



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**Mismatch Career Among Tertiary Education Level Graduates In Public
University**

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Abstract

This study explores the phenomenon of career mismatch among tertiary-level graduates in public universities, focusing on the factors that lead graduates to pursue careers misaligned with their academic qualifications. Grounded in the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making and the Theory of Work Adjustment, the research investigates four key areas: the criteria influencing career choices, the contributing factors to career mismatch, the challenges faced by graduates when seeking field-related employment, and the effects of mismatched careers on job satisfaction and development. Using a qualitative case study approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven public university graduates employed in careers unrelated to their fields of study. Thematic analysis revealed that economic pressures, family influence, lack of market exposure, and skill gaps were primary drivers of career mismatch. Participants also reported emotional strain, loss of skill relevance, and diminished motivation, yet some developed resilience and adaptability in unfamiliar roles. Findings underscore the need for enhanced university support, practical skill-building, and policy reforms to bridge the gap between academic preparation and labor market expectations. The study contributes to the discourse on graduate employability and offers insights for educational institutions, employers, and policymakers aiming to support sustainable career development among graduates.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This chapter covers the study's background, problem statements, research aims, questions, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, limitations, and term definitions.

1.0 Background of the study

According to Jiang (2024), The term "mismatched" refers to employment in fields unrelated to the greatest degree. Mismatched refers to a scenario where some pieces are unconnected or related. According to Lent and Brown (2020), career choice involves more than finding a profession that fits a person. Sophisticated decision-making considers a person's behavioral, cognitive, and educational background. A mismatched career occurs when an individual's job or professional path does not align with their skills, education, hobbies, or aspirations. This indicates a mismatch between a person's professional goals and a usual route based on their experience or skills. Everyone could have dreamed of getting a job as their survival to commit to this world. But then, getting a dream job that aligns with my interests could be an extreme life decision because the vacancy or promotion could be so limited.

Career mismatch is a global issue that affects many graduates and professionals. Many people across the world work in professions that do not match their abilities and credentials, resulting in underemployment and job dissatisfaction. This phenomenon is not limited to a single location or industry but is present in many industries and nations. Several reasons contribute to this pervasive issue, including the rapid speed of technology development, altering labor market needs, and educational systems that may be unable to keep up with these changes. It is critical to consider the possible impact of social desirability bias. Due to a variety of issues, highly educated professionals are unable to find suitable employment (Jiang, 2024). In such a reality, the knowledge, skills, and capabilities required by certain tasks might be divergent from the human resources in the given workforce, and these discrepancies are called 'job mismatch' (Kim

& Choi, 2018). Furthermore, socioeconomic hurdles and prejudice aggravate the gap between education and employment.

Graduate students may experience mismatched jobs for several reasons. Shifting interests might be one of the factors that a mismatched career could happen. Graduate students may discover new concepts, mentors, or experiences that spark new passions, leading them to pursue professions that may not fit with their initial ambitions. According to Abdul Rahman et al. (2025), Malaysia needs increased collaboration between universities and companies to address the mismatch between education and the employment market that due to limited career opportunities, individuals may feel compelled to pursue professions that align with their education and experience. Various variables, including industry advancements, regional limits, and economic crises, might create a mismatch between graduates' talents and job options.

1.1 Problem Statement

Mismatch careers are considered a hot issue that happens in the career world. Many graduates from any institution experience this trend to survive from commitment. It is quite challenging to work in different departments that do not align with the skills and knowledge that we learned during the study era. One of the main causes of this issue is the increased competency that employers are demanding, the industry's shift, graduate competitiveness, and new global economic practices (Husain et al., 2020).

The continuing job mismatch among fresh graduates from Malaysian institutions presents a substantial obstacle to the labor market and graduates' personal development. Despite having specialized academic degrees, many graduates find themselves in jobs that do not need their abilities or match their professional ambitions. The rising trend in unemployment rates over the past few years has presented challenges for Malaysian graduates (Kadir et al., 2020). This mismatch not only reduces employment happiness and productivity but also stifles economic progress by preventing graduates from realizing their full potential. Based on Njifen, (2024), undereducated workers are more content with their jobs than overeducated and underemployed people. In Malaysia, the unemployment rate among recent graduates is high because they have excessive expectations for their jobs, and when things do not go as planned, they tend to abandon up. In today's competitive employment market, recent graduates must be aware of the level of competition for available positions (Alhaderi & Jallali, 2024). The disconnect between the school curriculum and the labor market demands is a major component exacerbating the situation.

This issue has emerged in the country, with a particular emphasis on building surveyors within the TVET sector. The employability of TVET graduates has declined recently, especially concerning technical skills, which has become a critical concern for all building surveyor students and graduates. According to Husain et al. (2022), despite numerous career development approaches, there remains a mismatch in employment skills and a shortage of skilled graduates with both technical and non-technical abilities. This research analyzes the supply and demand for surveying graduates' skills from the perspectives of employers, instructors, and students. It examines academic and industry viewpoints on the performance of building surveying graduates and students' understanding of contemporary industry demands. However, this issue is not

unique to building surveyors. It should be investigated among all fresh graduates with tertiary education. The mismatch in careers should be explored further, and the critical status of this issue should be acknowledged. This study will focus on other courses that are misinterpreted as having fewer job opportunities and a lack of job placements.

Many researches had been made from various perspectives, mismatch careers also be something that be worried and should be shouted into the public through various researches (More & Rosenbloom, 2020; Khoiruddin et al., 2024; Alhaderi & Jallali, 2024). So, the continuous research can be made by improvising the research following the development of the economic and recent world of work. Fresh graduates face various hurdles in today's competitive market because they lack basic skills and job expertise. For many of them, finding work is difficult (Isai et al., 2024). Various research focusing on quantitative methods, collecting data with a lot of surveys made. Unfortunately, a lot of voices and experiences are not heard at all. Due to scale surveys only have been served to the society and the experiences and storytelling are told by scale 1 to 5 about the agree and disagree statement by a self-administered questionnaire was utilised as a study approach to gather primary data on students' perceptions of their employability abilities, and the questionnaires were distributed during the convocation (Alhaderi & Jallali, 2024). This approach gives researchers want to explore more about career mismatches that happen in the recent world of work.

Additionally, the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) was the main focus of this study, which examined how interest influences profession choices and career achievement. The foundation of SCCT is the social cognitive theory, which is utilized to comprehend career behaviours and growth (Bandura, 1995). It describes the whole framework for figuring out how graduates' beliefs, attitudes, and objectives affect their choice of vocation and employment. An individual's current learning experiences, context, self-efficacy, and result aspirations are all reflected in their current perceived employability (Gunawan et al., 2024). The idea highlights the crucial roles that result expectancies, personal goals, and self-efficacy play in determining a person's professional success. Thus, emphasizing how experiences and the environment impact career growth and job searching. The use of theories that emphasize the environmental element can aid in detecting the impact of job disqualification or mismatch in the sector of work.

The increase in recent graduates enrolling in Master's and PhD programs immediately after earning their bachelor's degrees rather than starting their careers is one factor contributing to the underemployment problem. It presents difficulties in the labour market even as it shows increased access to higher education. The unemployment rate for advanced degree holders was as high as 15.5% in 2020, indicating that many graduates find it difficult to find work despite their specialist preparation (Rahim et al., 2024). Even those who are hired usually start out with lesser pay, which offers little comfort. However, academic credentials and real-world experience are essential for employability, since graduates with practical experience have a higher chance of landing the job they want. The imbalance is made worse by companies' worries about hiring inexperienced graduates and graduates' uncertainty about their future options. Employers frequently point to skill and experience shortages as a reason for avoiding employing new employees.

Despite the research, focusing on the factor for mismatch could possibly happen. That led to the unemployment of fresh graduates. Unemployment is a devastating phenomenon for graduates as it affects various parts of their personal lives, especially for graduates who took study loans (Kadir et al., 2020). Next, the challenge of a mismatched career that becomes a burden and overwhelms the fresh graduate and the effect of it. But then, the discussion about the ideal of criteria should be emphasized too, therefore, the mismatch career issue can be reduced along with the improvement of the job marketability. Acknowledge the criteria early can give more awareness of the job unemployability among fresh graduates if they seek and limit their skill toward one specific job. Expanding their limit and skill by getting extra knowledge should determine them getting more opportunity of work and ensure the work employability. People must adjust to these changes in order to get and keep paid employment, particularly in times of crisis like the present epidemic (Taveira et al., 2023). As a fresh graduate, finishing their education is not a sign of competition, the reality is when it comes to seeking a job. They need to compete with others to get a proper job (Nastiti et al., 2021).

To conclude, this research will emphasize the broader issue of employability and skills mismatch among fresh graduates, aiming to highlight the critical nature of this problem and propose improvement solutions.

1.2 Research Objective

- 1) To explore the criteria influencing career choices among university graduates.
- 2) To explore the factors affecting mismatched careers among university graduates.
- 3) To explore the challenges faced by university graduates when seeking employment in a field that matches their qualifications.
- 4) To understand the effects of mismatched careers on career development in job satisfaction among university graduates.

1.3 Research Question

- 1) What are the criteria influencing career choices among university graduates?
- 2) What are the factors affecting mismatched careers among university graduates?
- 3) What are the challenges faced by university graduates when seeking employment in a field that matches their qualifications?
- 4) What are the effects of mismatched careers on career development in job satisfaction among university graduates?

1.4 Significance of study

1.4.1 Theoretical implication

This study investigates the underlying causes, obstacles, and coping methods linked with career mismatches among graduates. I hope to shed light on the larger consequences for both individuals and the economy by investigating the core causes and numerous problems that develop as a result of such mismatches. Furthermore, we look at the numerous coping techniques used by graduates to navigate and alleviate the impacts of job mismatch. This study aims to improve existing frameworks and create new paradigms for better understanding and addressing the complexity and subtleties of career mismatch by using insights from relevant career development theories.

1.4.1.1 Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making (SLTCDM)

SLTCDM describes and explains environmental conditions that could influence career decision-making in individual preference selections. In this research, SLTCDM will be applied to knowing the environmental factor for career decision-making in fresh graduates' context. As a result, this theory would enhance self-efficacy, which is their belief in their ability to succeed in specific career tasks and roles. By concentrating on this context, the theory offers a thorough framework for career counseling, assisting people in navigating the challenges of making professional decisions and adjusting to adjustments in their career trajectories.

1.4.1.2 Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA)

TWA uses two psychological hypotheses to explain and characterise work adjustment: (a) behaviour is driven by satisfaction, and (b) P-E correspondence (the interaction of a person (P) with the environment (E)) determines satisfaction. The results of this study can help the TWA by shedding light on how these factors impact people's P-E correspondence and work adjustment. Therefore, this study would contribute with TWA by providing insight in, how these factor affect the satisfaction and correspondence of P-E and work adjustment of individual. The study, would determine coping technique that would be apply by fresh graduate to maintain P-E correspondence and work adjustment.

1.4.2 Practical Implication

This research examines the structural factors that contribute to career mismatch, the challenges it presents, and effective techniques for resolving it. Understanding these characteristics can help provide practical counsel to those experiencing it. Recognizing the impact of career mismatch might help fresh graduates develop strategies to minimize the number of graduates who struggle to find their ideal employment. Giving a hand to this issue would decrease the economic consequences and impact on education relations and smooth the path and career decision-making process (Lembaga Kaunselor Malaysia, 2011). This study's results can improve career counselling, specifically in practicum, by providing counselors with the necessary tools and treatments to address concerns related to career mismatch (Lembaga Kaunselor Malaysia, 2011)

1.4.3 Policy Implication

The findings will substantially help career counselling programs that focus on career mismatches. The supervisor of a trainee counsellor, for instance, might design a training program aimed at improving a counsellor's competency in career counseling and knowledge and skills in addressing challenges associated with job mismatch (Lembaga Kaunselor Malaysia, 2011). This study aims to increase understanding of the skills needed to give effective advice to clients facing work mismatch difficulties. This is especially beneficial for trainee counsellors who are unfamiliar with addressing career mismatch or career counselling in general.

1.5 Scope of study

This study examines the factors that contribute to career mismatch among recent graduates. This study will focus on career mismatch among young graduates that have career beside their learning course.

1.6 Limitations of Study

1.6.1 Time consumption

Time consumption also can be the limit because of the different schedules of the interviewees and interviewer. This issue could arise and have a big impact on data collection, and unsatisfied data collection could occur. This research would be done in 2 semesters where this researcher believes that this study would be insufficient data collection could be done and it will impact the process of this research and the data collection satisfaction.

1.6.2 Disclosure information

Next, the refusal to disclose information could occur due to the unopened sharing of information. It could cause insufficient data collection and difficulty in interpreting the data, and the analysis process could be lacking. Insufficient data could disturb the process of interpreting the research question to find a solid justification for specific objectives.

1.6.3 Financial issue

The study's limited length and lack of financing limit its generalisability. The researchers' limited job experience and lack of a bachelor's degree may lead to bias in their interpretation of the findings. It could be one of the limitations that one should be born with. Money matters are the consent when the project continuous in collecting also gathering the data.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

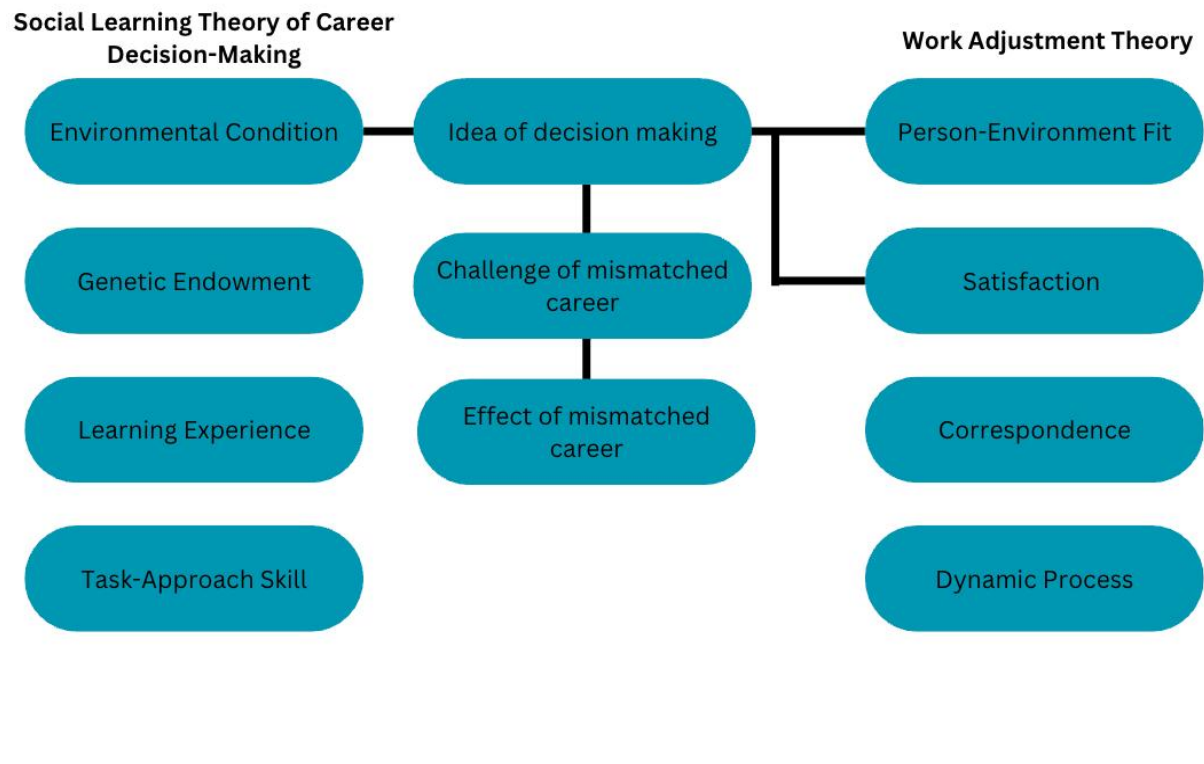


Figure 1.7

Figure 1.7 shows the flowchart of the theoretical framework that will be used in this research to find the correlation of the elements of the theories and also the finding that will be achieved

1.7.1 Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making

Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making (SLTCDM) consists of four elements which are environmental conditions, and the influence of external factors such as family, culture, and social and economic factors. People choose their careers depending on a variety of factors, including task approach skills, learning experiences, environmental conditions and events, genetic endowment, and special characteristics (Yunus et al., 2024). It could be classified as unplanned events that influence decision-making in unforeseen occurrences that can open or close career opportunities. Next, the genetic endowment that is related to crystallizing intelligence and fluid intelligence. Learning experience, past experience or the consequences of action that an individual experiences. Task-approach skills which are, cognitive and behavioral abilities, such as problem-solving, decision-making, and emotional regulation, that individuals use to effectively tackle tasks and navigate career-related challenges. This study only focuses on the environmental condition factor that SLTCDM had.

Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making (SLTCDM) explains that environmental conditions and events play a critical role. Individuals' professional selections are influenced by factors such as their socioeconomic background, educational prospects, and life experiences, which either extend or limit their alternatives. SLTCDM helps individuals understand how environmental factors influence their career choices, guiding them toward paths that align with their skills and interests.

This theory could be applied in the context of mismatched careers to investigate what are the ideal criteria of career choices related to environmental conditions (socioeconomic, cultural, political) and how mismatched careers could happen among university graduates that affect the future. The mismatched career could happen because of the changes of relevance of job toward the time being. Therefore, This idea emphasizes that an individual's professional decision-making process is influenced by their direct and indirect experiences in learning about their personality, preferences, learning process, and observations (Yunus et al., 2024).

In addition, researchers exploring the challenges faced by university graduates when seeking employment in the field that matches their qualification by this theory contribute to individuals learning from their live observations, occurrences, and their living circumstances, which are reinforced by their personalities (Yunus et al., 2024). Therefore, the obstacle

developed when one by one the life experiences been going through by university graduates seeking jobs that suit their skills and professions. Moreover, understanding the effects of mismatched careers on career development and job satisfaction among university graduates aligns with social learning theory, which teaches individuals to focus on learning, skills, and abilities improvements, as well as emphasizes career decision-making processes and procedures. (Yunus et al., 2024).

1.7.2 Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA)

The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) places a strong emphasis on matching job requirements (demands and expectations) and reinforcements (rewards and positive feedback) with an individual's needs (personal preferences and motivations) and abilities (skills and competencies) in order to improve performance and job satisfaction.

According to Musah (2022), this theory holds that understanding how to satisfy one's physical, social, and psychological demands at work is equally as crucial as making a professional decision. Work Environment, includes all of the social and physical elements of the workplace that affect a worker's ability to do their job effectively. It consists of the duties that must be performed, the abilities needed to carry them out, and the reinforcements (rewards and incentives) that the work offers. Moreover, In TWA, the terms "satisfactoriness" and "satisfaction" refer to two different but connected ideas that characterise the results of interactions between the person and the workplace.

This theory emphasize the adaptation concept of new environment and way with several thing to consider.

Work environment can be understand by several key element that align career issue;

1. Reinforces - the incentives and rewards offered by the position, including pay, perks, recognition, and career progression chances. These reinforcers aid in meeting the needs and values of the individual.
2. Social Environment - the connections and exchanges between coworkers, managers, and employees. While an unfavourable social environment might result in discontent, a positive one can improve performance and work satisfaction.

3. Physical Environment - Physical aspects of the job, such as comfort, safety, and ergonomics. Well-being and productivity are supported by a favorable physical environment.

Therefore, this theory could be applied to mismatch career issues in terms of changing the negative part of mismatch by applying the good opportunities by using this theory in jobs that not university graduates are destined to do. Therefore, the effect of mismatched careers on career development and job satisfaction among university graduates could be explored by implementing this theory.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

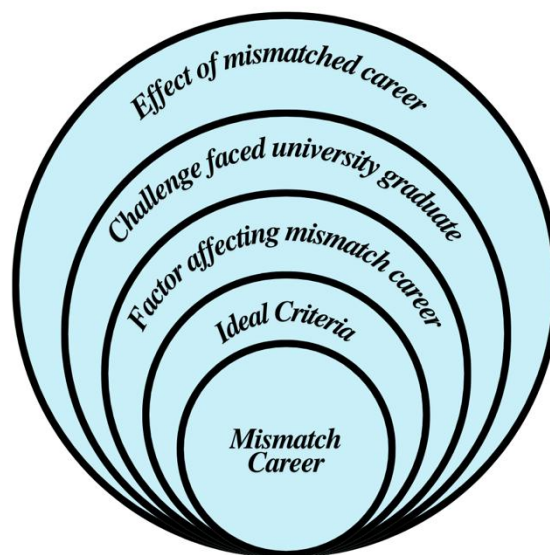


Figure 1 Onion Layer Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 demonstrates the study's conceptual framework, which has the four levels shown above. The conceptual framework, which also reflects the study's structure, is created using this model as a basis. The outer layer of the onion layer structure is followed by the inner layer. While the inner layer represents an individual's core beliefs and objectives, the outer layer represents the external factors that shape that person's professional judgements.

1.8.1 Effect of mismatched career

The first layer is the effect of mismatched careers, which stands for the outside variables that affect a person's choice of employment. It encompasses the social, cultural, and economic elements that influence their choices and possibilities. This component aims to address the research concerns about the impact of mismatched careers on university graduates' work satisfaction and career advancement.

1.8.2 Challenges faced university graduate

This layer depicts the challenges that a university graduate faces on an individual basis. It covers their priorities, expectations, and approach to the problem. The second layer will help investigate the difficulties university graduates encounter while trying to find work in an area that aligns with their qualifications.

1.8.3 Factor affecting mismatched career

The third layer represents the factor of how a mismatched career could occur. The internal and external factors could contribute to the mismatched career issue. This inner layer will explore the factors affecting mismatched careers among university graduates.

1.8.4 Ideal Criteria

The ideal criterion is the core layer, which stands for the essence of a person's values and professional goals. It gives them a feeling of purpose and direction and serves as the impetus for their job choices.

1.9 Definition of terms

1.9.1 Mismatched Career

1.9.1.1 Conceptual Definition

Graduates are compelled to look for employment outside of their field of study if they are unable to find employment inside it (Kadir et al., 2020). Job-education mismatch occurs when the job done does not match the individual's talent and education (Shahidan & Ismail, 2021). When a person's work or professional role does not fit with their abilities, values, hobbies, or long-term objectives, it is known as a mismatched career. Low performance, a lack of drive, job unhappiness, and even mental stress might result from this (More & Rosenbloom, 2020). In essence, it occurs when your professional activities do not align with your identity or goals.

Something important seems strange, whether it's the workplace, the type of job being done, or the culture of the organization.

1.9.1.2 Operational Definition

In this study, mismatched career refer to the unalignment of job with education taken of public university graduates especially in Kota Samarahan (UiTM and UNIMAS fresh graduate)

1.9.2 Tertiary Education Level

1.9.2.1 Conceptual Definition

Husin et al., (2021) stated that unemployment among tertiary education graduates in Malaysia appears to increase year after year with the hard economic environment. Tertiary education is the degree of education that follows the completion of secondary education. This comprises academic endeavours in universities, colleges, and vocational schools, which often include undergraduate and graduate degrees. High-quality higher education is crucial for preparing future graduates (Farzana et al., 2022). Tertiary education seeks to give advanced information and abilities in a variety of disciplines, preparing students for professional professions or further academic study. It frequently combines academic coursework and practical training to promote critical thinking, specialised competence, and intellectual development. In essence, tertiary education acts as a link between secondary school and professional or academic progress, providing students with the necessary certifications to succeed in their chosen vocations.

1.9.2.2 Operational Definition

Researchers focus on a bachelor's degree at the tertiary education level researchers highlight knowing the factors, challenges, and effects of mismatched careers aligned with the purpose of the research.

1.9.3 Public University

1.9.3.1 Conceptual Definition

AUKU Pindaan (2024) stated that there is no university or institution that offers tertiary education that may be built unless it complies with the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 (Act 555). "Higher Educational Institution" refers to any educational establishment that offers advanced instruction that culminates in the granting of degrees, certificates, or their equivalents (Parliament of Malaysia 1996). A public university is a higher education institution that is primarily sponsored and administered by government agencies, whether federal, state, or local (Bound et al., 2019). Public universities were designed to give accessible and inexpensive education to a wide range of people. Their funding is largely from the government, which allows them to maintain tuition costs cheaper than private colleges. These universities frequently provide a diverse range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, with a focus on research, public service, and community education (Wan, 2007). Public universities play an important role in the educational landscape by facilitating social mobility and helping to produce an educated workforce.

1.9.3.2 Operational Definition

In this study, public university is the niche of this study that focuses on two public universities in Kota Samarahan (UiTM and UNIMAS), to see the factors and challenges of the mismatched career. By that, it will impact the world of work also labor marketing could affect it.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed study aims to investigate the sources and consequences of the mismatch between university graduates' work satisfaction and career advancement, as well as the ideal criteria that affected their career choices. This study is necessary because it can help the career counselling sector become more aware of the decline in university graduates without jobs and the fact that work satisfaction has not yet reached a certain level.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

This study section will compare the proposed ideas to previous research findings including the theories used, the Theory of Work Adjustment, and the Social Learning Theory of Decision Making, as well as some points and themes that relate to this study. This section also identifies research gaps that arise.

2.1 Literature Review

A previous study investigating the issue of mismatched careers of fresh graduates was based on two factors – the relevance of individual competence and job demand- where the study emphasized the point of producing effective individual behavior. Those important on developing a competence model for the entire company that included identifying occupations, key skill categories, and likely competencies.

As a result of the study, the establishment of new employees had some issues where every company expected knowledgeable new workers that required less further training and the standard needs of the company itself. The changing world of work expected something impressive that required less effort to create a sustainable worker (Knight, 2020).

2.2 Discussion from previous study

2.2.1 Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA)

Adjustment is defined as the ability to cope with pressure, wants, and disappointments while also developing suitable psychological systems (Istari et al., 2023). TWA explains how individuals adjust their work environment, and both interactions give outcomes in terms of satisfaction and satisfactoriness of the individual. It is important to ensure the individual gives a good performance in adjusting their work environment that fits with personal preferences (Eggerth, 2008). Therefore, the previous study emphasizes the adaptation of pressure that fresh graduates receive related to environmental factors that happened at that time.

According to Istari et al. (2023), recent graduate students are more worried about the job application procedure than they are about being unemployed; the unemployment rate for university graduates also makes new graduates nervous about the likelihood that they would not find employment like alumni. Frustration occurs when there is a need for adaptation and adjustment processes to cope with the environmental factors that border the fresh graduate. According to Istari et al. (2023), the worries of new graduates may be comprehended by using TWA as a lens. During the crucial job application process, fresh graduates look for a fit between their skills and the demands of possible positions. They feel anxious and apprehensive because they are unsure if they will be able to find a career that fits their requirements and skills. A key component of TWA is the correspondence search, where people look for jobs that match their credentials and skill set.

This fear is made worse by the high unemployment rate among recent college graduates, which raises the possibility of a mismatch between the skills of the graduates and the jobs that are available. Hojjati and Zadhasn (2023) found that graduates may believe that their skills are not being sufficiently valued or acknowledged by companies if they are unable to obtain positions that match their qualifications. As graduates attempt to deal with the environmental issues that surround their shift from academics to the job, this lack of acknowledgment can cause anger. Istari et al. (2023) noted the necessity of adaptation and adjustment procedures, which is consistent with TWA's correspondence idea, which holds that people must constantly adapt to their workplace in order to reach a desirable degree of fit.

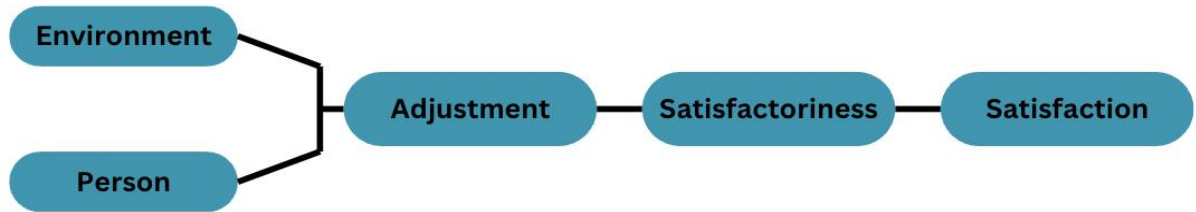


Figure 2.2.1 Element in Theory of Work Adjustment

Figure 2.2.1. show the element in TWA. Autonomy is the outcome for satisfaction. Lack of autonomy in the world of work can decrease motivation and not guarantee comfort in doing the job (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Motivation is the key element for the adjustment of person-environment correspondence (Hojjati & Zadhasn, 2023). TWA asserts that the extent to which a person's demands are satisfied by the reinforcers at work affects job happiness (Bretz & Judge 1994; Eggerth, 2008). TWA highlights the significance of alignment between a person's demands and the reinforcers of the work, as well as between a person's talents and the job's ability requirements (Istari et al., 2023). TWA asserts that the degree of fit or correspondence between these factors affects both job performance and job happiness (Eggerth, 2008). People are more likely to feel satisfied with their jobs and do well in them when there is a high level of correspondence.

However, in the previous study, they highlight the social support that they need in order to adjust their condition, depending on the environmental factors. Emotional support is the purpose of the study. Thus, in this study, the researcher finds that environmental factors cause fresh graduates to mismatch their careers and the satisfaction of the decision-making process.

2.2.2 Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making (SLTCDM)

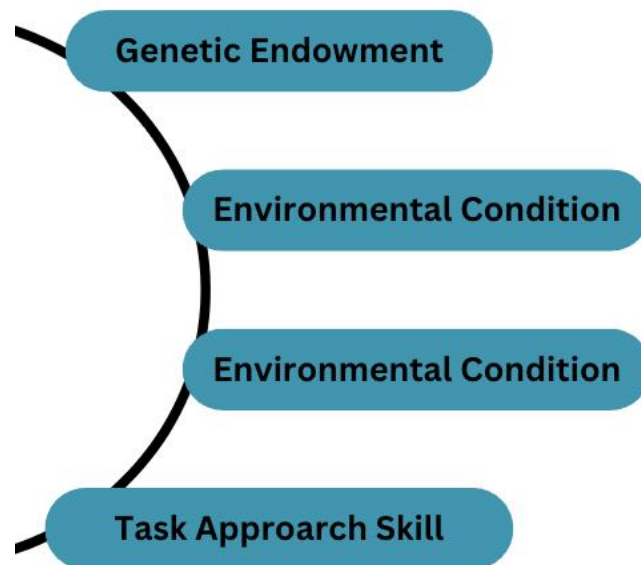


Figure 2.2.2

Figure 2.2.2 shows the key element in the theory. This theory emphasizes how crucial modeling, observation, and vicarious learning are in influencing people's decisions and behaviors (Jingwen et al., 2023). In the previous study, career readiness was applied along with the theory application. Modifying their condition is a procedure to achieve self-control and enhance their capacity for environmental adaptation.

