

CAREER BARRIERS TO CAREER INDECISION: A FINAL-YEAR BBA STUDENTS VIEW

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Abstract: Researchers uncovered number of factors that affect young students in finding their preferred career, and that lead to career indecision. This study thus drives into two directions: first to identify the major barriers that stimulate difficulty for students to explore right career, and second to ascertain what occupational barriers lead to career indecision. The sample of this research involved final-year BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration) students studying at ten different universities in Bangladesh. A survey was steered using self-reported questionnaire consisting of two standardized measures to gather research data. Surveyed data were reviewed first to ensure usability and then analysed following a number of distinct statistical techniques including descriptive, Pearson correlation and regression analysis. All the statistical analyses were performed in SPSS software version 20.00. Results reveal that political and social reference, national shortage of good job, lack of parental interest, lack of career counseling and lack of personal ability significantly affect students' career, that in consequence lead to career indecision. The present research suggests that various policy-makers, management and university may support students by ensuring merit-based recruitment, generating prospects through new ventures, organising career programs and developing their aptitudes.

Keywords: career, career barriers, career difficulty, career indecision

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Introduction

Making career decision is very important and thus quite taxing especially for young students. This is because they simply lack strong self-concept; appropriate career information, skills and competencies; and practical knowledge about the world of work (Gati et al., 1996). In addition to vocational and personality interests (Burns et al., 2013), factors like parent or family, socio-political condition, sufficient job prospects, and career counseling also play crucial role in career exploration and decision-making process (ILO, 2013; Keller and Whiston, 2008). Researchers found significant influence of family, parent or friends on students' career decision (Emmanuelle, 2009; Mudhovozi and Chireshe, 2012). Youth in under-developed or developing societies experience greater difficulty, as many parents in those cultures do not simply allow their adolescents to make career decision (Negsi, 2003). University students suffer vastly from career indecision (Jordaan et al., 2009; Saunders et al., 2000). Both environmental (external) and attitudinal (internal) factors may upraise career indecision (Osipow, 1999), which causes deep adverse consequences among students. Career indecision not only leads to career

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uncertainty but also contributes negatively to wellbeing, vocational life and social state of young adults (Bullock-Yowell et al., 2014; Cheung et al., 2014; Creed et al., 2005). Many young people get afflicted by career indecision in Bangladesh because of the complex labor market situation, that in turn navigates them to search superior opportunities overseas (ILO, 2013). To get rid of long-term detrimental effects, individuals associated to career decision-making thus need to diagnose the symptoms so as to reduce career indecision among students as well as other young adults.

Extensive researches uncovered significant impact of career barriers like parental influence, financial support, available job opportunities, career counseling on career indecision in different parts of the world (Creed et al., 2004; Saka and Gati, 2007; Lent et al., 2002). However, career barriers and indecision were paid less attention and remained under-researched in Bangladesh, though young educated people perceive relatively vaster difficulties in finding job due to uneven distribution of availability of job and qualified manpower in the country (ILO, 2013). In order to contribute to the career literature in Bangladesh, the present study was therefore designed to serve two specific purposes: (i) to ascertain major barriers that affect students to choose their anticipated career, and (ii) to investigate the effect of career barriers on career indecision. Several hypotheses were developed and tested to attain the research objectives.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Levinson ed. (1989) argued that placing someone in a career is challenging like setting together a psychological jigsaw puzzle: we are unaware of 'many objects' are not fashioned in such a way that we can fit them together efficiently. These objects can be termed as career barriers. Perceived career barriers, often known as perceived occupational barriers, on the other hand consist of obstacles an individual experiences to get employment (Albert and Luzzo, 1999), which may affect thoughts, emotions and activities during the process of career selection (London, 2001). Powell (2000) distinguished career barriers into two basic types: person-centered that encompasses personality attributes, skills and attitudes, and situation-centered that includes barriers related to work and environment.

Whilst Patton et al. (2003) branded two traits of external career barriers such as work related and non-work related barriers, Lent et al. (2002) argue some common career barriers to be lack of family support, economic difficulties and lack of personal ability. Howell and his colleagues (1984) extensively studied and extracted ten latent career or occupational barriers: lack of interest by parents, the school, financial disability to attend school, no intention to move, national shortage of good jobs, local shortage of good jobs, unavailability of technical school and colleges nearby, lack of information about existing opportunities, personal intelligence, and race.

