



Career Decision-Making and Its Impact on Student Stress

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Table of Contents

DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK.....	2
Introduction.....	11
1.0 Background of The Study	11
1.1 Problem Statement.....	12
1.2 Research Objectives.....	15
1.3. Research Questions.....	15
1.4 Significance of Study.....	16
1.4.1 Theoretical Implications.....	16
1.4.2 Policy Implication	16
1.4.3 Practical Implication	17
1.5 Limitation of Study	17
1.5.1 Limitation of sample size.....	17
1.5.2 Limitation Time Framework	17
1.6 Theoretical Framework.....	18
1.6.1 Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)	18
1.6.2 Krumboltz Social Learning Theory	19
1.7 Conceptual Framework.....	20
1.7.1 Sources of Stress.....	20
1.7.2 Career Indecision or Uncertainty.....	21
1.7.3 Role External Pressure	21
1.7.4 Coping Strategy.....	21
1.8 Definition of Terms	21
1.8.1 Career Decision-Making	21
1.8.1.1 Conceptual Definition.....	21
1.8.1.2 Operational Definition.....	22
1.8.2 Counselling Services	22
1.8.2.1 Conceptual Definition.....	22
1.8.1.2 Operational Definition.....	22

1.8.3 Coping Strategies	23
1.8.3.1 Conceptual Definition	23
1.8.3.2 Operational Definition	23
Summary.....	24
Chapter 2: Literature Review	25
Introduction.....	25
2.0 Social Cognitive Career Theory in Decision-Making.....	25
2.2 Krumboltz Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making	30
2.3 Discussion on Previous Studies	34
2.3.1 Sources of Stress Related to Career Decision-Making	34
2.3.2. Career Indecision	35
2.3.2 Role External Pressure	37
2.3.2.1 Family Pressure.....	38
2.3.2.2 Societal Expectation.....	40
2.3.2.3 Economic and Financial Pressure	41
2.3.4 Coping Strategy in Career Decision-Making	42
Chapter 3 Methodology	45
Introduction.....	45
3.1 Research Design	45
3.1.1 Semi Structured Interview	45
3.2 Sample of Study.....	46
3.3 Sample.....	46
3.4 Sample Procedure	47
3.5 Pilot Study.....	48
3.6 Ethics of Study.....	49
3.6.1 The standards to Prevent Harm	49
3.6.3 Privacy of Respondent.....	49
3.6.2 Inform Consent	50
3.7 Data Collection Procedure	51
3.8 Data Analysis Procedure	53
3.8.1 Thematic Analysis.....	53

Summary.....	54
Chapter 4: Results and Discussion	55
Introduction.....	55
4.1 Background of Participants	55
4.1.1 Participant 1: Daniel.....	56
4.1.2 Participant 2: Azril	56
4.1.3 Participant 3: Aira	56
4.1.4 Participant 4: Hakim	56
4.1.5 Participant 5: Amir.....	56
4.1.6 Participant 6: Faris	56
4.1.7 Participant 7: Naufal	57
4.2 Finding Analysis.....	58
4.2.1 Research Question 1: Sources of stress related to career choice	58
4.2.1.1 Theme 1: Sources of Career-Decision Stress.....	58
4.2.1.1.1 Subtheme 1.1: Ambiguity in career identity.....	59
4.2.1.1.2 Subtheme 1.2: Family and Societal Expectation Pressure	60
4.2.2 Research question 2: Effect of career uncertainty.....	62
4.2.2.1 Theme 2: Psychosocial Impact on Career Indecision	63
4.2.2.1.1 Subtheme 2.1: Physical Symptoms of Anxiety	63
4.2.2.1.2 Subtheme 2.2: Low Self-Esteem	64
4.2.3 Research question 3: Role external pressure in influencing career decision-making.....	66
4.2.3.1 Theme 3: Family Influence and Its Impact	67
4.2.3.1.1 Subtheme 3.1: Negative Family Perception.....	67
4.2.3.1.2 Subtheme 3.2: Positive Family Influence.....	68
4.2.4 Research question 4: The coping strategies students use to manage stress related to career choices	70
4.2.4.1 Theme 4: Adaptive Strategies Student Use for Managing Career-Related Stress	70
4.2.4.1.1 Subtheme 4.1: Seeking Social Support.....	70
4.2.4.1.2 Subtheme 4.2: Doing Physical Activities.....	71

4.2.4.1.3 Subtheme 4.3: Finding Information	73
Summary	74
Chapter 5: Discussion	78
5.1 Key Findings	79
5.1.1 Theme 1: Source of career indecision stress	79
5.1.1.1 Subtheme 1: Ambiguity in career identity	80
5.1.1.2 Subtheme 2: Family and societal expectation pressure	81
5.1.2 Theme 2: Psychosocial impact on career indecision	82
5.1.2.1 Subtheme 1: Physical symptoms on anxiety	83
5.1.1.2 Subtheme 2: Low self esteem	84
5.1.3 Theme 3: Family influence and its impact	85
5.1.3.1 Subtheme 1: Negative family perception	86
5.1.3.2 Subtheme 2: Positive family influence	87
5.1.4 Theme 4: The coping mechanisms students use to deal with related stress	88
5.1.4.1 Subtheme 1: Seeking for social support	89
5.1.4.2 Subtheme 2: Doing physical activities	90
5.1.4.3 Subtheme 3: Finding information	91
5.2 Recommendation for Future Research	91
Summary	93

Abstract

Making a career selection is a big developmental responsibility for students at universities, and it is frequently accompanied with psychological stress that can affect their academic performance and emotional health. This qualitative study explores the causes of stress, the psychological implications of career indecision, the influence of outside forces, and the coping mechanisms students use to deal with stress connected to their careers. The study emphasizes the dynamic interaction between learning experiences, individual self-efficacy, and contextual factors like family expectations, societal standards, and financial restrictions. It is based on Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory and the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT).

Four main themes emerged from thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with third-year counselling students at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS): (1) ambiguity in career identity and family or societal expectations as the main stressors; (2) physical symptoms of anxiety and low self-esteem associated with career indecision; (3) external pressures from family, culture, and economics that influence or limit student choices; and (4) adaptive coping strategies for managing career uncertainty, such as seeking information, engaging in physical activity, and seeking resources. The results highlight the critical need for student-centered career support programs that take into account the environmental and psychological aspects of choosing a career.

This study contributes to the limited research on the subject in Malaysia and has useful ramifications for educators, counselors, and legislators who want to encourage students' mental health and well-informed career planning. In career development processes, it supports for integrative counselling approaches that enhance self-efficacy, manage outside pressures, and foster mental health.

Keywords: career decision-making, student stress, career indecision, coping strategies, self-efficacy, university students, Malaysia

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

This chapter explains the background of the study, problem statements, research objectives, research questions, theoretical frameworks, conceptual frameworks, significance of study, limitations of study and definition of terms

1.0 Background of The Study

Selecting a professional path is a crucial and frequently difficult choice for students at universities that can have a significant impact on their future. High standards, the need to achieve, and the desire to find both professional and personal fulfilment characterize this time of decision-making. Many students struggle to strike a balance between their own goals and passions and the demands of their families, the wider community, and the ever-changing labor market. This delicate balancing act can cause severe psychological stress, which might worsen conditions like melancholy, anxiety, and indecision (Zhou et al., 2024).

Students have particular difficulties while making a career decision-making. Many people feel pressure to make the “right” option because they know it might affect both their self-identity and their ability to succeed professionally (Arbona et al., 2024). Some people find that family expectations create an additional layer of complication because they feel pressured to adhere to conventional professional routes or satisfy certain criteria. Others are motivated by the desire for economic stability, especially those from low-income families, and as such, financial security plays a big role in their decision-making. Some students may feel trapped, dissatisfied, or disengaged from their objectives because of navigating these demands while attempting to choose a professional path that fits with their passions and talents.

Career development theories like Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and Krumboltz’s Social Learning Theory of Career Development (SCLTD) highlight the close relationship between a person’s sense of self and their career choices. Conflicts between a student’s self-concept and career choices frequently result in greater stress levels and less academic path fulfilment. Students run the danger of experiencing problems like self-doubt, poor

self-esteem, and maybe regretting their professional choices if they do not receive the right assistance.

Many students report feeling unprepared or unsupported throughout this important process, even when career assistance options like seminars and counselling are readily available (Worsley et al., 2021). They might not have a thorough awareness of the employment market or be uncertain about which career options best suit their abilities and beliefs. This implies that more focused support networks that specifically address the psychological difficulties students have while choosing a vocation are required (Arbona et al., 2024).

With an emphasis on elements like anxiety, self-confidence, and the value of easily accessible support networks, this study attempts to investigate the psychological effects of professional decision-making from the viewpoint of students. In order to assist students, feel more empowered and content with their job choices, this study looks at how profession-related stress impacts their mental health and aims to identify strategies for strengthening support systems.

1.1 Problem Statement

Making a career selection is a crucial developmental career for university students since it has a big impact on their future paths in both the personal and professional spheres. However, psychological issues like stress, worry, and hesitation are frequently present during this process, and they can have a serious negative effect on students' mental health (Barbayannis et al., 2022). Nevertheless, despite all of the study being done, there remains a geographical gap, meaning that not enough research has been conducted in Malaysia. It is important also to have a concern about how Malaysia's distinct cultural, economic, and educational characteristics affect students' decision-making process and mental health remain unresolved due to the paucity of local studies. For instance, cultural expectations, familial pressures, and financial limitations are some of the unique difficulties that Malaysian students may encounter and are not adequately addressed in the literature (Chen et al., 2022).

Making professional selections that will affect their lives greatly puts a lot of pressure on university students. Numerous factors, such as academic achievement, financial limitations, family expectations, and personal goals, impact these decisions, which can lead to stress, worry, and self-doubt during this crucial time. A circumstance in which "an individual cannot

independently make career decisions and career choices at a certain time” is referred to as career decision problem by Chen and Lin (2024). Making a professional selection for many students is more than just making a career decision, it also entails forming their identity and laying the groundwork for their future. But in academic and counselling settings, the psychological difficulties of career choices are frequently disregarded, depriving students of the necessary assistance to deal with these complexity (Shen et al., 2021).

There is a huge methodological gap in the present work on career decision-making and its psychological implications on college students as being cited in Yaghi and Alabed (2021) in their quantitative research, they stated that the interaction of environmental variables, societal expectations, personal goals, and psychological aspects that affects career decision-making and its emotional effects on people. Although quantitative approaches, like surveys and statistical studies, are good at finding trends, they frequently fall short of capturing the richness and depth of students’ real-world experiences. This restriction is especially noticeable in Malaysia, where distinct cultural, family, and societal elements significantly influence professional choices. For instance, pressures that are highly personal and context-dependent are frequently brought on by conventional family expectations, cultural standards, and financial limitations. Researchers can discover the complex experiences and difficulties experienced by students by exploring these dynamics using qualitative techniques such focus groups, in-depth interviews, or case studies (Lee et al., 2023). These methods can give deeper, context-specific understandings of the psychological challenges associated with choosing a vocation, laying the groundwork for more focused and successful treatments that cater to the particular requirements of Malaysian college students.

According to Fernandes and Rawatlal’s (2024) study, there is a substantial practical knowledge gap regarding the ways in which university students’ job decisions impact their psychological health. Although a large portion of recent research focusses on self-efficacy, emphasising individual confidence and decision-making abilities, it frequently ignores important contextual elements such social influences, institutional support, cultural norms, and family economic conditions. These contextual factors are crucial in influencing students’ career choices and the ensuing psychological effects, especially in places like Malaysia where economic and social pressures are strong. The creation of comprehensive solutions that address both individual and institutional issues is hampered by an overemphasis on self-efficacy, which produces a limited understanding of the difficulties students confront. According to Thesatus (2024), ignoring these wider factors prevents the development of all-encompassing student support networks. By filling

up these gaps, interventions that incorporate environmental and systemic factors can be created, providing students with improved tools for managing their mental health and career paths. In order to develop efficient support systems that address the many issues university students have when navigating career decision-making, this gap must be closed.

The rapidly evolving nature of the employment market adds to the pressure to choose the “right” professional path. Once-secure fields may suddenly seem uncertain, and new industries frequently call for specialized skills for which students may feel unprepared (Nordin & Ravald, 2023). Many students in this setting suffer from a dread of failing and a profound sense of uncertainty about whether the course they have selected will result in success and stability. Students’ mental and emotional health may be negatively impacted by this uncertainty as well as repeated changes to their academic and professional objectives or decision paralysis brought on by the dread of choosing the “wrong” choice (Magere, 2022). Some people may experience chronic tension, annoyance, and even regret their employment as a result of this procedure.

Making a career selection is made more difficult by social and familial expectations. Instead of following their own passions and interests, many students feel under pressure to choose the best career that fit with family customs, social conventions, or financial success (Abe & Chikoko, 2020). Students from particular socioeconomic or cultural backgrounds may feel more pressure to choose professions that provide status or financial stability, often at the price of their own happiness or general well-being (Ambe et al., 2024). Students may experience shame, self-doubt, and even animosity as a result of these outside forces that clash with their own interests and the courses, they feel compelled to follow.

Research indicates that students frequently find these resources insufficient in addressing the mental health issues related to professional decision-making, even though many universities offer career counselling and support services (Worsley et al., 2022). Instead, then addressing the psychological and emotional challenges students have when making decisions, traditional career counselling frequently concentrates on practical topics like resume construction and job search tactics. Because of this, many students say they feel unprepared or unsupported when making these important professional decisions, which makes them feel even more stressed and anxious (Ambe et al., 2024). This disparity emphasises the critical need for more comprehensive career counselling strategies that place a high priority on mental health as a key element of helping college students make career decisions.

Additionally, students' academic performance and general quality of life may be impacted by stress connected to their careers. Students may lose interest in their studies, lose motivation, and become more prone to burnout if they endure ongoing stress and uncertainty about their future professions (Emerson et al., 2022). This may set up a vicious cycle whereby anxiety about professional decisions impairs academic achievement, which in turn fuels further anxiety and doubt about future employment (Chen & Lin, 2024). Because it influences students' long-term personal and professional growth in addition to their immediate well-being, the psychological effects of vocational decision-making are therefore a crucial concern.

Given the challenges college students experience, research on the psychological effects of career decision-making is desperately needed. By exploring the causes and effects of career decision making, this study seeks to offer important insights into how students deal with the demands of choosing a career. It also looks at how support systems can help ease these difficulties. The ultimate objective is to provide guidance for the creation of interventions and support networks that encourage self-efficacy, confident decision-making, and a sense of fulfilment and career path alignment for students.

1.2 Research Objectives

- i. To understand the sources of stress related to career decision-making among university students
- ii. To explore how career indecision or uncertainty affect students
- iii. To explore role external pressure, play in influencing student's career choice and mental health
- iv. To understand the coping strategies students, use to manage stress related to career choices

1.3. Research Questions

- i. What are the common sources of stress related to career decision-making among university students?
- ii. How does career indecision or uncertainty affect students?

- iii. What role do external pressures play in influencing students' career choice and mental health?
- iv. What coping strategies do students use to manage stress related to career choices, and how effective are these strategies?

1.4 Significance of Study

1.4.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings of the research about career choice and how it affects college students' mental health align with Krumboltz's Theory, which highlights how learning experiences and external factors shape professional choices. The study focusses how factors including financial difficulties, expectations from family, social norms, and opportunities impact students' decision-making and, in turn, their mental health. This supports Krumboltz's claim that erratic life occurrences and outside factors have a big impact on profession choices.

The relationship between contextual influences, self-efficacy, and psychological well-being in career decision-making is highlighted in this study, supporting the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). A crucial component of self-efficacy, "mastery experiences" are important in shaping students' confidence in their professional decisions. Resilience and stress reduction are fostered by successful prior accomplishments. Students' chances to create mastery experiences are further shaped by environmental elements including social support systems and outside obstacles like societal or financial demands. While unsupportive circumstances can impede self-efficacy and exacerbate stress, supportive situations can boost it by encouraging achievement and emotional health. Additionally, the results expand SCCT by showing how career problems both impact and reflect psychological states, highlighting the necessity of all-encompassing support systems to enhance students' mental well-being and problem-solving skills.

1.4.2 Policy Implication

In conceptual and research activity, it is morally important to acknowledge intellectual contributions, according to the Lembaga Counsellor Code of Ethics (2011), G.5.D policy. This supports the study of "career decision-making and its impact on university students stress". It highlights the need of openness and acknowledging the perspectives that students offer through case studies, group discussions, and internships perceptions that frequently mirror their stress.

Incorporating this principle into the study encourages professional development, ethical rigour, and equips students to uphold these principles in their future career decision-making.

1.4.3 Practical Implication

Important practical applications are found in the research on career decision-making and its effects on the stress of college students, particularly with regard to counselling internships and compliance with the Lembaga Kaunselor Code of Ethics (2011), (Section G: Research and Publication). Through customized interventions, like as stress management techniques and assistance with career decision-making, counsellor candidates can put the findings into practice by addressing important issues such personality traits, financial difficulties, family expectations, and societal standards. Additionally, by facilitating university programs like career workshops and peer counselling and role-playing, counselors can improve their abilities by fusing theoretical understanding with real-world application.

1.5 Limitation of Study

1.5.1 Limitation of sample size

First, the study's results are constrained by the small and uniform sample size, which may have an impact on how broadly applicable they are. The participants in this study are limited to Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) third-year of counselling students, all of whom have comparable backgrounds to other students at the same university. Because of this, the results could not accurately reflect the range of experiences that participants have in various contexts. Differences in educational methods and institutional support can have a big impact on how pupils learn and make decisions, which can result in findings that are not always applicable.

1.5.2 Limitation Time Framework

The study's reach in reflecting the changing intricacies of students' professional decision-making is limited by its two-semester (one-year) timeframe. Making a career decision is a dynamic process that is impacted by shifting academic, environmental, and personal factors. A more thorough knowledge of the influence of decision-making on students' mental health may be obtained

through a lengthier study or a longitudinal approach, which would offer deeper insights into how perspectives on decision-making evolve and change over time.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

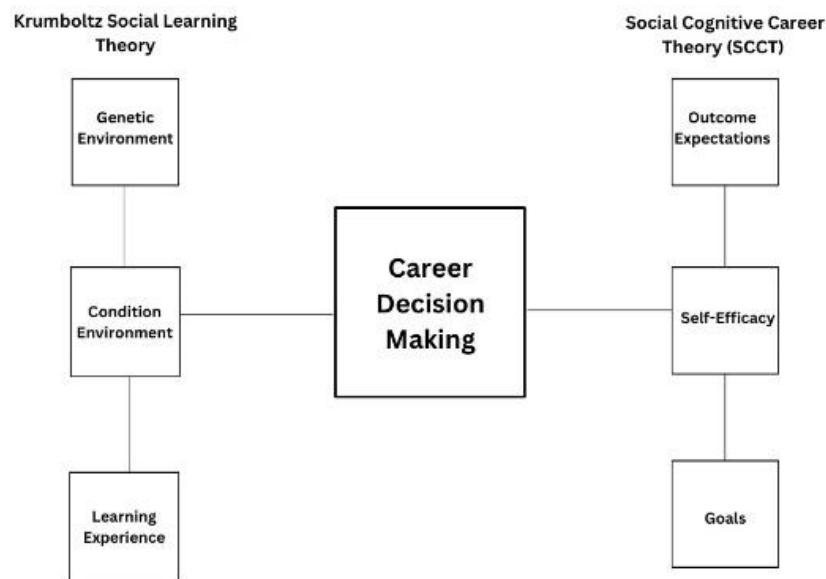


Figure 1 Krumboltz Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

1.6.1 Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

The Social-Cognitive job Theory (SCCT) is a thorough framework that explain how people interact with their personal, behavioural, and environmental aspects to develop job interests, make career decisions, and succeed in their careers. Three essential elements are at the heart of SCCT: outcome expectations, which are views about the possible outcomes of actions; self-efficacy, or the conviction that one can do particular tasks; and personal goals, which direct effort and decision-making towards intended career objectives. SCCT also takes into account how outside factors, such hurdles and social support, affect career paths. Integrating these components makes SCCT a crucial tool for educators and counsellors assisting with career development since it offers

insightful information on how people overcome obstacles, develop resilience, and match their goals with possibilities.

Self-efficacy is the primary component of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) that is highlighted in this study since it has a direct bearing on university students' career decision-making. Self-efficacy is a crucial component in students' decision-making since it has a substantial impact on their belief in their ability to achieve in the career paths they have chosen (Yiming et al., 2024). Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to take initiative to make decisions that are consistent with their interests and values, accept difficult possibilities, and persevere in the face of failure (Hayat, 2020). This self-assurance promotes improved mental health and a more positive outlook on the future by lowering stress and worry associated with one's work. Furthermore, enhanced self-efficacy developed via skill-building exercises, mentorships, and internships not only facilitates informed career choices but also improves psychological health and a feeling of accomplishment.

1.6.2 Krumboltz Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making by Krumboltz Making highlights how learning experiences, personal characteristics, and environmental factors all affect career decisions. This idea holds those four major elements influence people's profession choices, task approach skills, learning experiences, contextual circumstances and events, and genetic endowment and particular abilities. These components work together to create the basis for how people view possibilities, establish professional objectives, and make choices.

However, Environmental factors are the particular element that this study emphasises because of its direct connection to career decision-making. Environmental impacts are events and circumstances outside of students' control that have a big impact on their career choices. Students' perceptions of the various job alternatives are influenced by a number of factors, including institutional support, financial restrictions, family expectations, and society standards (Kocak et al., 2021). Such elements have the potential to increase or decrease the apparent variety of employment options, according to Krumboltz. Stress, discontent, and other detrimental psychological effects could result from students pursuing careers that are incompatible with their interests and goals due to financial constraints or social pressure to choose steady, traditional careers (Mofatteh, 2020). By examining how these environmental factors affect university

students' job pathways and the resulting emotional fallout, this study highlights the crucial role that outside influences play in determining career-related outcomes.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

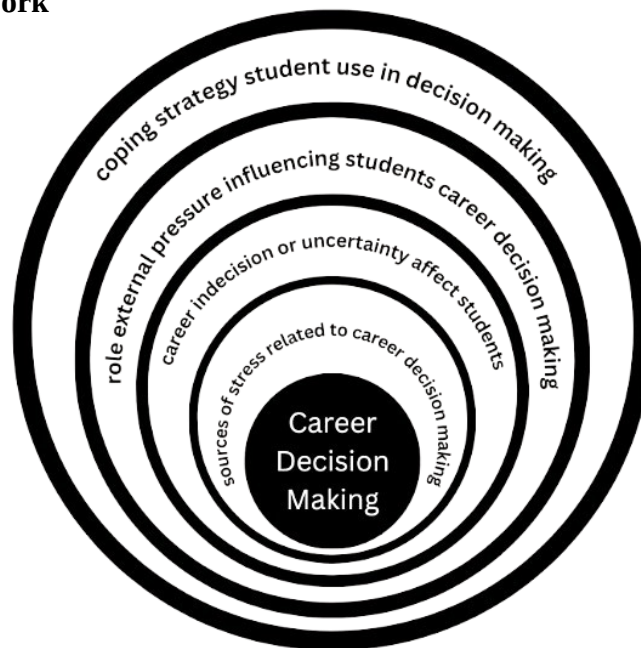


Figure 1 Conceptual framework in Decision-Making Process

The conceptual structure of this study is shown in Figure 1, which also highlights the important factors that influence university students' mental health when making career decisions. The knowledge of how variables such as sources of stress related to career decision making, career indecision of uncertainty affect students, role external pressure that influence student decision making and coping strategy student use in decision making is guided by this paradigm.