Moreover, the importance of developing and implementing comprehensive career planning is crucial for career readiness to avoid career mismatch career mismatches for fresh graduates (Jingwen, 2023). Comprehensive career planning is essential for connecting students' talents, interests, and values with the responsibilities and benefits of possible jobs (Low,2023). The SLTCDM principles, which place a strong emphasis on the value of learning from experiences and interactions, are the foundation of this alignment approach (Yunus et al., 2024). Educational institutions may provide students the chance to see and engage with experts in a variety of disciplines by integrating social learning ideas into career planning (Jingwen, 2023). Students may get a realistic grasp of many vocations via this exposure, which aids in their decision-making and helps them match their goals and skills (Ginting et al., 2024).

Yunus et al., (2024) stated that John Krumboltz presented the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making (SLTCDM), which holds that a mix of task approach abilities, learning experiences, contextual circumstances and events, and genetic endowment affect career decisions. People acquire knowledge about jobs through both direct and indirect experiences, which eventually influence their career choices, according to SLTCDM (Yunus et al., 2024). The idea suggests that people may learn by watching others, emphasizing the importance of modeling, imitation, and observation in the learning process (Abina, 2025)

Additionally, integrating social learning theory into career planning education might improve students' resilience and flexibility. SLTCDM acknowledges that people must constantly adjust to shifting conditions and gain knowledge from novel experiences (Jingwen et al., 2023; Abina, 2025). By giving students the tools and instruction they need to successfully negotiate the dynamic and changing nature of the workforce, educational institutions may aid in this process (Ginting et al., 2024). This strategy guarantees that graduates are ready to manage obstacles and career shifts in the future, in addition to being ready for their first job search.

However, in the previous research, talking about the prevention of mismatched careers could occur. The consequences avoidance could be applied before the real scenario could happen. In this research, the researcher would find the association and solution relate the theory of career decision-making and mismatched career in the context of fresh graduate.

2.2.3 Criteria in employability

Criteria of a career become the key holder of job requirements in some companies (Katz et al., 2023). The previous study highlights that the lack of experience is one of the incomplete criteria in a career that becomes the issue of a mismatched career. Experience is the key element highlighted for job requirements for some companies (Rodríguez-Modroño & López-Igual, 2021). In this perspective, the lack of opportunity to get a job that aligns with skill and knowledge during the study era impacted a lot of university graduates. Most companies ask for previous work experience, which is impossible for fresh graduate to have on their resume and complete the criteria of the job requirement.

In addition, the employment criteria are not met in the context of specialized knowledge that some companies require for fresh graduates. It leads to pressure to take a job that pays attention to their degree. Organizational pride may enhance a person's feeling of meaning and purpose at work (Pikl, 2023). Therefore, it would not be achieved because of the incomplete criteria some companies require in their job qualification. It disturbs a comprehensive framework for determining how graduates' beliefs perceptions and goals impact their career decision-making and job selection.

However, in the research, they keep on highlighting the self-efficacy in the job mismatch. Belief about one's capabilities obstructs the chance of job mismatch could happen. Hence, in this paper, research will highlight other criteria for career contribute to job mismatch.

2.2.4 Roles of passion in career decision-making

Passion has become less focus in studies regarding career choices and has less contribution to research in career (Rekha Wagani & Marathe, 2022). According to a previous study, studying the individual intention to pursue a career less vulnerable to explore the reason why a mismatch could happen. Two models of passion are associated the how the decision is perceived: harmonious and obsessive (Dasan, 2019).

Harmonious passion encourages positive emotions, enhances concentration, and promotes a sense of flow. Individuals with this type of passion are able to manage their involvement in activities effectively, maintaining a healthy balance and disengaging when necessary (Vallerand & Paquette, 2024). In contrast, obsessive passion often drives individuals to persist rigidly in their pursuits, which can lead to negative outcomes such as burnout. While obsessive passion may provide ongoing energy and motivation, excessive involvement in emotionally demanding situations can eventually result in physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion (Kent, Kingston, & Paradis, 2018).

However, in this study, the researcher would highlight the passion that creates motivation in individuals; therefore, it would become one of the factors that conquer career decision-making.

2.2.5 Factors of mismatched

The contribution of reason becomes the main point of why people are not into that particular job. According to the previous study, employability skill is the determinant of unemployment among graduates. English proficiency also becomes an issue of mismatched jobs in some companies. Language proficiency becomes a barrier for some fresh graduates to get the alignment of the job with the study skills that they have. Increased social contacts and potential employment opportunities can result from improved English communication skills (Akther, 2022). The add-on skill becomes an obstacle in recruitment in some companies.

Employability skills are transferable across industries and are often referred to as foundational skills or job-readiness skills (Doyle, 2019). According to research by Bahrim et al., (2019), employers are picky about who they hire and give preference to graduates with experience and employable skills over those who only have high marks. The same issue to language proficiency, English is a requirement in communication skills to reach the company's basic needs and goal. Proficiency in English is highly valued and viewed as a means of accessing opportunities and financial gain (Kadir et al., 2020b).

Therefore, some companies view add-on skills as extraordinary for some individuals have it and become an advantage for fresh graduates to be accepted into the company (Nagy et al., 2023). The possibility of being exposed to great opportunities is a high chance and leads to interdisciplinary skills valuable in various careers (Hoque et al., 2023). However, it can drag an individual far from their actual skill development, and adaptability would be the process to bear with in order to get the company's needs.

However, from the study, the satisfaction of fresh graduates with jobs is not the factor of mismatched careers. Highlight company needs rather than individual needs are the points that the research is about. Therefore, in this study, the satisfaction of the individual, along with the application of the theory to satisfaction, is something that going to talk about.

2.2.6 Challenges in the Employability

From the previous study, the challenge for the company toward fresh graduates as a subject is to employ them in the company in Afghanistan. The Human Resources department struggles to identify the essential skills that fresh graduates require for employability in the company. There is disagreement on the skills and qualities needed to increase a graduate's

employability (Wafa et al., 2020). The lack of essential skills gives a big challenge for employers to find suitable employees, especially fresh graduates for the company.

Next, the essential skill that they highlight is language skill which is English, where everybody has issues that arise because of linguistic background. English is important for communication and it has become an essential skill required for some companies. Demissie et al., (2021) state that one of the expected talents is communication, specifically in foreign languages.

Next, the abundance of fresh graduates in some courses makes some jobs have fewer vacancies and makes it harder for fresh graduates to get jobs related to the courses taken. Every job needs experience, and fresh graduates lack it. Every graduate has to understand that even with a master's degree, there is no assurance that they will find employment (Alhaderi & Jallali, 2024). They need to stand up in the crowd and show their ability in the competitive environment. It shows that it is a challenge for several fresh graduates who struggle to get a job. Plus, the existence of digital or advanced approaches makes some companies not need a large amount of employees, making fresh graduates get jobs.

The study shows the challenge of another country's struggle in selecting employees for the company. Essential skills become an issue among all the companies in the country. Plus, the struggle of fresh graduates with job seeking with having less experience of the world of the world makes it brutal to secure one job in life. However, in this research, the researcher highlights the challenge fresh graduates face in getting a job, and employment in a suitable job aligns with the study and makes further exploration of the struggle of non-digital or advanced jobs like machines, especially in a social context.

2.2.7 Effect of graduates' skill development for labor market

New ways of organizing work imply that working conditions are increasingly characterized by more competition, work intensification, a faster work pace, shorter lead times, the expansion of different kinds of flexible work contracts, including part-time work, and an increased decentralization of decision-making authority and responsibilities in the workplace (Habets et al., 2020). The previous study shows that work readiness is called a career prospect for graduates. Thus, the effect of career development will depend on the effort of graduates in preparing for the world of work.

Next, critical thinking and problem-solving are crucial in determining whether graduates fit into the industry. It should be implemented since the study showed that every company needs employees who can tackle issues with critical thinking in solving some problems, affecting the employee's fit in the company. The career development learning process is the determinant of career readiness in the world of work. Career development learning emphasises the planning of instruction and practices to assist students in obtaining the credentials required for their future employment (Ho et al., 2022).

However, Velciu (2017) stated the effect of the mismatch inspires fresh graduates to get ready for the job world more mindful, where some of the fresh graduates would get ready with some essential skill that makes them feel like it is useful for their job, and some feel like they need to take some advance skill that out of the course, as plus one in gaining knowledge for future use. Employees who are overqualified or overskilled may occasionally initially increase a company's production. They may be able to complete tasks more successfully than their less skilled counterparts, which might result in short-term increases in efficiency or creativity (Erdogan et al., 2011). People who navigate a mismatched job might develop resilience and problem-solving abilities as they learn how to handle and adjust to difficult circumstances (Rikala et al., 2024).

However, the effect of mismatch becomes one issue of mental illness. Many cases reported related to the world of work and getting a job become one of the issues that arise (World Health Organization, 2024). The struggle to get one becomes more crucial in order to continue their life with less or not depend on their past resources. The highlight of the previous study research with the fundamental value of critical thinking in problem-solving in order to fit in with the world of work. Those elements are needed in career decision-making that the researcher highlights in this research. Various points of view need to be reconsidered in decision-making to provide the best outcome from the action or thought that had been made.

2.3 Research Gap

Robinson et al. (2011) created a methodology for thoroughly identifying research gaps in light of the discovery that "the identification of such [research] gaps has not been completed in a systematic way" (Robinson et al. 2011, p. 1325). The fundamental issue for research is having a gap in order to improvise the topic and spread it to the public as an issue that should be focusing on community building. Finding research gaps in literature reviews may be made easier by characterizing research gaps, which enhances our knowledge of how they could be formed (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2015).

Firstly, there is a theoretical gap in this related research. Much research applied cognitive-based theory and adjustment of individuals toward something better in avoiding and adapting to mismatched careers. The insufficient of decision-making process-related theory makes this research more indemnification toward the world of work and fresh graduate life path.

The methodology gap in a mismatched career is a lack of focus on the structural factor of career mismatch, which is related to the organizational and societal context in which one navigates one's individual needs. Lastly, as a consequence of the geographical gap, there is also difficulty in implementing practices in career counseling from a local perspective because most of the research is done in Peninsula Malaysia, local perspectives influence the career counseling that could be applied to solve the issue in the researcher location.

Moreover, the context of existing research focuses on fresh graduates before the job is taken or before jumping in the world of work. Mismatch careers occur when there are graduate already jump into the industry or company that does not align with their study taken and course learning. The contextual supports would help and have a beneficial impact on the choice of career (Mohd et al., 2010).

Conclusion

The proposed study aims to explore the criteria, factors, challenges, and effects of career mismatch among fresh graduates as well as fill the research gaps on the topic. Therefore, the sample sampling process would run smoothly, and the determination of the field would be easy to recognize and be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes 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 will be employed in this study as it focuses on recent graduates and seeks to comprehend their experiences, viewpoints, and perspectives on mismatched jobs among recent graduates from public universities (Creswell, 2013).

Research focus, informant selection, data collection, quality assessment, data analysis and interpretation, and conclusion-making are all done by qualitative researchers, who operate as human instruments. Extension students frequently choose issues that others have already researched and then continue their studies by altering the previously examined crop location or sample unit (Bangar et al., 2024). A semi-structured interview is used in this study to gather data because the approach emphasizes depth and richness of understanding by attempting to comprehend and interpret the research object from the viewpoint of the sample under investigation (Kara, 2023). The data source would also contain field notes, voice recordings, and interviews to improve and elucidate the results acquired.

3.2 Sample of study

This study aims to understand the factors and challenges of career mismatch among fresh graduates struggling with job qualifications and skill implementation in different fields of study and work. The target of interest would be fresh graduates who have graduated from public universities for at least three years. This research involves fresh graduates from Malaysia (UiTM and UNIMAS) public universities. This research would take a fresh graduate who has graduated from two to three years of public university to ensure the relevance of the data collected (Cheang & Yamashita, 2023).

3.3 Sample

Basic ideas like samples serve as the foundation for deriving reliable and significant conclusions (Ahmad et al., 2023). The sample is the target respondent that we want to observe according to those criteria to complete the interview: (1) The participant is a graduate from any public university focusing on social sector course (Chaudhry et al., 2022) (2) The participant must have at least 2 to 3 years of graduation from a public university in Malaysia. (3) The participant must be in a job that does not align with the course taken at the university.

There are no universal numerical recommendations regarding the sample size (Kindsiko & Poltimäe, 2019) or "hard" rules regarding the number of units that should be included in the research sample (Lichtman, 2010, p. 142) due to the nature of qualitative research and the type of data that is collected. Small sample sizes are usually used in pilot studies due to practical factors like participant flow, financial limitations, and the number of participants needed to fairly assess feasibility goals. In qualitative research, data saturation plays a significant role in deciding sample size. Therefore, saturation is a context-dependent, subjective process that calls for rigorous systematic study (Rahimi & Khatooni, 2024).

Thus, this study seeks to include 7–10 public university graduates from a public university in Malaysia, of whom two will take part in a pilot study to evaluate the feasibility and possible efficacy of the intervention or study design (Bond et al., 2023)

However, depending on data saturation, the sample size for this study may change. It was hinted that increasing the sample size is a significant influence because researchers continued to gather data from additional patients until the saturation point was achieved (Mwita, 2022). More data collecting is unlikely to provide fresh insights if a researcher has gathered enough information to spot recurring themes or trends.

Table 1 Purposive sampling with criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria	Rationale for criteria
Participant graduate from public university	Participant graduate from private university	To ensure all the participant undergo same challenge of job market
Participant must at least less than 5 years of being graduate from any public university	Participant more than 5 years of being graduate from any public university	To get the inability of job adaptation and struggling
Participant must in job that not align with the course taken at the university.	Participant in job that align with course taken at the university	To get the correct data collection

3.4 Sampling procedure

Purposive sampling is the sampling technique used in this study to make sure the wealth of data is in line with the goals and themes (Hassan, 2024).

Therefore, the researcher will employ purposive sampling to find close connections that meet the requirements of this study and leverage the respondent connection to obtain more respondents that meet the research aim, in order to better grasp a theoretical framework, data collection is essential to study (Campbell et al., 2020).

3.5 Pilot study

According to Well et al. (2022), a pilot study is the first inquiry carried out in qualitative research to evaluate and enhance research tools, including interview guides, and to spot any defects or potential areas for research design development.

A pilot study with a minimum of two participants will be carried out to assess the feasibility of the research from local viewpoints and the study's impact on the community (Pearson et al., 2020). Modifications will be made after expert validation to address any mistakes or impracticality.

