

## The Effect of Compromising Factors on Career Choice Tendency: A Case of Malaysia Community College Graduates

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### Abstract

Compromise process in choosing careers that is not in line with the field of study is widely happening not only in Malaysia, but throughout the globe. This is because the reality of career selection is a very complicated challenge to be addressed especially by those who have just graduated. This study was conducted to gaze at predictive factors that influence community college graduates in compromising aspects during the job search processes. A total of 223 community college graduates involved in this study as respondents and data was analyzed using SPSS 23.0. Multiple Regression analysis was conducted to answer the research questions and normality test was also conducted to prove that the data obtained was normally distributed. Normality test analysis using skewness & kurtosis showed that both were valued between 1.96 and +1.96. Hence, this data has a normal distribution as the value of skewness = -0.894 and the value of kurtosis = 1.794. Further Multiple Regression analysis has shown that there is a significant involvement of predictive factors in compromising factors among community college graduates. Four (4) factors namely: Lack of Prospects ( $\beta = 0.134$ ,  $p = 0.03$ ), Personality Imbalance ( $\beta = 0.182$ ;  $p = 0.03$ ), Low Return ( $\beta = 0.297$ ;  $p = 0.00$ ) and Interest Changing ( $\beta = 0.264$ ;  $p = 0.00$ ) are significant predictors that play the roles in influencing career compromising. Another factor that is Obstacle ( $B = 0.02$ ;  $p = 0.95$ ) is proven not to be a significant predictor in influencing the tendency to compromise among community college graduates. The results of this study could be used by community colleges' management and lecturers to strategically plan and review their curriculum and the result could also serve as a guide to their graduates for future career decisions. It is also recommended that the top management of community colleges add subjects of relevant soft skills to equip the students with multiple skills to face the reality of the working world.

**Keywords:** Compromise, Career, Community College

**Introduction**

Vocational and Technical Education and Training (TVET) has been at the heart of the development of national education in Malaysia. The Government of Malaysia in its recent Budget 2021 announcement, has allocated six billion Malaysian Ringgit for TVET development initiatives (Ernst & Young, 2020). TVET has come out of its cocoon to create a new history in this country as previously it was only looked upon as institutions for those with lower academic achievement. The government is serious on this effort as TVET graduates are expected to meet the needs of the industry on skilled and semi-skilled labor among citizens that would in turn, could reduce the dependency on foreign labors which causes a huge amount of money outflows to other countries.

*Background of the Study*

Theoretically, people will choose a career that suits their personality as well as their interests and this is called career coordination (Super, et al., 1996). Naturally, every human being will try to find common ground between personality and the choice of work they would want to do to achieve self-satisfaction (Holland, 1996). However, the challenges of choosing such career have been very broad and challenging (Creed & Hughes, 2012) especially in this era of 2020 when we are facing with the Covid-19 pandemic which indirectly has made the world of work or to be exact, our next generation's career more difficult. Thousands of Malaysians have been fired. The local hotel industry, for example, has already laid off 6% of its employees, with a growing number of its staff taking unpaid leave and pay cuts as the sector crumbles from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (Ernst & Young, 2020) and several unreported retrenchments are worrying (Free Malaysia, 2020). This has resulted in some individuals choosing a career that they think is best for themselves even though it is not the best.

Hence, these increasing challenges have forced every graduate to be good at compromising with every job opportunity that is available. A career counseling figure, Gotfredson (1996) mentioned that the process of compromise is a common change in the pattern of individual career choices throughout his life when faced with constraints beyond their control. There are two processes of change that will be done. First, they will remove the job options from the dream by considering the factors of gender, value and desire for the job. Second, the career objectives set forth will be discarded or changed when it is felt that it is impossible to achieve. Overall, compromise is a method of choosing another way or modifying the desired job target.

*Research Problems*

Compromising is the process of one choosing a preferred option and dropping other alternatives that he thinks are unattainable (Sumari et al., 2016). The process of compromising allows one to find an alternative path for him to succeed in the future. This study was conducted based on Holland (1996); Gotfredson (1996) career personality theories that discuss the importance of compromising in career. Compromise is described as an exchange for the process of pursuing ambitions due to internal or external constraints. There are two (2) changes that will be implemented. Firstly, one will isolate or reject a career due to gender, prestige, and career interests. Secondly, the original career objectives will be changed or revisited if it feels complicated to achieve. Overall, compromise is a method of providing alternatives or changing planned objectives. In fact, there are other theories about compromise such as Holland (1997) who stated that compromise is very necessary if there is confusion in the match of personality, interests, and ambitions. Even Lent et al. (1994) in

cognitive social theory have also elaborated on the importance of compromise if one was faced with constraints during the process of obtaining a career of choice.