1.7.1 Sources of Stress

The first trait identifies the sources of stress associated with choosing a career, including anxiety of making the wrong selection, financial limits, pressure to live up to family expectations, and ambiguity regarding career paths. This trait supports exploration of the research topics on the effects of various stressors on college students' mental health when they are choosing a career.

1.7.2 Career Indecision or Uncertainty

The second trait focusses on career ambiguity or indecision as a cause of stress when making career decisions. This involves having trouble finding appropriate career pathways, being afraid of making decisions that cannot be changed, and finding ways to balance one's own interests with those of others. This feature examines how these uncertainties affect university students' mental health, which supports the research.

1.7.3 Role External Pressure

The third trait emphasises that stress in career decision-making is significantly influenced by outside pressure. This includes peer pressure, familial duties, and cultural expectations, all of which might pressure students to put pragmatism ahead of their interests. This trait investigates how these outside influences affect college students' mental well-being and capacity to make genuine career decisions.

1.7.4 Coping Strategy

The fourth trait focusses on the coping mechanisms that students employ to deal with the pressure of choosing a career. These include practicing stress-reduction strategies, asking peers or mentors for support, and reflecting on oneself. This feature looks at how these tactics lessen the negative psychological effects of career-related difficulties on college students' mental health.

1.8 Definition of Terms

1.8.1 Career Decision-Making

1.8.1.1 Conceptual Definition

Career decision-making, according to Morgan et al. (2024), is a dynamic, continuous activity that entails gathering knowledge and combining it in ways that aid people in understanding who they

are and where they are. The process of determining, assessing, and choosing a career path or set of professional objectives is referred to as career decision-making (Azhenov et al., 2023). This description emphasizes how career decision-making is more than just learning about certain occupations or acquiring information about jobs. Instead, it is an ongoing process of environmental awareness and self-discovery that helps people in all stages of life and work.

1.8.1.2 Operational Definition

The process by which third-year UNIMAS counselling students assess their objectives, values, interests, and skills in order to explore career options, evaluate possible outcomes, and make well-informed decisions regarding their future careers is known as career decision-making. This entails evaluating their counselling abilities, determining appropriate career pathways like education, mental health, or career counselling, and organising activities like networking and internships to reach their career objectives.

1.8.2 Counselling Services

1.8.2.1 Conceptual Definition

The Chicago School (2020), defined Counselling services as expert support networks designed to help people deal with and get over mental health issues in order to improve their general quality of life. Bhattacharjee (2021) also defined counselling as Counselling is a talking treatment that enables individuals to talk about their issues with qualified specialists in a calm and secure setting. These services concentrate on comprehending how individuals behave in the social, professional, and personal spheres of their lives. In order to promote emotional health, personal development, and resilience, counselling entails offering direction, therapeutic interventions, and support that are customized to each client's particular requirements. Counselling services assist people in setting and achieving personal objectives, creating coping mechanisms, and more skillfully navigating life's obstacles by collaborating with their clients.

1.8.1.2 Operational Definition

Third-year UNIMAS counselling students receive counselling services that include scheduled meetings with certified counsellors to address personal, emotional, and mental health issues. Setting goals, creating coping mechanisms, and having therapeutic conversations are some of the

evidence-based practices used in these private, encouraging sessions. The goal is to improve students' life functioning and well-being by monitoring quantifiable development over time. In order to ensure that students receive the support they need to effectively negotiate both personal and professional problems as they prepare for their future jobs as counsellors, counselling is structured to be client-centered and with specific outcomes in mind.

1.8.3 Coping Strategies

1.8.3.1 Conceptual Definition

Algorani and Gupta (2023) defined Coping is defined as the thoughts and behaviors mobilized to manage internal and external stressful situations. Stephenson and DeLongis (2020) also defined coping strategies as the ideas and actions employed to deal with the demands of a stressful circumstance, both internal and external, are known as coping strategies. It is a term used distinctively for conscious and voluntary mobilization of acts, different from “defense mechanisms” that are subconscious or unconscious adaptive responses, both of which aim to reduce or tolerate stress.

1.8.3.2 Operational Definition

For third-year UNIMAS counselling students, a coping mechanism is a particular behaviour or set of techniques they employ to deal with stress, anxiety, or emotional suffering when faced with personal or academic obstacles. These behaviours may involve both constructive approaches, including problem-solving tactics and reaching out for social support, as well as destructive ones that could have an impact on their general well-being and mental health. Students can better handle the stress of their coursework and internships while getting ready for their future employment in counselling by comprehending and creating healthy coping strategies.\

Summary

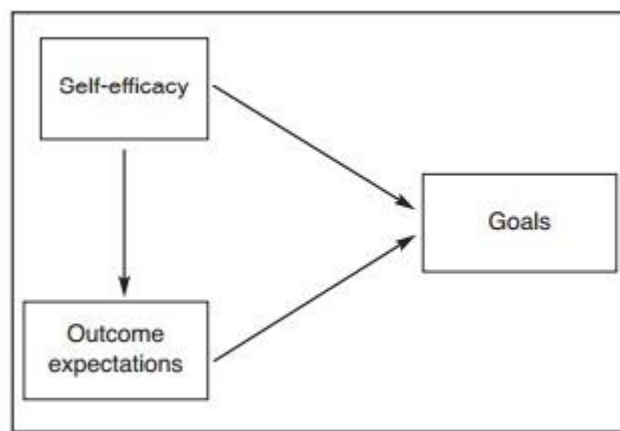
In conclusion, the proposed of this study is to explore the factors that influence career decision-making among university students and its effect on their mental health. This research needs to be done as it can contribute towards counselling profession and university in providing guidance toward students about career path. Also, not to be forgotten, this topic also still lacks discovery in the Malaysian especially in university students so it should be done so that it can gain more insights in Malaysian context.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In this section of the study, the theories proposed will be discussed with past research findings. The research gap will be also identified in this section.

2.0 Social Cognitive Career Theory in Decision-Making



Social Cognitive Career Theory

Lent, Brown, and Hackett created the Social Cognitive professional Theory (SCCT), which examines the interplay of contextual factors, behavioural influences, and personal characteristics to provide a thorough framework for comprehending how students make professional decisions (Wendling & Sagas, 2020). SCCT, which is based on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, emphasizes the critical importance of self-efficacy, or the conviction that one can accomplish activities or reach professional objectives (Chiu et al., 2023). This concept is important when choosing a career since it has a direct impact on the career routes people believe they can pursue and how persistent they are in the face of setbacks (Pham et al., 2024). Outcome expectations, another crucial component, are views about the possible repercussions of particular actions, such as expected benefits, job happiness, or social standing, and they influence student's career decisions. These expectations influence student's motivation to pursue particular challenges or careers. Furthermore, ambitions, also known as career goals, work as a catalyst for decision-making, impacting both immediate actions and long-term career planning. SCCT also emphasizes

the significance of contextual elements that can either facilitate or impede career exploration and decision-making, including social support, family expectations, and cultural influences (Ott et al., 2024). When paired with individual convictions, these outside influences produce a complicated context in which people make decisions about their careers. By combining these concepts, SCCT offers a comprehensive knowledge of how student approach choosing a career, taking into account both internal and external factors (Ennes et al., 2023). This theoretical model offers resources to assist student in overcoming the difficulties of making wise, satisfying career decisions, making it especially useful in career counselling and research.

This study focuses on self-efficacy among the SCCT components because it is the foundation for a person's capacity to make self-assured and knowledgeable career decisions. When choosing a career, self-efficacy a person's confidence in their ability to complete tasks and overcome obstacles is essential. High self-efficacy students are more inclined to explore career options, overcome setbacks, and face uncertainty with resilience rather than dread. On the other hand, when faced with obstacles connected to their careers, students who have poor self-efficacy are more likely to feel stressed, unsure, and avoidant (Maran et al., 2021). Because it affects how students assess their alternatives as well as how they react to outside pressures including familial pressure, financial limitations, and societal expectations, self-efficacy plays a particularly important role. In order to shed light on how students' confidence levels interact with these outside influences to affect their stress levels when making career selections, I will be looking at self-efficacy in this study. Mastery experiences, a crucial aspect of self-efficacy, are especially pertinent to comprehending how students develop self-assurance in their capacity to choose a career (Shorey & Lopez, 2021). Prior achievements that bolster a student's confidence in their abilities are referred to as mastery experiences. Successful academic performance, fulfilling internships, and accomplishments in extracurricular activities give university students a sense of competence and equip them for difficulties in the future (Nassar et al., 2024). Through these experiences, students learn how to deal with challenging circumstances, overcome obstacles, and apply newly acquired abilities in novel settings. On the other hand, a lack of significant achievements or a history of failures can undermine self-efficacy and increase stress while making career decisions. This study explores the impact that mastery experiences have in lowering stress and uncertainty by examining how these experiences affect students' confidence. Furthermore, mastery experiences help students maintain their motivation and optimism in the face of adversity

by fostering resilience in addition to competence. This aspect of self-efficacy is essential for enabling students to confidently and clearly negotiate the challenges of career decision-making.

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) paradigm emphasizes how important self-efficacy is while making career decisions, especially for students. Cherry (2024) defines self-efficacy as the conviction that one can successfully complete tasks or reach particular objectives. Students who have a high level of self-efficacy are more likely to actively research potential careers, consider a greater variety of career alternatives, and feel secure in their ability to make well-informed judgments (Yiming et al., 2024). These students typically see career hurdles as chances to develop their abilities and persevere through hardships, enabling them to set and accomplish lofty professional objectives (Shahid et al., 2024). On the other hand, students who have poor self-efficacy are more uncertain and anxious, which frequently results in their exploring careers less, being undecided, or avoiding difficult situations (Ran et al., 2022). They find it more difficult to make firm decisions because they lack confidence in their skills, which leads them to prematurely reduce their options or give up on certain avenues. These students might not pursue internships, additional schooling, or positions that first piqued their interest, which could lead to lost opportunities. Thus, it is essential for educators and career counselors to comprehend how self-efficacy affects students' career decision-making (Sandra & Mularsih, 2021). Students can acquire the self-assurance they must explore a variety of career possibilities, make informed judgments, and take proactive measures toward reaching their professional goals by improving their self-efficacy through focused interventions, such as skill-building programs and encouraging counselling (Lee et al., 2024). In the end, students' approach to career development is greatly influenced by their level of self-efficacy, which also has a big impact on their future performance in the workplace.

The Social Cognitive Professional Theory (SCCT) states that verbal persuasion, vicarious learning, and personal experiences all have a significant impact on self-efficacy, a dynamic component that shapes how people view, assess, and choose professional prospects (Spier, 2020). These experiences help people make decisions by boosting their confidence in their ability to successfully navigate career options, in addition to strengthening their belief in their potential to excel in certain professional activities. With the goal of examining its impact on the clarity, assurance, and results of professional decisions, this study highlights the importance of self-efficacy in this process. Effective career decision-making is regularly linked to self-efficacy, according to research. According to Zhou et al. (2023), people who have greater levels of self-

efficacy explore careers more thoroughly and make more assured, deliberate decisions. In the face of obstacles like conflicting family expectations, a lack of career possibilities, or financial constraints, self-efficacy enables people to become resilient (Ojo et al., 2021). These difficulties frequently discourage students from pursuing their job goals, but those who have greater self-efficacy are more likely to endure hardships, stick with their goals, and choose their careers carefully (Nur & Mahmud, 2024). Additionally, students who have a strong belief in their talents are more likely to set ambitious but attainable goals and develop practical plans to achieve them, which helps them to have clearer professional ambitions (Hirschi & Spurk, 2021). As a result, encouraging self-efficacy helps students overcome obstacles and make confident, well-informed professional options that complement their values, interests, and strong points. Supporting students' career development requires an understanding of the connection between self-efficacy and career decision-making, especially in complicated and unpredictable professional environments (Abdul Rahim et al., 2021).

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which emphasizes the roles of personal objectives, outcome expectancies, and self-efficacy in determining career trajectories, provides a thorough framework for comprehending the different elements that affect professional decision-making (Appling et al., 2022). This theoretical model has been widely used to examine how people choose their careers and deal with obstacles they face during their professional travels in a variety of academic and real-world contexts. SCCT offers important insights into the elements that influence professional development and advancement by concentrating on how individual convictions and outside forces impact the decision-making process (Wang et al., 2022). Several studies have emphasized the importance of SCCT in professional decision-making, including those by Pooja Damodar et al. (2024); Wang et al. (2022); Wendling et al. (2020). According to these findings, the theory offers a strong foundation for describing how result expectancies and self-efficacy can have a big impact on people's career decisions and the difficulties they encounter along the way. With results indicating that people with higher levels of self-efficacy and more defined outcome expectations typically make more informed and confident career decisions, these studies lend credence to the notion that SCCT is a good fit for explaining the influence of cognitive and contextual factors in career decision-making (Young et al., 2020). Additionally, these research findings corroborate the theory's emphasis on contextual impacts and dynamic personal experiences, highlighting its usefulness to comprehending the intricacies of professional decision-making in diverse populations and situations (Ahmed, 2024). In order to help people, make wise

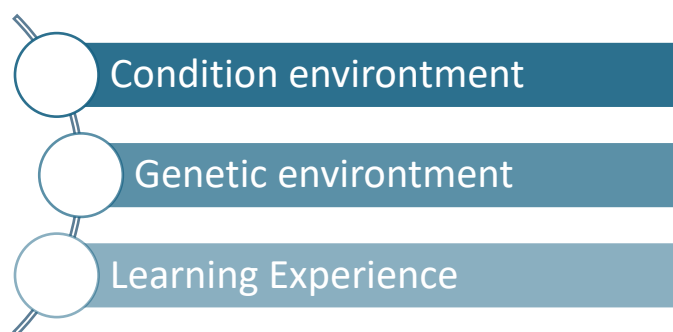
career decisions while tackling the various obstacles they face in their professional development, SCCT not only adds to scholarly discussions but also provides educators and career counselors with helpful advice.

While acknowledging the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) as a thorough framework for comprehending career development, Mohd Rasdi and Ahrari (2020) contended in their updated study that it might not adequately capture the variety of contextual factors that affect students' career choices and general life satisfaction. The authors contend that although SCCT successfully tackles the cognitive and personal aspects of career decision-making, it may ignore the larger social and environmental factors that influence student's career paths, indicating that more theories might be required to completely explain the complexities involved in career choices. However, Zola et al. (2022) conducted a critical analysis of the theory and asserted that while SCCT successfully captures the effects of result expectancies and self-efficacy on career decision-making, it often ignores the role of social and emotional elements. Their argument draws attention to the shortcomings of SCCT in taking into consideration the interpersonal ties, familial influences, and emotional support that frequently have a big impact on student's career decisions, especially when it comes to emotional pleasure and well-being. Both criticisms contend that although SCCT offers a fundamental framework for choosing a career, its application may be restricted if a wider range of influencing factors particularly the social and emotional aspects of career development are not taken into account (Shi, 2023). These results highlight the necessity of an integrated strategy that offers a more comprehensive understanding of the professional decision-making process by fusing SCCT with other theoretical stances.

Because the Social Cognitive professional Theory (SCCT) has a strong relationship with self-efficacy, result expectancies, and goal-setting in the context of professional development, it has been widely used in research on career decision-making, especially in understanding how students select career choices (Chiu et al., 2023). The cognitive processes involved in career decision-making have been effectively explained by SCCT, which also provides insight into how students view their own skills and make well-informed decisions about their chosen pathways (Wang et al., 2023). But there is a big study gap because much of the literature that is currently available uses quantitative research techniques, which frequently measure the correlations between different SCCT characteristics. Although these studies offer useful information, they restrict our comprehension of the subtleties and unique experiences that influence profession choices. In particular, qualitative research which stresses subjective experiences, personal

narratives, and the contextual factors influencing students' career choices is frequently disregarded. The complete intricacy of choosing a career is not sufficiently represented when these qualitative factors are disregarded. For example, family relationships, emotional impacts, and social networks are important factors that shape professional choices, yet quantitative research may not completely examine these aspects. Therefore, additional qualitative research is required to explore the ways in which social ties, cultural contexts, and personal narratives affect students' professional decision-making processes. This method would help close the gap between theory and students' practical experiences making career decisions, leading to a more thorough grasp of SCCT. Thus, by adding the lived experiences and sociocultural aspects of career decision-making, qualitative approaches have the potential to enhance current theories, expanding our understanding of the subject and offering more complex insights into how students shape their future careers.

2.2 Krumboltz Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making



Krumboltz Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory of Career Choice (SLTCC), developed by John D. Krumboltz, provides a thorough framework for comprehending how personal traits, environmental factors, and educational experiences work together to influence career decisions (Yunus et al., 2024). According to Siddiky and Akter (2021), career trajectories are significantly influenced by four main factors: life events, learning experiences, environmental circumstances, and genetic predispositions. According to SLTCC, learning experiences include both formal and informal learning that directs the development of skills, interests, and values that ultimately influence career choices, whereas genetic predispositions refer to innate qualities or traits that student are born with

and can influence how they approach career-related challenges (Khrisna & Chetry, 2024). Environmental factors, including social support networks, economic situations, cultural norms, and family, offer outside influences that affect people's professional choices and choices (Livingston et al., 2024). Last but not least, life events like personal losses or unforeseen possibilities can cause major changes in a student's career path and may change long-term professional objectives. By taking into account the dynamic interplay of these four elements, SLTCC clarifies how people choose their careers based on their capacity to adjust to and handle shifting situations in addition to their own unique skills and interests (Stroope & Larsson, 2023). Together, these factors influence student's options, influences their choices, and influences the tactics they use to adjust to changing professional environments. By emphasizing the interplay between internal and external elements in career growth, the theory offers a useful prism through which to view job choice as a complex, dynamic process rather than a fixed or linear decision. This perspective emphasizes the value of flexibility and openness to change in making well-rounded professional decisions by viewing career decision-making as a continuous learning process that changes in response to environmental influences, personal development, and unforeseen life events.

In this research, the focus is the conditioned environment component of Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory of Career Choice (SLTCC), which highlights how events and circumstances outside of an individual's control greatly influence their career choices. Kawakubo et al. (2023) define the conditioned environment as a conglomerate of external factors that affect the accessibility, feasibility, and availability of employment prospects. Educational possibilities are also important since the range of career that people can follow is largely determined by the educational resources and credentials that they have access to. Because social norms and community values frequently dictate or limit professional options based on gender, race, or societal role expectations, cultural expectations also play a part in the conditioned environment (Stewart et al., 2021). Additionally, socioeconomic variables like income, family history, and geographic location affect which career pathways are viewed as attractive or viable, frequently influencing the choices people make as their careers progress (Karney, 2020). The conditioned environment consists of dynamic and external aspects that can either encourage or hinder career exploration, in contrast to personal traits that are internal and stable, including genetic predispositions or particular skills (Kraft & Kraft, 2021). These elements have an impact on student's options as well as the methods they use to pursue particular professions, overcome

challenges, and eventually adjust to shifting life situations. Because it directly influences the variety of options and the degree of support or difficulties faced during one's career journey, the conditioned environment is consequently a crucial determinant in the career decision-making process (Mohd Zaini et al., 2021). Recognizing these impacts emphasizes the importance of context in career development and provides insights into the systemic elements that affect job choices.

John D. Krumboltz developed the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (SLTCDM), which highlights the significant impact that educational experiences have on forming career choices. This theory holds that a person's professional routes are greatly influenced by both planned and unplanned learning opportunities that come from their social environment (Saunders, 2021). Whether deliberate or unplanned, these events shape people's views of their abilities, competences, and surrounding circumstances, which in turn directly affects the choices they make about their careers. According to Krumboltz's view, people's career decisions are influenced by a constant interplay between their social environment and their educational experiences rather than being exclusively the product of inflexible decision-making processes or personal characteristics. Students' self-perceptions of their skills, their knowledge of the various career options, and their opinions of the ecological contexts in which they make decisions can all be impacted by these educational experiences (Kliene et al., 2021). This idea aids students in understanding how outside influences, such as peer pressure, school experiences, familial expectations, and unanticipated circumstances like internships or mentorships, can impact or improve career choices. These results are supported by Yunus et al. (2024), who concur that Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is a useful model for comprehending how learning experiences in formal and informal contexts affect students' career choices, especially when applied to career decision-making. By demonstrating how these factors impact students' career paths and professional choices, these studies support the theory's applicability by emphasizing the value of both planned educational experiences and the erratic, learning-oriented experiences that arise from social interactions and exposure to a variety of environments (Mutanga et al., 2023). As a result, SLTCDM provides insightful information about the social, dynamic, and learning-based processes that have a big impact on students' career decisions.

Andreev (2021) highlights the shortcomings of the Social Learning Theory of profession Decision Making (SLTCDM) in relation to profession choice in an updated study. Understanding how outside variables like educational opportunities, environmental conditions, and chance events

affect professional decisions is the main goal of SLTCDM. Andreev (2021) contends, however, that this focus on external factors may unintentionally minimize the important role that internal factors like human agency, self-motivation, and emotional resilience play in the process of choosing a vocation. These character traits influence how students handle and react to outside influences when making career decisions. Furthermore, Andreev (2021) notes that the theory falls short in addressing the psychological effects of career indecision, which is a crucial component of the mental health issues that students encounter. When choosing a career, students frequently struggle with outside influences including financial constraints and family expectations, which can cause a great deal of stress and anxiety. The psychological toll that these outside factors have on students is not specifically taken into account by SLTCDM, nor is it thoroughly examined how these stressors can worsen mental health issues and eventually impair students' capacity to make wise career decisions. Given that career indecision and the psychological stress it causes can have a detrimental effect on students' general well-being and ability to make decisions, this omission is especially troubling. Andreev (2021) argues that future theoretical models should more effectively incorporate the psychological aspects of career decision-making, since feelings of stress, perplexity, and helplessness are frequently associated with career indecision. The theory would provide a more thorough explanation of the pressure's students confront by addressing these emotional and mental health issues, especially how emotional variables interact with familial and financial difficulties to shape professional prospects. Therefore, a more comprehensive model for comprehending professional decision-making particularly in light of students' mental health and well-being would be offered by including internal, psychological aspects.

The Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (SLTCDM) is a useful paradigm for elucidating students' career choices because it emphasizes how outside influences, including educational opportunities, environmental conditions, and chance events, influence professional choices (Yunus et al., 2024). However, because so few studies use this theory to examine students' career decision-making, there is a major research deficit in the topic. The theory's emphasis on external factors at the expense of internal ones like emotional resilience and self-motivation, which are also important in the career decision-making process, is one of the flaws that contribute to this gap (Robinson et al., 2024). Furthermore, the psychological effects of career indecision and the stress brought on by outside forces like financial constraints and family expectations that are crucial to students' career decision-making are not sufficiently covered by SLTCDM. These drawbacks have prevented the theory from being widely used in studies on professional decision-

making. Further studies that apply Krumboltz's theory to the context of student career decision-making, however, have a great deal of potential to close this research gap and provide a deeper understanding of how internal personal characteristics and external environmental factors interact to influence career decisions. By addressing how students deal with career indecision and its psychological effects, an understanding of the subtleties of SLTCDM can greatly advance our understanding of career decision-making and eventually lead to more comprehensive models that take into account both internal resilience factors and external pressures (Priyashanta et al., 2022). By using SLTCDM as a guiding theory to explore the intricacies of career decision-making and improve knowledge of the more general elements influencing students' career choices, this study seeks to close the knowledge gap.

2.3 Discussion on Previous Studies

2.3.1 Sources of Stress Related to Career Decision-Making

According to Jung (2020), career stress is defined as the strain people experience both during the career selection process and as their career develops. In their research, Özcan et al. (2023) focused on the fact that a lot of students worry a lot about landing the career they want. Their desire to pursue their desired career in their chosen fields of study may suffer as a result of this increased concern about their prospects. Their anxiety about not finding work after graduation also adds to this stress, which makes them less confident in their career-related choices (Shu et al., 2023). Career stress has been shown to be particularly high in areas pertaining to "Career Uncertainty and Lack of Knowledge," with many students citing a lack of knowledge and misunderstanding as major sources of stress (Islam & Rabbi, 2024). These results demonstrate the complexity of career stress and its significant impact on students' stress and career planning.