Career indecision on the other hand is considered as the inability or feeling of higher extent of perceived uncertainty to choose a specific career goal (Callahan

and Greenhaus, 1990; Lopez and Ann-Yi, 2006). Gati et al. (1996) conceptualized career indecision as a construct indicating problems a person may experience in making his or her career decision, and devised a taxonomy for realizing difficulties leading to career indecision, which consists of three key domains: lack of readiness, lack of information and inconsistent information. Self-efficacy was found to be another significant predictor of career indecision (Betz and Voyten, 1997; Creed et al., 2004). Germeijs and Boeck (2003) extracted three factors of career indecision from normative decision theory: information problem, valuation problem and outcome uncertainty.

Patton et al. (2003), and Constantine et al. (2005) explored that career or occupational barriers positively relate to career indecision, which may cause severe psychometric problems (Hinkelman and Luzzo, 2007). Families or parent significantly influence children's career decision though (Wong and Lui, 2010); parents actually choose their children career in many Asian countries (Baines, 2009). Financial security, and Lack of self-efficacy or personal ability also affect career indecision (Baines, 2009; Betz and Luzzo, 1996; Betz and Voyten, 1997). Many researchers on the other hand evidenced significant relationship between career counseling or career education, and career decision (Brown and Krane, 2000; Hughes and Karp, 2004; Reese and Miller, 2006; Tabor, 2014).

Based on the prior discussion, the below research framework, and one basic (H1) and ten sub-hypotheses (h1-h10) were formulated. This framework demonstrates the postulated impact of occupational barriers on career indecision.

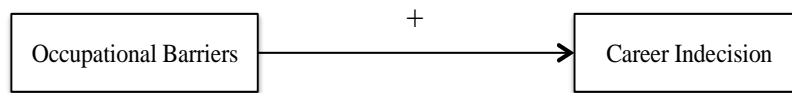


Figure 1. Research Framework

H1: Occupational barriers have a significant positive impact on career indecision.

h1: Lack of parental interest has a meaningful positive effect on career indecision.

h2: Institution (university) has a significant negative impact on career indecision.

h3: Insufficient financial support positively leads to career indecision.

h4: Unwillingness to move positively leads to career indecision.

h5: National shortage of jobs has a significant positive effect on career indecision.

h6: Lack of career counseling positively leads to career indecision.

h7: Lack of career education has a meaningful positive effect on career indecision.

h8: Lack of information about opportunities positively leads to career indecision.

h9: Lack of personal ability has a meaningful positive impact on career indecision.

h10: Political and social reference positively leads to career indecision.

Methodology

Participants and Procedures

Participants of this study include 300 final-year undergraduate students who are currently pursuing BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration) at 10 different universities in Bangladesh. This study followed quantitative survey method. The researcher first identified ten universities located in Dhaka, Bangladesh based on the reputation. The researcher either by him or through the faculty members/university staffs manually distributed questionnaires among randomly picked thirty students to each of the ten universities. The faculty members or university staffs were instructed about the protocol well before the survey took place. The filled-in questionnaires were manually collected. Then, all returned answers were carefully reviewed and only fully completed answers were considered for statistical analysis. 231 students returned their answers where twenty-one answers were found ineligible for statistical analysis. Thus, the final sample stood at 210 of which one hundred twenty (57%) were males and 43 % of them were females. This figure sounds quite relevant as The World Bank (2015) documented that female enrollment rates at higher study levels in Bangladesh was just above 40% and 41% in 2011 and 2012 respectively. All survey participants were aged between 21 and 25 years, and only eighteen percent of them are married. A mere four percent of the respondents reported having some sort of work experiences. Responses emerged from students with three different major areas of study: human resource management (46%), strategic management (38%) and finance (16%). Sixty one percent survey attendants were grown up in urban or sub-urban communities whereas thirty nine percent of them were brought up in rural community.

