THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY TRAITS AND OCCUPATIONAL SELF-EFFICACY WITH CAREER INTERESTS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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By

ABDULLAH SEIF ABDULLAH

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother Amina Mohamed Al Bahsan, father Seif Abdullah Al Miskry, and sister Maryam Seif Al Miskry who always inspired me to study and spent as much as they could for my comfort and success. May God bless them.
This study investigated the relationship between personality traits and occupational self-efficacy with career interests among Malaysian university students. The demographic factors associated with students’ occupational self-efficacy and career interests were also determined. The study had provided more insights on students’ behaviour that could enhance the alleviation of social and academic maladjustment among students and increase their academic achievement. In addition, the findings of this study were likely to enhance job satisfaction, quality services, and productivity. The research questions and hypotheses determined the following objectives of the study:

1. The identification of students’ occupational self-efficacy expectations, career interests patterns, prevalent personality traits and their relationship.

2. The relationship between personality traits, occupational self-efficacy, and career interests with the extraneous variables.
3. The relationship between personality traits and occupational self-efficacy with career interests after controlling for the demographic variables.

The population of the study comprised the second and third year Malaysian undergraduate students. Accordingly, based on the knowledge disciplines, 238 subjects were selected from UPM, IIUM, and UTM using the cluster random sampling. The Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale (OSES), Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI), and Personality Research Form (PRF) were used in the data collection to measure occupational self-efficacy, career interests, and personality traits respectively. The computer program software, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in the data analysis. The statistical techniques used were Pearson and Point-Biserial correlation, ANOVA, MANOVA, and the Multiple Regression.

The results indicated that students in general had moderate levels of occupational self-efficacy whereby male students were more confident in nontraditional occupation and sceptical in traditional occupations. In addition, the findings indicated that the largest group of students preferred social and investigative careers and very few were interested in realistic, artistic, and conventional careers. The most prevalent career patterns among participants were represented by the following Holland codes ISE, IER, EIS, SEI, SIE, and SIR. Moreover, the findings suggested that Engineering students were highly associated with achievement and understanding traits whereby Law students had high degree of dominance and aggression traits. The Economic and management students were associated with nurturance, order and cognitive structure traits. In contrast, Medical students were highly associated with achievement, change, and cognitive
structure. Moreover, affiliation and social recognition traits were dominant among Education students whereas the aggressive personality trait was prevalent among Agriculture students. Furthermore, students' personality traits that were significantly related with their career interests were achievement (I), affiliation (R, I, S), change (R, A), nurturance (S, E), order (S, C), social recognition (R, I) and understanding (I). These findings were consistent with the previous studies by Holland (1985) and Lidholm and Touliatos (1995).

Significant relationship was also found between occupational self-efficacy and career interests. These findings were supported by the previous studies by Lent, et. al. (1986) and Bores-Rangel, et. al. (1990). When the personality traits were examined, only cognitive structure and dominance personality traits were significantly related to occupational self-efficacy. Nonsignificant difference was found between occupational self-efficacy expectations and student’s faculty, major field of study, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. Also, nonsignificant relationship was found between occupational self-efficacy and age, gender, and home location. Yet, the findings suggested a significant relationship between occupational self-efficacy and students’ year of study and significant difference between occupational self-efficacy of different groups of occupational consideration. A significant difference was found between career interests of students from different faculties, major field of studies, and occupational preferences. In addition, a significant relationship between career interests with gender and home location was found. Finally, the stepwise multiple regression revealed that the personality traits, occupational self-efficacy and some demographic variables have significant linear relationship with career interests.
Abstrak tesis ini adalah untuk Lembaga Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia bagi memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah dalam Doktor Falsafa.

**PERHUBUNGAN ANTARA TRAIT PERSONALITI DAN KECEKAPAN SWADIRI DALAM PEKERJAAN DENGAN MINAT KERJAYA DI KALANGAN PELAJAR UNIVERSITI**

Ole:

**ABDULLAH SEIF ABDULLAH**

November 2001

Penyelia : Profesor Othman Dato' Haji Mohamed, Ph.D.

Fakulti : Pengajian Pendidikan.

Penyelidikan ini mengkaji perhubungan di antara trait personaliti, kecekapan swadiri dengan minat kerjaya. Faktor demografi yang berkaitan dengan kecekapan swadiri dalam pekerjaan dan minat kerja juga telah dikenal pasti. Kajian ini telah dapat mengemukakan wawasan ke atas perlakuan pelajar dalam mengurangkan ketidak sesuaian akademik serta sosial di kalangan pelajar di samping meningkat prestasi akademik mereka. Sehubungan ini, dapatan kajian kemungkinan akan dapat meningkatkan kepuasan dalam pekerjaan, kualiti perkhidmatan dan produktiviti. Persoalan kajian dan hipotesis kajian ini ditetapkan berasaskan objektif kajian seperti berikut:

1. Perhubungan antara jangkaan kecekapan swadiri pelajar dalam pekerjaan, pola minat kerjaya dan trait personaliti mereka.
2. Perhubungan antara trait personaliti, kecekapan swadiri dan minat kerjaya dengan pemboleh ubah extraneous.
3. Perhubungan antara trait personaliti, kecekapan swadiri dan minat kerja
setelah mengawal pemboleh ubah demografi.