3.6 Ethics of study

3.6.1 Consent

People have the freedom to consent to participate in research (Lembaga Kaunselor, 2011). Therefore, the topic of this study will be displayed on the front page of the Informed Consent form. This will contain the goals and aims of the study, terms and conditions like confidentiality and the ability of participants to withdraw, and the researcher's contact details in case of questions. In this research, participant's consent would be taken by informed consent form to get agreement in conducting research. The participant's informed consent is also included in this portion of the page.

3.6.2 Confidentiality

All data collected about research participants is kept completely private during the study. Research ethical practice mandates that, as part of the informed consent process, participants be told about the likelihood that others will have access to such material as well as strategies to maintain anonymity (Lembaga Kaunselor, 2011). After the research is complete, all the data will be erased with the ethical method. As a result, the study will adhere closely to confidentiality principles, which will be explained in the informed permission form that participants must sign before taking part.

3.7 Data collection procedure

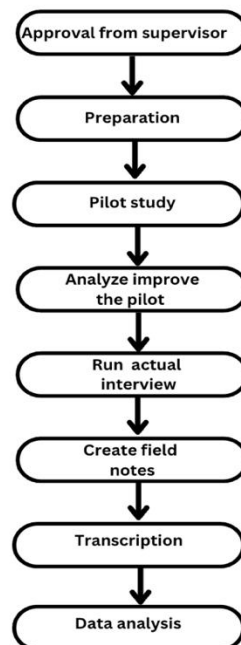


Figure 3.7

Figure 3.7 shows the procedure for data collection for this research. Data collection refers to the systematic collection of observations and measurements. The goal of qualitative research is to understand social processes by collecting and interpreting non-numerical data (Alam, 2020). This study uses field notes, audio recording, and semi-structured interviews as its data gathering techniques.

Moreover, handwritten notes will be used to record the one-on-one semi-structured interview (Mashuri et al., 2022), along with audio recordings that will be verbatim transcribed

prior to data analysis and field notes to record and comment on impressions, environmental contexts, behaviours, and nonverbal cues that may not have been captured by audio recordings.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

Data collection from interviews and field notes will be analyzed using thematic analysis and content analysis.

3.8.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a commonly used qualitative analytical technique in psychology that is not well defined and rarely acknowledged (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic Analysis (TA) is a frequently used qualitative research approach to uncover, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within data (Nowell et al., 2017) yet it offers an analytical technique in psychology that is not well-defined and rarely acknowledged (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It offers a comprehensive, intricate, and extensive description of the data (Rosairo, 2023). Based on Humble & Mozelius, (2022) thematic analysis is simple and adaptable for qualitative data analysis.

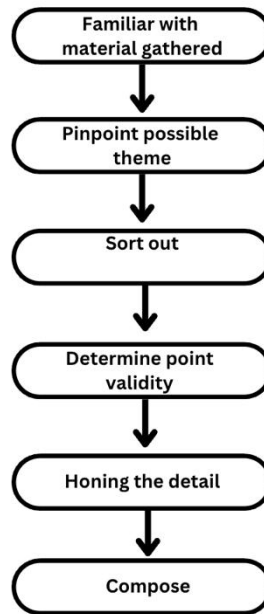


Figure 3.8.1

The thematic analysis consists of a six-step procedure show as the Figure 3.8.1, that includes the following phases: 1) Getting acquainted with your material, which includes transcribing, immersion, and taking notes on preliminary concepts, 2) Creating preliminary codes from the data that pinpoint an intriguing aspect, whether it be latent or semantic information, 3) Finding themes through the compilation of codes into possible themes, 4) Examining themes and determining if they relate to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the complete data set (Level 2), 5) Identifying and characterizing themes, honing the details of each topic, and refining the narrative the analysis conveys in its whole. 6) Composing the presentation of the discovered theme and polishing the narrative in its entirety (Humble & Mozelius, 2022). Thematic analysis interprets and makes meaning of data, rather than merely summarising it (Rosairo, 2023).

3.8.2 Content analysis

Content analysis is a qualitative research approach that identifies specific words, themes, or concepts within qualitative data, such as text. The main application of content analysis was as a quantitative research (frequency identification) technique to examine media, text, content so that comparable findings could be made among many text coders (Mezmir, 2020). It may be used by researchers to measure and examine the occurrence, significance, and connections of particular terms, themes, or concepts within data.

Summary

In summary, the proposed study will use a qualitative method, using thematic analysis to examine the information gathered from field notes, interviews, and verbatim and content analysis to see the frequency of data to address the stated research questions to get a deeper understanding. Data collection will be discussed in the next chapter, from this method that has been applied to this research.

CHAPTER 4: Results and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter comprises the collected data from semi-structured interviews with the participants and themes and sub-themes that emerged from thematic analysis in answering the experience, and also issues that arise in a mismatched career.

4.1 Background of participants

In this study, seven (7) participants were chosen through purposive sampling techniques to participate in the semi-structured interview session. Seven (7) of the participants are graduates who have mismatched careers from their courses taken. All the participants' name and identity already change for ethical purposes. Summarization of the participants is shown in **Table 1**

4.1.1 Participant 1- Nur Syahfirah

Participant 1's name is Nur Syahfirah, age 26 years old. She is from Kota Belud, Sabah, and currently works as an optical consultant. She graduated with a Bachelor of Counseling and Honours at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. She graduated in 2023

4.1.2 Participant 2- Vivien

Participant 2's name is Vivien, age 25 years old. She is from Sarawak and her current job is as a contract educator. She graduated with a Bachelor of Counselling and Honours at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. She graduated in 2024.

4.1.3 Participant 3- Vija

Participant 3's name is Vija Joseph, age 26 years old. She is from Sabah and her current job is as an admin in the company in Sabah. She graduated with a Bachelor of Counselling and Honours at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak in 2023.

4.1.4 Participant 4-Nadia

Participant 4's name is Nadia, age 24 years old. She is from Sarawak and her current job is as Sales Advisor at Proton Sdn Bhd, Shah Alam, Selangor. She graduated with a Bachelor of Counselling and Honours at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak in 2024

4.1.5 Participant 5- Mimi

Participant 5's name is Mimi, age 25 years old. She is from Sabah and her current job is as Community Community-Based-Rehabilitation worker (Part-Timer) at Shah Alam, Selangor. She graduated with a Bachelor of Counselling and Honours at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak in 2023.

4.1.6 Participant 6- Beatrice

Participant 6's name is Beatrice, age 25 years old. She is from Sarawak and her current job is as a retail worker at Satok, Sarawak. She graduated with a Bachelor of Counseling and Honours at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak in 2023.

4.1.7 Participant 7- Luqman

Participant 7's name is Luqman, age 30 years old. He is from Bangsar Selangor. He work as a Head of Department, Cum Business Development in Bangsar, Selangor. He graduated with a Bachelor of Event Management from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, UiTM Puncak Alam, Selangor. He graduated in 2020.

Table 1*Background of participants*

Participants	Gender	Current Job
1 (Syahfirah)	Female	Optical Consultant
2 (Vivien)	Female	Contract Educator
3 (Vija)	Female	Admin
4 (Nadia)	Female	Sales advisor
5 (Mimi)	Female	Community Based-Rehabilitation worker (Part-Timer)
6 (Beatrice)	Female	Retail worker
7 (Luqman)	Male	Head of Operation Department, Cum Business Development

Note. The table above is a summary of fresh graduates from a public university who participated in this study.

4.2 Finding Analysis

According to the data extracted from the semi-structured interview, fresh graduates described a unique and varied experience and expectation from their journey that led to a mismatched job. These data were formulated into four core themes - criteria, factors, challenges, and effects, along with their own parts that comprise the study's findings (refer to Figure 2). To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms were employed for analyzing of theme and their experiences. Discussion of previous literature and theory was included in each core themes.

4.2.1 Research question 1: Criteria for career choice

For research question 1, participants shared several criteria based on their experience and also their views about the criteria in choosing or determining their career choice, or general views and preferences for career choices by fresh graduates. *Figure 1* shows the theme and subtheme for research question 1.

Theme	Subtheme
1.Career Choice Factor	1.1 Family influence
	1.2 Economic factor
	1.3 Passion driven career choices
	1.4 Salary and benefit
2.Market Driven Career Adaptation	2.1 Commitment issue
	2.2 Self-Efficacy
	2.3 Unpredictable job market
3.Parental Career Expectation	3.1 Forced career impact

Figure 1: The core themes and subthemes of the criteria for career choice for fresh graduates.

4.2.1.1 Theme 1: Career choice factor

The first core theme is depicted from the mismatched graduates' view on the criteria of career choice. This core comprises 3 subthemes: (i) family influence, (ii) economic factor, (iii) passion driven career choices (iv) salary and benefit

4.2.1.1.1 Subtheme 1: Family influences

All the participant shared that the career choice factor became their reason for career choices. All of them agreed family influences become the focus issue for the career choices and dominate as the factor that influences them. Nur Syahfirah said that:

“rasanya bagi saya dia daripada faktor peribadi. Yang juga dipengaruhi daripada faktor ekonomi keluarga” (Line 29-30 p1).

Nur Syahfirah shared that the relation of one factor is from another factor that contributed to the main factor. Economic factors in the family reflect the formation of personal factors in contributing to career selection.

Vivien stated that: *“kalau macam yang high standard lagi punya family mesti dia orang nak anak dia orang bekerja yang lebih, orang cakap lebih standard lah pekerjaan itu”*(Line 193-195 p4).

Vivien shows some views about the standardization of family methods, which could form a personal perspective in career selection. It shows that the standardization builds interest in themselves for career decision-making. Therefore, Vija also mention about family standardization in career selection where, Vija said that:

“Mungkin kalau dari segi family contoh, family kita ni ramai yang guru contoh. So, maybe mereka nak anak-anak mereka pun nak meneruskan tradisi tu.”(Line 33-36 p1).

From all the quote given, it solid to show that all participants agree family influences play closely related to each other.

4.2.1.1.2 Subtheme 2: Economic factor

Some of the mismatched graduates, reported that their criteria for career choices depended on economic factors, where economic reasons became the most considered factor for choosing a career, and also the economic impact on themselves, forcing them to adapt and adapt to the conflict. Nadia stated that:

“secara pribadi, saya sendiri melihat kepada faktor ekonomi iaitu gaji yang ditawarkan dan career growth yang akan saya perolehi kalau saya dapat jawatan tersebut lah””(Line 27-30 p1).

Nadia highlights the worthiness of job selection, examines the future occurrence of working based on the career they choose. This determination has a significant impact on graduate life for a person who is new to commitment and struggles to make a life.

Luqman also stated that:

“economic factor ni dia ada responsibility in terms of nak tanggung the keluarga”(Line 65-66 p2).

Both agree and support that the economic factor becomes one of the career choice factors that contribute to fresh graduates in making decisions about their careers, despite the responsibility toward ourselves and also the people that we support in our lives.

4.2.1.1.3 Subtheme 3: Passion-driven career choices

This sub-theme also agrees majority of the respondents in making decisions regarding career choices. Vija reported that:

“maybe seseorang yang ada minat tertentu dalam sesuatu bidang ataupun dalam sesuatu kegiatan, saya rasa benda itu mempengaruhi untuk pemilihan kerjaya” (Line 50-53 p2).

Along with Nadia shared the same statement :

“minat dan juga minat dan juga keinginan lah keinginan sangat penting dalam pemilihan kejayaan sebab perkara tersebut akan mendorong kepada motivasi untuk bekerja” (Line 58-60 p2).

Luqman reported same view on the passion where:

“Graduate sekarang or university student sekarang ni, diorang lebih pandai nak fikir ataupun pandai nak, diorang lebih tahu macam mana, how diorang nak go with their life. So, normally, diorang akan buat kerja yang kena dengan passion diorang.” (Line 80-85 p3).

All the statements get a majority vote to agree that passion becomes a factor in career choices. But Nadia adds that passion should come with desire; it can enhance career decision-making. Desire would be passionate about someone and create passion that possesses someone's interest. Passion reflects who we are and what our personality is. Passion creates something, such as a job, mirroring our willingness in that field. If no passion developed, we could work as zombies and put the mentality of doing the job as required, and no joy developed, resulting in pressure and worse work quality.

4.2.1.1.4 Subtheme 4: Salary and benefits

Advantages from hard work, such as salary and company benefits, also become a choice among graduates for career selection. Some of the participants highlight this point and put it as a criterion in making decisions for career decisions. Nur Syahfirah:

pada pendapat saya, saya rasa as long as pekerjaan itu memberi benefit yang sepatutnya, seperti APF, KWSP, SOPSO dan basic kan. (Line 67-69 p2)

and Vivien stated:

“And then the benefit pun kami orang memang dapat full benefit lah dekat situ which is dari segi insurance, SOPSO, APF, semua itu. And then benefit untuk explore ataupun develop kita punya professionalism pun diberikan jugak untuk saya punya kerjaya sekarang”(Line 150-154 p4).

When choosing a career, both have the same viewpoint on salary and benefits. Respondents cited KWSP, SOPSO, and APF as essential for providing benefits after employment and for saving money after we are classified as senior citizens. As we try to improve our future, we should receive all the benefits that will help us save money in the future. By now, long-term life planning needs to have been established, and in order to realise the ideal, side income or savings from the beginning of a profession should be given top of the list.

4.2.1.2 Theme 2: Market-driven career adaptation

This second core theme covers job market demand and adaptability in company needs and forces in adopting new and inexperienced environments in order to survive in the industry world. This core theme contains three (3) sub-themes: (i) commitment issue, (ii) self-efficacy, and (iii) unpredictable job market.

4.2.1.2.1 Subtheme 1: Commitment issue

A commitment issue is an economic aspect, but academics feel it has to become more adaptable and responsive to market movements. Furthermore, several respondents stated that they must be adaptable, flexible, and follow market trends in order to thrive, this eventually turns into a career adaption that is reliant on market trends. Nadia (R4) stated that:

“market trend pekerjaan dan juga kondisi ekonomi sangat-sangat mempengaruhi pemilihan kerja atas faktor kita bekerja untuk memenuhi keperluan dan juga membayar commitment”(Line 77-80 p2)

also Mimi:

“macam trend sekarang dengan ekonomi bagi akak macam dia mempengaruhi. Macam mana ah, Macam kamu cakap tadi, akak kerja sebabkan ada commitment dan kena bayar semua”(Line 120-122 p4).

Both show similarity in answering questions about job market trends and economic conditions influencing career mismatch. Both agree, job market trends drag the economic situation in adapting nowadays. “Paying the commitment” becomes the reason for having a job and forces one to adapt to the market trend if one wants to survive.

4.2.1.2.2 Subtheme 2: Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is essential to market-driven career adaptation because it enables people to take charge and boldly react to changing job trends. Some participants share the same view about putting self-efficacy in the market trend.

Vija shared that:

“contoh dari bidang kaunseling pergi kepada bidang perkeranian, pergi kepada bidang bisnes sebagai contoh. So, bila mereka membina kerjaya baru, mungkin pertimbangan mereka lain lagi, maybe dari segi income ataupun dari segi peluang pekerjaan, maybe sebab mereka rasa bidang bisnes itu memberikan mereka income”(Line 81-89 p2).

Vija highlights with an example, people would have a new opportunity if they open themselves to trying new things that might become a new path to create new job opportunities

And Beatrice stated that:

“Other than that, it is important for growth opportunity for myself, it is because the ability to learn new skills and taking responsibility in long-term career satisfaction”(Line 119-122, p3).