Instruments

Perceived Barriers Scale (PBS): The Perceived Barriers Scale developed by Howell et al. (1984) consists of ten barriers. The sixth (local shortage of good jobs) and tenth (race) items were replaced, and other items were slightly altered in order to fit the nature and context of this study. The PBS asks participants to respond to a general question “How much effect do you think each of the following things has in keeping you from getting the job you desire?” for all ten barriers: (i) lack of parental interest; (ii) the university you are attending; (iii) insufficient financial support; (iv) your unwillingness to move; (v) national shortage of good job; (vi) lack of career counseling (vii) lack of career education; (viii) lack of information about exiting opportunities; (ix) lack of personal ability; and (x) political and social reference. Respondents were optioned to indicate the effect level of each barrier on a 5-point scale going from 1-no effect to 5-very much effect. Higher scores imply greater perceived barriers. The occupational barriers scale was found highly reliable measure for this study with a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.835. Several researchers used this scale and evidenced decent alpha score of 0.80 or more (e.g. Creed et al., 2005).

Career Indecision Scale (CIS): Career Indecision Scale of Germeijs and Boeck (2003) was adopted to measure students' perceived difficulties in choosing anticipated career. This scale includes seventeen items that are split in three sub-scales namely information problems, valuation problem and outcome uncertainty. Information and valuation problems contain six items each whereas the latter yields five items. The scale comprehends both positive and negative statements where positive ones were reverse graded. Items were weighted on a 5-point scale ranging between 1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree where 1 indicates no problems and 5 implies significant problems in career decision making. This scale and its three factors were also found suitable and consistent for the present study as the overall CIS produced quite decent alpha value to be as high as 0.871, whereas the three dimensions such as information problems, valuation problems and outcome uncertainty yield alpha coefficients of 0.758, 0.796 and 0.789 respectively.

Demographic variables: In addition to the standardized measures, a demographic section was also designed to collect some general information about the graduate students. Participants were solicited to indicate their sex, age, marital status, work experience, major area of study and community where they have grown up.

Data Analysis

Frequency distribution and percentile measures were undertaken for the distribution of study sample. Whilst descriptive statistics was used to calculate the scores of mean and standard deviation, Pearson correlation was applied to experiment the typical relationship between occupational barriers. Simple and multiple regressions were run so as to examine the relationship impact between independent and dependent variables of this study. In addition, reliability of the scales was tested determining the scores of Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

Results

Occupational barriers were first analysed determining the scores of mean and standard deviation (SD) of each of the ten barriers. Then these barriers were ranked on the basis of calculated mean value. Table 1 presents the scores of mean and SD of occupational barriers and their corresponding ranking.

As demonstrated in Table 1, political and social reference yields the highest mean score of 4.01 while unwillingness to move ($M=2.87$) generates the lowest mean value among all ten barriers. National shortage of good job ($M=3.89$), lack of career counseling ($M=3.85$) and lack of parental interest ($M=3.84$) produced almost similar but higher scores of their respective mean. Mean value of lack of personal ability ($M=3.74$) was also relatively higher. Lack of career education ($M=3.50$) and lack of information about opportunities ($M=3.31$) produced moderate mean values. Apart from these, mean scores of educational institution ($M=2.89$) and poor financial support ($M=3.06$) were significantly low in comparison to other factors.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of occupational barriers

Occupational Barriers	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Lack of Parental Interest (LPI)	3.84	0.63	4
University You are Attending (UYA)	2.89	0.93	9
Insufficient Finacial Support (IFS)	3.06	0.91	8
Unwillingness to Move (UM)	2.87	0.85	10
National Shortage of Good Job (NSJ)	3.89	0.72	2
Lack of Career Counseling (LCC)	3.85	0.60	3
Lack of Career Education (LCE)	3.50	0.67	6
Lack of Information about opportunities (LIO)	3.31	0.72	7
Lack of Personal Ability (LPA)	3.74	0.63	5
Political and Social Reference (PSR)	4.01	0.76	1

As displayed in Table 2, all ten barriers are intercorrelated between each other except between UYA and NSJ as indicated in the table below. Most of the correlations are statistically significant at $p < 0.01$.