TVET graduates from community colleges do not only have to compete with other TVET graduates from various public institutions such as Institut Latihan Perindustrian (ILP), Institut Kemahiran Tinggi Belia Negara (IKBN), Institut Kemahiran Mara (IKM) and so on, but also from Private Skills Training Institutions. Similarly, SPM graduates who are working while studying with companies do add to this competitive world of work. In addition, Nor AMR et al. (2017) found out that 50% of the community college graduates in the field of electricity in three community colleges in Selangor, Johor and Melaka have changed occupations that had nothing to do with their studies at community colleges. Among the main reasons was high competition in the field of electricity causing them to compromise on their career path. For these graduates, the need to compromise is very critical to ensure survival even if it might not be considered as the best decision. The study was further supported by Sattar et al (2016) who found that the process of career compromise did occur among community college graduates much earlier. In fact, there are community college graduates who are currently successful in other career paths despite the different programs they had learned while in community college. This shows that compromise is a very important and a common career process for graduates of an institution when they want to find jobs after they have graduated.

Thus, this study was conducted aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify influential predictor factors in the career compromise process of community college graduates.
- To determine the relationship between predictive factors and the desire of community college graduates to compromise in their career choices.

## **Literature Review**

### *Definition of Compromise and its Importance*

The process of compromise is a form of exchange or adjustment of personality with the choice of employment in the real working world. This is considered a normal response in an individual's effort to find the best match in his or her dream career choice (Creed & Hughes, 2012).

Compromise is an important framework in the theory of Career Aspirations by Gotfredson (1996) as it is much related to the process of finding a dream career. It should be noted that finding a suitable career between personality and career type is not an easy task especially in today's borderless world of globalization. The various obstacles and challenges that lie ahead can make a person give up and even lose in making choices of finding good job and developing careers. This is what forces individuals to change their desired career path to enable them to continue and compete in the job market (Gotfredson, 2005). Even if the job is unattractive or unpopular, difficult, and dirty for some individuals, it was the best career choice for them at that point of time.

However, this aspect of compromise has been given less attention before in the career world or even while the students were in colleges, and only a little research has been produced to discuss the factors contained in career compromise (Creed & Hughes 2012). Holland (1997) has clearly said that compromise is a necessity when there is difficulty in matching personality and dream job. In addition, Lent et al (1996) in Career Social Cognitive Theory reiterated that compromise is very important when faced with constraints or difficulties to get the desired job.

