



Research Paper

Predictors of Career Awareness on Selected BSAIS Students in Laguna University: A Basis for Career Awareness Program

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Abstract.

In this study, researchers aimed to assess the career awareness level based on demographic factors of Selected BSAIS Students in Laguna University. The researchers sought to answer the following: (1) What is the respondent's demographic profile with regards to the following: year level, sex, age, family income, General Weighted Average, and the respondents' participation in career related activities? (2) What is the respondent's level of career awareness in terms of the following: career decision-making, career exploration, career interest, and career choice? (3) Is there a significant relationship between the demographic profile and the level of career awareness of the respondents? (4) What program may be proposed based on the research findings?

The survey was distributed through Google forms to 160 participants and chisquare was used as statistical treatment. Results indicated a heightened awareness among students concerning career decision-making, exploration, and interests. This suggests a sufficient level of awareness for pursuing chosen career paths, with a prevalent desire among respondents to pursue careers related to Accounting Information Systems. Notably, the study revealed a significant relationship between demographic factors when categorized by age, sex, and the respondents' participation in career-related activities and the level of career awareness. This underscores the importance of demographic considerations in shaping career awareness.

Based on the results, the researchers recommend to implement personalized guidance programs that consider diverse demographics, emphasizing sex and age. Integration of these programs into school curricula can encourage students to explore various career options. Also, the guidance office can take the lead in providing specialized training for educators to understand the influence of sex and age on students' career perceptions. The guidance office can appoint a career development coordinator to organize and oversee peer mentoring programs..

Collaboration with external experts is suggested to enhance the effectiveness of career awareness initiatives and create a comprehensive support system for students. Promoting community participation, including internships and real-world experiences, fostering support for students, emphasizing early career exploration for both students and their families. Active involvement in community initiatives provides access to information about

various career paths and industry trends. Lastly, community engagement opens doors to mentorship, career guidance, and potential job opportunities, ultimately increasing their awareness and readiness for diverse professional opportunities.

Keywords:

Career Awareness

Career choice

Career exploration

Career interest

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I. Introduction

Choosing the right career path is a decisive part that every student needs to make. It requires careful planning and consideration of many factors, especially during this pandemic. The decision made by students regarding the college they will attend and the program they will pursue significantly influence their long-term career development. Therefore, it is important to focus on enhancing the student's career awareness. According to Byrne (2023), career awareness is an ongoing learning process wherein students can gain insights into available job opportunities, explore different career pathways, and identify the resources required to meet their desires through career counseling. The students need to be engaged in this process, enabling them to make informed decisions aligning with their interests, skills, and long-term career goals. Engaging in this process empowers students to make informed decisions, fostering a sense of purpose and direction in their career pursuits.

Unfortunately, many individuals are not exposed to a wide range of professional options during their education. Limited exposure to various fields and professions can hinder their understanding and awareness of potential career paths. Insufficient career guidance programs, limited resources, or a lack of career counseling in schools contribute to the challenge of accessing information about different careers. In the career decision-making process, students must consider critical factors such as their family income. While education is a valuable commodity, not all students have the privilege to pursue their dream careers due to financial constraints. Students who manage to overcome financial obstacles typically opt for the most affordable career option accessible to them, thinking it will provide them with better career prospects after graduation.

However, relying solely on affordability when making career decisions can lead to choices that do not align with the demands of the current economy. Graduates may find themselves ill-suited for the job market, lacking the necessary skills and knowledge required by industries in need. This mismatch has contributed to high unemployment and underemployment rates in the country. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data last January 2019, the unemployment rate in the Philippines was 5.2%, with 28.2% of the unemployed being junior high school graduates and 20.9% being college graduates. The government is increasingly concerned about the rising number of unemployed college graduates and job mismatches resulting from inadequate career preparation or a lack of career awareness. Students who pursued BSAIS program typically underwent a specialized program that integrated accounting principles with information technology concepts. Equipped with a unique skill set, they were enabled to bridge the gap between traditional accounting practices and the technological systems used to manage financial information. The assessment of career awareness among BSAIS students was crucial to address challenges such as escalating unemployment, limited job opportunity awareness, and a noticeable skills gap. This evaluation empowered institutions to align programs with industry needs, enhance career counseling, and tailor education to meet the then-current job market demands, contributing to improved career outcomes for graduates.