Both respondents state that to accomplish a certain objective, they must have a belief in their ability to act in the form that is required. In this example, success comes from believing in oneself to fit into a career field, to survive, and to continue on a different path.

4.2.1.2.3 Subtheme 3: Unpredictable job market

Luqman stated that an unpredictable job market influences career decisions. Researchers believe that not all graduates put insight into this awareness by the time they graduate, and should be bold in planning what they should do to survive with their available skills and flexible them to the trend:

“Because if the market, let's say hot for, sekarang market tengah hot for digital marketing, ataupun content creator nowadays. So, dia akan, untuk orang-orang yang background on marketing, multimedia, diorang akan rasa macam job market tu still ada..... So, for me, the economic, the up and down, the trend is also up and down..... That's, itu yang menjadikan dia akan ada mismatch.....It really depends on the market because the market is not fixed.”(Line 102-116 p3).

Researchers believe this subtheme is a strong point to be pointed out since it is related to the flexibility of the job market trend. Researchers also believe that new graduates have to become smart in adapting their skills and knowledge to suit the market. The researcher takes a statement from Nur Syahfirah, giving a statement:

Mereka are fresh graduates. Tapi memilih untuk membuka klinik sendiri kan? Sepatutnya yang kita buatlah perubahan yang perlu dilakukan. Berani untuk ambil risiko membuka bisnes sendiri” (Line 226-228 p5).

Strong statements for upside-down market trends should be adopted by graduates, and be brave enough to make a difference.

4.2.1.3 Theme 3: Parental career expectation

As fresh graduates, some of them still have parents who like to decide what they should do as their career choices. So some of the fresh graduates have expectations from their parents to become what they dream of, depending on their views and the careers they want for their children. This core theme has one (1) sub-theme, which is forced career impact.

4.2.1.3.1 Subtheme 1: Forced career impact

Some of the participants shared some of their views on the imposed ambition of their parents toward their children. Luqman stated that:

“in Malaysia, banyak family yang still have that kind of mindset yang stable job, kerja government and macam professional field..... So, for me, that kind of pressure can push a student into a career yang dia orang tak nak pun.” (Line 138-143 p4).

He stated that possible could happen when the career is decided by the parents; therefore agree with the impact of forced career. This case usually happens and is reported frequently in Asian families.

Next, Mimi stated that some parents expect something high:

“parent yang expect anak aku perlu jadi doktor. So, dia akan mempengaruhi kepada pemilihan kerjayaan kita lah. Sebab family kita dah expect kita nak jadi doctor”(Line 158-161 p5)

And Vija stated that:

“Mereka bagi mereka career macam doktor, lawyer, teachers or something like that. Mungkin mereka kerjaya itu adalah satu kerjaya yang berprestasi. Itu mungkin pandangan parents kita”(Line 134-136 p3).

Both shared the same view of how parent could view some career decisions for their child. Parent believe that if they choose, they will probably make the right choices that determine a bright future for their child. In this situation, some show good outcomes, but some cases do not show the expected result, resulting in a disappointing result for parents and an abandoned career path.

4.2.2 Research question 2: Factors of affecting mismatched career

From the research question 2, participants shared about the factors that affect mismatched careers in their experience, and some perspective on how that thing could happen in their field of study and job availability. *Figure 2* shows the themes and subthemes for the factor that affected the mismatched career.

Theme	Subtheme
1. Economic Pressure	1.1 Financial urgency
2. Lack Of Career Guidance And Information	2.1 Lack of university support 2.2 Limit market exposure 2.3 Skill gap between university training and work
3. Career Shift	3.1 Forced career adaptation
4. Job Availability Of Geographic Limitation	4.1 Limited regional job growth 4.2 Preference for proximity

Figure 2 shows the core theme and subthemes for factors affecting the mismatched career.

4.2.2.1 Theme 1: Economic pressure

Economic pressure becomes the main factor for university graduates to experience career mismatch. It becomes a general factor that comes first when talking about mismatched careers among university graduates. This core theme contains one subtheme, which is (i) financial urgency.

4.2.2.1.1 Subtheme 1: Financial urgency

Several participants, 3 out of 7 respondents, shared the same situation due to financial urgency, as their life that need to be covered, forcing them to find a job even though it is not in their field. Beatrice shared that:

Other than that, also cost of living... because of high cost of living in my area, this time I have to, eh, force me to accept lower paying” (Line 328-336 p8).

Same with Luqman stated that:

"If job are limited, fresh grad tu dia nak kerja yang cepat, dia tak nak menganggur. So, they need money fast." (Line 260-262 p7).

Both share a perspective on the urgency for having money in order to cover their life and responsibilities due to economic struggle. Living costs are rising by the day, influencing university graduates to seize every opportunity to create revenue as soon as possible, and they do not want to postpone the process. Since it is not ideal for a parent to support their wants as a university graduate, swift action should be taken, disregarding every other possibility. It typically occurs in families that are under economic pressure and have a lot of responsibilities.

4.2.2.2 Theme 2: Lack of career guidance and information

Some of the respondents flashed back the need for a university that lacks and results in a career mismatch. Some of them share about the lack of guidance during university life. This core theme contains three (3) subthemes, which are (i) lack of university support, (ii) limited market exposure, and (iii) skill gap between university training and work.

4.2.2.2.1 Subtheme 1: Lack of university support

Some of the participants reported about absence of university support for career exposure. Luqman shared that:

Job fair tu ada je... tapi benda tu dekat luar. So why not we start with benda yang paling senang kita nak grab student which is dekat tempat dia belajar sendiri tu”(Line 242-246 p7).

Support this view with another respondent, where Vivien stated:

"Diorang tak access pun benda tu, diorang tak ambil berat... ada platform untuk diorang tengok sama ada diorang dapat match career ataupun macam mana." (Line 261-266 p1),

meaning that the information is there but not accessible enough, and not being pointed out for the student to take note. Both exhibit an indifferent attitude toward career paths, which results in a lack of proper guidance.

Additionally, Luqman added:

“Not all universities ada dedicated program untuk fresh graduates learn ataupun dapat overview tentang career path apa yang sepatutnya mereka pergi (Line 234-237 p6, p7).

Essential for universities to provide a clear vision in career paths for students to acknowledge which path they should explore when graduating, the same goes for students themselves, who should realize the importance of planning their career paths and which path they should pursue depending on their preferences and own capabilities.

4.2.2.2.2 Subtheme 2: Limited market exposure

Knowing the need for a career without knowing the channel or market should be targeted, being the problem in matching the career with the industry or the world of work. Syahfirah stated:

"Kurang exposure pasal networking dan sebagainya lah. Networking sangat penting." (Line 170-171 p3).

Networking serves as essential for maintaining service quality, marketing oneself to others, and benefiting both the industry and people. Limiting exposure can reduce the potential of showcasing people's qualities and, thus, the chance of creating a significant opportunity.

Same view as Beatrice (R6) stated that:

"Lack of maklumat tentang pasaran" (Line 201-202 p5).

Beatrice stated the input by providing the example:

Contoh, kalau saya kurang information tentang contoh pasaran boutique, so I mungkin ada masalah tentang how to tell the customer" (Line 202-204 p5).

Clearly demonstrate how market trends and modern upgrades from the era's advancements affect how one approaches employment prospects.

Market exposure changes over time, updates are required to suit the world of work, and generating income efficiently depends on the needs of industry. Some university graduates do not consider this essential knowledge important to step into the career world.

4.2.2.2.3 Subtheme 3: Skill gap between university training and workplace needs

Since skills reflect the knowledge that should be used in the workplace, they have significance when applying for jobs. We still need to learn new talents to keep up with the latest advancements, though, as our existing skill set is still insufficient for industrial use. Beatrice stated:

"Academic training yang kita selalu belajar will not exactly be what the real-life work experience is. So this can result in a mismatch between skill and process." (Line 277-281, p7).

Some real-world tasks may need a completely different skill set than what we have been taught, or they may be completely outside of the skill set. It is important for keeping university students informed about industry demands so they are not startled by the changing skill set as a result of the growth of the era.

Not a new issue if relating university graduates with experience issues. Vivien shared:

"Untuk masuk ataupun bekerja dekat position tu kamu kena ada dalam 4 years experience ataupun 3 years experience bekerja. Tapi kebanyakan fresh graduan banyak yang tak ada experience tersebut." (Line 303-309 p7).

Even though a certificate is published and recognised by the university, industry prefers an experienced candidate to fill the position for one reason: university skills and workplace experience present different challenges, and employees believe it is not the same situation that should be approached.

4.2.2.3 Theme 3: Career shift

Career shift, somehow, the pressured turnover behavior in career, that influences people, mostly university graduates, to shift their profession in order to survive and get a job as fast as they can. This core theme consist (1) sub-theme, which is (i) forced career adaptation

4.2.2.3.1 Subtheme 1: Forced career adaptation

Forced career adaptation occurs when individuals must adjust to roles outside their field of study due to economic pressure, job scarcity, or unforeseen circumstances. Many graduates find themselves in positions where their academic qualifications do not align with the demands of their new jobs, requiring them to develop new skills and reorient their professional identity. Luqman stated that;

Mismatch tu menyukarkan diri I untuk because I'm starting from this salary... So, need to climb back tu sampai tahap, tapi sampai tahap kita kena adapt dengan benda ni." (, Line 428-432)

Luqman illustrated the situation of achieving or climbing to the same point requires adapting to unfamiliar or unaligned skills. Supposing this statement, Vija shared that;

"Slowly, akak dah setahun lebih kerja sejak graduate hari itu, dah setahun. So far dah adapt juga dengan beberapa torture baru dalam pekerjaan ni." (Line 235-239)

Vija stated that, in the period of time, adaptation was created from torture and experienced itself. Blood, sweat, and tears are achieved in order to fit ourselves into an unrelated field in order to put adaptation into ourselves. Both of them show that all the torment in forced skill adaptation can result in fitting into the job, but still leave a scar.

4.2.2.4 Theme 4: Job availability of geographic limitation

As a newborn employer or a want-to-be corporate slave for their entire life, university graduates always put geographic limitations on their preference, despite unstable economic conditions. Pursuing a career in an unfamiliar place and zone is usually avoided by some university graduates, despite predictions of the future, and questioning whether they could survive. This

core theme consists of two (2) subthemes, which are (i) limited regional job growth and (ii) preference for proximity.

4.2.2.4.1 Subtheme 1: Limited regional job growth

Limited regional job growth presents significant challenges for university graduates, particularly in areas where career opportunities are scarce. Vivien discusses how the lack of relevant job openings in Sarawak forces fresh graduates to reconsider their career choices and remain in their local area rather than seek employment elsewhere. She explains,

"Contohnya peluang pekerjaan dekat Sarawak itu sendiri, untuk kita punya field kurang, ok so dekat situ bila field tu kurang, peluang pekerjaan dalam field tu kurang itu... tak semua orang sanggup untuk pergi jauh kan, ..., so diorang memilih untuk bekerja di tempat yang senang untuk access ataupun apa, dalam kawasan yang sama je lah macam negeri Sarawak sendiri." (Line 329-339 p7)

This hesitation to relocate for employment is reinforced by Nadia (R4), who highlights how geographical factors, limited regional job vacancies, influence career mismatch. She notes,

"Macam counseling kalau Aiman nak tahu dekat Sarawak it may hard to find. Dia ada. Tapi kalau nak good career grow, kena explore tempat lain." (Line 329-332 p7).

Beyond individual concerns, regional job limitations are a common issue in many developing economies, where employment opportunities tend to cluster in metropolitan areas, leaving rural or smaller regions with fewer options. This imbalance means graduates often face the difficult choice of either relocating to urban centers for better prospects or accepting positions outside their field of study in their hometowns. For many, economic constraints, personal responsibilities, and limited professional networks further complicate the decision to move. Ultimately, the lack of regional job growth not only affects career satisfaction but also contributes to the broader issue of workforce misalignment, where graduates may struggle to find meaningful work that aligns with their qualifications.

4.2.2.4.2 Subtheme 2: Preference for proximity

Preference for job proximity is a significant factor influencing career decisions among graduates, often limiting their job opportunities. Luqman highlights this issue by explaining how fresh graduates tend to prioritize jobs near their homes, even at the cost of better career prospects. He states,

"Macam I pun sendiri pun I kalau boleh nak kerja dekat. Okay. Tapi when you are fresh grad, you pilih benda tu dia akan dia akan limitkan you punya opportunity sebab you akan end up working tempat yang berdekatan dengan rumah."(Line 396-400 p10,p11)

This preference can be driven by financial concerns, familiarity, and security, making relocation seem like a risky or unnecessary step.

Similarly, Vija reinforces this sentiment by emphasizing how personal responsibilities influence the decision to stay close to home. She mentions,

"Tak dapat travel jauh untuk cari opportunity sebab ya sebab lebih tanggungjawab and maybe value juga."(Line 319-320 p7)

Many graduates face obligations, such as family responsibilities, financial limitations, or a lack of confidence in transitioning to a new environment, which discourages them from seeking opportunities in different regions.

Beyond individual preferences, geographical limitations play a crucial role in shaping workforce mobility. In many areas, job opportunities are concentrated in urban centers, while smaller towns offer fewer specialized roles. Graduates often struggle to balance the potential career benefits of relocating with their immediate personal circumstances, leading to career mismatches where they settle for local jobs that do not align with their qualifications. This trend can contribute to workforce stagnation, where talent distribution is uneven across regions.

Ultimately, while proximity-based job selection provides immediate stability, it may hinder long-term career growth, leaving graduates confined to limited industries within their home regions rather than exploring broader opportunities that align with their aspirations.

4.2.3 Research question 3: The challenges faced by university graduates when seeking employment in a field that matches their qualifications

From research question 3, participants shared an overview of the challenges faced by university graduates when seeking employment in a field that matched their qualifications. Every participant faced various challenges when seeking a job. *Figure 3* shows themes and subthemes for the challenge of university graduates.

Theme	Subtheme
1. Employment Barrier	1.1 High saturation of fresh graduate
2. Skill Gap in Industry Adaptation	2.1 Practical experience deficiency
	2.2 Adaptation to industry demand
3. Emotional Pressure	3.1 Perceived limitations in low motivation
	3.2 Fear of risk-taking
4. Salary Expectation In Competitive Market	4.1 High expectation resulting in low employment

Figure 3 shows the themes and subthemes of challenges faced by university graduates when seeking employment in a field that matches their qualifications

4.2.3.1 Theme 1: Employment barrier

Employment barriers, core theme one, exist when the majority of employers choose experienced candidates, leaving overwhelmed fresh graduates seeking ideal jobs, leading them to choose unrelated fields of job, therefore leading to (i) high saturation of fresh graduates, thus it becomes a sub-theme of core theme.

4.2.3.1.1 Subtheme 1: High saturation of fresh graduates

Compounding this issue is the overwhelming saturation of fresh graduates, which further limits the availability of suitable positions. With an increasing number of degree holders entering the job market each year, competition has intensified. Nur Syahfirah highlights the severity of this issue, stating:

"Sebenarnya kita terlalu banyak graduan tetapi terlalu sikit peluang pekerjaan. Terutamanya dalam bidang kita sendiri." (Line 190-191 p4).