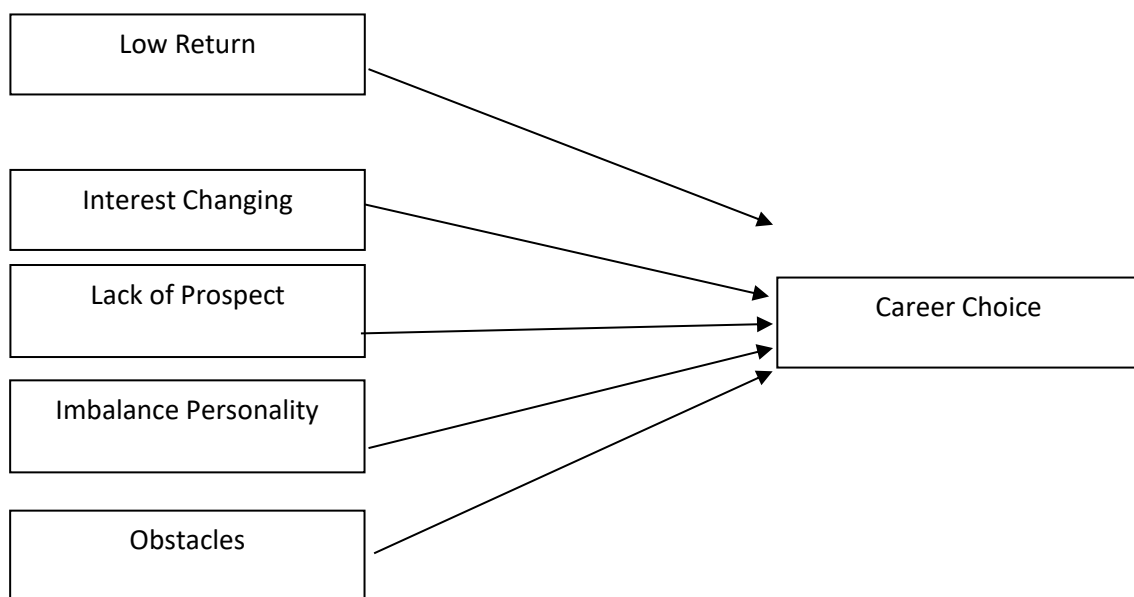
### Compromise Process

Eysenck's (1998) study of genetic sensitivity of fraternity stated that, in determining the direction of human experience, an individual will find it himself, and it is not something that will happen naturally without human involvement. Every individual will determine the desired options in his life and most of the time, individuals will compromise to grab a job offer that is considered "good" even, if not the "best" (Gotfredsen, 2005). If it is just a small obstacle, most people will not sacrifice their prestige or gender differences to get the job. Sacrifices are made only when there are major constraints and difficult changes to be made from what they are having now (Gotfredson, 1996; Gotfredson, 2005; Ming et al., 2007; Zunker, 2012).

### Conceptual Framework

In general, this study is based on the TVET Student Career Development Pathway Model or known as the ROSS career model that has been developed by Nor ARM (2016). This model was developed based on the Theory of Super Career Development Theory (1971) and Gottfredson's Theory of Career Aspiration (1981) which was developed into a career path model for TVET students. This model proposes five (5) constructs of the compromise factors of community college graduates generated from a study on 15 high-income community college graduates. Figure 1 explains the conceptual framework for this study which was built based on the R.O.S.S. Career Model.

#### Compromising Factors



Sources: Nor ARM (2016)

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

### Methodology

This quantitative study involved a total of 223 graduates of Melaka and Negeri Sembilan Zone community colleges as the respondents. The number of samples is much larger than the sample size suggested by the G-Power sample selection application (Amir WM et al., 2018). For studies requiring analysis of Multiple Regression (effect size: 0.8 and *peer prob.*: 0.05), the minimum sample proposed is 49 people (Faul et.al., 2009). This coincides with the opinion of

Darussalam and Hussin (2016) who stated that the larger the study sample, the better the study findings.

Google Form research instruments were distributed virtually based on the pre-determined sample sizes and stratified random sampling has been used to select the respondents. The study responses were collected digitally where descriptive and inferential analysis was conducted on the results of this study. This instrument consisted of two parts. Part A revolved around demographic information of community college graduates. While Part B was about the information on predictive factors that influence the tendency of community college graduates to compromise in their careers. The instrument used was adopted from the study of Nor AMR (2016) which has been confirmed by three counseling experts and has an alpha value of 0.882.

### *Normality Test*

This study used Multiple Regression to identify compromise predictor factors and this analysis requires data to have a normal distribution. Therefore, the Data Sample Normalization Test was done to ensure that the data obtained is normal and meets the requirements of the analysis. If the data is not normally distributed, parametric tests cannot be performed and it is only suitable for non-parametric tests. There are various methods used to determine the normality of the data. The normality test for the distribution of data can be divided into two ways namely whether to use: a. Statistical tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov; Shapira-Wilks; Lilliefors Statistics; Skewness & kurtosis); or b. Graph (Histogram; Steam-and-Leaf plot; or Normal probability plot). For this study, the Skewness & Kurtosis method was used, and the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

### *Skewness & Kurtosis Normality Test*

Statistic		Std. Error	
Compromise	Mean	3.5556	.06213
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound 3.4328	Upper Bound 3.6783
	5% Trimmed Mean	3.5908	
	Std. Deviation	.76853	
	Skewness	-.894	.196
	Kurtosis	1.794	.390

Normality Test analysis using skewness & kurtosis showed that both results are between 1.96 and +1.96. Hence, this data has a normal distribution because the value of skewness = -0.894 and the value of kurtosis = 1.794, where both are in the range of value + -1.96. Therefore, the data of this study have been proven to be normally distributed and this allows the method of Multiple Regression analysis to be performed to test the predictor factors in the tendency to compromise.