Given these challenges, the researchers aim to conduct a study to determine respondents' level of career awareness based on their career decision-making, exploration, interests, and choices based on their demographic profile. This study will assist students in enhancing their career awareness and making informed decisions about their career paths. The findings will also inform a proposed career awareness program that aims to provide students with a better understanding of job opportunities in BS Accounting Information Systems.

1. Theoretical background

This study is strongly related to Holland's theory. John L. Holland developed Holland's theory of job choice in 1959. It became one of the most researched and used theories of career development. His theory is based on the idea that personality traits influence career decisions, asserts that people align 19 themselves and their worldview with a career, and choose a career that matches their chosen personal orientation.

According to John Holland's Career Selection Theory (RIASEC), people prefer careers that allow them

to collaborate with others who share similar interests. They look for situations where they can apply their knowledge and expertise, demonstrate their attitudes and values, and participate in enjoyable challenges and roles. The interaction of personality and environment determines behavior. This theory is relevant to this study because personality and experiences vary between individuals and their career choices can be influenced by their interests. Social Cognitive Career Theory, also called SCCT, was developed in 1994 by Robert Lent, Steven Brown, and Gail Hackett. SCCT emphasizes how self-efficacy beliefs, performance expectations, and personal aspirations influence career-related behaviors and outcomes. SCCT focuses on both environmental and individual aspects that influence a person and their career decision, considering the person's own cognitive structure, learning experiences and interests in relation to the future workplace. Self-efficacy refers to a person and their confidence in their ability to succeed and achieve desired outcomes. Activities that promote career awareness can increase self-confidence and the ability to pursue one's career. Outcome expectations are thoughts about the possible effects of certain career paths. Activities that promote career awareness can help people understand the potential advantages and disadvantages of different occupations, such as career advancement, financial security, or personal fulfillment. According to SCCT, personal goals are important in guiding career-related behavior. Activities that promote career awareness can help people identify their career goals and help them make decisions. Perceptual learning allows people to examine and pick the brains of successful people. These essential components of SCCT help people understand how career awareness affects career development. It offers people the information, life lessons, and motivation they require to make rational decisions, establish reasonable objectives, and take appropriate action in the direction of obtaining their desired professions.

2. Research question or Research hypothesis or Problem statement

The purpose of this study determined the demographic profile as predictors of career awareness of selected BSAIS students at Laguna University. 3 It especially aimed to respond to the following:

1. To identify respondent's demographic profile with regards to the following:
 - 1.1 Year Level
 - 1.2 Sex
 - 1.3 Age
 - 1.4 Family Income
 - 1.5 General Weighted Average
 - 1.6 Participation of Career-Related Activities
2. To determine respondent's level of career awareness in terms of the following:
 - 2.1 Career Decision-Making
 - 2.2 Career Exploration
 - 2.3 Career Interest
3. To describe a significant relationship between the demographic profile and the level of career awareness of the respondents?
4. To come up with a program may be proposed based on the findings of the study.

II. Data and methods

This study used a descriptive-correlational method and quantitative research design to determine the demographic profile factors that affect the career awareness of BS in Accounting Information System students. Survey questionnaires were distributed through Google forms and are used to collect data from 160 respondents and gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives. Chi-Square test, Mean, and Frequency were utilized to answer the problem statement.

III. Results

The findings indicated significant trends, notably an aggregation of students in their third and fourth academic years, a predominant representation of females, and an age distribution predominantly spanning from 19 to 22 years. The majority of participants reported family incomes primarily falling within the bracket of 10,000–20,000. Moreover, a substantial portion of respondents maintained Grade Point Averages (GPAs) ranging between 1.51 and 2.00, with seminars emerging as the most attended career-related activities.

Table 1. Test of Relationship Between the Demographic Profile and Level of Career Awareness of the Respondents in Terms of Career Decision Making