Also, Vija points out how the surplus of graduates leads to career mismatches, explaining:

"Ramai individu ataupun orang lain yang mereka tak dapat pekerjaan dalam bidang itu... mereka akan lead kepada mismatch career juga." (Line 372-374 p8)

Both respondents agree that because of the huge number of applications that organisations get, graduates are frequently left to fight for a few options. Many graduates are thus forced to work in professions that have little to do with their fields of study.

4.2.3.2 Theme 2: Skill gap in industry adaptation

Lack of industry readiness and practical experience is a common barrier that graduates confront, which limits their ability to find employment that matches their qualifications. Companies usually want people who can contribute straight away, but recent grads are generally less competitive in hiring procedures since they are not yet exposed to industry-specific technologies, procedures, and expectations. This core theme contains two sub-themes: (i) practical experiences deficiency, and (ii) adaptation to industry demand.

4.2.3.2.1 Subtheme 1: Practical experiences deficiency

Graduates are frequently underprepared for the practical needs of their business, since typical academic programs emphasise theoretical knowledge rather than hands-on training. Beatrice explains this difficulty by saying:

"We lack of practical experience. Kita susah mok deal with our work lah." (Line 390-391 p9)

The statement captures how graduates often find it difficult to make the switch from university to real-world employment settings. For many positions, theoretical knowledge alone is insufficient, and recent graduates may find it difficult to do industry-specific responsibilities effectively without practical skills. The statement highlights the gap between industry expectations and education by expressing frustration and uncertainty in managing professional obligations.

Vija echoes this concern, noting employers' expectations for prior experience:

"Bila kita jadi kerja nanti, kita akan sentiasa found the requirement kerja tu at least experience, so tak cakup yang fresh graduate ni tak dapat kerja, the susah cari kerja is the reality lah." (Line 393-396 p9).

It takes ongoing training, improvement of skills, and an eagerness to develop professionally to meet the needs of the industry. Graduates improve their employability and ensure long-term job success by proactively matching their abilities with industry standards. Respondent acknowledges the widespread difficulty fresh graduates face when searching for jobs. The phrase conveys how challenging it is for new entrants to secure employment without prior industry experience. Employers often prefer candidates who have already worked in similar roles to minimize training costs, leaving fresh graduates in a disadvantaged position.

4.2.3.2.2 Subtheme 2: Adaptation to industry demand

In order to be competitive in the quickly changing employment market of today, graduates must constantly adjust to industry needs. Employers are looking for experts who can stay up to date with new developments, evolving business trends, and evolving employer requirements. Many recent graduates find it challenging to make the connection between their academic credentials and the abilities needed in practical work contexts, which makes it challenging for them to land positions that fit their areas of competence. Four respondents emphasised how crucial flexibility is to fulfilling industry standards and landing a steady job. Nadia acknowledges the necessity of adapting to industry shifts:

"Menjadi satu cabaran besar kita kena adapt dengan industri yang berkembang dan kita nak dibayar setimpal dengan degree yang kita ada." (Line 467-469 p10)

This statement reflects the challenge graduates face in ensuring their qualifications are relevant to industry demands. As businesses evolve, graduates must refine their skills to align with emerging trends and justify their compensation expectations. The phrase of a big challenge

that the respondent stated emphasizes that adaptation is essential, not optional, for professional success.

Moreover, Beatrice discusses the increasing skill requirements expected by employers:

"Kaitan dengan job market lah, which is you have to know the skill required. Mean we have to always up to date with the skill, which is industry also have to increasing demanding in new skill, to handle technology and changing." (Line 434-437 p10).

This quote highlights the growing expectation for graduates to stay informed about industry trends and acquire relevant technical competencies. Employers demand candidates who can navigate technological disruptions, digital transformations, and industry innovations to contribute effectively to their organizations.

Additionally, Mimi touches on the importance of proactive learning and mentorship to support industry adaptation:

"Dia orang banyak di push buat program ni program tu oleh yang lebih berpengalaman lah tapi ada yang guide, ada yang memang berkena cari sendiri." (Line 334-336 p10)

This statement highlights how some graduates actively seek professional development opportunities, while others depend on structured mentorship to bridge the adaptation gap. The phrase *self-discovery for sources of information* suggests that successful adaptation requires both individual initiative and external support from industry experts.

It can be concluded, those respondents agree that the view of adapting to the ever-evolving demands of the job market is a critical factor for graduate employability. As industries continue to shift in response to technological advancements and market trends, graduates must go beyond academic credentials and demonstrate adaptability, continuous learning, and relevant skills. The insights shared by Nadia, Beatrice, and Mimi reveal that successful employment outcomes rely not only on qualifications but also on a graduate's willingness to evolve, seek mentorship, and remain aligned with industry expectations. Therefore, flexibility, upskilling, and

proactive engagement with industry developments are essential for achieving career stability and growth in today's competitive landscape.

4.2.3.3 Theme 3: Emotional pressure

Graduates entering the industry frequently feel emotional pressure, especially when they are afraid of their future advancement. This worry is a result of self-doubt, social pressures, and confusion regarding professional expectations. Many people are hesitant to pursue professional progression because they are worried about their capacity to satisfy industry needs, employment stability, and taking risks. This core theme consists two subthemes (i) perceived limitations in low motivation, and (ii) fear of risk-taking.

4.2.3.3.1 Subtheme 1: Perceived limitation in low motivation

The emotional burden of career progression can lead graduates to feel hesitant and demotivated, preventing them from exploring new opportunities. Nadia describes how this pressure influences their work motivation:

"Impact ke atas motivasi saya untuk bekerja." (Line 439-440 p9)

This statement suggests that fear of career progression can suppress ambition, causing individuals to question their ability to succeed. When motivation declines, graduates may struggle to take initiative, delaying their entry into professional roles or settling for jobs below their qualifications.

Along with, Beatrice highlights the effects of self-doubt:

"Lack of confident la. Terlalu kerap kurang percaya pada diri." (Line 474-475 p11)

Graduates who lack confidence often hesitate to apply for competitive positions or negotiate career growth opportunities. Less belief in ourselves indicates deep-seated uncertainty, making it difficult for individuals to overcome internal barriers and pursue professional success.

In summary, emotional challenges such as low motivation and self-doubt significantly affect graduates' ability to navigate their career paths effectively. Nadia's and Beatrice's reflections reveal how psychological barriers—like pressure, fear of failure, and lack of self-confidence—can hinder graduates from seizing opportunities or striving for roles that match their

qualifications. Without adequate emotional resilience, even well-prepared individuals may struggle to transition into the workforce, emphasizing the need for mental and emotional support alongside skill development in career readiness initiatives.

4.2.3.3.2 Subtheme 2: Fear of risk-taking

Many graduates feel pressured to choose traditional career paths over entrepreneurial ventures due to societal expectations and financial security concerns. Syahfirah (R1) describes this fear:

"Kalau kita kerja kerajaan, barulah benda itu dipanggil pekerjaan. Kalau kita kerja swasta, benda itu macam masih lagi orang ambil macam enteng kan. Kita tidak berani untuk membuka bisnes." (Line 216-219 p5)

This statement reflects how external influences shape career preferences, discouraging graduates from exploring alternatives such as business ownership. Self-limiting fear underscores the reluctance to embrace career risks, leading to stagnation instead of progression.

Next, Nadia addresses the challenge of adapting to industry expectations:

"Menjadi satu cabaran besar kita kena adapt dengan industri yang berkembang dan kita nak dibayar setimpal dengan degree yang kita ada." (Line 467-469 p10)

The big challenge mentioned by the respondent shows how daunting career adaptation can be for graduates. Many individuals fear that their degree may not guarantee appropriate compensation, creating additional stress about financial stability and professional growth.

Additionally, Luqman elaborates on how career progression can impact emotional well-being:

"the motivation maksudnya dia dia akan buat kita self-esteem turun lah sebab dia tahu dia kena compete" (Line 609-610 p16)

This quote reveals that prolonged job searches and career instability contribute to feelings of overwhelming stress, leading to burnout or loss of confidence. When graduates struggle to secure employment, emotional distress can intensify, affecting self-esteem and confidence in their abilities.

4.3.2.4 Theme 4: Salary expectation in the competitive market

Salary expectations always become key for graduates to find a suitable job, following their preferences and individual interests; therefore, graduates always put high expectations on the competitive market trend. This core theme contains one subtheme (i), high expectations resulting in low employment.

4.3.2.4.1 High expectation resulting in low employment

Several respondents highlighted how unrealistic salary expectations contribute to employment struggles. Graduates face difficulties competing against experienced professionals who have adjusted their expected wages to stay relevant in the job market. Luqman describes this dilemma: *"You kena lower your expectation in terms of salary first... orang yang experience ni now are willing to go down the price."* (Line 583-587 p15)

This quote reflects the reality that salary competition has become increasingly challenging. While graduates may expect higher salaries based on their qualifications, experienced workers offer employers more immediate productivity at lower costs. This forces fresh graduates to reconsider their financial expectations to improve their chances of securing employment.

Additionally, Beatrice stated that:

"If you have higher expectation, employers must increase their requirement also, for available position. And then they will expecting you have more experience. And then you have additional certification and this can be particularly challenging lah, for the graduate who is make in qualification, and maybe they were overlook on the role." (Line 406-411 p9,p10)

Those phrase emphasises how companies' increasing demands frequently conflict with graduates' high aspirations for employment. Many recent graduates believe their degrees would get them jobs, but when choosing applicants, businesses are more picky and frequently want people with a lot of experience or other credentials. As a result, graduates hoping for greater pay or certain roles may find it difficult to find work since employers value real-world experience above academic credentials.

4.2.4 Research question 4: The effects of mismatched careers on career development in job satisfaction among university graduates

From research question 4, participants shared their perspective on the effect of a mismatched career on career development in job satisfaction among university graduates. Every participant faced the effect of a mismatched career and different information already gathered. *Figure 4* shows themes and subthemes for the effect of a mismatched career.

Theme	Subtheme
1. Effect on skill	1.1 Skill decay
2. Personality development	2.1 Apathy
	2.2 Emotional exhaustion
	2.3 Resilience in mismatched career
3. Future career decision	3.1 Career transition
	3.2 Uncertainty in career path

Figure 4 shows the themes and subthemes for the effect of a mismatched career on career development in job satisfaction among university graduates.

4.2.4.1 Theme 1: Effect on skill

A mismatched career would affect the skill and knowledge about a specific field that we spend time to learn before university graduates jump into a new and unfamiliar field, or known as a mismatched career. This theme discusses the effect of the existence of skills that university graduates gain during their education. In this theme contain one subtheme which is (i) skill decay.

4.2.4.1.1 Subtheme 1: Skill decay

When graduates do not use the skills that they learn during their degree, it leads to skill decay and makes it forgotten, hard to use them again when graduates get a job related to the course taken, thus, disturbing the productivity of work. Vivien stated that:

“even sekarang pun akak dah rasa dah saya punya skill ataupun ability tu dah semakin terhakis. Sebab kita tak practise”(Line 515-516 p11).

She expressed a sense of skill erosion, attributed to a lack of consistent practice. It reflects on the personal awareness and conveys a deep concern about the progressive decline of competencies, particularly those that were once possessed with confidence. Same with another respondent, Vija shared that:

“so kita dapat bekerja di bidang yang lama means kita tak guna skill tu hari-hari ok so skill kita maybe semakin berkurang dalam bidang kita, dalam bidang study kita dulu so untuk kembali kepada bidang tu sangat susah jadi tidak mustahil tapi agak susah”(Line 529-532 p12).

Vija highlights a deep awareness of the erosion of skills that occurs when there is a misalignment between one’s educational background and current job role. Vija articulates that not using specific academic or professional skills on a daily basis results in a gradual decline of proficiency. This leads to a situation where returning to the original field of study or specialization becomes increasingly difficult, by not impossible, but quite difficult. The comment brings attention to the long-term consequences of skill non-utilization, a phenomenon often referred to as deskilling or skill atrophy in workforce literature.

This awareness of competency decay not only highlights the functional aspect of skill erosion but also hints at the emotional and psychological struggle associated with re-entering a previously mastered field. The respondent’s experience illustrates a disconnect between academic preparation and job application, which results in diminished confidence, perceived capability gaps, and perhaps a hesitation to reintegrate into one’s trained profession.

Such a situation is especially common among graduates who enter employment in unrelated fields due to market demands, socioeconomic constraints, or lack of immediate opportunities. Over time, this misalignment between qualifications and job tasks can lead to underutilization of talents, professional stagnation, and eventually, reduced career satisfaction or advancement prospects.

4.2.4.2 Theme 2: Personality development

Mismatched careers develop some sort of personality depending on how they way of handling crises. Personal development results in many outcomes that depend on how the university graduate take it and apply it in their job. The outcome of a mismatched career can vary depending on the individual's journey and wisdom. This core theme consists of three subthemes which are, (i) apathy, (ii) emotional exhaustion, and (iii) resilience in mismatched career.

4.2.4.2.1 Subtheme 1: Apathy

Apathy or low motivation is called as effect of a mismatched career, regarding passion and interest in the work. Unwillingness always results in low motivation and influences our personality development and career outcomes. Nur Syahfirah highlights that willingness can also contribute to influencing work productivity:

“May be daripada aspek willingness untuk datang kerja. Kita tak ada semangat untuk datang kerja”(Line 313-314 p7)

Even if you are forced to take any available job, willingness can help to tackle the job. Low motivation comes from a low spirit in doing something that originates from a forced situation. Crucial for graduates to enjoy and create a willingness for a career can alter the work productivity, resulting better future. Even Luqman said that:

“do something you don't enjoy dia akan ... you tak put your mind into the work so when you don't put your mind into the work of course performance you akan drop ... you akan buat benda tu setakat yang perlu je lah” (Line 743-752 p19).

Luqman offers a clear illustration of motivational decline resulting from job-role misalignment and lack of personal engagement. The participant emphasizes how working in a role that is neither enjoyable nor aligned with one's interests or expertise can be mentally exhausting. This emotional fatigue leads to reduced cognitive investment in the work, resulting in declining performance and minimal effort, only enough to meet the bare minimum expectations.

The statement highlights a significant theme in occupational psychology: when individuals are placed in unfulfilling or unfamiliar job roles, they often experience amotivation, a state where internal drive is absent. The phrase *of just do it for the paycheck*, reflects a transactional mindset that emerges when intrinsic motivation is lacking. In such cases, employees tend to mentally disengage, which inevitably affects job performance, learning, and long-term career development.

Furthermore, this quote touches on the psychological cost of misalignment between one's job and personal or professional identity. It suggests a cycle where dissatisfaction leads to disengagement, which then results in underperformance, further eroding both confidence and potential for growth.

The insights from this participant are valuable in understanding how emotional disconnection from work can contribute not just to lower productivity but also to long-term stagnation and career dissatisfaction, especially among graduates placed in roles outside their area of study or interest.