Students' profession choices are greatly influenced by their family's expectations and the environment. These outside variables have the potential to cause significant stress and uncertainty, which frequently results in a career dilemma. When students are urged or expected to pursue prominent or stable occupations that do not fit with their individual interests, skills, or goals, this is a common example of family pressure. Students who experience this misalignment frequently hesitate, put off, or second-guess their decision-making, which leaves them feeling confused and overburdened. Furthermore, research like those done by Arslan and Bayraktar-Uyar (2020), Karim

and Jebat (2024), and Saimons and Chatuverdi (2022) continually emphasizes the significant influence that family expectations and environmental limitations have on students' profession choices. These results highlight how these outside forces greatly influence students' profession choices, frequently at the price of their personal preferences and uniqueness.

However, studies that look at career decision-making often use quantitative approaches, which are mostly concerned with numerical data and statistical analysis. Although this method offers insightful information on relationships, patterns, and trends, it frequently falls short of providing the depth necessary to completely comprehend the subjective and individual experiences of those participating in the career decision-making process. Its incapacity to capture the many emotional, psychological, and contextual elements that influence students' career choices is the source of this problem. This study aims to fill the gaps left by quantitative research by utilizing qualitative approaches. A more thorough and detailed exploration of the factors influencing career choices is made possible by qualitative methodologies, especially when considering students' emotional experiences, internal conflicts, and stress (Hadiyati & Astuti, 2023). Such a method can reveal the complex, multidimensional stories that underlying students' decisions, emphasizing the ways in which personal preferences, professional paths, and stress interact (Silvola et al., 2021). In addition to improving theoretical knowledge in this area, this greater comprehension offers educators, counselors, and regulators useful implications for better student support.

2.3.2. Career Indecision

The problem of career indecision has been extensively researched since it has a big impact on both academic achievement and personal development. When choosing a career, a lot of students get really anxious, especially when there is uncertainty and insufficient career counselling (Özcan et al., 2023). Students often experience professional doubt due to external influences including family expectations, societal conventions, and the fear of making the “wrong” choice (Badu et al., 2024). This adds to their stress levels as they try to plan for their futures. Further evidence that career uncertainty and a lack of thorough knowledge about possible career choices are the main causes of indecision comes from research by Boo and Kim (2020). These elements not only impair students' capacity for making decisions, but they also have a detrimental effect on their self-esteem, making them question their prospects for professional growth. Because of this, career

indecision is a major barrier to both academic achievement and long-term professional development, highlighting the need for better career counselling and support to enable students to make confident and well-informed decisions about their future (Atitsogbe et al., 2024)

Lack of understanding regarding specific career options is a critical factor contributing to career indecision, often intertwined with emotional and psychological challenges. Jung (2020) highlights that student struggling with career choices frequently feel overwhelmed by the pressure to make significant life decisions at a young age, particularly when they lack adequate knowledge about diverse career paths. This uncertainty is exacerbated by limited exposure to various professions, high parental expectations, and societal pressures to pursue “successful” careers, leading to confusion, reduced confidence, and heightened mental distress, such as anxiety and depression (Nyunt et al., 2023). According to the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), a lack of knowledge about job possibilities makes decision-making even more difficult by lowering self-efficacy and adversely influencing outcome expectations (Han et al., 2022). Similar to this, Krumboltz’s Theory of Career Decision Making highlights how a lack of career-related experiences limits students’ ability to explore and strengthens their dependence on outside influences, leading them to pursue career that might not be a good fit for their skills or interests (Yunus et al., 2024) In order to close these gaps, students need both career counselling to help them understand their alternatives and mental health support to enable them to make choices that are consistent with their own beliefs and objectives. Students can make more confident and healthy professional decisions by filling in these knowledge gaps and addressing outside influences.

Even though a lot of research has been done on career hesitation, little is known about the precise psychological and emotional elements that play a role in this phenomenon (Pirsoul et al., 2023). Few studies offer through, evidence-based insights into how these characteristics appear and affect people in real-world circumstances, despite the fact that previous literature frequently highlights common causes including anxiety, uncertainty, and a lack of professional competence. Furthermore, there is a substantial knowledge vacuum about the complexity of career indecision since a large portion of the existing research is generic and ignores the complicated, unique experiences of this situation. More focused empirical study that looks at the unique psychological and emotional factors driving career indecision is needed to fill this gap and provide a more thorough and in-depth knowledge of the problem. In addition to advancing theoretical frameworks, this kind of research would aid in the creation of more potent interventions that would better address the particular difficulties faced by those who are unsure about their careers.

2.3.2 Role External Pressure

The long-standing theoretical assertion that choosing a career throughout life is a crucial but fundamentally challenging developmental task is supported by the continued prominence of career decision-making challenges in career development and counselling (Azhenov et al., 2023). Selecting a career entails balancing one's own goals with the effect of outside variables, which can make decision-making more difficult. According to Fajriani et al. (2024), outside factors including peer pressure, cultural norms, and family expectations greatly influence people's professional decisions. Because people may feel pressured to put social or family acceptance ahead of their own tastes and interests, these factors can produce an atmosphere of increased stress and uncertainty (Pybus et al., 2022). Confusion and hesitation are frequently caused by a conflict between one's own objectives and those of others, which arises from the pressure to live up to cultural and familial expectations as well as the desire to satisfy peer group standards. These difficulties highlight how crucial it is for career development frameworks to address both the internal and external aspects of professional decision-making, providing specialized assistance to enable people to manage these complexities and promote genuine and well-informed job choices. (Hirschi & Koen, 2021)

The variety of career that students believe they can pursue is severely constrained by outside factors, which frequently influence them to make decisions that are more in line with social or familial norms than with their own interests or skills (Deng et al., 2023). For example, since they believe these professions to be more prestigious or financially stable, parents may push their kids to pursue particular professional tracks, like engineering or medicine, without taking into account their unique objectives or skills. The idea that some professions ensure success or stability is often reflected in this parental influence, which frequently ignores the kids' own goals in the process (Gao et al., 2024). In a similar vein, students feel under pressure to pursue careers that are considered financially or socially acceptable due to labour market pressures and society norms (Nikunen, 2021). These factors may cause students to choose externally validated job possibilities over ones that truly interest them. In addition to limiting job development, this mismatch between personal choices and external expectations can cause tension, discontent, and a lack of fulfilment in their professional trajectories. In order to address these problems, it is necessary to create an atmosphere that values career exploration and self-awareness. This will allow students to make decisions that are in line with their individual interests and skills rather than caving in to other influences.

Using qualitative approaches, my study aims to bridge a significant geographic divide while investigating the psychological and emotional dimensions of choosing a career. The geographical discrepancy results from a lack of research especially looking at career choices in this area, which leaves a big gap in our knowledge of how regional factors affect decision-making. By concentrating on this context, the study explores the distinct cultural, sociological, and economic factors that influence profession choices in ways that are frequently missed by more general, non-contextualized studies. For instance, local economic opportunities or limits have a substantial impact on perceived career feasibility, while area cultural norms may impose unique expectations on professional trajectories. An in-depth exploration of these complexities is made possible by a qualitative technique, which captures the emotional difficulties and lived experiences of people making career decisions in this particular setting (Budjanovcanin & Woodrow, 2022). By presenting subtle insights into the ways that geographic location interacts with emotional and psychological elements, this study seeks to enhance the body of existing knowledge and provide a more thorough understanding of professional decision-making in understudied fields.

2.3.2.1 Family Pressure

It is common knowledge that parental support plays a significant role in how university students, especially those who are almost finished with their education, choose their careers. According to Putri (2023) study, “Studi Korelasional: Career Decision Making Mahasiswa Tingkat Akhir Dengan Dukungan Orangtua,” there is a strong beneficial link between smart job choices and parental support. It demonstrates that outside help, such parental instrumental support, educational coaching, and emotional support, helps students feel less stressed about their careers and make better decisions (Geduld, 2024). For third-year counselling students, who are starting to prepare for their professional roles while juggling the demands of their internship, coursework, and personal commitments, this relationship is especially important. Parental support is crucial to the mental health and decision-making processes of counselling students, who in particular rely on it to boost their confidence in both their professional path and their capacity to manage the demands of the field (Campbell et al., 2023)

Parental support has a special significance for counselling students since it helps them build emotional resilience and self-efficacy. Parental emotional support, such as words of understanding and encouragement, might be crucial for counselling students as they deal with the responsibilities of their internships and coursework, according to Nafira-Tiara-Putri’s results

(Putri, 2023). During their practice, these students frequently struggle with significant levels of responsibility, such as offering emotional support to others. Parental support strengthens their conviction that they can overcome these obstacles and make wise professional choices. Informational support is especially important since parents can offer information about employment opportunities, counselling expectations, or other career options in the larger psychology and mental health area (Saether et al., 2023). Additionally, practical support such as help with living expenses, tuition, or textbooks can lessen the financial strain that third-year students sometimes face, allowing them to concentrate better on their coursework, internships, and future planning. This comprehensive parental participation reduces stress as counselling students navigate career uncertainty by giving them the skills, they need to develop clarity and self-confidence.

Third-year counselling students frequently experience increased stress while making career decisions due to the demands of the counselling profession and the need to put their academic knowledge to use in practical situations. The reality of their chosen vocation become more evident at this crucial juncture in their academic path. Students who do not have enough parental support may feel more stressed, question their abilities, or worry about making mistakes in their careers. According to Putri (2023) research, having strong parental support networks can serve as a protective barrier against these stressors and boost self-efficacy, or the conviction that one can succeed. Higher self-efficacy counselling students are less likely to have anxiety-related symptoms or decision paralysis because they are more likely to approach professional decisions with confidence, especially in the midst of uncertainty (Maier et al., 2023). By reaffirming students' sense of purpose and ability, parental validation of their career choice can also lessen the impact of outside pressures, such as societal misconceptions about the counselling profession or worries about financial stability.

These findings clearly relate to my sample of third-year counselling students at UNIMAS for my study, "Career Decision-Making and Its Effect on University Student Stress." The results emphasize the value of assessing parental support's nature, including whether it is seen as empowering or controlling, in addition to its accessibility. Given the rigorous demands that counselling students must meet, knowing how parental support affects their stress levels and confidence in their ability to make decisions can give institutions vital information for putting in place focused support programs. Families could receive psychoeducation as part of these programs on how to help students through this time of change. Furthermore, third-year counselling students'

distinct experiences juggling coursework, internships, and the pressure of entering the industry offer a rich environment for comprehending the complex interactions among career self-efficacy, parental participation, and mental health outcomes. The study by Nafira-Tiara-Putri emphasizes the necessity of proactive strategies that address family dynamics as a significant determinant of students' psychological health and preparedness for the workforce.

2.3.2.2 Societal Expectation

The expectations of society greatly influence university students' career goals and decision-making, especially for those negotiating a world economy that is changing quickly. Entrepreneurship is becoming a more popular and feasible career choice in research universities, frequently in response to societal needs for economic growth, career creation, and innovation. "Processing Societal Expectations: Entrepreneurship Initiative Decision-Making at a Research University" Basri et al. (2022), examines how institutional pressures and societal standards interact to shape students' entrepreneurial choices. In addition to adhering to conventional notions of professional success, it emphasizes how students are impacted by outside pressures to adopt new trends that place an emphasis on independence, creativity, and economic effect. The pressure to meet both institutional and societal standards sometimes lead to internal tensions, which complicates students' decision-making processes and increases stress levels.

In their third year, counselling students start participating in practical training and internships, which help them to better grasp the demands of the field. However, these students may be deterred from completely enjoying their chosen career by external stressors such as societal prejudices and the undervaluation of counselling roles (Johnson, 2022). For example, students may face opposition from friends or family about their career decision in societies where counselling is seen as less prestigious or financially rewarding. These students struggle with self-doubt and worry about whether their career fits with society's expectations of success, which leads to internal conflict as a result of this resistance. The essentially service-oriented aspect of counselling is frequently at odds with the subtle pressure that many counselling students feel to prove concrete worth, whether through pay prospects or quantifiable career results. These demands may cause students to doubt their own abilities and aptitude for their chosen field of work.

The demands placed on third-year counselling students frequently go beyond personal pressure to encompass more significant structural and cultural factors. The emphasis on economic output and market-driven career possibilities in many nations makes it more stressful for students who choose to pursue less lucrative careers (Mushtaq et al., 2022). As they strive toward certification in a field that demands a great degree of empathy, patience, and personal resilience, counseling students who are already in a formative period of developing their professional identities may feel the burden of social criticism (Yu et al., 2022). The innate passion that propels many counselling students may be at odds with societal narratives that place a premium on prestige or financial stability, leaving them open to stress, worry, and uncertainty about their future. The demands of finishing coursework, overseeing internships, and making plans for post-graduation professions, all of which come together during the crucial third year, frequently exacerbate this outside strain.

The experiences of third-year counselling students are closely related to the impact of social expectations in my study, “Career Decision-Making and Its Effect on University Student Stress.” Social expectations can influence these students’ confidence in choosing professions that complement their love of helping people as they make selections about where and how to practice. Societal pressure can undermine their confidence by framing counselling as a less “successful” career, thus amplifying their stress and challenging their capacity for effective decision-making (Bunjak et al., 2021). My research’s discussion of these social constraints may emphasize how critical it is to reframe cultural perceptions about counselling careers and provide students with focused interventions. My research can provide important insights into creating environments that support counselling students’ resilience and mental health, allowing them to flourish in spite of outside constraints, by examining the intersection of career decision-making stress and societal expectations.

2.3.2.3 Economic and Financial Pressure

Financial and economic strains are important outside variables affecting college students’ profession choices. Repaying student loans, being financially independent, and choosing occupations that offer steady, long-term income are just a few of the financial worries that many students face as they make the move from school to the workforce (Martin & Dwyer, 2021). Global and local economic realities make this stress much worse because students are aware of shifting employment markets and rising living expenses. Since counselling is frequently linked to

comparatively lower financial returns than other disciplines, these influences are more noticeable for students pursuing the subject. Therefore, as they make decisions about their career prospects, third-year counselling students juggling internships and academic obligations may find that financial strain is a major external stressor.

For students preparing for careers in counselling, the idea that the sector pays less presents extra difficulties. Many third-year counselling students encounter pushback from family members or society that stems from worries about the financial sustainability of this line of work. Students may feel guilty or under pressure to think about other, more profitable careers in cultures or households where financial security is valued highly. These demands may cause them to struggle internally between their desire to serve others and the external pressure to support their family or become financially independent as soon as they graduate (Deng, 2022). The burden is much more severe for students from lower-income families, whose capacity to pursue internships, postgraduate degrees, or even start their professions may be significantly impacted by their immediate earning potential. Their confidence in pursuing their chosen career may be impacted by these financial constraints, which may force them into part-time work unrelated to their field of study and leave less time for hands-on learning (Moxon et al., 2020).

The responsibilities of their academic programs frequently collide with financial strain for third-year counselling students. A common prerequisite for counselling programs, internships might be unpaid or have meager pay, which puts further pressure on students who are already juggling living expenses and tuition. Counselling students are more likely to face prolonged financial insecurity than students in high-paying professions, who could expect financial rewards shortly after graduation. This disparity increases stress and may cause students to doubt the viability of their chosen career path, which could impair their self-efficacy and mental well-being in general. Even if students initially wanted to work in community mental health settings, which may offer lower financial remuneration, economic pressures might also affect their post-graduation job possibilities. They may feel pressured to prefer positions in private practice or organizations with greater income.

2.3.4 Coping Strategy in Career Decision-Making

Coping strategies are essential when choosing a career because they enable people to manage the mental and emotional stress that comes with big life decisions. Coping strategies are adaptive ways

that people use to manage the intricacies of career decisions while reducing stress and anxiety, according to Lent and Brown (2020). These techniques help people deal with uncertainty by allowing them to explore their feelings, face obstacles, and gain confidence. According to the study, students frequently employ a variety of coping strategies, including asking for help from friends, family, or counselors, using structured approaches to problem-solving or being proactive by looking into career options and accumulating relevant experience (Bondarchuk et al., 2023). By using these techniques, students can lessen their anxiety, define their career goals, and better handle the emotional strain of decision-making. Effective coping strategies can also help students organize their careers in a more resilient and disciplined way, allowing them to overcome outside demands, adjust to unforeseen challenges, and make decisions that are consistent with their interests and values (Shim & Pelaez, 2022). Since it gives them the emotional and psychological resources they need to make confident and well-informed career decisions, identifying and supporting these mechanisms in students can be a crucial part of career counselling.

Student's general well-being is greatly impacted by how they manage career indecision because coping strategies affect their emotional and psychological states while they are making decisions (Zhu et al., 2021). Students who use healthy coping mechanisms, such goal-setting and proactive job exploration, report feeling less anxious and having a better understanding of their career prospects, according to Fajriani et al. (2024). These techniques provide people a sense of agency while making career decisions, which keeps them motivated, focused, and more assured of their choices. However, those who use unhealthy coping strategies, such avoidance or denial, frequently go through periods of increased stress, indecision, and decreased satisfaction with their final professional decisions. Such maladaptive behaviours can result in emotions of discontent and unhappiness in their professional lives in addition to prolonging the career decision-making process (Badri et al., 2024). Therefore, effective coping strategies are crucial for developing personal agency, emotional control, and resilience in addition to stress management. These attributes are essential for making wise professional choices because they enable people to deal with setbacks, maintain focus on their long-term objectives, and more easily adjust to changing conditions. Since adaptive coping techniques have a major impact on students' decision-making process and general mental health, it is critical to acknowledge and support their development in career counselling (Zhu et al., 2021)

The exact coping mechanisms that work well in various cultural or demographic contexts remain largely unknown, despite a large body of research investigating the influence of coping

mechanisms on career decision-making. While a large body of research emphasizes the overall function of coping strategies in managing stress and uncertainty linked to one's work, fewer studies concentrate on how cultural background, familial expectations, and social influences influence the coping mechanisms people use. This disparity highlights the need for additional targeted study that explores the ways in which these unique components impact the coping strategies employed by diverse groups in diverse contexts. People from collectivist cultures, for instance, might use coping mechanisms that put family unity or following social norms first, whereas people from individualistic cultures might favour mechanisms that place more emphasis on independence and personal objectives. It is essential to comprehend these cultural and demographic differences in order to customize interventions that cater to the unique requirements of various groups and offer contextually appropriate support systems. Understanding how different groups respond to obstacles in career decision-making can also result in more individualized advice and tools, assisting people in successfully navigating their professional pathways (Azhenov et al., 2023). Furthermore, by using these insights, more sophisticated counselling treatments and support networks might be created, guaranteeing that career development services are available and flexible enough to accommodate the various challenges and experiences of various populations (Eseadi, 2023). By ensuring that interventions are both culturally competent and pertinent to the unique requirements of students from a variety of backgrounds, this research can significantly improve the efficacy of career counselling

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

This chapter covers the many approaches that are used to collect data and conduct analysis for this study. Research design, sampling and sample size, pilot study, trustworthiness, study ethics, data gathering process, and data analysis are among the approaches covered.

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative case study technique will be used in this research to better understand university students' perspectives, experiences, and opinions on professional decision-making and how it affects their mental health. This methodology facilitates an in-depth exploration of the ways in which career-related obstacles impact their psychological state, coping strategies, and emotional health (Li et al., 2024).

Researchers may explore how students view their career decision-making processes and the stress that goes along with it by conducting qualitative research, which captures student's complex perspectives. This approach places a strong emphasis on comprehending the individualized connotations that students ascribe to their career decisions, which quantitative approaches could miss (Shi, 2023). Through direct connection between researchers and participants, qualitative approaches help clarify the "informative understanding" of personal experiences, as shown in a study. This reveals deeper insights into the difficulties faced by students during this crucial time in their life.

3.1.1 Semi Structured Interview

Qualitative researchers use human instruments to choose informants, decide on a study subject, gather and evaluate data, analyse and interpret data, and make conclusions. A semi-structured interview is used in this study to gather data because the approach emphasises depth and richness of understanding by attempting to comprehend and interpret the research object from the viewpoint of the sample under exploration (Ruslin et al., 2022). In order to improve and elucidate the results acquired, the data source would additionally contain field notes, voice recordings, and interviews (Monday, 2020).

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), semi-structured interviews offer flexibility by allowing questions to shift to suit the flow of the discussion while staying on topic with a list of key topics. Because it encourages participants to provide in-depth, individual viewpoints, this approach is especially effective for analyzing sensitive or complex subjects. Furthermore, the lack of a strict timetable enables interviewers to probe more deeply into unexpected responses, yielding more intricate and subtle data. These qualities make semi-structured interviews a valuable method for qualitative research that aims to understand the many perspectives of participants.

3.2 Sample of Study

The population of the research interest will be university students presently enrolled in their third year as counselling students within the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development at UNIMAS. The study's goal is to comprehend the factors and difficulties that third-year counselling's students face when making career decisions.

3.3 Sample

Bhandari (2020a) as well as Statistic Canada (2021), highlight that the sample is the portion of the population that is the subject of the study. The following requirements must be met in order for participants to effectively complete the interview: (1) The participants are student that currently enrolled in university, (2) The participants currently active participating in choosing a career, (3) The participants are approaching significant career turning moments.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to recruit 7 to 10 third-year counselling students from UNIMAS in Kota Samarahan, two of whom will participate in a pilot study to assess the viability and potential effectiveness of the intervention or study design. Students in their third year usually have more life and academic experience than those in their first or second year. They may offer more insightful explanations of their decision-making processes because they have advanced in their education and have probably participated in a variety of career-related activities. Third-year students were chosen because, according to one study, they have grown through the system and are capable of offering unbiased evaluations of counseling techniques (Amusala, 2023). Numerous academics have made an effort to determine the precise number of sample responders for a qualitative investigation (Bekele & Ago, 2022). They have used distinct terminology for the number for various qualitative research designs in their explanation. According to Creswell (1998)

cite by Bekele and Ago (2022), it is advised to conduct 20–30 interviews for a grounded theory study and 5–25 interviews for a phenomenological investigation. Lastly, I suggest 7–10 participants for my research project because of time limits and data saturation. Furthermore, the concept of “information power” is offered as a guiding principle for sample size adequacy, suggesting that a smaller sample may be sufficient if it includes significant information pertinent to the study’s objectives. This is consistent with the understanding that qualitative research prioritizes depth over breadth and necessitates a tailored sampling approach based on specific study objectives and settings (Subedi, 2023).

However, the study’s sample size might change based on how saturated the data is. More data collecting is unlikely to provide fresh insights if a researcher has gathered enough information to spot reoccurring themes or trends. Saturation guarantees the information acquired is adequate to address the study objectives and offers a comprehensive comprehension of the phenomenon being studied.

3.4 Sample Procedure

This study will utilize purposive sampling since it depends on the researcher’s ability to choose and pinpoint the traits of respondents that will best answer the suggested research topic (Nikolopoulou, 2022; Simkus, 2023).

Third-year counseling students at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) will be approached using purposive sampling in order to find individuals who fit the study’s criteria. Following the identification of a qualified participant, they will be urged to suggest additional people who meet the requirements and might be interested in participating. Until the required sample size is reached or data saturation happens, this referral procedure will be repeated as necessary to guarantee a targeted and concentrated selection of participants.