Table 2. Correlation matrix

	LPI	UYA	IFS	UM	NSJ	LCC	LCE	LIO	LPA
UYA	.190**								
IFS	.200**	.674**							
UM	.173*	.683**	.696**						
NSJ	.741**	0.117	.158*	.139*					
LCC	.365**	.356**	.299**	.269**	.293**				
LCE	.194**	.343**	.441**	.523**	.201**	.313**			
LIO	.197**	.356**	.258**	.319**	.180**	.298**	.535**		
LPA	.665**	.203**	.238**	.140*	.634**	.389**	.269**	.289**	
PSR	.601**	.172*	.151*	.158*	.609**	.351**	.299**	.270**	.458**

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

All correlations are positive where some of them produced strong uphill linear relationship. Lack of personal interest is highly correlated to national shortage of good job ($r=0.741$), lack of personal ability ($r=0.665$), and political and social reference ($r=0.601$). National shortage of good job also established greater correlation with lack of personal ability ($r=0.634$), and political and social reference ($r=0.609$). Insufficient financial support on the other hand generated two strong correlations with university ($r=0.674$) and unwillingness to move ($r=0.696$). Another greater correlation was reported between university and unwillingness to move ($r=0.683$). Other correlations were found varying between weak to moderate

level. Simple regression was used to test the single basic hypothesis and multiple regressions were applied to examine ten sub-hypotheses as formulated before. Results of simple and multiple regressions were summarized in Table 3 and Table 4 that demonstrate the values of R^2 , the standardized regression coefficients (Beta), the values of t and the associated p-values for the variables inserted into the equation.

Table 3: Result of simple regression

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R^2	Beta	t	Sig	Impact
Occupational Barriers	Career Indecision	0.275	0.524	8.877	0.000	Significant

Result of simple regression (Table 3) suggests significant relationship between occupational barriers and career indecision at $t= 8.877$, $p<0.001$. The impact of this relationship is quite high ($R^2=0.275$, which implies that occupational barriers can predict and explain 27.5% of the variance in career indecision. The Beta effect is also measured to be high and positive (Beta=0.524), which indicates that occupational barriers positively relate to career indecision. Therefore hypothesis H1 is supported.

Table 4. Results of multiple regressions

Independent Variable	Dimensions	Dependent Variable	R^2	Beta	t	Sig	Impact
Occupational Barriers	LPI	Career Indecision	0.533	0.291	3.650	0.000	Significant
	UYA			-0.036	-0.483	0.629	Insignificant
	IFS			-0.017	-0.237	0.813	Insignificant
	UM			0.103	1.329	0.186	Insignificant
	NSJ			0.216	2.794	0.006	Significant
	LCC			0.237	4.256	0.000	Significant
	LCE			0.199	3.362	0.001	Significant
	LIO			-0.040	-0.040	0.544	Insignificant
	LPA			0.179	2.568	0.011	Significant
	PSR			0.187	2.896	0.004	Significant

Analysis of multiple regressions (Table 4) reveals substantial impact of six different occupational barriers on students' career indecision. Lack of parental influence (Beta=0.291, $t=3.650$), lack of career counseling (Beta=0.237, $t=4.256$) and lack of career education (Beta=0.199, $t=3.362$) significantly relate to career indecision at $p<0.001$. Whilst national shortage of job (Beta=0.216, 2.794), and political and social reference (Beta=0.187, $t=2.896$) have association with career indecision at $p<0.01$; the relationship between lack of personal ability and career indecision was established within 95% confidence level. Therefore, hypotheses h1,

h5, h6, h7, h9 and h10 were accepted. University, insufficient financial support, unwillingness to move and lack of information about opportunities on the other hand, reported no significant relationship with career indecision, and thus hypotheses h2, h3, h4 and h8 were rejected.

Discussion

Overall outcomes of this research provided sufficient contextual background to identify key barriers that affect getting into anticipated career, and to prove majority of the hypotheses. As expected, political and social reference was unveiled to be the most influential barrier to get into the desired career in Bangladesh. While national shortage of good job became the second most significant predictor of students' career, and lack of career counseling and lack of parental interest ranked on the third and fourth place; respondents have given almost similar importance to these three obstacles. The other factor in top five barriers was lack of personal ability. Lack of career education was also given due significance as its mean score was 3.50. Students though reported some effect of lack of information about opportunities; educational institution, poor financial support and unwillingness to move have considerably lower influence on their desired career.