4.2.4.2.2.Subtheme 2: Emotional exhaustion

Excessive emotional effect can result in emotional exhaustion, cause burnout, pressure, and even other effects can be stimulated from emotional exhaustion. Focusing on finding job satisfaction would drag the emotional state and change personality development. Beatrice shared that:

“okay dari segi mental health, career mismatch also can increase level of depression and anxiety because it can lead to a sense of being out of place and lacking control lah, and then, but at the same time it also can be contributing to psychological distress”(Line 585-589 p13)

This quote highlights how career mismatch may lead to feelings of disconnection, low autonomy, and emotional discomfort, which in turn contribute to psychological distress. The participant's reflection illustrates that being in a job that does not align with one's skills or aspirations can increase vulnerability to mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety. The sense of being out of place and lacking control reflects a deeper emotional strain that results from

ongoing dissatisfaction, lack of fulfillment, and a weakened sense of professional identity. This underscores the broader implications of career misalignment on emotional well-being and the importance of person–job fit in sustaining mental health.

Same view with Vija, shared that:

“Psikologi mungkin salah satu yang common adalah stress lah bila kita memasuki sesuatu kerjaya yang ataupun kerja yang kita suka kita tak minat dan sebagainya kalau dalam mental health maybe stress pun akan lead kalau kita tak cukup kan maybe lead kepada mental health yang tak bagus juga or even worse kan boleh kena depression dan sebagainya di tempat kerja”
(Line 468-473 p11)

This statement underscores how working in a job that lacks personal interest or passion can lead to persistent stress. The participant acknowledges that such stress, when prolonged or left unmanaged, can escalate into more serious mental health issues such as depression. The mention of mental health deterioration and potential workplace-related depression highlights the psychological burden of career mismatch. The experience of being in an unfulfilling role may diminish emotional resilience, lower motivation, and reduce overall well-being, creating a harmful cycle that affects both personal functioning and work performance. This illustrates how career misalignment is not only a professional concern but also a serious psychological risk factor that can impair an individual’s mental health over time.

4.2.4.2.3 Subtheme 3: Resilience in a mismatched career

Moreover, a mismatched career also brings a good side in personality development, where it builds resilience for university graduates in gaining experience from an unrelated field. Nadia stated that:

“it make me more resilient and can work under pressure lah so the career mismatch may influence my job performance and productivity when I try to survive and I try to aa implement a good and positive mental ,”(Line 659-662 p14)

She notes that the experience of career mismatch has made them more resilient and capable of working under pressure, although it may still negatively affect their job performance and productivity. They emphasize efforts to survive and maintain a good and positive mental perspective in personality development despite the mismatch.

Beatrice also shared her view about resilience:

“they can accept aa stress, ...Jadinya, lebih stress, nya lebih aa nya lebih power gik lah, nya lebih strong lah” (Line 594-598 p14)

This statement highlights the role of acceptance in managing stress. Beatrice suggests that individuals who are able to accept difficult or dissatisfying situations tend to maintain stable mental health and even become more powerful or stronger when facing increasing stress.

It emphasizes that the ability to accept stress and unfavorable situations contributes to stronger mental health and resilience. Even when things are not satisfactory or don't go as expected, acceptance helps maintain mental well-being, making the individual mentally stronger under pressure.

4.2.4.3 Theme 3: Future career decision

Future plan would be topic should be discuss topics related to mismatch. Some graduates might or might not have the planning to turn back to the original knowledge uses and utilise the skill in

the correct channel with full capacity. This theme contains two subthemes, which are (i) career transition, discussing the will to get back on track, and (ii) uncertainty in career path

4.2.4.3.1 Subtheme 1: Career transition

A career transition is a plan for the future, a way to get back on track, or a job that relates to the skills. For the majority of university graduates, their future plans involve making the most of their education and applying it in a way that aligns with their interests and passions. Vivien shared:

“memang akak plan untuk long term punya plan ini planning lah. Akak memang nak masuk balik ke bidang consulting after these 2 years” (Line 603-605 p13)

This statement shows that the effort and alignment with the job will be sought, and the advantages of skill-building and utilizing it with the correct path. This shows that, Vivien is determined to follow the original plan of her career, aligning with her passion and interests.

Mimi has the same view on:

“akak tak tak stay maksudnya macam kalau ada dalam bidang counselling akak ambil counselling” (Line 409-410 p12)

She states that she does not remain in unrelated fields and prefers to stay within their area of expertise, indicating a clear commitment. This reflects the respondent's dedication to working in the counselling field. Rather than shifting to unrelated areas, the respondent chooses to stay aligned with her professional background, emphasizing career consistency and a strong preference for relevant roles.

Both statements show the intention of working in the related field because of the will to take the related job, align with passion, and result in job satisfaction for individuals.

4.2.4.3.2 Subtheme 2: Uncertainty in career path

People who confront mismatches between their educational background and current job frequently suffer uncertainty in their job development. This frequently results in uncertainty, hesitancy when making future plans, and worries regarding the long-term applicability of their learnt abilities. Vija stated that:

“Akak tak tahu plan kedepan career macam mana yang panjang sebab dalam bidang ni pun akak banyak benda yang akak tak faham tapi makin lama kita untuk kembali kepada bidang kita tu susah.” (Line 522-525 p11).

The respondent indicates doubt and confusion regarding long-term career planning as a result of working outside of her field of competence. Despite having experience in a certain profession, she acknowledges that she does not completely comprehend her present function. Returning to her native field gets harder and harder with time. The answer draws attention to a prevalent worry among recent graduates: that skill atrophy from extended separation from one's specialised area might make readmission into the field more difficult.

Next, Nadia reflects on temporary, adaptive approach to career uncertainty:

“Bolehkah saya katakan untuk masa sekarang saya tak ada decision sebab my plan is that I want to make a good performance or a good resume aa as for moment.” (Line 674-677 p14).

The respondent acknowledges a lack of concrete decisions for the future but focuses on building a strong professional record in the present. The emphasis on good performance and a good resume suggests a strategic mindset that instead of aiming for long-term clarity, Nadia prioritizes immediate achievements that can open future opportunities. This approach demonstrates resilience and the use of short-term goals to manage career ambiguity.

Both views highlight the complex emotional and professional challenges individuals face when navigating unclear career paths. While one respondent is concerned about skill degradation and difficulty returning to her field, the other adopts a performance-based mindset to strengthen her prospects. These narratives underscore the need for better career support systems for individuals facing mismatches between education and employment.

4.3 Summary

Career mismatches among graduates stem from various factors, shaping their professional journeys and long-term satisfaction. Many graduates make career decisions based on family influence, financial constraints, personal passion, and salary expectations. However, unpredictable job markets, commitment challenges, and parental expectations often push them into roles outside their field of study.

Economic pressures force graduates to prioritize financial stability over alignment with their qualifications, leading to urgent career adaptations. Universities provide limited career guidance, restricting students' exposure to industry demands and reinforcing skill gaps between academic training and workplace needs. Geographic preferences further limit employment prospects, as graduates often seek jobs close to home.

Intense competition among fresh graduates results in employment barriers, making it difficult to secure positions directly related to their degrees. The disconnect between industry expectations and university training creates further obstacles, requiring graduates to develop practical experience and adaptability. Emotional stress, fear of failure, and uncertainty about career progression contribute to low motivation and hinder professional confidence.

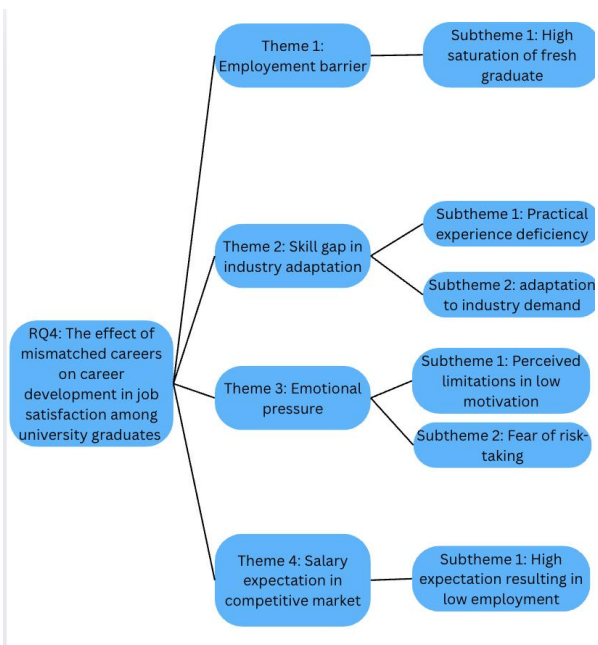
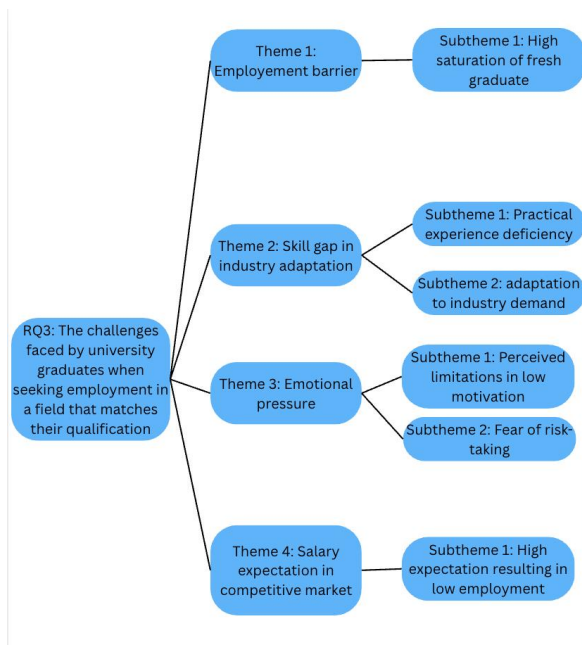
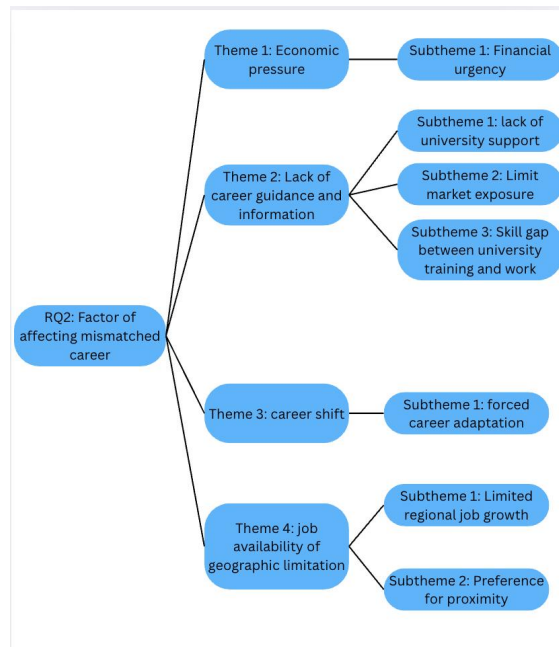
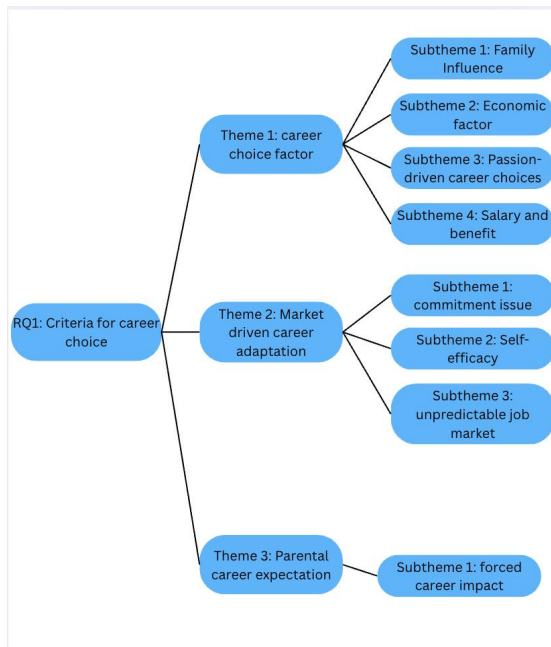
Many struggle with skill decay when their jobs do not allow them to use their academic knowledge, while others experience emotional exhaustion due to dissatisfaction with their roles. Despite these challenges, some graduates develop resilience, using their mismatched careers as opportunities for personal growth. Career uncertainty remains prevalent, with some actively planning transitions back to their field, while others feel lost about their professional future.

Addressing career mismatches requires a more comprehensive approach, including better university support, improved industry alignment, and enhanced adaptability in workforce planning. Without these changes, mismatched careers will continue to affect skill retention, job satisfaction, and long-term career development. In the next chapter will discuss the findings

based on informed counselling practice, theory proven and institutional policies, and future research on the intersection between mismatched careers and university graduates.

4.4 Illustration of themes and subthemes for research questions

Researchers put the mind-mapping of themes and sub-themes for every research question as an overall overview, which can be easier and attractive for the reader to explore more about this research.



Chapter 5

Introduction

This chapter focused on finding on four primary areas: (1) criteria in career decision, (2) factors affecting mismatched careers, (3) challenges for university graduates when seeking employment with matched qualifications, and (4) the effect of mismatched careers on career development in job satisfaction among university graduates. Recommendations are preserved as the research has been conducted, and the data have already been collected, analysed and, discussed.

Key findings

Although there is limited literature specifically on university graduates experiencing career mismatch, extensive research exists on the causes of professional misalignment, the challenges faced by individuals in mismatched roles, and the barriers to career transitions. Additionally, literature is available on the requirements needed, employability skills in order by which employees contribute to find a job. This research study sought to explore the perceptions and perceived levels of readiness of career counselors-in-training working with graduates navigating career mismatch. This section will include a discussion of each theme and subtheme presented in the data analysis in relation to the existing literature.

5.1 Criteria of career choice

Many factors influence the criteria for career choice, depending on personal preferences, external factors, and uncontrollable factors based on the environment and requirements. Previous studies highlight about requirement for experience in the workplace, where it becomes the main problem for fresh graduates, and they find it difficult to jump into the world of work. So in this study, researchers find more criteria that have been explored and relate to the theory application, Work of Adjustment Theory and Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making (SLTCDM). There are many factors, such as career choice factor consists of sub-factors, (i) family influence, (ii) economic factor, (iii) passion-driven career choices, and (iv) salary and benefits.

5.1.1 Career choice factor

The first major theme that emerged from the analysis relates to the factors influencing career choices among graduates. Findings from internal and external determinants that shaped their initial career decisions. These were categorized into four subthemes: family influence, economic factors, passion-driven choices, and salary and benefits.

5.1.1.1 Family influence

Family influence was found to be one of the strongest guiding forces in career decision-making. Findings show many graduates reported that their choices were shaped by family expectations or traditions, reflecting the collective cultural values common in Malaysian society. This aligns with the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (SLTCDM), which emphasizes the influence of significant others, observational learning, and environmental conditions in shaping career preferences. In this context, family members often served as role models or decision-makers, indirectly guiding the participants' perceptions of what constitutes a “suitable” or “respectable” career (Mohd Yunus et al., 2024).

5.1.1.2 Economic factor

Economic factors also emerged as a central influence. The financial standing the stability of families, as well as the need for economic stability post-graduation, often led them to prioritize job security over alignment with their academic training (Lagunay et al., 2024). This pragmatic approach to career choice reflects a survival-based mindset driven by socioeconomic constraints (Asifa Afrin Jamim et al., 2024).

