
**EXPLORING THE CAREER SUCCESS OF GRADUATES WITH MSC. (HRD):
A STUDY IN UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK**

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Abstract:

This study was conducted to explore the perceptions of the Master of Science (Human Resource Development) graduates' at the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia on their career successes after obtaining that qualification, their reasons for undertaking this particular master's programme, and the differences in perceptions on their career successes after qualifying for this degree based on gender, age and ethnic background. A survey research method was used to gather 43 usable questionnaires from the alumni of this program from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia. Of all hypotheses tested by T-Test and ANOVA, only one hypothesis failed to be rejected – that showed a significant difference in the perception of Master of Science (Human Resource Development) of the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak's graduates on employability based on gender. Thus it means that there were no differences in the perceptions of the alumni on career success, objective career success, subjective career success, pay, promotion, job satisfaction, skills development and work-life balance based on gender, age, and ethnic background. This was then inconsistent with several earlier studies. It is important to note that most literature reviews and past researches were (most of its) conducted at western settings, which were no doubt different as compared to the Malaysian context, particularly in culture and perception. This result confirms that the orientation of career success and perception could differ from those in the same culture, as well in different cultures.

Keywords: Career Success, Objective Career Success, Subjective Career Success, Demographic Characteristic.

Introduction

Rapid economic growth, coupled with intense global competition and increased corporate restructuring has led to a liberal expansion of institutions offering postgraduates qualification and a surge in demand for master level degrees (Tay, 2001). According to Mihail & Elefterie (2006), the main aim of a master level degree is to add value to graduate students by providing them with relevant business-related knowledge and managerial skills. For some, a master level degree is likened to an international currency or recognition (Carnall, 1995 in Tay, 2001).

A popular conception on the attainment of a master level degree is that it is the ticket to career success, often measured in terms of increased salary and position within the organization (Baruch, Bell & Gray 2004). Thus, postgraduate qualifications are increasingly becoming prerequisites for both men and women aspiring for senior positions within an organization (Finney, 1996).

Background of Study

In view of the importance of postgraduates towards the quality of human capital in Malaysia, and the government's effort in providing greater access to higher education for the nation, the question is thus raised on the perception of these graduates on their career success. While there have been several previous research to uncover the value of obtaining a post graduate education in relation to career success, most of the studies had only focused on the career success of MBA graduates (Baruch & Leeming; 2001; Hay & Hodgkinson, 2006; Mihail & Elefterie, 2006,) and none to date on the career success of graduates with post graduate qualifications in human resource development.

Despite the fact that the Master of Science programme in human resource development (MSc HRD) had been offered by the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) since 1996, the researchers have yet to find any conclusive studies which measure the effectiveness of the programme with respect to the career success