Variables	χ^2 values	P values	Decision	Interpretation
Variables	χ^2 values	P values	Decision	Interpretation
Year level	1.528	0.822	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
Sex	8.115	0.017	Reject Ho	Significant
Age	7.569	0.477	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
Family income	7.410	0.686	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
GWA	15.220	0.364	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
Participation of career-related activities	12.106	0.060	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
Year level	1.953	0.744	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
Sex	3.227	0.199	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
Age	15.254	0.054	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
Family income	13.034	0.222	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
GWA	15.428	0.350	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 1 reveals a significant relationship between the demographic profile and the level of career awareness among respondents, specifically in terms of career decision-making. The p-value obtained for the Participation of career-related activities is 0.002, falling below the 0.05 alpha level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Conversely, the remaining variables related to the demographic profile and the level of career awareness in terms of career decision-making have p-values exceeding 0.05 alpha, failing to reject the null hypothesis for these variables. This implies that active engagement in career-related activities is a crucial factor influencing the level of career awareness, highlighting the importance of participating in career guidance programs within schools. Such programs provided students with essential awareness, information, and skills necessary for success in the workforce. This approach effectively links students' chosen career paths with their interests and skills, aiding them in comprehending the requirements of their chosen professions. Occupational orientation, as an integral component of career development (Savickas & Super, 1996), involved students identifying their interests and skills and aligning them with available job prospects. To enhance students' educational, training, or employment prospects, "transition enhancement" support must be provided (Baker, 2000). Vocational guidance and counseling programs play a critical role in meeting the vocational needs of students by assisting them in exploring a variety of career alternatives at the local, state, and federal levels. Participation in these programs contributes significantly to students' self-understanding (Hiebert, Collins, & Robinson, 2001). In summary, these findings underscore the importance of actively participating in career-related activities and guidance programs for informed career decision-making and overall vocational success

Table 2. Test of Relationship Between the Demographic Profile and Level of Career Awareness of the Respondents in Terms of Career Exploration

Table 2 Test of Relationship Between the Demographic Profile and Level of Career Awareness of the Respondents in Terms of Career Exploration

The findings from Table 2 highlighted a significant relationship between the demographic profile, specifically sex, and the level of career awareness among respondents in terms of career exploration. The obtained p-value of .017 is below the 0.05 alpha level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that respondents' sex plays a crucial role in influencing their level of career awareness concerning career exploration. These results align with Mansor et al.'s (2009) study, which indicated a substantial portion of respondents exhibiting a low level of career readiness. Interestingly, when comparing male and female undergraduates, the study found that female undergraduates demonstrated even lower levels of career readiness. This was evident in their heightened need for career information and a higher degree of anxiety and indecision when faced with career-related choices. The study underscored the importance of understanding the factors that contribute to career readiness in both male and female university students, providing valuable insights for educators aiming to enhance the career development process for their students.

Table 3. Test of Relationship Between the Demographic Profile and Level of Career Awareness of the Respondents in Terms of Career Interest

Variables	χ^2 values	P values	Decision	Interpretation
Year level	7.223	0.125	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
Sex	6.076	0.048	Reject Ho	Significant
Age	16.322	0.038	Reject Ho	Significant
Family income	7.797	0.649	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
GWA	12.671	0.553	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
Participation of career-related activities	22.909	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant

Table 3 presents the test of the relationship between the demographic profile and level of career awareness of the respondents in terms of career interest. It shows that sex, age, and participation in career-related activities have a significant relationship with the level of career awareness of the respondents in terms of career interest. Since their p values obtained are .048, .038, and 0.001, respectively, which are less than 0.05 alpha level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis. This implies that respondents differ in their levels of career awareness based on sex, age, and their prior engagement in career-related activities when considering career interest. The significance of sex suggests that individuals of different sex may manifest distinct levels of awareness regarding their career interests. Similarly, the association with age highlights that respondents at different life stages may possess varying levels of awareness concerning their career interests. Additionally, the substantial relationship with participation in career-related activities emphasizes the influential role of practical experiences in shaping individuals' awareness of their career interests. For instance, Ghofur et al. (2020) observed that gender plays a role in shaping the level of vocational maturity in students, a conclusion also supported by the research conducted by Yon et al. (2013). Yon et al.'s findings offer valuable insights into potential explanations for these distinctions. They proposed that female students are more inclined to express curiosity in exploring details about potential careers and the required skills. This insight was crucial for understanding the detected differences in career maturity and awareness between male and female students. Additionally, Cassie and Chen's (2012) asserted that the process of career maturation differs between males and females. These results highlight the need for tailored interventions and support systems that account for gender-specific distinctions in career development, particularly in the context of career interest, to better serve the diverse needs of students. Moreover, these findings were in line with Super's (1980) concept that individuals undergo a process of exploration to discover their vocational goals and preferences. Active engagement in career-related activities is emphasized as a critical factor influencing career success, supported by a meta-analysis led by Thomas and colleagues in 2005. This analysis identified various predictors of both objective and subjective career achievements, including personal skills, knowledge, organizational support, demographic background, and enduring individual traits. The overarching conclusion is that active involvement in career-related pursuits positively impacts overall career success.