### **Findings and Discussion**

#### *Influential predictor factors in the career compromise process of community college graduates*

This study clearly shows Lack of Prospects ( $\beta = 0.134$ ), Personality Misconduct ( $\beta = 0.182$ ), Low Return ( $\beta = 0.51$ ) and Changing Interest ( $\beta = 0.66$ ) are the most dominant predictor factors in

influencing the tendency of community college graduates to compromise. Individuals tend to act when the time to act has come and individuals will take on jobs that are suitable to fulfill their career desires. Compromise is based on good choices even if it may not be the best choice. This is in line with the findings that show a change in interest after graduation can be a factor of graduate compromise. According to Holland et al. (1996) interest is something that can be nurtured and can change over time. When an individual gets exposure to a career, a change in career interests can also occur.

#### *The Relationship between Predictor Factors and the Propensity to Compromise in Career Choice*

Multiple Regression analysis was used for this study due to the existence of five (5) predictive factors that are expected to be significant in the desire to compromise in careers among community college graduates. This Multiple Regression Analysis was also used to identify the dominant predictor factor in this compromise process. The value of  $r$  is the correlation between the criterion variable (dependent variable) and the predictor variable (combination of independent variables). The  $r^2$  value of 0.513 indicates 51.3 percent change in the criterion variable due to the contribution of the predictor variable. This result is supported by the Anova Test with a value of  $F$  ( $dk = 5, 216, p < 0.00$ ) = 45.53.

The results of this Multiple Regression analysis have also shown the existence of a significant influence of predictive factors that influence the desire to compromise among community college graduates. Four (4) factors namely: Lack of Prospects ( $\beta = 0.134, p > 0.03$ ), Personality Misconduct ( $\beta = 0.182, p > 0.03$ ), Low Return ( $\beta = 0.297, p < 0.00$ ) and Interest Changing ( $\beta = 0.264, p < 0.00$ ) is a predictor of significantly influencing the tendency to compromise in a career. This coincides with this study which shows that changes in interest can affect the compromise aspect of community college graduates. Compromise is a process that is closely related to a person's perception of the accessibility of career choices (Sumari, Mohd Khalid & Razak, 2016). However, one factor that is Obstacle ( $\beta = 0.101, p > 0.10$ ) is not a significant predictor in influencing the tendency to compromise among community college graduates. This proves that Barriers in Careers (gender constraints, difficulty finding employment and difficulty competing) are not predictive factors that influence the tendency of community college graduates to compromise.

Few perceptions of accessibility can be inferred through this study where an individual will usually pay attention to the things, he thinks are most appropriate for himself and within his social sphere. The higher the inclination towards a choice, the higher the likelihood that a person will seek and obtain information related to that choice. This supports the findings that show that when there is an inconsistency of personality an individual tends to compromise and change careers that are different to his field of study. They do it in order to get a career that feels in line with their personalities. Many career theories such as Super (1971); Holland (1973) and several other theories including Anne Row (Brown & Brooks, 1996) agreed on the role of personality coordination in individual career choices.

A compromise will also be made when all efforts to fulfill the inspired career have been made but to no avail. At this stage, the individual will compromise and choose the career he thinks is best suited to him. The career chosen is not necessarily the best but suitable and good for oneself. One of the most important factors is the good return from the career he is pursuing. This is because a career is a source of income for every human being to support himself and his family.

These predictive factors can be considered by policy makers to reduce unemployment so that social problems can be prevented and open more opportunities and initiatives to the younger generation to venture into entrepreneurship as a career choice. Even in Islam, work is Sunnatullah and Allah promises sustenance for His servants who strive (Noah, 2006). Allah says which means:

"Indeed, successful people who try to purify their souls and develop themselves. He remembers his Lord by always mentioning His name and performing prayers."  
(Surah Al-A'la, 14 & 15)

### **Conclusion**

In all, this study has successfully achieved its objective to look at predictive factors on the tendency to compromise community college graduates. All these predictor factors of compromise need to be taken seriously by the top management of community colleges to ensure the level of marketability of community college graduates continues to increase. This is important to ensure that the curriculum and even the image of community colleges in the job market remains relevant. It is also recommended that the top management of community colleges add subjects of relevant soft skills to equip the students with multiple skills to face the reality of the working world.

In addition, the ability to compromise in the job market is critical in the current situation where the job market is in a state of uncertainty due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Community college graduates can no longer rely entirely on their own interests and personalities in choosing the job they want. They need to wisely evaluate the factors that exist and act quickly to seize the opportunities available.

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