Table 1 Purposive sampling with criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale for criteria

Participant is a student that enrolled in university	Participant is not enrolled in a university	These requirements are justified by the need to guarantee that the study concentrates on people who are actively enrolled in university, as the university setting has a direct influence on their psychological affects and professional decision-making processes (Pulse, 2022).
Participants are in third year counselling students	Participants are not in their third year of counselling students	Counseling students are often involved in discussions about career paths, personal development, and professional identity, which makes them a relevant population for studying career decision-making (Sharma et al., 2023)
Participants should be willing to provide consent and actively participate in the study.	Participants unwilling to provide consent or fully engage in the research process	Participants who are willing to engage fully are more likely to provide thoughtful and meaningful contributions to the study. Active participation enhances the richness of the data collected, as engaged participants are more likely to share their experiences and insights relevant to the research topic (Manandhar & Joshi, 2020).

Note. Table above shows the inclusion, exclusion, and rationale of the participants in this study.

3.5 Pilot Study

Dayanand and Chaudhary (2024) describe a pilot study as a first inquiry carried out in qualitative research to test and develop research tools, including interview guides, and to find any shortcomings or potential areas for research design improvement.

3.6 Ethics of Study

3.6.1 The standards to Prevent Harm

Counsellors who utilize people as research subjects are accountable for the participants' safety during the study and are required to take appropriate precautions to prevent participants from suffering social, psychological, emotional, or bodily harm (Lembaga Kaunselor, 2011, pp. 53–58).

To protect participants, I conduct my research in accordance with the ethical standards set forth by Lembaga Kaunselor (2011). Getting participants' informed consent entails educating them about the goals, methods, and rights of the study. I maintain confidentiality by anonymizing data and safeguarding participant personal information. In addition, I foster a safe space where people can express themselves without worrying about criticism or injury. In order to protect their wellbeing, participants will have access to counselling help or be sent to the proper agencies if they experience any emotional distress.

3.6.3 Privacy of Respondent

Research participant data collected throughout the study is treated with the utmost confidentiality. The prospect of others having access to such information is required under research ethics practice, together with strategies to ensure confidentiality. As part of the informed consent process, be described to participants (Lembaga Kaunselor, 2011, pp. 53–58). Informed consent will be provided to participants before to their participation in the study, and confidentiality principles will be rigorously adhered to throughout.

Following ethical norms, I make sure that participant data is managed with absolute secrecy throughout my research (Lembaga Kaunselor, 2011). During the informed consent procedure, participants will be told about the study's objectives, the use of their data, and who will have access to it. Additionally, they will be guaranteed that their answers will be kept private and used only for study. Data will be securely stored, only authorized persons will have access, and participant identities will be protected by using coded identifiers rather than personal information.

3.6.2 Inform Consent

People are free to consent to participate in research, according to Lembaga Kaunselor (2011). On the top page of the Informed Consent, the study's discussion will be displayed, along with its goals, terms, and conditions. Terms including confidentiality, the ability for volunteers to choose not to participate out, and the researcher's contact details in case of questions. The participant's informed consent is also included in this section of the page.

To make sure that participants in my research are fully aware of the study's objectives, purpose, and participant rights, informed consent will be used. The consent form will stress that participation is completely voluntary, describe the nature of the study, and describe the steps taken to ensure anonymity. Additionally, participants will be made aware of their freedom to leave at any time without facing any repercussions. I will also provide participants my contact details so they may get more information or ask questions before committing to the event. Throughout the study, the informed consent form will act as a contract to safeguard the participants' rights and welfare.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

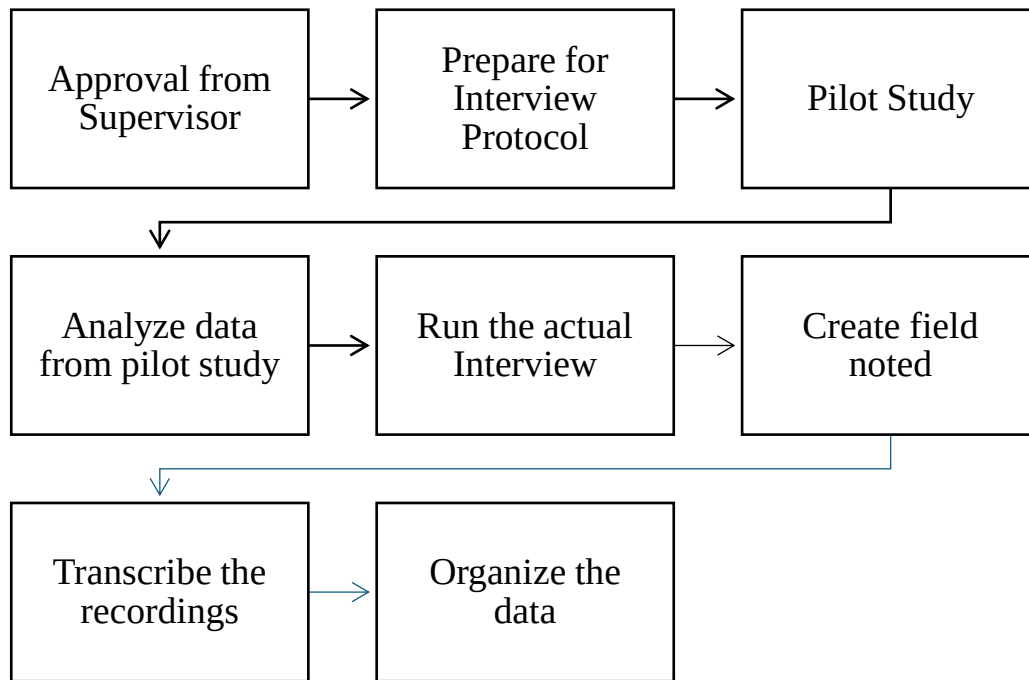


Figure 2 Data Collection Procedure

The systematic process of obtaining information pertinent to a research question or objective through a variety of methods, including surveys, interviews, observation, or pre-existing data sources, is known as data collection. In qualitative research, non-numerical data is collected and examined to gain a deeper understanding of social phenomena (Bhandari, 2020).

One-on-one semi-structured interviews will be used to gather data, and audio recordings of the entire conversations will be used in addition to handwritten notes that highlight important findings. Following each interview, field notes will be made to document impressions, nonverbal cues, and contextual information not caught by the audio. To guarantee accuracy and preserve the breadth of participants' answers, the recordings will be literally transcribed. After that, all field notes, handwritten notes, and transcripts will be safely collected and arranged for in-depth examination.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), semi-structured interviews offer flexibility by allowing questions to shift to suit the flow of the discussion while staying on topic with a list of key topics. Because it encourages participants to provide in-depth, individual viewpoints, this approach is especially effective for analyzing sensitive or complex subjects. Furthermore, the lack of a strict timetable enables interviewers to probe more deeply into unexpected responses, yielding

more intricate and subtle data. These qualities make semi-structured interviews a valuable method for qualitative research that aims to understand the many perspectives of participants.

Getting the research supervisor's approval is the initial stage. This guarantees that the methodology, tools, and research design adhere to academic and ethical standards. Supervisor input is crucial to improving the strategy and resolving any potential issues before moving forward. Once approval is secured, the preliminary phase begins. This includes finalizing protocol interview questions, acquiring consent forms, and organizing logistics like as participant selection, interview schedule, and recording equipment. A pilot study is conducted with a limited sample of participants to ascertain the efficiency of the research strategy and tools. This step helps identify any issues with the interview questions, data gathering techniques, or logistics. The results of the pilot research are analyzed to assess its effectiveness and identify areas that require improvement. Modifications are made to enhance the process, guaranteeing that the questions are understandable and effectively addressing any methodological or practical issues.

The primary study participants are interviewed when the processes have been improved. Semi-structured interviews are used to collect in-depth qualitative data, with the finalized interview procedure serving as a guide. Field notes are taken during or immediately following the interviews to capture nonverbal cues, background information, and other observations that may not be fully captured by recordings. These annotations improve the transcriptions and give them more depth. The recorded interviews are verbatim transcribed in order to prepare them for analysis. Transcription accurately captures all spoken information, enabling systematic classification and topic identification. The field notes and transcribed data are analyzed to find recurring themes, patterns, and insights. This step involves coding the data and using qualitative analysis techniques to answer the research questions and meet the study's goals. With an emphasis on accuracy, development, and ethical adherence, this procedure offers a systematic and iterative way to collect and assess qualitative data.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

Thematic analysis will be used to examine the information gathered from field notes, interviews, and verbatim.

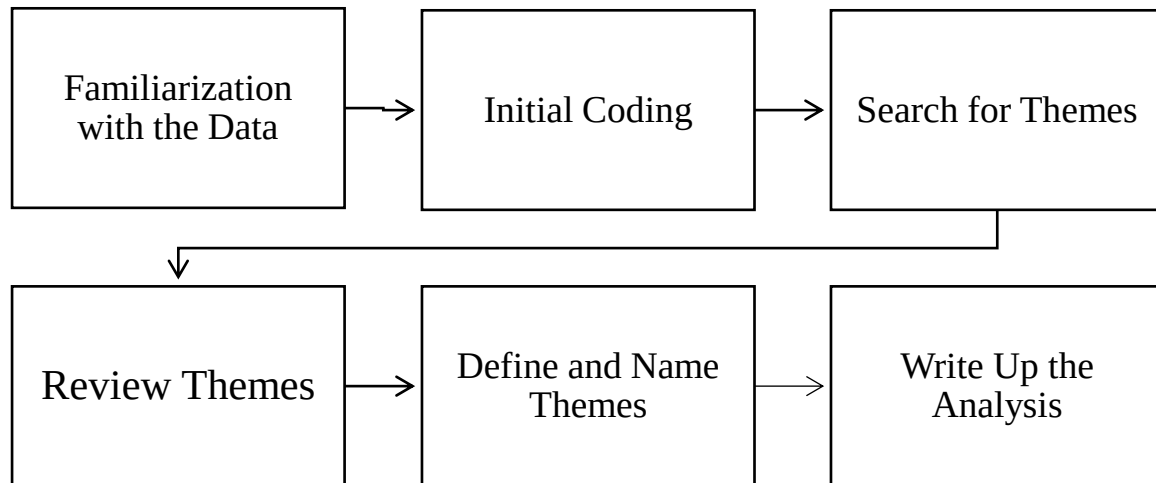


Figure 3 Thematic Analysis Procedure

3.8.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis, as defined by Braun and Clarke (2006), is the process of methodically arranging and examining data in order to identify important themes that highlight key elements of the data in connection to the research question. In order to find patterns, this technique necessitates carefully examining and rereading the data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that involves reviewing a set of data (such as focus group or in-depth interview transcripts) and searching for semantic patterns to identify themes (Delve, 2020). Stated differently, the process entails analyzing the data set's themes and patterns to ascertain its fundamental significance. It is not necessary to identify every theme in the data; rather, this approach should focus on the most significant components that are related to the research questions. It is directed by the study objectives and questions (Sovacool et al., 2023).

According to Dawadi (2020) Thematic analysis is the best analytical technique for inexperienced qualitative researcher. Thematic analysis is a straightforward, flexible, and increasingly popular method for analysing qualitative data. This method is used for identifying

and analysing themes, or meaningful patterns, in qualitative data. (Jones, 2022). According to Yardley (2024), Getting to know the data, creating preliminary codes, looking for themes, evaluating themes, defining and labelling themes, and creating the report are the six steps of thematic analysis. Because of the iterative nature of the approach, the researcher switches between the phases as necessary (Morgan & Nica, 2020).

Six interconnected processes make up the methodical process of thematic analysis, which is used to find, examine, and interpret patterns in qualitative data. The first step in the process is becoming familiar with the data, which involves the researcher reading and rereading notes or transcripts, making preliminary observations, and looking for reoccurring patterns. This leads to the second phase, creating initial codes, in which significant data segments are methodically labeled with brief descriptors that capture key characteristics pertinent to the study issue. By grouping related codes into more general themes in the third step, “searching for themes” the researcher finds connections and patterns among various data segments.

The researcher then moves on to the fourth phase, examining themes, where they are further refined and assessed to make sure they appropriately reflect the data. To preserve coherence, they may merge, divide, or eliminate themes as needed. Each theme is given a precise name and a thorough description that encapsulates its core and demonstrates how it helps to address the research question in the fifth stage, which is defining and naming themes. In order to give a thorough and lucid explanation of the data findings, the researcher uses representative quotes and interpretations to weave the themes together into a coherent narrative throughout the report writing step. A comprehensive and thoughtful analysis is ensured by this methodical methodology, which extracts valuable insights from qualitative data.

Summary

The proposed study, in summary, is a qualitative method study since the information gathered from field notes, interviews, and verbatim will be evaluated using theme analysis to address the stated research objectives.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

Introduction

The data gathered from semi-structured interviews with university students is presented in this chapter, together with the main themes and sub-themes that the thematic analysis revealed. The results were aimed to explore the feelings and experiences of students in relation to professional decision-making, as well as the root causes of stress, especially when there is a conflict between the academic paths that students have chosen and their desired careers.

4.1 Background of Participants

Seven (7) participants in all were chosen for the study using purposive sampling to take part in semi-structured interviews. Every participant was picked because they were relevant to the study's main objective, which is university students who are having trouble choosing a career. Due to uncertainty regarding their future professional path, including instances of career-course mismatch, each participant reported various levels of stress. All participants' names and identifying information have been anonymised in accordance with ethical guidelines. Table 1 summarizes the background data of the subjects.

4.1.1 Participant 1: Daniel

Daniel (pseudonym), the first participant, is a 22-year-old undergraduate student from Bandar Semariang, Kuching, Sarawak. At Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), he is presently a third-year student in the Bachelor of Counselling program.

4.1.2 Participant 2: Azril

Azril (pseudonym) the second participant, is a 22-year-old undergraduate student from Sibu, Kuching, Sarawak. At Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), he is presently a third-year student in the Bachelor of Counselling program.

4.1.3 Participant 3: Aira

Aira (pseudonym) the third participant, is a 23-year-old undergraduate student from BDC, Kuching, Sarawak. At Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), he is presently a third-year student in the Bachelor of Counselling program.

4.1.4 Participant 4: Hakim

Hakim (pseudonym) the fourth participant, is a 22-year-old undergraduate student from Lundu, Sarawak. At Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), he is presently a third-year student in the Bachelor of Counselling program.

4.1.5 Participant 5: Amir

Amir (pseudonym) the fifth participant, is a 22-year-old undergraduate student from Betong, Sarawak. At Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), he is presently a third-year student in the Bachelor of Counselling program.

4.1.6 Participant 6: Faris

Faris (pseudonym) the sixth participant, is a 22-year-old undergraduate student from Johor. At Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), he is presently a third-year student in the Bachelor of Counselling program.

4.1.7 Participant 7: Naufal

Naufal (pseudonym) the seventh participant, is a 22-year-old undergraduate student from Perak. At Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), he is presently a third-year student in the Bachelor of Counselling program

Table 1

Background of Participants

Participants	Participant Code	Gender	Program and Year of Study	University		
1 (Daniel)	P1	Male	Bachelor of Counselling, Year 3	University (UNIMAS)	Malaysia	Sarawak
2 (Azril)	P2	Male	Bachelor of Counselling, Year 3	University (UNIMAS)	Malaysia	Sarawak
3 (Aira)	P3	Female	Bachelor of Counselling, Year 3	University (UNIMAS)	Malaysia	Sarawak
4 (Hakim)	P4	Male	Bachelor of Counselling, Year 3	University (UNIMAS)	Malaysia	Sarawak
5 (Amir)	P5	Male	Bachelor of Counselling, Year 3	University (UNIMAS)	Malaysia	Sarawak
6 (Faris)	P6	Male	Bachelor of Counselling, Year 3	University (UNIMAS)	Malaysia	Sarawak
7 (Naufal)	P7	Male	Bachelor of Counselling, Year 3	University (UNIMAS)	Malaysia	Sarawak

Note: Table above are the summarization of the third-year counselling students' background participated in this study

4.2 Finding Analysis

According to the information gathered from the semi-structured interviews, university students discussed many different types of unique experiences associated with the process of choosing a career and the resulting psychological stress. Four major topics emerged from the thematic analysis of the interview data: Source of stress about career decision making, the effects of uncertainty, the effect of external pressure in career decision-making, and coping mechanism student use to cope with. The main conclusions of this study are formed by the sub-themes that support each theme further. All participants were given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality while their narratives were being analyzed and presented.

4.2.1 Research Question 1: Sources of stress related to career choice

Participants in Research Question 1 discussed several types of factors that shaped a career choice, derived from both individual experiences and more general perspectives on university students' preferred careers. Students' objectives, attitudes, and aspirations are reflected in these factors, which also show how they approach the career selection process. Important themes and sub-themes were discovered as a result of the responses' analysis, as shown in Figure 1, which summarizes the essential components of the standards applied while choosing a career.

Theme	Subtheme
1.Source of Career Decision Stress	1.1 Ambiguity in Career Identity
	1.2 Family and Societal Expectation Pressure

Figure 1: The theme and subthemes of the source of career decision stress.

4.2.1.1 Theme 1: Sources of Career-Decision Stress

The first theme emerged from the participants' views of the factors that go into selection of a career. Within this category, four sub-themes were identified: (i) Ambiguity in career identity and (ii) Family and societal expectation pressure.

4.2.1.1.1 Subtheme 1.1: Ambiguity in career identity

Ambiguity in career identity a state marked by doubt, lack of clarity, and confusion over one's future career direction was a common source of stress seen throughout participants' narratives. This subtheme, which reflected an internalized tension among college students who were finding it difficult to match their academic choices with a clearly defined career route, surfaced again and with force.

Participants' main source of doubt was their inability to choose which career path best suited or matched their individual values, interests, and strengths. Daniel said that:

"Faktor ni sebenarnya sebabkan...tak nak tahu nak pilih mana satu yang sesuai dengan kita. kan...maybe kalau kita buat suka hati, kita sendiri tidak akan minat. (Line 31-32, p2)

Self-directed ambiguity, in which the person acknowledges that they are both the source of indecision and the decision-maker, is a fundamental problem that the reflection illustrates. The stress of having complete control over such a big life decision seemed to worsen their mental discomfort.

This issue is further reinforced by Azril's perspective, who emphasized that:

"Faktor terjadi mungkin masih keliru dan tak tahu bidang mana yang nak ambil macam tu lah, faktor kurang tahulah berkenaan dengan bidang apa yang diambil" (Line 18-19, p1)

According to Azril, suggesting an ongoing difficulty in limiting one's academic alternatives. Students who were caught between several options and lacked the confidence to commit to one course of action frequently experienced significant confusion in their minds as a result of their indecision. This phenomenon is consistent with research indicating that a major predictor of decision-making challenges and associated stress is unresolved identity development during the emerging adult phase.

Consistent with Azril's view, another participant which is Aira shared a similar experience:

...isulah berkaitan dengan career decision ni sebab saya sendiri pun belum pasti career dalam bidang kaunseling apa yang akan betul-betul sesuai dengan saya. (Line 32-34, p2).

For instance, was shared by Aira. (Lines 32–34), emphasizing that after choosing a career, stress does not always go away. Rather, it may develop into a more profound apprehension over

particular career responsibilities, roles, or future employment satisfaction in that field. This lends evidence to the idea that choosing a career is a complex process, and that if underlying identity issues are not addressed, ambiguity may endure through many phases. Adding to these perspectives, Naufal stated that:

“Dalam segi akademik, saya macam sukar lah nak melihat masa depan dalam kerjaya saya sebab saya sekarang tengah struggle dalam akademik.” (Line 20-21, p1).

Naufal reaffirmed the concept. (Lines 20–21), demonstrating the challenge of imagining an actual or secure career future. Reduced academic engagement, higher worry, and less desire resulted from this incapacity to see long-term career objectives. According to the statistics, students frequently have poorer goal orientation when they do not have a clear vision of their future, which can have a negative impact on both their academic performance and emotional health.

This ambiguity’s emotional impact was also seen in patterns of conduct. Overthinking, mental exhaustion, and lack of trust were among the experiences that the participants shared. Many reported feelings alone during the decision-making process, even though some made an effort to get information or speak with peers. Students were left to make important decisions on their own, frequently without sufficient support networks or exposure to real-world employment scenarios, which increased their stress levels in the absence of systematic career guidance or mentorship.

The results show that career identity uncertainty is a major psychological stressor that influences student’s academic motivation, self-perception, and future planning, rather than just being a developmental discomfort. This subtheme captures the complicated interactions that students have when choosing a career: self-discovery, uncertainty, and stress. Insufficient assistance during this stage may raise tendency to stress and burnout, decrease academic achievement, and extend uncertainty. In order to lessen the negative impact of identity ambiguity on students’ mental health and professional growth, focused interventions such as career counselling, mentoring programs, and experiential learning opportunities are essential.

4.2.1.1.2 Subtheme 1.2: Family and Societal Expectation Pressure

Participants reported feeling a great deal of stress from family and societal expectations during the career decision-making process, in addition to personal ambiguity. This subtheme shows how parents, family members, and social expectation frequently put students under pressure that went

against their own interests and goals. These demands complicated the already challenging process of choosing an appropriate career path for many, acting as a psychological load and a limitation.

Daniel expressed that:

“Dalam masa yang sama yang faktor seterusnya dari segi ni lah. Parents jugalah. Kadang-kadang orang tanya, kenapa tak ambil jurusan ni? (Line 190-193, p, 8)

The narrative demonstrates the mental struggle that students experience when outside opinions cast doubt on their decisions, particularly when those opinions are expressed during critical decision-making processes like university admissions (UPU). Guilt, insecurity, and a loss of freedom of association can result from feeling looked over or judged for abandoning from socially preferred career paths, such as engineering, or medicine.

For students in specific family positions, especially those who were the oldest child, cultural and familial expectations seemed to be particularly high. This point was reflected in Amir’s experience, who said:

“...sebab pressure sebagai anak sulung, so saya rasa benda tu bagi pressure lah sebab saya adalah rujukan untuk khusus, saya punya career.” (Line 31-33, p2),

Implying that there were unspoken expectations associated with birth order to set an example for younger siblings and seek a “respectable” career. Traditional ideas of success and responsibility were reinforced by this hierarchical family system, which frequently hindered an exploration of unusual or alternative career paths. Similar to Amir, Naufal carried the responsibility of being a role model, but uniquely, he faced it without any social support from his family, he shared that:

“Sebab saya merupakan anak sulung...dia kena hero model, tambah pula apa yang saya kena buat dalam keputusan hidup saya, saya kena buat sendiri, (Line 58-61, p2).

Naufal suggesting a lack of encouraging discussion in professional negotiations as well as a burden of independence. Without sufficient emotional or informational support, the pressure to make “correct” decisions led to a stressful and uncomfortable experience. This is consistent with research showing that collectivist family structures, which are prevalent in many Asian cultures, frequently prioritize family responsibilities over personal preferences when it comes to career planning.

Hakim also emphasized how psychological stress during their career decision-making process was influenced by familial and societal expectations. Outside of the family, social views frequently raised some academic disciplines like engineering and medicine, while indirectly stigmatizing other options, like counselling. One participant, Hakim, talked about the internal struggle he went through when he felt compelled to pursue a career, he was not passionate about:

“perlu mohonkan nak degree apa, jadi masa tu saya berbelah bagi, sebab family saya suruh saya ambik engineering, tapi saya tak minat engineering” (Line 137-138, p5)

This data also showed that these demands were intensely emotional in nature in addition to being verbal. Some students said they struggled between wanting to follow their passion and worrying that they would not live up to cultural expectations of success or disappoint their family. A greater sense of responsibility resulted from this mismatch between the self and society expectations, frequently at the price of the student’s confidence and mental well-being.