Table 4. Test of Relationship Between the Demographic Profile and Level of Career Awareness of the Respondents.

Variables	χ^2 values	P values	Decision	Interpretation
Year level	1.500	0.054	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
Sex	2.771	0.250	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
Age	18.967	0.015	Reject Ho	Significant
Family income	12.036	0.283	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
GWA	12.026	0.604	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant

Participation of career-related activities	13.197	0.040	Reject Ho	Significant
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Table 4 presents the test of the relationship between the demographic profile and level of career awareness of the respondents. It shows that the level of career awareness of the respondents has a significant relationship to the profile of the respondents in terms of age and participation in career related activities. Since the pvalue obtained is less than 0.05 alpha level of significance thus, to reject null hypothesis. This implies that respondents differ in gaining awareness in terms of the previous participation in career related activities and their age. This implies that respondents exhibit variations in their levels of career awareness based on both their age and their prior involvement in career-related activities. 39 This finding is supported by the study of Migunde et al. (2015), which highlighted the critical importance of age as a key factor affecting how people approach the complexities of career decisions. This acknowledgment suggested that the developmental stages and experiences associated with varying age groups can shape individuals' perspectives on career choices. The significance of age as a contributing factor suggested that individuals at different life stages may have distinct levels of awareness concerning their career paths. Additionally, participating in career-related activities showed that practical experience can help people better understand their career goals and choices. This means that those actively involved might have a clearer idea of what they want to achieve in their careers. Conversely, a lack of involvement in school career guidance activities, especially in assessments, indicates that students might not be fully prepared. They might struggle to connect their personalities with the right jobs, making it hard to use their abilities effectively for better productivity. In the 21st century, being competent and productive depends on making smart career choices by doing assessments, exploring options, and seeking career information.

Table 5. Proposed Program

SERVICES	OBJECTIVES	COMPETENCIES	PERSONS INVOLVED
Career Exploration Workshops	These workshops can be designed to help students explore different career options available to them.	They can include interactive sessions where students can discuss their interests and learn about various career fields.	Guidance Counselor BSAIS Students
Online Job Platform Workshop	These workshops can help to enhance the awareness of the students regarding online job platforms and company websites for career exploration.	Provide workshops that teach students how to use online job platforms like LinkedIn and Glassdoor to explore career opportunities and identify job requirements.	Guest Speaker BSAIS Students
Mentorship Program	This program can provide students with personalized guidance, expand their professional networks, and help them develop the skills they need to succeed in their careers.	Establish a mentorship program that connects students with professionals in their chosen career paths.	Guest speaker (BSAIS graduate professional) BSAIS Students
Career Fair	These events can help students learn about internship opportunities and build their professional networks.	Career fairs can provide students with access to a variety of employers and industries.	Companies (Human Resources) BSAIS Students
Practical Skill Development Sessions	These sessions can help students to enhance their skills in practical setting.	Organize sessions that help students develop practical skills required in their chosen career paths, such as programming languages, software tools, and project management.	Accounting Information System Professor BSAIS Students
Technology Skill Development Sessions	These sessions can broaden their knowledge and skills about accounting software.	Organize sessions that help students improve their comfort level with technology tools and develop skills in areas such as data analysis, and accounting software.	Accounting Information System Professor BSAIS Students

Table 5 was designed as an answer to the gaps of this study. The various strategic activities, including internship programs for hands-on experience, career workshops and seminars for industry-specific insights, mentorship initiatives to provide personalized guidance, skill development programs addressing technical and soft skills, networking events to connect students with professionals, and career counseling services for personalized career guidance. By implementing these initiatives, the study can empower the BSAIS students to make informed decisions and thrive in their future careers.

IV. Conclusions

This study revealed a significant correlation between demographic profiles and career awareness, with age and prior engagement in career-related activities being key influencers. Individuals at different life stages exhibit varying awareness levels, emphasizing the dynamic nature of career understanding. Practical experiences, particularly hands-on involvement in career-related activities, played a crucial role in shaping awareness. These findings suggested the need for interventions to address the diverse needs of individuals. Recognizing the impact of age and prior experiences can lead to more effective strategies for fostering informed decision-making in career development.

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