of becoming a developed country (Mohamad, 1991). The nine challenges are

1. Establishing a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny.
2. Creating a psychologically liberated, secure, and developed Malaysian Society with faith and confidence in itself, justifiably proud of what it is, of what it has accomplished, robust enough to face all manner of adversity.

3. Fostering and developing a mature democratic society, practicing a form of mature consensual, community-oriented Malaysian democracy that can be a model for many developing countries.
4. Establishing a fully moral and ethical society, whose citizens are strong in religious and spiritual values and imbued with the highest of ethical standards.
5. Establishing a matured, liberal and tolerant society in which Malaysians of all colours and creeds are free to practise and profess their customs, cultures and religious beliefs and yet feeling that they belong to one nation.
6. Establishing a scientific and progressive society, a society that is innovative and forward-looking, one that is not only a consumer of technology but also a contributor to the scientific and technological civilisation of the future.
7. Establishing a fully caring society and a caring culture, a social system in which society will come before self, in which the welfare of the people will revolve not around the state or the individual but around a strong and resilient family system.
8. Ensuring an economically just society.
9. Establishing a prosperous society, with an economy that is fully competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient.

Islam and Ismail (2011) in their study identified top three challenges that require immediate attention in realising the Vision 2020. These are establishing a fully moral and ethical society (no. 4); establishing a united Malaysian nation (no.1); and creating a psychologically liberated, secure, and developed Malaysian Society (no. 2). Despite the above findings, the challenge number 6 that is 'establishing a scientific and progressive society, a society that is innovative and forward-looking, one that is not only a consumer of technology but also a contributor to the scientific and technological civilisation of the future', is of particular interest in the present study. It is imperative that the country's science and technology be at an advanced stage and flourishes for her to become a developed country. For this to materialise, a target of 60:40 ratio for science and technology to non-science and technology students' enrolment has been set by the government (<http://www.epu.gov.my/en/pembangunan-sumber-manusia>).

In striving for a developed country with high technology, and high-income nation, it is vital for the government to take initiatives that drive the nation towards achieving these goals. It is therefore imperative for the government to prepare its younger generation to be more amenable to these goals. The related government bodies and