All things considered, the participants’ experiences choosing a career were significantly impacted by external stressors such as pressure from family and society. Students’ stress levels were increased by these external pressures, which were socially imposed and less controlled than internal ambiguity, which results from self-reflection and identity formation. The results emphasize how crucial it is to develop culturally aware career counselling frameworks that recognize and take into account the socio-familial factors impacting students’ decisions. In order to provide students with comprehensive support while they navigate difficult career decisions under duress, universities and career services must take these outside realities into account.

4.2.2 Research question 2: Effect of career uncertainty

From the research question 2, participant shared about how the effects of uncertainty in career decision-making give impact to their emotional and psychological well-being. Their responses show that career uncertainty not only affect their own physically, but also affect them in internal self-doubt. Figure 2 shows the themes and subthemes for the effect of career uncertainty among students.

Theme	Subtheme
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Figure 2 shows the theme and subthemes the effect of career uncertainty among students in career decision-making

4.2.2.1 Theme 2: Psychosocial Impact on Career Indecision

The second theme that emerged from the participant experiences was the psychosocial impact on career of career indecision. Within this theme, two key sub-themes were identified: (i) Physical symptoms experienced as a result of career-related stress, and (ii) low self-esteem stemming from uncertainty and lack of direction in career decision-making.

4.2.2.1.1 Subtheme 2.1: Physical Symptoms of Anxiety

The appearance of physical symptoms directly associated with mental stress resulting from career indecision was a significant finding across participant narratives. Students who had been concerned about their future for a long-time experienced symptoms that are often linked to anxiety disorders. Trembling, heavy sweating, disturbed sleep, restlessness, and trouble focusing were some of these symptoms. For university students in transitional stages of life, the physical impact of mental stress is an important indicator of the built emotional weight that professional decisions carry.

Daniel demonstrated this by mentioning the physical impacts of anxiety directly:

“Physical effect ni kadang anxiety pun ada juga. Shaking pun ada juga sebenarnya. Memang ada pengalaman sebegitulah. Sebab anxiety ni macam ada kah rasa buat keputusan yang betul.” (Line 175-177, p7)

Shaking causes a strong physiological reaction, indicating that indecision is more than just a cognitive discomfort issue and might potentially lead to physical problems. These physical symptoms may have an impact on relationships with others and academic achievement, suggesting a wider influence on student life.

In a similar vein, Faris described how this stress interfered with daily schedules and impacted sleep cycles. They explained that they frequently feel anxious before studying:

“...saya akan ada nervous akan badan berpeluh akan rasa...bila tak tahu semua benda tu saya serah diri je lah biarlah aku kena marah pun, banyak mengganggu waktu tidur kadang-kadang peluh badan.” (Line 155-159, p6)

The combination of anticipated worry and insomnia highlights how career insecurity can disrupt crucial biological cycles. Students’ stress response system is continuously triggered when they are unable to discover clarity or direction in their career path, which hinders both their emotional and physical recovery.

Azril contributed to this experiencing by expressing emotional instability during a crucial transitional period:

“...ataupun mungkin ada sedikit gelisah sebab tu buat pilihan selepas mendapat decision tu lepas mendapat tawaran sedikit gelisah lah kenapa saya dapat tawaran sedangkan saya letak yang lain, tapi bila saya fikir semula salah letak.” (Line 92-95, p4)

This shows how students struggle to control their uncertainty and anxiety when there is uncertainty about course approval. By stating that they had trouble falling asleep, Hakim confirmed this pattern:

“Err adalah sikit macam, dari segi tidur dengan gelisahlah, tapi tu masa awal-awal dululah sekarang dah kuranglah, dulu masa awal-awal macam kadang-kadang disebabkan gelisah tu, kadang-kadang tak dapat tidur haa sebab effect dia dulu.” (Line 154-157, p6)

Illustrating how ongoing anxiety might result in long-term sleep disturbances.

When combined, these narratives show a clear connection between reluctance and the development of physical symptoms associated with worry. These symptoms affect students’ academic performance and emotional control in addition to lowering their quality of life. In order to support students holistically, higher education institutions should think about introducing preventive treatments including career-focused wellness programs, stress-management workshops, and mindfulness training.

4.2.2.1.2 Subtheme 2.2: Low Self-Esteem

A development of low self-esteem was another significant psychological effect of career indecision that was disclosed in participant narratives. Students who faced pressure from family or society and lacked clarity about their career prospects sometimes internalized these experiences

as feelings of inadequacy or personal failure. Their self-worth was severely damaged by their ongoing incapacity to make assured career choices as well as by emotions of rejection or lack of support.

Daniel explained how pressure and a lack of confidence were brought on by parental expectations:

“faktor seterusnya dari segi ni lah. Parents jugalah. Kadang-kadang orang tanya, kenapa tak ambil jurusan ni? So banyaklah rasa tertekan juga dalam pemilihan UPU kan waktu itu.” (Line 191-193, p8)

They felt criticized and misunderstood as a result of being asked about their career choices on a regular basis, which suggested uncertainty about their talents. The participant's confidence in their own ability to make decisions was undermined over time by this type of ongoing exploration.

By explaining how outside views affected their self-perception, Amir deepened this emotional impact:

“Pada mulanya benda tu effect saya lah, sebab saya rasa diaorang macam pandang rendah terhadap kerjaya sebagai seorang pelajar kaunseling” (Line 148-149, p5)

Feelings of guilt, unworthiness, and a weakened sense of identity developed by internalizing the belief that their chosen path was inferior. Students' development of a stable work identity is disrupted and their self-esteem is lowered when they believe that their ambitions are being negatively perceived by significant individuals.

Being the oldest kid and being expected to lead without direction increased these emotions for Naufal:

“Sebab saya merupakan anak sulung, dia macam susah sedikitlah anak sulung, dia kena hero model, tambah pula apa yang saya kena buat dalam keputusan hidup saya, saya kena buat sendiri, saya kena cari pandangan sendiri, macamtulah.” (Line 58-61, p2)

High expectations combined with decision-making isolation led to a fear of failure. The participant's self-confidence was under a great deal of strain because they had no role model to follow and no emotional support.

Participants frequently reported that poor self-esteem became a barrier to future decision-making as well as a result of hesitation. Students who were uncertain about their career were less likely to trust themselves, which increased their hesitancy and prolonged their indecision. This created a psychological cycle. They avoided taking chances, did not ask for assistance, and stopped actively pursuing professional prospects as a result of their lowered self-esteem.

It takes a calculated and caring strategy to deal with low self-esteem in professional settings. Universities need to go beyond general job counselling and create focused programs that assist students in redefining who they are. Students' feeling of agency can be restored through narrative counselling, strengths-based coaching, and identity-focused career training. Furthermore, creating welcoming environments that honour a variety of career choices may lessen stigma and encourage students to take pride in their individual routes. Institutions can have a profound impact on students' ability to deal with uncertainty with resilience and confidence by making self-esteem a top priority in the career development process.

4.2.3 Research question 3: Role external pressure in influencing career decision-making

In response to research question 3, participant describes how the role of external pressure influencing their decision-making process. The data shows that external influences especially from family members, societal expectation and peer comparison played a significant role in guiding or complicating their decision-making process. On one hand, some participant viewed family support as a source of motivation and reassurance in choosing a secure or reputable career path. On the other hand, several respondents shared that felt overwhelmed, conflicted or emotionally burdened when external expectations did not align with their personal interests or value. Figure 3 displays the core theme and two subthemes reflecting the contrasting impact of external pressure in the career decision-making process.

Theme	Subtheme
3. Family Influence	3.1 Negative family perception
	3.2 Positive family influence

Figure 3 shows the theme and subthemes for the role of external pressure in influencing career decision-making process.

4.2.3.1 Theme 3: Family Influence and Its Impact

The third theme that emerged from the participant's responses was the role of external pressure to their career decision-making process. Within this theme, two key sub-themes were identified: (i) Negative family perception and (ii) Positive family influence.

4.2.3.1.1 Subtheme 3.1: Negative Family Perception

Stress related to career decisions was found to be significantly influenced by unfavourable opinions held by family members. Participants reported that their families frequently had rigid beliefs about what kinds of careers were valuable or respectable, and that straying from these beliefs caused emotional distress, a fear of disappointing loved ones, and, in certain situations, an identity crisis. Internal conflict resulted from this conflict between family approval and personal ambition, particularly when participants had no additional encouraging voices to balance these impressions. A person's motivation was impacted by the perceived devaluation of their career choice, which also raised concerns about their future success and self-worth.

Evidence of this can be seen in the following response, by Daniel:

“Ada lah dia orang cakap, kenapa kau ambil courseling ni? Courseling lah masalah orang” (Line 198-199, p8)

Here, a stigmatizing and disrespectful comment undervalued the participant's field of research. Such remarks cause internalized uncertainty by criticizing the field as well as the student's judgment. Students may find it more difficult to boldly follow their interests due to the stigma associated with mental health professions, especially in Asian countries.

Amir described the continual emotional effects of judgment:

“Pada mulanya benda tu effect saya lah, sebab saya rasa diaorang macam pandang rendah terhadap kerjaya sebagai seorang pelajar kaunseling” (Line 148-149, p5)

Students' psychological resilience decreases and they may start to doubt the value of what they are studying when they feel ignored. This emotional strain can cause students to lose interest in their studies, feel guilty about their decisions, or completely avoid talking to their family about their academic lives.

This issue is further reinforced by Naufal statement:

“... dia pengaruh, family jugalah, sebab saya cakap ke mak saya, saya nak ambil DPLI lepas dah habis belajar, tapi mak saya kata cukup setakat belajar sampai habiskan degree ni je...saya ... pressure, stress, anxiety ... rasa diri takde support lah.” (Line 156-159, p5-6)

This illustrates how parental control can go beyond emotional input to directly restrict academic progress and diminish autonomy when making important life decisions. The suppressing of additional goals by family pressure serves as an example of how students may feel constrained, especially when approval comes along with financial and emotional support.

These events highlight how students endure an unseen burden as a result of outside pressure from family perception. It reduces self-esteem, encourages guilt, and restricts one's freedom of choice. This type of pressure may eventually have an impact on motivation, academic achievement, and general well-being. Particularly if students pursue careers, they are not truly passionate about, the effects may continue into post-graduation life, affecting long-term career commitment as well as career fulfilment. Family influence is therefore a major and continuous factor in determining the course and result of career decision-making.

Universities is capable about introducing family-inclusive counselling and outreach initiatives that clarify conventional preconceptions about specific careers and highlight how career success is a dynamic process in order to lessen this. By assisting students and families in having productive conversations about career relevance, adaptability, and student autonomy, educators and counselors can serve as cultural mediators. The creation of student seminars centered on assertive communication, values clarity, and boundary establishing in family conversations about career planning is another aspect of this.

4.2.3.1.2 Subtheme 3.2: Positive Family Influence

Some students found their family to be consistent providers of emotional support and encouragement, in contrast to the stress brought on by rejection. Supportive family members gave students more self-assurance and supported their interests, even if they did not fit with conventional or well-paying careers. These families recognized that achieving wealth or status was not as important as mental health and fulfilment. They promoted experimentation and acknowledged that a student's success would be determined by their own development and contentment rather than by social acceptance.

Aira highlighted this support:

“Family which is parents saya sendiri, diorang influence saya untuk masuk dalam bidang tu sendiri...walaupun..sepatutnya saya masuk dalam bidang PAI, tapi rezeki tak mempunyai hak kepada saya.....saya dapat counselling, but parents saya bersyukur and support saya dalam bidang ni. (Line 192-198, p7)

Hakim response further strengthens the issue by stating:

“setakat ni takdalah jumpa yang merendah-rendahkan, sebab diaorang pun fahamlah, setiap kos ada struggle masing-masing lah, dan apa untuk social, setakat ni takdalah, maybe saya jelah yang kurang sosial.” (Line 199-201, p7)

Similarly, Faris shared that although their parents were initially shocked by their career choice, they eventually become supportive, stating:

“first impression terkejut lah eh macam mana boleh dapat course ni? bukan amirul takde mohon ke?...mak ayah beritahu mungkin boleh try” (Line 204-208, p7)

The term “sangat supportive” indicates both active involvement in the student’s success and happiness as well as passive acceptance. It shows that parents and kids respect one another and have faith in the student’s ability to make wise judgments. Participants were able to develop internal resilience and stay focused in the face of external obstacles thanks to this trust.

It is simpler for the student to endure when emotional intelligence and respect for the student’s effort are demonstrated. The stigma associated with so called “non-prestigious” areas was lifted by families who recognized the intricacy of all professional pathways, allowing students the psychological room they need to succeed on their own terms.

This response, which started off as surprise but eventually turned into encouragement, demonstrates how parents can change and support their children as they progress through life. Parental support that is flexible and shows growth reinforces the idea that learning can occur throughout generations. This dynamic boosted the student’s motivation and sense of belonging while lowering their anxiety of being judged.

Higher levels of psychological security and a more distinct sense of career identity seemed to be associated with positive family support. These students typically had more autonomy in their academic and career decisions and less emotional conflict. Additionally, they reported fewer instances of self-doubt, underscoring the preventive function of family validation. Fostering long-term student well-being requires parents to be encouraged to believe in each student's potential and to be responsive to contemporary career trends.

4.2.4 Research question 4: The coping strategies students use to manage stress related to career choices

From research question 4, participants shared their coping mechanism that they use to manage their stress related to their career choices. Every participant has their unique techniques that will be discussed in the next section. Figure 4 shows theme and subthemes for the coping strategies students use.

Theme	Subtheme
4. Coping strategies student use to cope with stress	4.1 Seeking social support
	4.2 Doing physical activities
	4.3 Finding information

Figure 4 shows the theme and subthemes for the coping strategies student use to cope with stress.

4.2.4.1 Theme 4: Adaptive Strategies Student Use for Managing Career-Related Stress

Adaptive strategy, theme one, emerge when students experience career-related stress due to uncertainty and external pressures, leading them to adopt many types of coping mechanisms to manage their emotional well-being, resulting in sub-themes such as: (i) Seeking social support, (ii) Doing physical activities, and (iii) Finding information, which become key elements under this core theme.

4.2.4.1.1 Subtheme 4.1: Seeking Social Support

The most popular and successful coping mechanism among participants was social support. During times of uncertainty, students looked to their loved ones, friends, and peers for support, emotional expression, and clarification. For many, sustaining self-confidence in the face of the pressure to choose the “right” career path required emotional affirmation and motivational reinforcement. When students felt overpowered by the complex of their circumstances, social support served as a sounding board for ideas and concerns as well as an emotional anchor. These encouraging connections gave them comfort in knowing they were not alone and helped normalize their experiences.

This is supported by the experience of the participant which is Daniel, who stated that:

First, ini lah. Saya perlukan sokongan daripada family saya. Diaorang memang always support saya... tanpa doa mereka saya tak akan berada di sini lah...Kalau tak ada mereka memang tak ada lah saya di sini. (Line 255-264, p10)

Underscoring how critical consistent support from family can be in helping students feel less isolated in their decision-making journey. Similar, Aira turned to their mother for input:

“Yang paling saya rapat adalah mak.saya sendiri. So, saya akan bertanya dengan pendapat mak saya sama ada career ni sesuai tak untuk saya ataupun bolehkah kalau saya proceed dalam bidang ni. So, first adalah mak saya.” (Line 277-280, p11)

Emphasizing how crucial strong emotional bonds are for bringing relief and a feeling of safety. According to Hakim, peers were also essential sources of support.

“Aaa minta tolong tu, takdalah, tapi macam kira macam apa, aaa saling curhat lah aaa macam cakap-cakap laa saling menasihati lah kiranya, dengan kawan-kawan, kah, kadang-kadang adalah jugak dengan orang terdekat.” (Line 224-226, 8)

Demonstrating how empathy and understanding were developed by shared experience.

Social support can help prevent anxiety and hesitation, especially when it comes from people who listen without passing judgment and offer genuine encouragement. Institutions should support programs that improve peer mentoring, family involvement, and community discourse because they recognize the significance of emotional networks in students’ overall wellbeing. These consist of cooperative study sessions, open group talks, and unofficial counselling outreach, all of which can create a supportive network.

4.2.4.1.2 Subtheme 4.2: Doing Physical Activities

Another common coping strategy that was mentioned was physical activity. Walking, working out, and spending time in nature were among the activities that participants reported to be helpful in managing their mental stress. These actions helped students to temporarily escape from overpowering thoughts and reset their mental state through physical movement. Many participants said that “getting out” or “taking in nature” helped them re-establish their emotional balance and clear their brains, making it a therapeutic activity. Engaging in physical activities provided a sense

of clarity, rhythm, and routine while also acting as a type of active meditation and a respite from cognitive rumination.

Daniel explained the benefits of nature engagement and small exercise:

“Memang ada activity je. Contohnya macam breeze walk, tengok-tengok alam. Ada juga masa main permintaan untuk tenangkan fikiran. Activity tu memang penting lah, tak like just ada komputer je. So, kita tu ada activity yang mengeluarkan peluh” (Line 293-296, p12)

Amir shared a similar approach:

Apa yang saya buat, main game, main game of course, main game, kadang-kadang main game boleh tambah stress juga, so saya pergi bersukan, bersukan dan pergi jalan-jalan lah, ambil angin. (Line 190-191, p7)

Which shows how simple acts of movement provided relief. This perspectives was echoed by Faris who stated that:

... saya akan jalan jalan tengok view so benda tu membuat dia membuatkan saya tak fikir saya tak fikir benda tu bila saya tengok sunset ke atau langit ke ada angin saya rasa macam wow semua benda yang saya fikir tu (Line 249-252, p9)

Indicating that aesthetic beauty also played a role in promoting a sense of awareness and perspective. Finally, Naufal emphasized a more structured form of activity:

“ataupun saya akan bangun awal pagi, saya akan berjogging ataupun bersenam ataupun saya mungkin akan, saya rasa ni membantu juga,” (Line 230-231, p8),

Reinforcing that even low-intensity exercise can be a mood stabilizer.

The importance of presence in stress healing is demonstrated by such narratives. In addition to being good for your health, physical activity is also essential for controlling your emotions. To encourage a balanced and healthful student lifestyle, higher education institutions should include wellness initiatives, escorted nature walks, sporting events, and access to recreational facilities. Students can develop healthy habits in these settings, which lessen psychological stress while fostering a sense of belonging and autonomy.

4.2.4.1.3 Subtheme 4.3: Finding Information

Proactively searching out knowledge was another empowered coping strategy. By looking at academic options, exploring professional fields, and considering their long-term objectives, students were able to find peace and direction during uncertain times. Seeking information gave students a sense of agency, allowed for knowledge-based decision-making, and helped to eliminate uncertainty. Students felt more capable of comprehending themselves and handling the decision-making process after exploring their options. This proactive coping strategy differs from avoidance or denial in that it entails facing the unknown head-on rather than running away from it.

Azril explained this decision-making logic:

“maybe saya buat banyak option lah buat banyak pilihan dan pilih mana satu.pilihan yang mempunyai apa tu tahap keberkesanan yang lebih tinggi macam tu buat option then select the best strategy macam tu lah.” (Line 157-159, p6)

Indicating a rational and strategic method. A similar view was expressed by Aira, who stated that:

“second adalah melalui pencarian maklumat lah. Pencarian maklumat. Jadi, bila saya mula untuk cari maklumat tentang bidang yang saya minat, so benda ni akan bagi insight kepada diri saya sendiri untuk saya prepare lah, prepare dalam bidang tu sendiri nanti.” (Line 280-283, p11)

Revealing how reflection and exploration led to greater self-understanding. Naufal also shared:

“dengan career, mungkin, mungkin saya akan cari maklumat lah berkaitan dengan kerjaya yang saya nak.” (Line 259-259, p9)

This shown how lowering uncertainty through study contributed in regaining confidence and clarity.

Finding knowledge served as an act of empowerment in addition to helping people make more informed judgments. It provided students with the means to question presumptions and allowed them to feel in charge of their own paths. Accessible career counselling services,

interactive decision-making tools, online portals, and individualized academic counselling are some ways that institutions should encourage this behavior. In addition to helping students make well-informed decisions, timely and accurate information also increases self-efficacy, which strengthens students' resilience.

Summary

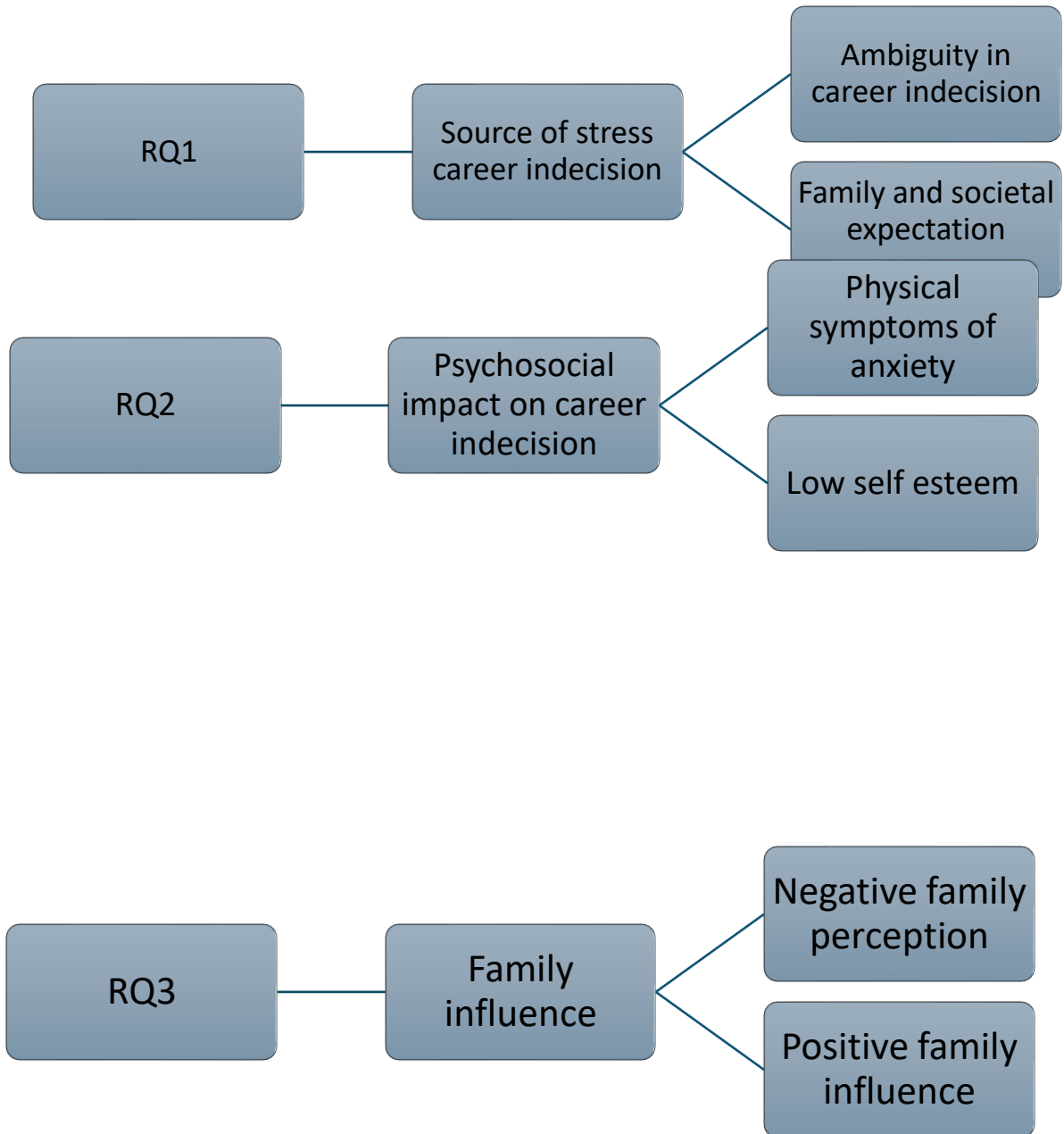
This qualitative study looked into how university students' psychological health and stress levels are affected by the profession decision-making process. Based on the knowledge that choosing careers is a significant developmental milestone in the emergence of adulthood, the study concentrated on the real-life experiences of students who struggle with societal and familial expectations, career uncertainty, and the internal conflicts these pressures cause. It became evident from a thorough thematic analysis of participant narratives that choosing a career is a highly emotional and psychosocial process that influences students' academic motivation, identity formation, and mental health outcomes.