Political influence was found being correlated to outcomes (Ferris and Judge, 1991). Bangladesh has long history exercising political influence in recruitment and selection procedures (Jahan, 2006; Pandey, 2009; Political appointment, 2015), which was fairly enough for the students to place this onto top threat for their career. Apart from being an influential career obstacle, this study uncovers that political and social reference positively leads to career indecision. National deficit of jobs is another big challenge for the educated youth. In addition, the current study unveils significant positive relationship between job shortage and career indecision. These outcomes are quite consistent with other findings. Report indicates that forty seven percent of graduates struggle to get suitable job in Bangladesh (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2014). Many educated young people become pessimist about career in Bangladesh and attempt to migrate abroad because of impoverished labor market condition (ILO, 2013). This is understandably happened due to the mismatch between job opportunities and qualified labor force.

Lack of parental interest upturn extensive difficulties for the students to get into their anticipated career, and a significant positive relationship between lack of parental interest and career indecision was not unpredicted as a large number of research originated similar result (Guerra and Braungart-Rieker, 1999; Wong and Lui, 2010). Salami (1999) evidenced that adolescents' careers are heavily affected by the higher expectations of their parents and family. Number of researchers found that perceived parental psychological support and acceptance affect career indecision (Emanuelle, 2009; Guerra and Braungart-Rieker, 1999; Nota et al., 2007). Youth basically anticipate to know the parental behavior that their parent

are confident in their efficacy and career decision, and shows interest on their chosen occupation (Keller and Whiston, 2008). Children whose parent gets interested on them were found having higher perceived career self-efficacy (Keller and Whiston, 2008).

Lack of career counseling was also revealed to be another major barrier for students' career that in turn positively leads to career indecision. Number of researches explored significant correlation between career counseling and career decision (Masdonati et al., 2009; Whiston et al., 2003). Career counseling can be done either by one-to-one meeting or through the arrangement of different career programs. Barthorpe and Hall (2000) conducted a study concerning collaborative career program, and found that those who participated in career advising programs perceive comparatively higher level of confidence and interest to explore their career, are able to assess their attitudes and personality wherever required, and tend to work hard in order to improve personal ability. Researchers studied and consistently found that career counseling supports students in improving skills, as well as in responding to problems related to their career (Dragolea, 2015).

Another perceived barrier of students' career was found to be Lack of personal ability. Extensive studies found substantial positive relationship between self-efficacy or personal ability and career decision (Betz and Voyten, 1997; Weiss, 2000). In addition, lack of career education also leads to career indecision. Many earlier studies discovered that career education affects adolescents positively to make career-related decisions (Hughes and Karp, 2004; Reese and Miller, 2006). Students get benefit from career courses that support them to develop knowledge, and to provide background to make career decisions (Hughes and Karp, 2004; Reese and Miller, 2006). Personal ability is also internally correlated to career education. Apart from being a competent career decision-maker, studies suggest that career education increases career planning skills and self-efficacy (Reardon et al., 2007).

University was reported having no significant impact on career indecision. Moreover university was ranked ninth out of ten occupational barriers. These findings were quite surprising as universities in Bangladesh as well as many other countries lack proper resources, and still follow the traditional style of teaching and learning. Therefore, students' expectations and purposes are unmet, that in consequence upturn career indecision among students. Another substantial finding of this study that no significant relationship exists between insufficient financial support and career indecision was also unpredicted, as strong financial backup is believed to be an essential element in exploring desired career (Kirkland, 2010). Although relocation or transfer is a very common phenomena in many public and private job sectors in Bangladesh, final-year BBA students anticipate having no big problem finding their preferred career if they really do not want to move.

Conclusion

The present study confirms five top influential barriers to be political and social reference, national shortage of job, lack of parental interest, lack of career counseling and lack of personal ability that significantly affect finding their desired career. All of these top five barriers positively lead to problems in making career decision. Besides, the sixth factor namely lack of career education has also positive meaningful impact on career indecision. Results of this study involve substantial implications for parents, educationalists, government and policy-makers as well as career and university management in several directions, as they could design and implement effective strategies that contribute to reduce students' career problems. This study suggests that political and social reference shall be used positively, and employers must ensure merit-based recruitment and selection.