Populasi kajian adalah dari kalangan pelajar universiti tahun dua dan tiga. Seramai 238 subjek telah dipilih secara rawak berkelompok berasaskan disiplin pengetahuan mereka dari UPM, IIUM dan UTM. Alat kajian The Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale (OSES), Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI), dan Personality Research Form (PRF) telah digunakan bagi pengumpulan data untuk mengukur kecekapan swadiri dalam pekerjaan, minat kerjaya dan trait personaliti. Perisian program komputer, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) telah diguna dalam menganalisis data. Teknik statistik yang diguna adalah korelasi Pearson dan Point Biserial, ANOVA, MANOVA dan Regresi Pelbagai.

Hasil kajian menunjukkan secara amnya pelajar mempunyai tahap kecekapan swadiri dalam pekerjaan yang sederhana di mana pelajar lelaki lebih yakin dalam pekerjaan bukan tradisional dan bersikap curiga terhadap pekerjaan tradisional. Dapatkan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa kumpulan terbesar di kalangan pelajar memilih kerjaya investigative dan bilangan yang kecil menunjukkan minat dalam kerjaya realistik, artistik dan konvensional. Pola kerjaya yang paling kerap di kalangan peserta diwakili dengan kod Holland ISE, IER, EIS, SEI, SIE dan SIR. Sehubungan ini, dapat menunjukkan bahawa pelajar Kejuruteraan mempunyai perkaitan yang tinggi dengan trait pencapaian dan pernahaman, manakala pelajar jurusan Undang-undang mempunyai trait agresi dan darjah dominan yang tinggi. Pelajar jurusan Ekonomi dan pengurusan dikaitkan dengan trait pengasuhan, teratur dan berstruktur kognitif. Berlainan pula dengan pelajar Perubatan yang dikaitkan dengan trait pencapaian, perubahan dan

perhubungan yang signifikan diantara minat kerjaya dengan genus dan lokasi tempat kediaman. Pada akhirnya, regresi pelbagai secara stepwise menunjukkan bahawa trait personaliti, kecekapan swadiri dalam pekerjaan dan beberapa pemboleh ubah demografi mempunyai perhubungan linear yang signifikan dengan minat kerjaya.
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It is my genuine pleasure to acknowledge the contribution of the many people who participated in making this dissertation successful. Particular thanks are due to those who worked tirelessly at guiding and constructively criticizing every step of my work. I would like to acknowledge the sincere efforts and support given by the committee Chairman particularly, Professor Dr. Othman Mohamed, and the committee members of this research, Assoc. Professor Dr. Abdul Rahim Bakar and Professor Dr. Abdul Majid Mohd Isa for their tremendous technical contributions.

In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to the panel of languages and measurements experts for their valuable comments and suggestions (see Appendix C). I am also indebted to the Deans of the faculties where data were collected in IIUM, UTM, and UPM for their permission to allow the data collection from their students. I also acknowledge with profound gratitude the financial support provided by the El Farouq Foundation for without it this work could hardly be materialised.

Likewise, I would like to express my gratitude to the Ministry of Education, Zanzibar for granting me a permission to pursue the higher studies. I am equally grateful to my wife and children for their support, endurance and perseverance through all the tough times they experienced while I was preparing this work. Finally, I would like to acknowledge all types of support rendered to me financially, technically, and morally from other parties not mentioned herein that helped to make this project a success.
I certify that an Examination Committee met on 2nd November 2001 to conduct the final examination of Abdullah Seif Abdullah on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “The Relationship between Personality Traits and Occupational Self-Efficacy with Career Interests among University Students” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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Date: 18 JAN 2002

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This thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

AINI IDERIS, Ph.D.
Professor,
Dean of Graduate school,
Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Date:
I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations that have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

Abdullah Seif Abdullah

Date: 18/1/2002
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A = Artistic career interest
Ac = Achievement
Af = Affiliation
Ag = Aggression
C = Conventional career interest
CAS = Career Attitude Scale
Ch = Change
CI = Career interests
Cs = Cognitive Structure
Do = Dominance
DV = Demographic Variables
E = Enterprising career interest
EDA = Exploratory Data Analysis
En = Endurance
I = Investigative career interest
IIUM = International Islamic University Malaysia.
Nu = Nurturance
Or = Order
OSE = Occupational Self-Efficacy
OSES = Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale
PRF = Personality Research Form
PSD = Public Services Department
PT = Personality Trait
R = Realistic career interest
S = Social career interest
Sr = Social Recognition
Un = Understanding
UPM = Universiti Putra Malaysia
UTM = Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
VPI = Vocational Preference Inventory
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Among the likely problems to confront students at the end of their schooling is their choice of work by which earning for living can be secured. Most times, people select jobs on the basis of their experiences at home, school or society. For some, it may be a continuing and comfortable experience. To most people, however, it is a completely new experience mixed with many conflicts that confront individuals who are about to start new jobs. As a result, a number of questions will come to mind that arise from several aspects of human life, needs, aspiration, ability and self-concept (Super, 1957).

Despite all these inconveniences, in order to survive in this world we must have jobs through which we would be able to get our basic needs such as food, shelter, clothes as well as other physical and psychological needs that we perceive as very important in our daily life. Maslow (1971) contended that our needs are divided into physical, biological, and psychological needs. Many of these needs can be fulfilled through our jobs. Although we have to work to earn a living, we cannot be happy and satisfied with our jobs if they do not serve our interests (Holland, 1985). Hence, interest is a very important element in selecting a career because without it job satisfaction cannot be attained. Based on this view, a large number of researches have been conducted that indicated strong association between career interest and job satisfaction (Holland, 1985; Gottfredson, 1996).