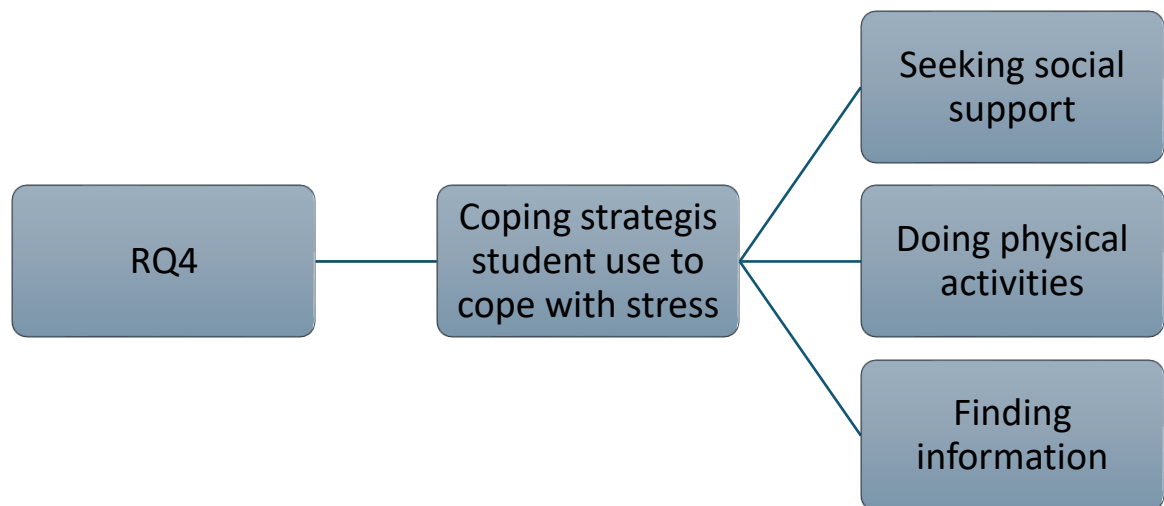
Every participant gave different and detailed accounts of the feelings, ideas, and difficulties they encountered when deciding on their future careers. Their thoughts demonstrated how stress related to professional decisions is multifaceted and influenced by both internal and external factors. The analysis revealed four main themes: (1) Sources of career-decision stress (2) Psychosocial impact on career indecision, (3) Family influence and its dual impact, and (4) Adaptive strategies student use for managing career-related stress. Each of these topics had several subthemes that represented the various stressors and coping strategies employed by students. These topics helped to clarify the complexity of stress associated to one's work and demonstrated how students try to balance conflicting expectations while exploring their changing identities.

Family expectations, societal norms, academic requirements, and financial concerns were examples of environmental influences. Many participants discussed how challenging it might be to follow personal interests when they conflict with the expectations of their families or the perceived status of particular professions. For instance, a number of students expressed feeling pressured to put their parents' approval of "secure" or "successful" career choices ahead of their own passion or sense of purpose. A sensation of imprisonment and intense mental stress resulted from this misalignment between the self and the surroundings. A limited definition of success was further reinforced by societal discourses that idealize particular professions, especially in the fields of medical, engineering, or law, which increased the internal pressure to fit in.

Internal psychological reactions were just as noticeable. In addition to their hesitation, participants often reported experiencing emotional instability, such as worry, overthinking, failure-related fear, and low self-esteem. Many suffered from continuing thoughts, doubting their skills, potential, and ability to live up to expectations. The psychosocial pressure of facing uncertain futures is indicated by a number of reported psychosomatic symptoms, including irritation, exhaustion, difficulty sleeping, and loss of desire. Negative self-evaluations were also a result of internalizing external expectations, particularly when students contrasted themselves with peers who appeared to have already attained clarity regarding their futures.

To sum up, choosing career options has a significant impact on students' stress levels, and this influence is mediated by a complex interaction between societal expectations, personal beliefs, emotional resilience, and environmental factors. In order to provide comprehensive, student-centered interventions that support mental health and educated, genuine career choices, it is important to acknowledge the affective aspects of this process. The study's implications go beyond academic settings, arguing that career education ought to be rethought as a continuous, supported process that promotes emotional health and clarity. The next chapter will discuss how these findings inform counseling practices, institutional policies, and future research on the intersection between career development and mental health in higher education.





Chapter 5: Discussion

Selecting a career is a crucial developmental stage that frequently influences one's sense of self, aspirations for the future, and mental health. Today's university students are under increasing pressure from both external and internal sources, such as cultural norms, familial expectations, and financial demands, in addition to internal difficulties like hesitation and self-doubt. Students' motivation, self-efficacy, and academic performance may ultimately suffer as a result of these complex pressures, which can cause significant stress, worry, and emotional exhaustion. Many students say they feel unprepared for the decision-making process or unsupported, even when career counselling services are available. This is especially troublesome in Malaysia, where students' career paths are uniquely shaped by culturally specific beliefs, family influence, and economic uncertainty. Using a qualitative research design, this study explored how students view internal challenges and external limitations by exploring into their lived experiences and psychological reactions to career-related stress. The study specifically focused on understanding four main areas: (1) the main causes of stress associated with choosing a career, (2) the psychological implications of career uncertainty and indecision, (3) the influence of outside forces, such as cultural and familial expectations, on career choices and mental health, and (4) the coping mechanisms students use to deal with related stress.

Previous research has explored the impact of academic stress on career decision making and psychological well-being among adolescents (Kamath & Baruah, 2023), the influence of career decision-making self-efficacy on employability of higher vocational students (Zhou et al., 2023), the effect of social support on career decision-making difficulties, the chain mediating roles of psychological capital and career decision-making self-efficacy (Zhou et al., 2024), the investigation of career stress, expectation, decisions of speech-language pathology students (Uysal et al., 2023), the relationship between college students' resilience and career decision-making difficulties, the mediating role of career adaptability (Pang et al., 2021). However, there remains a lack of qualitative research on focusing specifically on how Malaysian university students specifically in the counselling field, perceive and emotionally respond to the stress related to career decision-making.

To understand it better, I have conducted a semi-structured interview, engaging with the participants in 30-45 minutes. Four main themes and the subthemes were emerged through the data analysis. The themes include (1) Sources of career decision stress, (2) Psychosocial impact on career indecision, (3) Family influence and its dual impact and (4) Adaptive strategy student

use for managing career-related stress. The two subthemes for sources of career decision stress are subtheme 1: ambiguity in career identity, Subtheme 2: Family and societal expectation pressure. The two subthemes for psychosocial impact on career indecision are Subtheme 1: Physical symptoms on anxiety, Subtheme 2: Low self-esteem. The two subthemes for family influence and its dual impact are Subtheme 1: Negative family perception, Subtheme 2: Positive family influence. Lastly, there were three subthemes for adaptive strategy student use for managing career-related stress include, Subtheme 1: Seeking social support, Subtheme 2: Doing physical activity, and Subtheme 3: Finding information.

In this chapter, I will discuss the study's key findings, exploring the limitations, and listing out the recommendations for future research. Lastly, I will discuss the implications of this study for professional counselors, trainee counselor and also university institution.

5.1 Key Findings

There is a significant body of study on the more general topics of career development, student stress, and mental health in higher education, despite a lack of literature that specifically tackles the psychological effects of professional decision-making among Malaysian university students. Previous research has looked at how students' emotional health and preparation for the profession are impacted by a variety of factors, including family expectations, academic pressure, career indecision, and socioeconomic circumstances. Furthermore, a wealth of research has examined the ways in which external factors like career market needs and cultural norms interact with internal conflicts like self-doubt and fear of failure to influence university students' career choices and mental health.

5.1.1 Theme 1: Source of career indecision stress

There was a lot of stress for third-year counselling students when they were trying to decide on a career. This was mostly because there was a gap between what they learned in university and how they actually had to make career decisions. Despite having a solid grounding in professional theories and developmental models from their university, many of them believed that these ideas were too abstract and unrelated to the emotional and personal struggles they were dealing with. It was challenging for students to relate what they had learned to their own identities, values, and long-term goals since there were few opportunities for experiential learning, such as decision-

making simulations or reflective self-exploration. When external factors, such unclear career pathways, family expectations, and societal norms, added to their internal challenges, this gap worsened emotions of uncertainty, self-doubt, and anxiety.

Although the students were able to understand the general framework and underlying ideas of different professional decision-making models, they frequently found it difficult to apply these frameworks in a way that felt appropriate for their particular situations. Many people questioned if they were really ready to make confident and well-informed professional decisions, particularly when there was emotional stress involved. Despite having plenty of theoretical knowledge, it did not seem to be enough to help them manage the uncertainty and complexity of career planning in the actual world. They felt disoriented and lacked clarity regarding their career identities and prospects for the future due to the absence of organized, practical experiences.

Students pushed for improvements to the academic program to encourage more purposeful and useful involvement with career exploration in response to these difficulties. In order to increase student comprehension and lessen stress, they recommended adding real-world case studies, expert guest lectures, coordinated reflection sessions, and planned exposure to diverse work environments. Malik and Behera (2024), who highlighted the importance of experiential learning in counselor education, concur with these viewpoints. Their results demonstrated how including representation assignments, role-plays, real-world case analysis, and community involvement into the curriculum could assist students in embracing theoretical ideas while simultaneously fostering critical thinking abilities and a more robust sense of professional identity. By bridging the gap between academic preparation and practical application, such efforts help students make more informed and self-assured professional decisions.

5.1.1.1 Subtheme 1: Ambiguity in career identity

Due to a perceived gap between university-based theoretical knowledge and its practical application, several third-year counselling students in this study reported having trouble creating an individual and independent professional identity. When making important career decisions, students frequently experience perplexity, self-doubt, and mental stress due to the lack of possibilities to apply career development theories and future-planning models to their own goals. It was said that there was little room for introspective personal identities or personal inquiry because the academic experience was mostly based on subject matter. Students consequently

found it difficult to match the knowledge they learned with their personal values, passions, and long-term professional objectives.

Many students believed that there were not enough organized events in their programs to encourage their exploration of various career alternatives or provide them a meaningful introduction to the realities of professional practice. It became challenging for them to see themselves in specific career roles or comprehend how their individual skills could fit into the larger professional landscape in the absence of such experiences. Many students were unsure of their future paths since it was more difficult to integrate a sense of professional identity in the absence of real-world context. Their confidence in handling difficult choices was also weakened by their lack of practical involvement, which also added to their continuous stress levels throughout the career planning process.

The findings of Suphasri and Chinokul (2021), who stressed the value of including reflective, experiential, and socially meaningful learning into counselor education programs, are in line with these findings. In addition to possibilities for direct interaction with diverse populations, their ideas included the implementation of organizing efforts, interactive guest lecturers, real-world case studies, and multicultural awareness exercises. These methods help students develop their critical thinking skills while also fostering a greater sense of self-awareness and identity. These thoughts were supported by the students in this study, who expressed a significant desire for further experiential learning opportunities that would enable them to better understand their identities and professional identities. These techniques are thought to be essential first stages in assisting students in developing a more cohesive and self-assured career identity.

5.1.1.2 Subtheme 2: Family and societal expectation pressure

During their job decision-making process, third-year counselling students found that family and society expectations were a major cause of stress. Many students admitted that rather than being based only on their own interests or long-term goals, their professional decisions were greatly impacted by the expectations and norms imposed by their families, especially their parents. These expectations from the family were frequently based on firmly established cultural beliefs, expected career stability, and traditional notions of success. Students specifically talked about feeling limited by conventional norms that valued renowned and “acceptable” careers like becoming a doctor, lawyer, or engineer while considering other career pathways to be less

respectable or legitimate. When choosing careers that differed from family expectations, a number of students expressed emotions of guilt, inner struggle, and shame, demonstrating the psychological impact that such pressures took.

These results are consistent with previous research (Yang et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2023), which indicates that parental influence can considerably reduce a student's sense of autonomy in collectivist cultural environments, resulting in poor career alignment and elevated psychological stress. Students' ability to make autonomous professional decisions is further complicated by a combination of social norms and cultural expectations, especially in non-Western nations where personal aspirations are frequently subordinated to family or community values (Fahrati, 2023; Chen-Xia et al., 2023; Mansour, 2024). Scholars contend that this conflict, particularly when students lack sufficient support networks to manage this complexity, can lead to career indecision, decreased satisfaction, and emotional tiredness.

In order to actively address these cultural and familial factors, there is a growing demand for counselor education programs and career advisory services. To handle conflicting demands, professionals advise giving students the skills they need for critical self-reflection, raising their level of self-awareness, and teaching them coping mechanisms. While understanding and negotiating the socio-cultural pressures they encounter, these support systems can enable students to make professional choices that are more in line with who they truly are.

5.1.2 Theme 2: Psychosocial impact on career indecision

It was discovered that third-year counselling students' emotional well-being, mental health, and general motivation were all greatly impacted by career indecision. When presented with choices regarding their future careers, many students reported feeling emotionally uncomfortable, overthinking, and under constant stress. Several people reported feeling "stuck" or aimless, and these responses were frequently accompanied by symptoms including anxiety, internal conflict, and low self-esteem. These experiences demonstrate that choosing a career is a very personal and psychological challenge that affects students' sense of identity and life fulfilment, going beyond simply being an academic or planning issue. These results are consistent with those of Atitsogbe et al. (2024), who discovered that university students who were more indecisive about their careers also reported higher levels of psychological discomfort and lower levels of overall life satisfaction.

Career uncertainty has a negative impact on students' academic performance and social interactions in addition to their internal emotional issues. Some students reported feeling less motivated and focused in their classes, while others withdrew from peer groups or avoided discussions about the future because they felt inadequate or ashamed. These patterns of behavior are consistent with the findings of Pignault et al. (2023), who showed that career decision-making difficulties are frequently linked to lower academic engagement, strained peer relationships, and more general mental health issues. Particularly susceptible to sentiments of despair and loneliness were students who felt pressured to live up to external standards but were unsure of how to do so. A cycle of self-doubt and emotional exhaustion became worse by the weight of these unmet expectations.

Scholars like Heinrichs et al. (2021), Zhu et al. (2021), and Ran et al. (2022) have highlighted the necessity of support networks that address the emotional aspects of career indecision because of these psychosocial implications. These professionals support counselling services and therapy procedures that address the psychological conflicts and identity difficulties that are present in career decisions rather than just practical decision-making. Participants in the current study indicated a significant need for more individualized career counselling that offers possibilities for self-exploration, emotional support, and a secure space to talk about uncertainties, all of which are in line with these suggestions. They recommended for a more comprehensive method of career counselling that acknowledges the emotional and mental challenges of picking a career in a world that is becoming more unpredictable.

5.1.2.1 Subtheme 1: Physical symptoms on anxiety

Third-year counselling students' experiences with career dilemma were not only psychological, but also showed up as a variety of physical symptoms, highlighting the close relationship between the mind and body in stressful decision-making situations. Many students reported experiencing physical discomforts such weariness, migraines, tense muscles, digestive issues, and disturbed sleep during times when they were more confused about their future careers. When significant decisions on higher education or career paths were about to be made, these bodily reactions frequently surfaced in response to internalized pressure or impending external expectations. Prior to family conversations, career-related interviews, or attending career expos, the distress was most noticeable, indicating that these stressors caused anticipatory anxiety that negatively impacted the body. The constant accounts of physical discomfort suggested a common experience of physical

symptoms associated with anxiety related to one's career, even though participants hardly ever utilized clinical or diagnostic words.

This finding is consistent with previous research showing a relationship between university students' psychosomatic symptoms and academic stress and future uncertainty. Students who are under educational or life-planning stress frequently exhibit symptoms of persistent weariness, appetite loss, and sleep difficulties, according to Deng (2022), Levin and Moreau (2022), and Lino et al. (2022). Similarly, Wuthrich et al. (2021) and Mclean et al. (2022) emphasized how a student's bodily symptoms, such as restlessness or stomach pain, might be a manifestation of high-stakes decision-making that clashes with their fundamental interests. According to their accounts of physical tiredness and sleeplessness as deadlines and professional goals drew near, study participants validated this association. These testimonies demonstrate how the stress caused by career uncertainty goes beyond the psychological realm and actively impairs students' physical health, making it harder for them to concentrate, perform well in class, and interact with others.

These findings are further supported by research by Barbayannis et al. (2022), Slimmen et al. (2022), and Qiang et al. (2024), which discovered that high workload, emotions of powerlessness, and ongoing stress are major factors in the development of physical symptoms in students dealing with future uncertainty. Particularly in settings that prioritize accomplishment and a clear career path, these physiological reactions are closely linked to indecision. It is evident from the students' experiences that the body often carries the burden of unresolved career worry, even though they did not always identify these symptoms as clinically serious or attribute them to stress. This is in line with more general psychological research (Fernandes & Rawatlal, 2024; Chen & Zeng, 2021; Ovadia & Netzer, 2024), which shows that unresolved indecision can impair daily functioning and long-term health. As a result, educational institutions must implement career development services that support both psychological and physical well-being.

5.1.1.2 Subtheme 2: Low self esteem

Among students struggling with career indecision, low self-esteem emerged as a key psychosocial effect, particularly when it came to parental disapproval or unfulfilled expectations. Participants discussed how parents' disapproving or negative responses to their personal career interests frequently damaged their confidence. Many experienced disappointments or demands that conflicted with their own aims instead of support, which made them doubt their own skills and

invalidate their objectives. Students felt emotionally abandoned and uncertain of their own value as a result of this type of outside evaluation. These experiences are consistent with the findings of Xu et al. (2022), who observed a strong correlation between diminished self-confidence during the career decision-making process and parental pressure and regulating behavior.

Frequent comparisons to siblings or other family members who had chosen professions considered more “respectable” or financially secure worsened these difficulties for a number of students. In addition to reinforcing a hierarchy of “acceptable” options, these comparisons further damaged students sense of self and value. According to other participants, family members immediately dismissed their desired career routes due to perceived social stigma or economic insecurity, which hindered experimentation and self-determination. According to Khatri et al. (2024), students frequently experience internal conflict and a decline in self-esteem when their work values deviate from their family norms. Many students internalized sentiments of failure and inadequacy as a result of receiving constant criticism, even before they entered the field, which made them reluctant to take charge of their professional paths.

The participants said that these emotional loads negatively impacted their ability to make decisions for themselves and take proactive measures to prepare their futures. Their voices were often hindered and open conversations about their hobbies were hindered by their fear of disappointing or rejection by their parents. This emotional repression worsened anxiety and increased self-doubt at a time when confidence and clarity were needed. This observation is supported by research by Nice and Joseph (2022), Wider et al. (2023), and Moavero et al. (2025), which demonstrate that emotionally dominating or critical family dynamics can lead to increased disengagement, indecision, and a lack of career self-efficacy.

5.1.3 Theme 3: Family influence and its impact

The role of family has a significant role in influencing students’ professional decisions, with both positive and negative aspects of this impact being expressed. Family support served as a protective factor for some, lowering stress and improving the clarity of their decision-making. All of them talked about how their family members’ appreciation for their personal interests and goals made them feel encouraged, validated, and emotionally supported. They felt more confident in their chosen career routes when their parents or guardians actively listened to them, encouraged dialogue, and provided emotional support. Family engagement in these situations not only reduced

feelings of doubt but also strengthened self-assurance and personal direction, confirming the notion that emotional support from loved ones can have a favorable impact on decisions about one's work.

However, spoke of a more rigid and oppressive home dynamic. They talked about how they had been led or even pressured to pursue particular career choices that were more in line with accepted criteria of success, financial stability, or cultural expectations than with their own objectives. According to them, they felt misunderstood, overburdened by responsibilities, and perhaps emotionally detached from their decisions. Confusion, self-doubt, and frustration were frequently the results of the tension between one's inner wants and external pressures. Despite its good intentions, this type of family participation led to decreased autonomy and increased psychological stress, especially when students felt pressured to repress their own interests in order to satisfy their families. The finding is supported by research by Marathe and Wagani (2022), which highlights how culturally motivated family pressure can sometimes impair a student's capacity to make autonomous career selections.

This simultaneous effect of family engagement emphasizes how complex and deeply established career growth is in many cultures. The balance between support and control becomes crucial, particularly in democratic or collectivist environments where family is a major influence on life decisions. Misalignment between parent and child beliefs frequently results in emotional strain and hindered professional exploration, even if strong familial interaction can boost motivation and offer a solid basis for decision-making. According to academics like Bai et al. (2025) and Geduld (2024), someone's career autonomy and internal conflict may be affected by parents' expectations that are overly strict or unrelated to their developing identity. The study's conclusions highlight how crucial it is to promote candid communication and understanding among family members in order to prevent support from unintentionally turning into pressure.

5.1.3.1 Subtheme 1: Negative family perception

This research highlighted how their families' disapproving opinions of their professional choices had a significant emotional and motivating effect. Numerous students described how family members discouraged them from following careers that matched their true interests, frequently because those careers were seen as lacking in social acceptance, financial security, or

status. These children exhibited feelings of guilt, irritation, and self-doubt, particularly when parents or other family members questioned or disregarded their decisions. The process of choosing a career can be emotionally and intellectually stressful for students as a result of internalizing confusion about their choices due to such invalidation, claims Brooks (2023).

Deeper internal conflicts were frequently caused by emotional stress brought on by constant criticism or carefully applied pressure to pursue more traditional or “secure” career paths. Their perception of their abilities and long-term potential was impacted by this internalized pressure, which was particularly damaging to their self-esteem. The weight of familial expectations consequently interfered with the participants’ ability to make clear, confident employment decisions, making it more difficult for them to concentrate. Making decisions in these situations involved more than simply choosing a career path; it also involved managing one’s identity in the face of criticism from others.

Despite these barriers, some individuals reported that these unfavorable opinions actually strengthened their own will to achieve. Some students talked of using family criticism as a motivating factor instead of retreating, which boosted their desire to demonstrate their resilience and value. This dual character of family impact is in line with research by Dost and Smith (2023), which indicates that, depending on how people emotionally interpret things, family dynamics can serve as both motivating factors and barriers. However, the pressure of balancing personal goals with family expectations continued to be a major obstacle for many, highlighting the emotional complexity of establishing a professional identity in the face of rejection.

5.1.3.2 Subtheme 2: Positive family influence

In order to help students, build their career confidence and direction, supportive family situations are essential. Students are more likely to make confident and clear employment decisions when their families support their independence and recognize their goals. Family support offers emotional stability, which develops an internal sense of validation and lessens anxiety of being judged. This internal validation boosts drive and encourages the development of a strong professional identity. According to research by Soler et al. (2024), family affirmation has a major role in boosting a person’s self-confidence and belief in their ability to succeed, both of which are critical for managing challenging professional environments.

Emotionally supportive families provide an emotional support system that helps students cope with outside demands, even when career choices diverge from normal standards or cultural norms. These kinds of settings develop resiliency and minimize the psychological effects of employment insecurity. Families that provide support and acceptance without enforcing strict rules allow people to concentrate on their long-term objectives and personal development. These results are consistent with Jiang (2022), who highlighted that positive family relationships help students feel better about themselves, feel less anxious while planning their careers, and be more flexible when faced with obstacles connected to their careers.