Governmental and non-governmental entities may encourage new ventures among young adults through financial and policy support that as a result, contribute to national job prospects. Besides, parents need to pay considerable attention to the willingness and capability of their adolescents in order to facilitate students' decision in finding best-fit career. This study also advocates that students must invest sufficient time and energy in proper career management by setting specific goals, improving aptitudes, and systematic and logical evaluation of their developmental progress. In addition, university management could support students by arranging and coordinating career counseling sessions or collaborative career programs in cooperation with external organizations, and offer proper career education to students, as these can benefit them to make right career decision. These implications are well thought having potentials to create sustainable opportunities and environment for the youth by lessening career decision uncertainty.

Apart from its sundry effects, this study acknowledges several limitations. The present research solely based on self-reported questionnaires, and thus may not reflect insights of students as a whole. A combination of survey and interview techniques might be more useful to learn their real feelings and experiences, which could make the outcomes of this study more extensive. Potential future researchers may use interview or case study approach in addition to structured questionnaires. This study concentrates on how career barriers affect career indecision. In future, career barriers can be studied in terms of multiple measures e.g. career decision self-efficacy, exploration and aspiration.

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OD BARIER KARIERY DO NIEZDECYDOWANIA CO DO KARIERY: PRZYKŁAD STUDENTÓW OSTATNIEGO ROKU LICENCJATU Z ZARZĄDZANIA

Streszczenie: Naukowcy odkryli wiele czynników, które wpływają na młodych studentów podczas poszukiwania preferowanej kariery, a które prowadzą do niezdecydowania co do kariery. Badanie to prowadzi w dwóch kierunkach: po pierwsze, aby zidentyfikować główne przeszkody, które stymulują trudności dla uczniów co do odkrywania właściwej kariery, a po drugie, aby ustalić, jakie bariery zawodowe prowadzą do niezdecydowania co do kariery. Próbką badania obejmowała ostatni rok licencjatu z zarządzania, studentów studiujących na dziesięciu różnych uniwersytetach w Bangladeszu. Badanie polegało na samodzielnym wypełnianiu kwestionariusza przez respondentów, składającego się z dwóch standardowych środków do zbierania danych badawczych. Badane dane zostały zweryfikowane najpierw aby zapewnić użyteczność, a następnie przeanalizowano je przy wykorzystaniu różnych technik statystycznych, uwzględniając opisową korelację Pearsona oraz analizę regresji. Wszystkie analizy statystyczne przeprowadzono w wersji oprogramowania SPSS 20.00. Wyniki pokazują, że odniesienia polityczne i społeczne, brak dobrej pracy w kraju, brak zainteresowania rodzicielskiego, brak doradztwa zawodowego i brak osobistej zdolności znacząco wpływają na kariery studentów, które w konsekwencji prowadzą do niezdecydowania co do kariery. Przeprowadzone badania sugerują, że różni decydenci, zarządzanie i uczelnia mogą wspierać uczniów poprzez zapewnienie rekrutacji opartej na osiągnięciach, generując perspektywy poprzez nowe przedsięwzięcia, organizowanie programów kariery i rozwijanie swoich uzdolnień.

Słowa kluczowe: kariera, bariery kariery, trudności związane z karierą, niezdecydowanie co do kariery

職業生涯阻隔職業猶豫不決：最後一年BBA學生查看

摘要：研究人員發現，影響青年學生找到自己喜歡的職業因素數量，以及導致事業優柔寡斷。因此，本研究將推動兩個方向：首先要找出激發學生的困難，探索合適的職業的主要障礙，其次，以確定哪些職業障礙導致的職業生涯優柔寡斷。這項研究的樣本涉及的最後一年BBA（工商管理學士）的學生在孟加拉國十個不同的大學就讀。調查採用自我報告問卷包括兩個標準化措施收集研究數據轉向。調查數據首先確保可用性的審查，然後分析下一批不同的統計方法包括描述，Pearson相關分析和回歸分析。所有的統計分析在SPSS軟件版本20.00執行。結果表明，政治和社會參考，抓好國家緊缺，缺乏父母關心的，缺乏職業輔導和缺乏個人能力顯著影響學生的職業生涯中，在後果導致的職業生涯優柔寡斷。目前的研究表明，不同的決策者，管理和大學可以通過確保擇優錄用，通過生成新的合資企業的前景，組織職業課程和發展他們的性向支持學生。

關鍵詞：職業，職業壁壘，職業困難，職業猶豫不決