Positive family dynamics not only provide emotional support but also frequently enable people to pursue interests and career alternatives that may otherwise be viewed as unusual. Communication that supports autonomy increases internal drive and cultivates a sense of responsibility over decision-making. According to Hinduja et al. (2024), students are more likely to form secure and self-assured job identities if they receive affirming and non-controlling feedback from their families. This data emphasizes the importance of family support as a stress-reduction strategy as well as a motivator for identity development, persistence, and career clarity.

5.1.4 Theme 4: The coping mechanisms students use to deal with related stress

Students use a range of coping strategies to manage stress, restore focus, and maintain emotional well-being in reaction to the emotional and psychological burden that comes with choosing a career. These techniques help people deal with uncertainty more resiliently by fulfilling both practical and emotional needs. Coping strategies are crucial tools that help students stay motivated and maintain mental stability during times of change and uncertainty, according to Zhu et al. (2021). In order to regain control over their situation, students usually go to systematic techniques like goal-setting, time management, and planning. These problem-focused coping mechanisms facilitate more structured approaches to decision-making and lessen feelings of overwhelm. Simultaneously, internal suffering is addressed with emotion-focused techniques. In this situation, social support is essential; talking to peers or other reliable people provides perspective and emotional comfort. To relieve psychological stress and regain harmony, activities including taking breaks, exercising, and taking up hobbies are used.

Additionally, thoughtful and reflective behaviors are beneficial to students. Techniques for processing emotions and reinforcing personal beliefs include writing, journaling, and self-affirmation. Spiritual or religious involvement frequently provides further comfort by serving as a tool for existential reassurance and emotional control. These techniques help to promote an optimistic attitude on the future in addition to reducing stress. The results are consistent with psychological theories of adaptive coping that stress the value of establishing a balance between problem-focused and emotion-focused techniques. Effective stress management, according to Bondarchul et al. (2024), often requires a flexible strategy in which people evaluate their emotional needs while actively addressing outside difficulties. Similarly, Macia et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of adaptive coping in developing psychological resilience during life transitions, including the move from college to the profession.

5.1.4.1 Subtheme 1: Seeking for social support

One of the most important coping mechanisms for handling the stress related to choosing a career is looking for social support. During times of uncertainty, social connections with trustworthy people such as family members, mentors, peers, and teachers provided an essential emotional buffer. In addition to offering confidence, this interpersonal assistance offered chances for introspection and perspective, assisting people in expressing their uncertainties and gaining understanding of their professional possibilities. Dost and Smith (2023) assert that interacting with people who are supportive during times of uncertainty can greatly lessen emotional discomfort and promote psychological clarity.

A sense of belonging was reinforced and the isolating effects of professional uncertainty were lessened by social contacts, which served as protective factors. The simple act of having a safe place to voice worries to a sympathetic ear frequently brought about emotional comfort. Many times, social networks' support and affirmation helped people rediscover their self-worth and sense of direction. Supportive connections improve psychological resilience and emotional regulation during stressful transitions, which is consistent with research by Liu et al. (2021) and Musich et al. (2022).

Furthermore, a sense of normality and mutual understanding was promoted by peers' shared experiences dealing with comparable problems. Participating in a group that recognized the complex nature of career planning decreased feelings of guilt and strengthened the idea that hesitation is a normal and controllable aspect of growth. In addition to lowering anxiety, this group

support facilitated more deliberate and relaxed decision-making. In the end, having supportive relationships was crucial for overcoming the psychological obstacles related to career planning.

5.1.4.2 Subtheme 2: Doing physical activities

A useful and approachable coping strategy for handling the psychological stress of making professional decisions is physical activity. Simple activities like walking, stretching, or spending time in nature provided useful ways to relieve emotional and mental exhaustion. Even though they were frequently informal and unstructured, these physical routines let people temporarily escape the stress of academic commitments and future planning. The short separation made room for cognitive clarity and emotional control, allowing people to resume their decision-making processes with more calm and focus.

Physical activity is an effective way to manage stress and improve emotional well-being, according to research. Even low-intensity physical activity can significantly reduce university students' worry and overthinking, according to Teuber et al. (2024) and Lin and Gao (2023). The advantages extend beyond physiological results to the cognitive and emotional realms, providing a soothing impact during uncertain times. In this situation, physical activity promotes mental stability naturally and non-invasively without the need for extensive resources or organized programs.

Furthermore, these physical activities provide people a chance to reflect without feeling rushed to find solutions to difficult problems. Simply walking or moving through open areas produces a mental buffer that makes it easier to think and absorb emotions. This is consistent with research by Alodhialah et al. (2024), who contend that little physical activities may promote psychological resilience by providing the opportunity from the emotional impact of indecision and prolonged mental strain. Essentially, including physical activity into daily living turns into a subtle yet effective tactic to support students in preserving their mental clarity as they pursue their careers.

5.1.4.3 Subtheme 3: Finding information

For students facing the uncertainty of career decision-making, actively seeking knowledge turned out to be a crucial coping strategy. Students were able to lessen their fear and sense of powerlessness by making conscious attempts exploring academic platforms, career search engines, career-related forums, and professional guidance channels. They were able to define career routes, comprehend industry expectations, and assess employment chances using factual information rather than speculation or peer pressure thanks to this proactive approach.

By providing them with useful information on subjects like skill requirements, possible salary, career scopes, and long-term chances, information-seeking behaviors empowered students. By developing a sense of control and self-efficacy, this technique enabled people to evaluate how well particular careers matched their own objectives, values, and strengths. In this way, the process of obtaining knowledge improved clarity and decreased emotions of confusion while simultaneously acting as an emotional buffer and a tool for decision-making.

This strategy is in line with the principles of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which highlights how having access to reliable information and engaging in self-directed inquiry helps people create outcome expectations and increase their confidence in their decision-making. Students showed autonomy by weighing several sources and viewpoints to reach well-informed conclusions, as opposed to being passive recipients of career guidance. This well-informed base also lessened outside pressures, particularly when students had to defend their career choices to classmates or family who had different expectations.

5.2 Recommendation for Future Research

Future study might use a mixed-methods approach to better understand the stress associated with career decision-making among college students. A more comprehensive understanding of the psychological, emotional, and behavioral aspects of this experience might be provided by combining quantitative data such as stress inventories, self-efficacy scales, or academic success indicators with qualitative interviews. While qualitative accounts can add depth and context to those findings particularly with regard to personal struggles, family expectations, and coping mechanisms quantitative methods can assist in identifying general trends and connections.

Future research may also include in-person interviews to better understand participants' emotional reactions by capturing significant body language and nonverbal cues that were difficult to obtain in online interviews. The results may also benefit from greater diversity if the participant pool is enlarged to include students from more academic programs and institutions. It may be possible to determine whether the causes and effects of stress related to professional decision-making range by discipline or stage of academic life by comparing students from different faculties, cultural backgrounds, or year levels.

A validated assessment tool or scale to measure career decision-related stress specifically in the Malaysian university context could help institutions identify at-risk students and design customized interventions. Finally, future research could examine the role of career counselors and university staff in supporting students through these decisions. Interviewing academic advisors, counselors, or career services personnel could offer insight into institutional practices and the support structures currently in place. All things considered, further research on this topic from various angles can result in more effective support systems that promote both academic success and psychological well-being

Summary

This study explored the lived experiences of seven third-year counselling students as they stress related to career decision-making. The research focused on understanding the internal and external factors influencing their psychological responses, as well as the coping strategies they used to manage these challenges. This qualitative study contributes to the growing literature on student mental health and career development by presenting insights into how future counselors experience and respond to uncertainty, family expectations, and identity conflict in their own professional journeys. The study produced three major themes: (1) Sources of Career Decision Stress, (2) Psychosocial Impact on Career Indecision, and (3) Coping Mechanisms Students Use to Deal with Related Stress. Each theme was supported by rich qualitative data and was further broken down into a total of nine subthemes. The subthemes include (1) Ambiguity in career identity, (2) Family and societal expectation pressure, (3) Physical symptoms of anxiety, (4) Low self-esteem from family pressure, (5) Negative family perception, (6) Positive family influence, (7) Seeking social support, (8) Doing physical activities and (9) Finding information. All things considered, the results provide insightful information on how third-year counselling students experience, feel and handle the emotional challenges of choosing a career.

Participants showed their ability to critically evaluate the elements impacting their decision-making process, including social pressure, personal uncertainty, and family expectations, despite the fact that their academic program did not provide them with formal training in managing stress related to career decisions. They also covered practical strategies for managing stress, such as getting help, exercising, and researching pertinent topics. According to the results, students would benefit from additional structured guidance and hands-on experience during their training, even though they are somewhat aware of how to handle these pressures. By taking part in career-focused seminars, attending workshops, and looking for mentorship, counselling students can take the initiative. In addition, university counselling programs might think about include modules on reflective career planning and experiential learning in their curricula. Students would be able to actively explore a career identity, comprehend stress management techniques, and develop the emotional resilience required to make difficult career decisions in both their personal and professional lives with the help of these additions.

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Appendices

Borang Persetujuan Termaklum

Terima Kasih di atas kesudian dalam menjadi sebahagian ahli untuk kami temu bual bersama.

Tujuan saya menjalankan kajian ini yang bertajuk "Career Decision-Making and Its Impact on Student Stress" bagi tugas Projek Tahun Akhir adalah untuk meneroka faktor stress, kesan ketidak pastian dalam pembentukan kerjaya, bagaimana pengaruh luar mempengaruhi, serta strategi mengadaptasi isu-isu tersebut dalam kalangan pelajar.. Kajian ini akan dijalankan menggunakan kaedah Kualitatif. Hasil kajian ini akan membantu saya sebagai penyelidik mengetahui dengan lebih mendalam berkaitan dengan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi stress dalam kalangan pelajar sekaligus dapat memberi inspirasi kepada kaunselor pelatih yang ingin bergraduan nanti.

Sila Baca Sebelum Melanjutkan Ke Soalan Yang Seterusnya.

- Saya faham bahawa walaupun saya bersetuju untuk mengambil bahagian daripada temubual, saya boleh menarik diri pada bila-bila masa atau enggan menjawab sebarang soalan tanpa sebab.
- Saya faham bahawa saya boleh menarik balik kebenaran untuk menggunakan data daripada temu duga saya dalam masa dua minggu selepas temu duga, yang mana bahan tersebut akan dipadamkan.
- Saya telah menerangkan tujuan dan sifat kajian secara bertulis kepada saya dan saya berpeluang untuk bertanyakan soalan tentang kajian tersebut.
- Saya faham bahawa penyertaan temuduga ini akan melibatkan kerahsiaan yang akan dipersetujui oleh kedua pihak.
- Saya faham bahawa saya tidak akan mendapat manfaat secara langsung daripada menyertai penyelidikan ini.
- Saya bersetuju wawancara saya dirakam audio dan video.
- Saya faham bahawa semua maklumat yang saya berikan untuk kajian ini akan dirahsiakan.
- Saya faham bahawa dalam mana-mana laporan hasil penyelidikan ini identiti saya akan kekal tanpa nama. Ini akan dilakukan dengan menukar nama saya dan menyamarkan sebarang butiran wawancara saya yang mungkin mendedahkan identiti saya atau identiti orang yang saya bicarakan.

- Saya faham bahawa petikan menyamar daripada temu bual saya boleh dipetik dalam pembentangan dan hasil laporan dari kajian ini.
- Saya faham bahawa jika saya memaklumkan penyelidik bahawa diri saya atau orang lain berisiko mengalami bahaya, mereka mungkin perlu melaporkan perkara ini kepada pihak berkuasa yang berkaitan - mereka akan membincangkan perkara ini dengan saya terlebih dahulu tetapi mungkin dikehendaki melaporkan dengan atau tanpa kebenaran saya.
- Saya faham bahawa borang persetujuan yang ditandatangani dan rakaman audio asal akan disimpan dalam laporan yang akan kami sediakan, dan data ini hanya akan diakses oleh penyelia kami bagi tujuan menyelia hasil kajian dapatan kami.
- Saya faham bahawa transkrip temu bual saya di mana semua maklumat pengenalan telah dialih keluar akan disimpan untuk digunakan sehingga tamatnya tempoh masa kajian.
- Saya faham bahawa di bawah kebebasan pengesahan maklumat saya berhak untuk mengakses maklumat yang saya berikan pada bila-bila masa semasa ia berada dalam simpanan seperti yang dinyatakan di atas.
- Saya faham bahawa saya bebas untuk menghubungi mana-mana orang yang terlibat dalam penyelidikan untuk mendapatkan penjelasan dan maklumat lanjut.

Tanggungjawab Penyelidik Terhadap Responden:

- Memastikan maklumat yang diberikan oleh responden kekal sulit dan tidak disebarkan tanpa kebenaran.
- Memberikan penjelasan lengkap mengenai tujuan kajian dan mendapatkan persetujuan responden secara sukarela.
- Menghormati hak responden untuk menarik diri daripada kajian pada bila-bila masa tanpa sebarang penalti.
- Menyediakan maklumat yang jelas tentang proses kajian, termasuk tempoh masa, objektif, dan jenis soalan yang akan ditanya.
- Mengelakkan sebarang bentuk soalan atau situasi yang boleh menyebabkan ketidakselesaan atau tekanan kepada responden.
- Melaporkan data yang diperoleh secara jujur tanpa sebarang manipulasi.
- Mengelakkan sebarang bentuk diskriminasi atau eksploitasi terhadap responden sepanjang kajian.

Setelah anda menulis nama penuh di bawah, ianya akan membuktikan bahawa anda bersetuju dengan pernyataan di atas.

**PERSETUJUAN UNTUK MENGAMBIL BAHAGIAN DALAM
PENYELIDIKAN**

Sila Tuliskan Nama Penuh Anda Di Bawah

()

TT/BB/TAHUN, HARI/MASA

()

Tanskrip Responden 4

Tarikh : 16 Februari 2025

Pengesahan Transkrip:



1.Pengkaji	1.Okey, bismillahirrahmanirrahim, Assalamualaikum dan selamat petang lah 2.kepada saudari. So sebelum tu saya nak perkenalkan diri saya dululah. Nama saya 3.Aliff Bin Azmi, saya selaku pengkaji bagi kajian akhir tahun untuk semester tahun 4.3, semester satu iaitu FYP yang bertajuk Career Decision Making and Its Impact 5.on Student Stress. Tujuan saya mengadakan sesi interview ini adalah untuk 6.mendapatkan sedikit maklumatlah ataupun sedikit pandangan berkenaan dengan 7.career decision making dan bagaimana benda tu akan efek kepada mental health 8.student lah ataupun lebih mudahnya stress. Okey untuk pengetahuan saudari, 9.segala info yang kita dapat daripada temuduga ini hanya akan digunakan untuk 10.tujuan kajian, Pendidikan dan juga ilmu pengetahuan yang baru bagi kajian-11.kajian yang akan datang dan untuk pengetahuan saudari juga, maklumat yang 12.ada dalam ni akan dapat diakses oleh penilai lapangan ataupun SV supervisor 13.FYP saya iaitu Dr Edris Bin Aden iaitu selaku pensyarah saya sebagai kaunseling 14.lah, okeh boleh? so sebelum tu, boleh tak nak saudari perkenalkan diri serba 15.sedikitlah berkenaan saudari?
2.Responden	16>Nama saya (Responden 4), merupakan pelajar kaunseling tahun 3, itu 17.sahaja.
3.Pengkaji	18.Terima kasih, so seperti sedia maklum dah diedarkan borang inform consent. So 19.ada apa-apa soalan berkenaan dengan soalan inform consent tersebut?
4.Responden	20.Tak ada
5.Pengkaji	21.So kalau tak ada apa-apa kitab oleh mulakan lah ya?
6.Responden	22.bolehhh
7.Pengkaji	23.So soalan yang pertama, pernah tak menghadapi isu berkaitan berkenaan dengan 24.career decision-making?
8.Responden	25.Career decision-making? secara umumnya ke?
9.Pengkaji	26.Ya, secara umunya ke ataupun spesifiknya ke pun bolehh.

5.Responden	27.Sejujurnya ada lah sebab sejak dari di bangku sekolah, saya mempunyai minat 28.terhadap dalam bidang perubatanlah, which is nak jadi doctor, tapi bila 29.meneruskan pengajian, saya telah mengambil dalam bidang Dakwah Islamiyah 30.di IKMAS lah. Then bertukar lagi saya punya haluan which is sekarang dalam 31.bidang kaunseling. So even dalam bidang kaunseling itu sendiri pun sekarang 32.ada juga mengalami apa? isulah berkaitan dengan career decision ni sebab saya 33.sendiri pun belum pasti career dalam bidang kaunseling apa yang akan betul-34.betul sesuai dengan saya dan yang akan saya ceburi. Tapi mungkin disebabkan 35.saya masih di tahun tiga. So mungkin selepas dah masuk tahun empat nanti 36.mungkin akan lebih jelas lah setelah belajar secara lebih mendalam berkaitan 37.dengan bidang kaunseling itu sendiri. Itu sahaja.
6.Pengkaji	38.Okay, so tadi ada mention berkenaan dengan pertukaran bidang. Mula-mula 39.minat bahagian perubatan, lepas tu ambil bahagian dakwah Islamiyah. Lepastu 40.bertukar lagi berkenaan dengan kaunseling, so macam mana boleh teretusnya 41.macam pertukaran itu sendiri? kenapa tak static?
7.Responden	42.Dulu waktu zaman sekolah saya tak dapat dalam bidang perubatan, sebabkan 43.salah satu isunya adalah saya tak dapat result yang bagus untuk matematiklah. 44.So seperti yang kita tahu dalam bidang perubatan kita perlu score subjek-subjek 45.yang penting which is science, matematik dan bm dan sebagainya. So matematik 46.adalah satu subjek yang saya tak dapat score. So, saya tak dapat nak teruskan 47.dalam bidang perubatan lah. So bila dah habis SPM, saya mula untuk ceburi 48.bidang agama which is dalam bidang dakwah Islamiyah sebab satu saya minatlah 49.juga dalam bidang agama sebab saya dari kecil sampai ke sekolah menengah 50.memang taka da belajar agama dengan lebih mendalam. So bila saya masuk 51.dalam bidang agama ketika peringkat diploma, saya belajar perkara tentang 52.agama. So, waktu diploma sepatutnya saya nak teruskan untuk menjadi seorang 53.guru, cikgu agama tapi disebabkan waktu UPU saya tak dapat PAI untuk degree, 54.so saya telah ditawarkan untuk masuk dalam bidang kaunseling, which is saya 55.minat juga dan saya sebenarnya ingatkan bila masuk dalam bidang kaunseling ni 56.saya

	akan jadi cikgu kaunseling lah. Rupanya tidak semudah yang disangkakan, 57.macamtu.
8.Pengkaji	58.So, tadi ada mention lah sebab apa-apa pertukarannya course tersebut kenapa 59.pindah daripada perubatan masuk ke agama Islam, Dakwah Islamiyah dan last 60.sekali masuk ke bidang kaunseling. so saya teruskan ke soalan yang seterusnya, 61.apakah faktor – faktor yang menyumbang ke arah terjadinya isu-isu tersebut.? 62.macam jadi kan ada mention mengenai tak pasti kan? so, apakah faktor – faktor 63.yang menyebabkan perkara tersebut terjadi?
9.Responden	64.Ermmm salah satu sebab utama adalah dari segi minat lah, minat. So sejak bila 65.eh, salah satu sebabnya adalah minat, so bila kita saya minat pada suatu bidang 66.dan contohlah, macam saya bagitahu tadi sayaa minat dalam bidang perubatan 67.tapi saya tak dapat, so saya ada minat yang lain untuk saya apa? untuk saya 68.ceburi, so sebab benda tu terjadi salah satu sebabnya adalah sebab minat. Kedua 69.adalah disebabkan gaji, bila kita bekerja nanti, obviously lah kita nak gaji yang 70.setaraf dengan bidang Pendidikan yang kita dah dapat. so, macam saya, saya 71.sendiri saya memang minat nak jadi cikgu actually dan saya tahu gaji cikgu pun 72.lumayan kan? and also bukan sebab gaji semata-mata, saya memang minat 73.untuk menjadi seorang guru. Parents saya pun mendorong untuk saya menjadi 74.seorang guru. Menjawab ke?
10.Pengkaji	75.Ya, menjawab. So, pernah tak mengalami stress? dalam isu career decision 76.making?
11.Responden	77.Bukanlah dalam career decision making? Kalau stres tak pernah cuma anxious 78.maybe ada sebab risaulah tentang masa depan saya sendiri sebab saya walaupun 79.saya banyak macam bukanlah banyak tapi mungkin boleh saya katakan saya ada 80.bidang-bidang yang saya minati and boleh saya teburi and benda itu membantu 81.tetapi sikit sebanyak dia menyumbang kepada perasaan gelisah sebab tak ada 82.career yang tetap. Career yang tetap maksudnya, Career yang tetap. Contohnya 83.macam seperti yang setelah saya ceritakan saya mula-mula minat dalam bidang 84.perubatan. Lepas itu terburu-

	buru dalam bidang agama which is dalam diploma 85.dalam Islamiyah. Kemudian tiba-tiba masuk dalam bidang counselling. So, 86.benda ini menjadi isulah juga menyumbang kepada rasa gelisah sebab tak ada 87.career yang tetap. Itu sajalah.
12.Pengkaji	88.Ada tak faktor-faktor lain yang menyumbang ke arah stres awak ataupun bukan 89.stres maksudnya faktor-faktor lain yang menyebabkan awak anxious bila 90.bersebut tentang career session making?
13.Responden	91.Anxious? Contoh?
14.Pengkaji	92.Contohnya faktor-faktor lain. Mungkin dari faktor kebolehan atau faktor 93.pekerjaan yang kurang ke sekarang contoh?
15.Responden	94.Apa lagi soalan dia?
16.Pengkaji	95.Ada tak apakah faktor-faktor lain yang membuatkan awak anxious bila kita sebut 96.tentang?
17.Responden	97.Faktor lain yang menyumbang kepada kegelisahan saya? Mungkin sebab 98.persaingan. Persaingan sebab sekarang bila kita dah bergraduan nanti, even kita 99.ambil degree sekalipun, kita ada banyak persaingan dengan orang di luar yang 100.lebih berpengalaman. Jadi, banyak perkara ini pun menyumbang kepada rasa 101.anxious terhadap saya
18.Pengkaji	102.Okey, soalan seterusnya, Kita pergi ke soalan yang ketiga. Soalan yang ketiga, 103.bagaimana peranan akademik membantu awak ataupun ia memberikan tekanan 104.kepada awak dalam perbuatan career decision making?
19.Responden	105.Macam mana akademik memberi tekanan terhadap career decision making 106.saya? Macam mana tekanan? Tekanan yang baik atau tidak baik?
20.Pengkaji	107.Dia terpulang kepada awak. Bagaimana peranan akademik di universiti? 108.Adakah akademik di universiti ini atau subjek universiti ini membantu awak 109.ataupun ia memberi tekanan kepada awak dalam pemilihan dalam perbuatan 110.career?

21.Responden	111.Setakat ini, tak ada sebab bagi saya, ia membantu saya untuk membuat 112.pemilihan dalam career decision making saya sebab kita dapat pendahan 113.tentang macam kaunseling dan bidang kaunseling sendiri.
22.Pengkaji	114.Sejak dah masuk tahun tiga ini, kita dah belajar dalam bidang career, ada dalam 115.bidang mental health dan coming soon kita akan belajar tentang family 116.kaunseling dan sebagainya. Jadi, benda ini banyak dapat membantulah bagi 117.saya seorang pelajar untuk membuat pilihan dalam bidang apa yang sesuai 118.dengan saya nanti. Baiklah, ia membantulah.
23.Responden	119.Kita terus ke soalan yang keempat, bagaimana tekanan luar biasa seperti 120.pertandingan dengan rakan-rakan menyebabkan tekanan dalam membuat 121.keputusan career? Faham tak? Tekanan luar? Maksudnya, bagaimana pengaruh 122.persekitaran seperti saingan antara kawan-kawan, maksudnya macam... rakan 123.sebaya. rakan sebaya. Mungkin kalau secara mudahnya, kadang-kadang masa 124.perjalanan career kita ini tak smooth macam orang lain. Orang lain di umur-125.umur yang macam ini dah capai, nak jadi contohnya, tokei kedai, pemilik kedai 126.tapi kita pula agak sedikit lambat. Jadi, bagaimana awak rasa tentang benda itu 127.bila awak tengok pasal career awak?
24.Pengkaji	128.Saya setuju dengan statement awak beritahu, which is kebanyakan yang di umur 129.sekarang dah banyak dapat kerjaya yang stable, which is ada kawan saya 130.sendiri, dia jadi seorang guru di sekolah. So, benda ini tak menyumbang kepada 131.stres tapi macam yang saya mention tadi, ianya menyumbang kepada perasaan 132.anxious ke dalam diri saya sebab macam terfikir juga adakah saya dapat jadi 133.seorang cikgu juga ataupun saya akan dapat menjadi seorang kaunselor 134.nantikah sebab saya ada planning, which is after habis degree ini nanti, saya 135.nak sambung dalam DPLI ataupun dalam maktab untuk menjadi seorang guru 136.kaunseling.
25.Responden	137.So, boleh saya simpulkan yang kejayaan awak yang awak nak betul-betul jadi 138.ialah sebagai guru kaunseling?

26.Pengkaji	139.So, kita pergi kepada objektif yang kedua, soalan yang pertama to explore how 140.career indecision or uncertainty affects students. So, untuk Saudari Umairah, 141.career indecision ni adalah maksud dia ketidakpastian berkenaan dengan 142.kejayaan. Maksudnya macam itulah, career indecision ataupun lebih mudahnya 143.kesukaran untuk membuat decision berkenaan dengan career.
27.Responden	144.Apa kesukaran saya?
28.Pengkaji	145.Tadi Umairah dah sebutkan berkenaan dengan kejayaan Umairah sebagai nak 146.jadi guru kaunseling betul? So, how do you feel about your future career?
29.Responden	147.How do I feel? I feel confidence to achieve my future indeed which is dalam 148.career yang saya nak but ada kerisauan sebab saya rasa saya nak bekerja juga 149.tapi dalam masa yang sama macam, macam mana bila saya nak jadi cikgu nanti, 150.cikgu kaunseling, saya kena sambung belajar lagi. So, macam, mesti dah saya 151.rasa anxious. Contohnya kalau saya tengok kawan-kawan saya dah ada kerja 152.yang tetap lepas habis degree nanti tapi saya still masih belajar. So, nak jadi 153.cikgu kaunseling kan. So, menjawab ke?
30.Pengkaji	154.Menjawab. So, soalan yang seterusnya, soalan yang kedua, tadi dia cakap pasal 155.anxious kan. So, macam mana perasaan anxious ini memberi, adakah ia 156.memberi efek kepada awak punya performance dekat universiti ataupun adakah 157.ia juga memberi efek kepada motivasi awak untuk menjadi seorang guru 158.kaunseling?
31.Responden	159.Ya, ia memberi impact ke dalam diri saya which is dari segi development lah, 160.skill-skill yang saya belajar, teori-teori yang saya belajar, and how I manage 161.my mental health with good condition. Ianya memberi insight lah terhadap diri 162.saya untuk saya menjadi seorang guru kaunseling juga nanti. Betul kan?

32.Pengkaji	163.Thank you. Okey, tadi Umairah ada sebut pasal career which is like a guru 164.kaunseling. So, kiranya rezeki bukanlah terletak pada guru kaunseling, apakah 165.kejayaan yang akan Umairah akan ceburi?
33.Responden	166.Kalaulah bukan cikgu kaunseling menjadi career saya, saya tetap akan berada 167.dalam bidang kaunseling itu sendiri which is mungkin saya akan jadi kaunselor, 168.saya akan dapatkan lesson, saya akan jadi kaunselor tapi dalam bidang apa itu 169.saya tak berapa pasti lagi lah sebab since saya belum explore banyak tentang 170.kaunseling dalam bidang apa yang sesuai. Sebab nanti waktu tahun empat nanti 171.ada lagi bidang lain yang kita belum belajar. So, mungkin family kaunseling 172.yang menjadi pilihan hati saya.
34.Pengkaji	173.Buat masa sekarang, bidang apa yang awak minat?
35.Responden	174.Buat masa sekarang, bidang apa yang awak minat? Bidang, macam yang saya 175.beritahu saya memang nak jadi cikgu kaunseling lah. Maksud saya, bidang 176.sebagai seorang kaunselor.
36.Pengkaji	177.Oh, dalam menjadi seorang kaunselor ya, bidang apa?
37.Responden	178.Saya berminat untuk apa, dalam bidang apa ya, saya belum fikir lagi actually. 179.Belum betul-betul tetap lah. So, saya rasa sekarang ni memang cikgu 180.kaunseling je lah.
38.Pengkaji	181.Okay, terima kasih. Kita terus ke soalan yang seterusnya. Can you describe any 182.experience of self-doubt or lack of confidence related to career indecisions? 183.Pengalaman awak, contohnya maybe ada pengalaman yang palingnya awak 184.takkan dapat lupa berkenaan dengan career. Pengalaman, contohnya? 185.Contohnya maybe ada pengalaman awak yang macam, sebabkan benda ni aku, 186.sebabkan benda ni lah career aku sampai macam ni, macam ni.

39.Responden	187.Apa pengalaman yang pernah saya lalui menyebabkan saya pilih career ni ke? 188.Macam tu. Hmm, maybe boleh saya cakap is sebab minat satu. Minat sebab, ya 189.macam saya bagitahulah, saya memang walaupun saya minat dalam bidang 190.perubatan pada awalnya, saya still boleh adapt and boleh proceed untuk minat 191.dalam bidang yang lain. Terus ke minat, kalau yang kedua is sebab family lah. 192.Family which is parents saya sendiri, diorang influence saya untuk masuk 193.dalam bidang tu sendiri. Contohnya dalam bidang diploma sekalipun, parents 194.saya sangat supportive lah untuk saya proceed dalam bidang tersebut. Even 195.dalam, sepatutnya walaupun saya, sepatutnya saya masuk dalam bidang PAI, 196.tapi rezeki tak mempunyai hak kepada saya untuk masuk dalam bidang PAI, 197.saya dapat counselling, but still parents saya bersyukur lah and support saya 198.dalam bidang ni. Ya, maybe sebab minat, family, itu sahajalah. Thank you.
40.Pengkaji	199.So, kita proceed ke soalan yang keempat. So, tadi ada cakap pasal anxious kan? 200.Adakah bila awak anxious tu menunjukkan something dari segi fizikal? 201.Contohnya, di depan jantung yang tak normal, ataupun awak rasa macam susah 202.nak tidur bila mengenangkan career yang awak nak pilih, ataupun awak 203.anxious, atau anxious tu sampai tahap macam anxiety, contohnya dapat ke tak 204.apa, nak jadi guru counselling, pernah tak?
41.Responden	205.Kalau anxious sampai tahap yang teruk tak ada, cuma maybe maybe dari segi 206.kesukaran untuk saya tidur lah. Sebab saya jenis yang selagi benda tu saya tak 207.syapai and selagi benda tu tak jelas, saya akan sukar untuk tidur. Even saya nak 208.tidur pun saya akan berfikir-fikir-fikir-fikir tentang masa depan. Banyak fikir 209.ya? Ya, banyak-banyak
42.Pengkaji	210.Okay, so kita pergi ke soalan yang seterusnya. Objektif yang ketiga, to explore 211.the role external pressure play in influencing student's career

	choice and mental 212.health. So, yang pertama, in your opinion, what are the external pressure in your 213.career choice?
43.Responden	214.External choice? External pressure? Pressure? External pressure, saya rasa 215.sebab persaingan lah. Persaingan, saya rasa bila dah bergraduan nanti terlalu 216.banyak persaingan untuk dapatkan pekerjaan. So, benda ni menyumbang 217.kepada anxious, rasa anxious terhadap dalam diri saya jugalah. So, itu je. Kalau 218.macam, maybe kalau saya sebut kewangan? Kewangan, yes, kewangan. Betul? 219.Sebab, seperti yang kita tahu, ekonomi sekarang sangat-sangat memerlukan 220.kepada sumber kewangan yang stabil and also yang macam yang kita tahu, 221.sekarang gaji yang paling minimum sebagai seorang counsellor adalah 1,700 222.macam tu. So, saya rasa 1,700 tu, tidaklah saya menidakkan ketentuan rezeki 223.daripada Allah, tapi tidak mencukupi dengan dalam keadaan ekonomi yang 224.sangat-sangat mendemandkan duit. So, salah satu sebabnya juga saya nak jadi 225.cikgu counsellor adalah dari segi gaji lah. Bila saya jadi cikgu, pendapat saya 226.sendiri, bila saya jadi cikgu mungkin gaji saya lebih daripada tu since saya ada, 227.apa sijil dalam degree, itulah
44.Pengkaji	228.So, ada kawan-kawan yang macam tak sokong awak punya career?
45.Responden	229.Tak ada, setakat ini surrounding saya tak ada isu dalam career decision making 230.saya. Sebab saya jenis yang kalau berkaitan dengan career, saya memang buat 231.keputusan sendiri. Kalau ada apa-apa yang memimbangkan pun, saya akan 232.tanya pendapat daripada parents saya. Macam tu.
46.Pengkaji	233.So, soalan seterusnya, ada tak maybe dari segi family yang cakap macam 234.kenapa ambil care, kenapa ambil counselling, ada tak?
47.Responden	235.Kalau dalam family mak ayah saya ke ataupun adik-beradik saya tak ada, but 236.then maybe orang luar lah, orang luar. Macam saya pernah, ni raya

	baru tahun 237.lepas lah, biasalah kita berziarah kan orang akan tanya kita belajar bidang apa, 238.bidang apa. So, pakcik ni dia tanya, saya belajar dekat Unimas bidang apa? So, 239.saya cakap bidang counselling. So, secara tiba-tiba, apa pakcik tu macam 240.memandang, macam mana nak cakap eh? Dia macam counselling kan macam 241.tu. Persoalkan lah. Kenapa counselling macam tu? Macam kenapa? Saya pun 242.tak tahu macam mana nak explain. Tapi dia macam ada pandangan negatif kalau 243.macam tu. So, apa expectation macam-macam tu ni?
48.Pengkaji	244.Apa pandangan family awak terhadap kena counselling? Semuanya okey lah?
49.Responden	245.Ya, okey. So far, family saya okey tapi mostly macam orang luar lah. Mostly, 246.orang luar bila tanya saya-saya dalam bidang apa sebelum cakap counselling 247.je, dia orang macam, macam mana nak cakap counselling ni macam bukan satu 248.career yang high demand macam tu. Contoh lah kalau saya cakap saya bidang 249.perubatan, nak jadi doktor. So, maybe dia orang macam, oh doktor, ni macam 250.ni, macam ni. Macam lebih hype. Tapi saya tengok bila saya cakap saya dalam 251.bidang counselling, dia orang macam, oh macam tu je.
50.Pengkaji	252.So, melalui pandangan tu, adakah ia efek kepada keputusan awak?
51.Responden	253.Tidak langsung, Sebab dia orang bukan family saya. Dia orang bukan siapa-254.siapa lah macam tu.
52.Pengkaji	255.So, soalnya terusny, soalnya ketiga, surrounding yang macam mana yang akan 256.membuatkan awak lebih rasa yakin ataupun boleh kurangkan awak punya 257.anxious terhadap awak punya career decision making?
53.Responden	258.Surrounding yang, macam boleh saya katakan, surrounding yang macam 259.sekarang kan saya dalam bidang counselling. So, even kawan-kawan dalam 260.kelas pun belajar counselling kan, so dia orang adalah surrounding

	yang baik 261.lah yang dapat mendorong saya untuk teruskan dalam bidang counselling ni. 262.Sebab dia orang pun ada kawan-kawan kelas, dia orang nak jadi seorang 263.counsellor. So, benda ni memberi motivasi kepada saya lah.
54.Pengkaji	264.So, awak pernah share lah, maksud saya, awak pernah share lah awak punya 265.kejayaan dengan kawan-kawan? Apa pandangan dia orang?
55.Responden	266.Pandangan dia orang, dia orang okay. Setakat ni dia orang rasa career yang, 267.pilihan career yang saya nak ni adalah salah satu career yang bagus untuk saya 268.capailah.
56.Pengkaji	269.So, okay. So, kita proceed ke seterusnya, Ataupun objektif yang keempat. 270.Okay, so. Ataupun objektif yang pertama yang bertajuk, to explore the coping 271.strategies students use to manage stress related to career choices. So, soalan 272.yang pertama, what strategies or practices help you deal with the stress of 273.making career decisions? Maksudnya, apa teknik bila awak anxious kan? Apa 274.teknik yang awak gunakan untuk cope with the stress ataupun cope with the 275.anxious bila berkaitan dengan career decision making?
57.Responden	276.So, first adalah, bila saya ada isu berkaitan dengan career, saya akan, first sekali 277.saya akan rujuk kepada family saya lah. Yang paling saya rapat adalah mak 278.saya sendiri. So, saya akan bertanya dengan pendapat mak saya sama ada career 279.ni sesuai tak untuk saya ataupun bolehkah kalau saya proceed dalam bidang ni. 280.So, first adalah mak saya. So, second adalah melalui pencarian maklumat lah. 281.Pencarian maklumat. Jadi, bila saya mula untuk cari maklumat tentang bidang 282.yang saya minat, so benda ni akan bagi insight kepada diri saya sendiri untuk 283.saya prepare lah, prepare dalam bidang tu sendiri nanti. So, yang ketiga, boleh 284.saya katakan dalam surrounding saya lah orang-orang yang saya rapat, which 285.is kawan-kawan.

	Jadi, bila saya berbincang dengan kawan-kawan yang ada 286.yang dalam bidang counselling tu sendiri, so saya, sedikit sebanyak saya akan 287.dapat info-info yang dapat membantu saya lah dalam mendengar ni masalah 288.anxious dalam career decision making saya.
58.Pengkaji	289.So, soalan yang kedua, pernah tak minta tolong ataupun minta nasihat daripada 290..kawan ataupun maybe counsellor tentang career awak?
59.Responden	291.Saya pernah berjumpa dengan counsellor pelatih dan membawa isu tentang 292.career jugalah. So, mengerusi daripada sesi counselling yang telah saya pergi, 293.so saya telah mendapat insight berkaitan dengan career decision making saya 294.and baru-baru ni jugak, saya memang decide memang nak sambung daripada 295.saya ataupun dalam maktab untuk jadi seorang guru lah. So, apa soalan dia tadi?
60. Pengkaji	296.Macam mana awak, ada pernah tak awak cari kawan-kawan?
61.Responden	297.First sekali, pernahlah which is kaunselor pelatih, saya rasa benda tu sangat 298.membantu, sebab saya seek from someone yang tepat dan betullah, so saya 299.dapat solution, kalau dari kawan-kawan tu, saya taklah cakap saya tak dapat 300.solution, tapi hanya sekadar bertukar pandangan dan pendapat sahaja, so yang 301.betul-betul membantu adalah kaunselor pelatih sendiri,
62. Pengkaji	302.So, soalan yang seterusnya, soalan yang ketiga, macam mana awak balance 303.keperluan akademik awak, dan persiapan diri awak untuk achieve career 304.decision making awak which is sebagai seorang guru kaunseling.
63.Responden	305.Balance? macam mana ya?
64.Pengkaji	306.Maksudnya macam mana awak balance contohnya, awak pun tengah 307.merancangkan? awak punya perjalanan sebagai seorang guru kaunseling kan? 308.at the same time awak pun ada tanggungjawab akademik jugak, so macam mana 309.awak balance dua benda tu?
65.Responden	310.Okay, actually saya dah tetapkan satu matlamat which is saya nak jadi cikgu 311.kaunseling kan? so saya dah ada matlamat untuk dicapai, so takda

	isu yang 312.mengganggu untuk bahagian akademik saya, so saya akan terus tetap seperti 313.biasa and supaya saya ada apa? knowledge yang baik berkaitan dalam bidang 314.kaunseling, supaya saya dapat memanfaatkan ilmu yang saya perolehi ketika dah 315.bekerja nanti.
66.Pengkaji	316.So, tadi awak ada mention kan awak pernah cari maklumat berkaitan dengan 317.guru kaunseling, so bagi pendapat awak sendiri, apakah kriteria yang baik untuk 318.menjadi seorang guru kaunseling yang perlu ada?
67.Responden	319.Kriteria yang baik? seperti yang kita tahu kan, kaunselor pun perlu ada empati 320.yang tinggi, ada skill-skill yang perlu diapply dengan baik, teori-teori, so 321.perkara ni pun tak ada beza sangat bila dah jadi seorang guru kaunselor nanti 322.kan? so ermm, apa soalnya tadi? lupa pulak saya zone out
68.Pengkaji	323.Guru kaunseling yang baik.
69.Responden	324.Guru kaunseling yang baik, so first of all adalah dari segi empatilah, and also 325.kerahsiaan, kerahsiaan adalah satu benda yang penting untuk dipegang sebagai 326.seorang kaunselor even menjadi seorang cikgu kaunselor nanti pun ia sangat 327.penting untuk dibawa oleh saya sendiri, which is seperti yang kita tahu, 328.sekarang ramai cikgu kaunseling dekat sekolah, tak menjaga kerahsiaan murid-329.murid ataupun klien lah dekat sekolah, so benda ni memberikan efek yang 330.negatif kepada aa cikgu kaunselor itu sendiri so saya sebagai seorang yang apa? 331.yang telah belajar dalam bidang kaunseling itu sendiri, akan menerapkan 3 332.penstrukturan yang pentinglah, bila dah saya menjadi cikgu kaunselor nanti, so 333.benda ni sangat apa orang kata? apa soalnya tadi, syok sangat bercakap
70.Pengkaji	334.Aaa maksud saya, guru-guru kaunseling yang baik haa
71.Responden	335.Haaa, benda ni sangat menunjukkan identity yang baiklah, sebagai menjadi 336.sorang guru kaunseling nanti
72.Pengkaji	337.Ermm, so macam tadi anxior berkaitan dengan career counselling, and then 338.awak pun ada research juga berkenaan dengan kerjaya awak so, boleh tak saya 339.tahu, adakah awak sedia maklum, perjalanan tentang menjadi seorang guru 340.kaunseling,

73.Responden	341.Perjalanan? ermm setakat ni yang saya tahu adalah samada saya sambung DPLI 342.ataupun maktab, so bila saya dah ada sijil menjadi seorang guru, so begitulah 343.saya akan menjadi seorang guru kaunselor.
74.Pengkaji	344.Tapi, kita pun sedia maklum jugak bahawa sistem Pendidikan di Malayia ni dia 345.bukanlah exactly semua, kadang-kadang penempatan guru agak terhad di 346.sebuah institusi Pendidikan, terutamanya sekolah-sekolah lah, so macam mana 347.awak nak berdepan dengan isu-isu tersebut?
75.Responden	348.Saya jenis yang cepat adapt dengan surrounding, kalau ditempatkan di Kawasan 349.pedalaman, betulke?
76.Pengkaji	350.Maksud saya, macam mana awak nak adapt, maksudnya tadi kan saya 351.cakap,limited space untuk seorang guru, masuk ke dalam bidang sekolah, 352.maksudnya penempatan guru tu agak terhad.
77.Responden	353.Seperti yang saya tahu, permintaan untuk menjadi seorang guru di Sarawak itu 354.sendiri agak tinggi ye, haah so saya rasa perkara ni tak menjadi issue, sebab 355.saya rasa saya tahu dekat Sarawak sendiri memerlukan guru-guru terutamanya 356.dalam bidang agama lah, tapi dalam bidang yang lain saya tak pasti contohnya 357.macam kaunseling tu sendiri, so melihat kepada rezeki tu nanti.
78.Pengkaji	358.Ermmm kalau rezeki awak lambat? saya tak doakan tapi kalau perancangan 359.Allah tu lain kan? perancangan Allah tu berbeza setiap manusia so kalau Allah 360.takdirkan rezeki awak mungkin datang lambat sedikit, so how do you manage?
79.Responden	361.How do I manage? seperti yang saya pernah mention, awal-awal tadi, saya akan 362.mengambil license sebagai seorang kaunselor, kira ni adalah backup plan saya 363.jugaklah, walaupun saya meneruskan pengajian dalam bidang menjadi seorang 364.guru nanti, tetap saya mengambil license sebagai seorang kaunselor dan 365.seandainya tak tertulis rezeki saya menjadi guru kaunselor, saya akan tetap jadi 366.kaunselor,
80.Pengkaji	367.So bagi pendapat awak sendiri, untuk soalan yang keempat, apakah persiapan 368.yang diperlukan untuk awak rasa betul-betul ada confidence dan tak anxious 369.bila nak buat career decision making?
81.Responden	370.Dalam career decision making?

82.Pengkaji	371.Persiapan yang macam mana yang awak perlu buat?
83.Responden	372.Persiapan dalam membuat pemilihan kerjaya, obviously info adalah yang 373.sangat pentinglah dalam bidang apa yang saya nak ceburi nanti, info lepastu 374.bila dah dapat info obviously lah kita akan aa belajarliah, kita akan memperolehi 375.ilmu dalam kelas seperti sekarang, apa lagi eh? info berkaitan dengan bidang 376.kita nak, lepastu knowledge, and then saya.... itu sahaja.
84.Pengkaji	377.Okay, so soalan yang kelima, bagi awak konfiden tu penting ke? dalam career 378.decision-making?
85.Responden	379.Ya penting, sangat-sangat penting, kalau kita tak konfiden, kita tak akan ada 380.apa, career yang tetap yang kita betul-betul nak nanti, betulkan? so bila kita 381.confidence, kita akan berusaha untuk capai bidang tersebut, seandainya kita tak 382.confidence, kita akan rasa boleh ke tak boleh ke tak, end up kita takkan ada satu 383.career yang kita betul-betul nak capai, so confident tu sangat mendorong 384.seseorang which is saya sendiri untuk membuat pemilihan kerjaya lah,
86.Pengkaji	385.So, berakhirnya soalan tadi, maka berakhirlah tu lah merupakan soalan yang 386.terakhir untuk kita punya sesi temuduga, so saya nak ingatkan semula, segala 387.apa maklumat yang dapat dalam temuduga ni akan digunakan untuk tujuan 388.kajian, Pendidikan dan ilmu baharu, untuk pengkaji-pengkaji dekat luar sana, 389.dan juga untuk maklumat ni hanya akan dapat diakses oleh penyelia lapangan 390.iaitu Dr Edris Bin Aden, dan segala maklumat akan disimpan sehingga 391.tamatnya kajian, so sekali lagi saya ucapkan terima kasih sebab sudi untuk 392.menghadiri sesi temuduga dan juga sudi untuk berkongsi maklumat, pandangan 393.dan juga ilmu baharu kepada saya untuk saya ceritakan dalam saya punya 394.kajian, okay so apa-apa insha Allah saya akan maklumkan terhadap awaklah, 395.so awak pun boleh contact saya sekiranya aa ada apa-apa isu yang awak nak 396.bincangkan lah, so ada apa-apa soalan?
87.Responden	397.tak ada.
88.Pengkaji	398.Okay, kalau tak ada apa-apa soalan, saya rasa sekian itu sahaja, so terima kasih 399.dan assalamualaikum.