5.1.1.3 Passion-driven career choices

Passion-driven career choices were an ideal determinant, although often compromised in reality (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). While personal interest and intrinsic motivation were acknowledged as significant, they were frequently overridden by financial or familial considerations. Thus, Suman (2025) stated that, in order to improve work completion, academic achievement, and productivity, motivation is essential. It acts as a motivating factor that keeps people devoted to their objectives and focused. Both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards have a big impact on motivation levels because

they give people a sense of achievement and reward good behaviour (Bardach & Murayama, 2024). Maintaining continuous performance requires a constant dose of inspiration since low motivation can result in procrastination and lower production.

5.1.1.4 Salary and benefit

Salary and benefits were pragmatic determinants that influenced decision-making. Findings show the often selected roles that promised better financial compensation or long-term security, even if they did not align with their initial field of study. This pattern supports the Work Adjustment Theory (WAT), which suggests that individuals seek work environments that meet their needs and values. When a match is not possible, they often compromise their preferences to achieve financial or practical alignment with their environment (Eggerth, 2008).

5.1.2 Market-Driven Career Adaptation

The second theme explores how graduates adapt to a competitive and often unpredictable job market. This theme includes three subthemes: commitment issues, self-efficacy, and unpredictable job market conditions.

5.1.2.1 Commitment issue

Commitment issues arose as findings analyzed how the need to meet financial obligations, such as supporting family or repaying student loans, influenced their willingness to accept any available job, even if it was mismatched with their degree. When it comes to commitment, studies show that no one can truly avoid it. In today's world, commitment is essential for survival, and it often requires sacrifice to keep moving forward in life (Modise, 2023). This form of adaptation demonstrates behavioral flexibility, often seen in response to immediate life demands (Bonanno et al., 2023).

5.1.2.2 Self-efficacy

Bernales-Turpo et al. (2022) reported that self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations, was a critical factor in how participants navigated their career transitions. Those with higher self-efficacy reported being more proactive in seeking out opportunities

beyond their academic field. This reflects a key component of SLTCDM, which posits that personal beliefs and outcome expectations heavily influence career behavior (George, 2024). Graduates with a stronger belief in their capabilities were more likely to redefine their career goals and adjust effectively (Pham et al., 2024; Zhao & Ma, 2025).

5.1.2.3 Unpredictable job market

Unpredictable job market conditions were another constraint, forcing graduates to shift directions based on labor market demands rather than personal or academic alignment (Tomlinson, 2012; Othman et al., 2023). This supports the Work Adjustment Theory, which suggests that when the work environment does not meet an individual's preferences, they either adjust to the environment or seek a better fit (Vleugels et al., 2022). The findings in this study opted to adapt rather than resist the misalignment, indicating a level of flexibility and resilience in the face of labor market volatility.

5.1.3 Parental career expectation

The third theme focuses on the role of parental career expectations, particularly the forced career impact subtheme. Findings show compelled to follow career paths that their parents had predetermined. These expectations often stemmed from traditional notions of job prestige and stability, such as favoring roles in medicine, law, education, or civil service.

5.1.3.1 Forced career impact

Findings show varying degrees of internal conflict as university graduate navigated their parents' expectations versus their own aspirations. This internal conflict often led to mismatched careers, with some individuals later transitioning away from those imposed career paths (Chen & Reay, 2020). SLTCDM helps explain this phenomenon, as it emphasizes the powerful influence of family modeling and reinforcement in shaping early career decisions (Nguyen, 2024). However, when the imposed expectations do not align with an individual's interests or personality, dissatisfaction and misalignment often follow.

In terms of Work Adjustment Theory, Hesketh et al. (1992), this theme illustrates the tension between individual satisfaction and external demands. While graduates initially complied with parental expectations (satisfactoriness), many experienced dissatisfaction and ultimately

questioned the long-term sustainability of their career alignment (Tatar, 2020). This tension between external pressures and internal needs is central to understanding maladjustment in the workplace.

5.2 Factors of affecting mismatched careers

Findings show the factors affecting mismatched careers, which depend on their personal preferences, external influences, and uncontrollable environmental conditions. Previous studies have highlighted skill employability as a key factor contributing to unemployment among fresh graduates, who often struggle to enter the workforce due to a lack of practical experience. In this study, researchers identify additional factors mentioned by participants and connect them to relevant theoretical frameworks

5.2.1 Economic pressure

Economic instability and the urgency of financial demands emerged as central drivers of career mismatch among the graduates. This theme includes four subthemes: financial urgency, lack of university support, limited market exposure, and skill gaps between university training and industry needs.

5.2.1.1 Financial urgency

Financial urgency emerged as a dominant subtheme, heavily influencing graduates' employment decisions post-graduation. Many expressed an immediate need to secure a source of income, often prioritizing financial stability over career aspirations or alignment with their academic qualifications (Barhate & Dirani, 2021). This necessity was frequently driven by personal or family financial obligations, including supporting dependents, repaying student loans, or managing living expenses (Jabbari et al., 2023).

As a result, graduates were compelled to accept jobs outside their field of study, viewing employment as a means of survival rather than a step toward professional fulfillment (Schneider, 2018). The weight of financial responsibilities often led them to lower their career expectations, emphasizing immediate earning potential rather than long-term job satisfaction (Jabbari et al.,

2023; This pattern reflects broader societal economic pressures, where the urgency to meet financial needs supersedes the pursuit of personal or professional alignment.

From the perspective of Work Adjustment Theory, this scenario highlights the process of adjustment in response to external constraints. According to Biscontini (2024), individuals entering the workforce may adapt to less-than-ideal work environments to satisfy pressing financial needs. They exhibit reactive adaptability, modifying expectations and behaviors to fit available job opportunities rather than seeking roles that match their personal values or occupational interests (Zhang et al., 2019). This trade-off underscores a shift from idealistic career planning to pragmatic employment choices, where survival-oriented decision-making takes precedence over intrinsic job satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2019; Ardel & Sharma, 2021).

In some cases, this financial urgency leads to career mismatches, potentially resulting in decreased long-term engagement and professional fulfillment. However, others may develop resilience and strategic adaptability, using initial mismatched roles as stepping stones to later career advancements or opportunities that better align with their skills and interests.

5.2.1.2 Lack of university support

Many graduates faced challenges due to inadequate university career support. Institutions often failed to provide career guidance, internships, and real-world exposure, leaving students unsure about their employment prospects (Farao & Marieta du Plessis, 2024). Without structured career services, graduates lacked awareness of career options and struggled to make informed decisions. The absence of mentorship and industry connections further limited their ability to navigate professional pathways effectively (Nunan et al., 2023). Many students entered the workforce feeling unprepared and disconnected from their academic training (Matabane et al., 2024).

This issue aligns with Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making. Career choices are shaped by access to information, role models, and guided learning experiences (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012). Without exposure to diverse career possibilities, students relied on trial-and-error approaches rather than intentional planning. Limited industry engagement prevented them from developing confidence in their career aspirations (Wardiansyah et al., 2024).

The gap in university support reflects a systemic issue where academic institutions prioritize education but neglect career preparedness. Graduates who lacked career-related learning opportunities often faced uncertainty in securing meaningful employment (Kwok, 2018).

5.2.1.3 Limited market exposure

Limited market exposure further exacerbated the challenges faced by graduates, as they lacked awareness of current labor market trends and emerging career fields. Many graduates had little to no interaction with industry professionals during their studies, restricting their ability to gain firsthand insights into evolving job demands. The absence of networking opportunities further hindered career awareness, preventing students from establishing connections that could have facilitated informed career decisions (Isabirye et al., 2024).

According to Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (SLTCDM), environmental exposure plays a critical role in shaping career choices (Mohd Yunus et al., 2024). When students have limited access to industry engagement, professional mentorship, or real-world job experiences, their career decision-making is based on incomplete information. Such restrictions in learning opportunities increase the likelihood of career mismatch, as graduates often make career choices without a full understanding of job requirements, workplace expectations, or potential (Keng & Chang, 2023)

The lack of structured market exposure reflects broader gaps in career preparedness within higher education institutions. Without initiatives that connect students to industry professionals, career fairs, and experiential learning, graduates struggle to develop a clear vision for their professional paths (Spanjaard et al., 2018). These challenges underscore the importance of integrating comprehensive career services into university curricula to ensure students are equipped with relevant industry insights before entering the workforce.

5.2.1.4 Skill gaps between university training and workplace demands

Skill gaps between university training and workplace demands significantly affected graduates' employment outcomes. Many found that the theoretical knowledge acquired during their education did not align with the practical skills required in industry, creating barriers to competitiveness in the job market (Sarin, 2019). This discrepancy made it difficult for them to secure roles that matched their qualifications, forcing some to accept positions for which they were either overqualified or underprepared. Employers often prioritized candidates with hands-on experience, leaving recent graduates at a disadvantage (Hoque et al., 2023).

From the perspective of previous studies related to Work Adjustment Theory, this mismatch highlights the poor correspondence between an individual's capabilities and the reinforcers provided by the job environment (Lyons et al., 2014). When graduates enter workplaces that do not adequately support their skill development, they experience lower satisfaction and reduced performance outcomes. This misalignment can lead to early career frustration, diminished motivation, and increased turnover rates as individuals struggle to adapt to roles that do not fully utilize their competencies or align with their expectations (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2024).

The gap between academic instruction and industry requirements underscores the need for universities to integrate more experiential learning, internships, and industry collaborations into their curriculum. Bridging this divide would help students develop the practical skills necessary for workforce readiness, reducing the likelihood of career mismatch and enhancing long-term job satisfaction.

5.2.2 Career shift

The second core theme, career shift, reflects how participants were often compelled to transition into unrelated fields as a result of systemic constraints. The key subtheme under this category is forced career adaptation.

5.2.2.1 Forced career adaptation

Graduates frequently accepted employment opportunities in sectors unrelated to their academic training due to limited job openings in their fields (Salas-Velasco, 2021). This career shift was often a matter of necessity rather than choice. In these cases, career decisions were shaped by external reinforcements rather than intrinsic interests or long-term goals. As explained by SLTCDM, career behavior is influenced by situational learning and reinforcement contingencies. When opportunities in the preferred domain are absent, individuals are conditioned to adapt to whatever is available in their environment (Mohd Yunus et al., 2024; Truyens, 2019).

From the Work Adjustment Theory perspective, such transitions indicate a low level of congruence between the individual's aspirations and the available occupational reinforcers (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Eggerth, 2008). Although some findings demonstrated adaptability, the resulting positions often lacked compatibility with their needs for achievement, interest alignment, or growth, contributing to dissatisfaction and low long-term engagement.

5.2.3 Job availability of geographic limitation

The third theme addresses how geographic constraints restrict access to career-aligned opportunities, especially for graduates in rural or less economically developed regions. This theme comprises two subthemes: limited regional job growth and preference for proximity.

5.2.3.1 Limited regional job growth

Limited regional job growth posed significant challenges for graduates from non-urban areas, as specialized career opportunities related to their academic training were scarce in their home regions (Othman et al., 2023). Findings show that many graduates were forced to choose between relocating to metropolitan areas in search of relevant employment or accepting local jobs that did not align with their qualifications. However, relocation was often restricted by financial limitations, family obligations, and unfamiliarity with urban environments, making the transition difficult (Urrila et al., 2025).

This phenomenon aligns with Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (SLTCDM), which emphasizes the crucial role of environmental context in shaping career

behavior (Mohd Yunus et al., 2024). When graduates face constrained local job markets, their decision-making horizons become narrower, leading to necessary compromises. A lack of accessible opportunities limits exposure to diverse career paths, increasing the likelihood of individuals settling for roles that do not match their professional aspirations or skill sets (Kho et al., 2024).

The scarcity of specialized jobs in non-urban areas reflects broader structural economic disparities, where workforce opportunities remain concentrated in metropolitan centers. Without targeted interventions such as regional job development programs, remote work initiatives, and university-industry partnerships, graduates from these areas may continue to experience difficulties in securing meaningful employment (**Poh et al., 2024**). Addressing this imbalance requires a concerted effort to expand career opportunities beyond urban centers, ensuring that graduates are not forced to choose between misaligned jobs or relocating under challenging circumstances (Jackson et al., 2024).

5.2.3.2 Preference for proximity

Preference for proximity played a crucial role in shaping graduates' career decisions. Findings show that graduates prioritized employment close to home due to convenience or family responsibilities, aiming to reduce personal and financial burdens associated with relocation. While staying near home offered stability, it also significantly narrowed the range of available job opportunities, often limiting graduates to roles that did not align with their academic backgrounds or career aspirations.

From the perspective of Work Adjustment Theory, this decision reflects an emphasis on environmental fit, where location-based comfort takes precedence over job content. While proximity may enhance stability and reduce external stressors, it can also lead to lower satisfaction in other aspects of work, such as task relevance, professional growth, or advancement opportunities (De Cooman & Vleugels, 2022). Graduates who prioritize proximity may experience career stagnation or skill underutilization, influencing long-term job engagement and motivation (Abele et al., 2012; Sholahudin et al., 2025).

This phenomenon highlights the trade-offs in career decision-making, where individuals weigh practical considerations against ideal career alignment. Researchers believe that understanding these dynamics can help institutions develop strategies to expand remote work opportunities, create localized job development programs, or provide targeted career counseling to help graduates navigate employment choices without compromising career fulfillment.

5.3 Challenges faced by university graduates when seeking employment in a field that matches their qualifications

University graduates face numerous challenges when attempting to secure employment that matches their qualifications. This study found that personal interests, external pressures, and uncontrollable environmental factors such as economic conditions play a significant role in shaping career outcomes. Previous research highlights that many fresh graduates struggle with employability due to a lack of essential practical skills and real-world experience. Additionally, an oversupply of graduates in certain disciplines has resulted in limited job vacancies, intensifying competition, and leading many to accept roles unrelated to their academic background. This contributes to career dissatisfaction and low workplace motivation. The emergence of digital advancements has further transformed job market expectations, requiring graduates to adapt quickly to new technologies and digital competencies—skills not always emphasized during their academic training. By integrating these participant experiences with established theoretical frameworks, this study offers a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted factors that contribute to career mismatches among university graduates.

5.3.1 Employment barrier

One of the most significant challenges identified was the oversaturation of the job market with fresh graduates, leading to limited opportunities for employment in specialized or relevant fields. This high saturation of fresh graduates has created intense competition for available positions, making it more difficult for new entrants to secure roles that match their qualifications.

According to the Work Adjustment Theory, when the supply of similarly qualified candidates exceeds the demand, the likelihood of person–environment fit decreases (Vianen, 2018). Graduates are more likely to accept positions that deviate from their academic background

simply to enter the workforce. This mismatch reduces job satisfaction and may hinder long-term career development (Elena Ya. Varshavskaya & Podverbnykh, 2023). From the SLTCDM perspective, Wang et al, (2022), these employment conditions act as environmental influences that shape behavior; as individuals learn from observing peers struggling in the same saturated market, they may lower their expectations or shift their career trajectories altogether.

5.3.2 Skill gap in industry adaptation

The second theme addresses the discrepancy between university-acquired skills and industry requirements, encompassing two subthemes: practical experience deficiency and adaptation to industry demand.

5.3.2.1 Practical experience deficiency

Findings found that academic training, while theoretically comprehensive, did not equip them with the practical skills necessary for immediate workforce entry. This gap in applied experience made them less competitive in recruitment processes that emphasize hands-on skills and industry exposure (Sakamoto & Sung, 2018). Employers often prioritize candidates with direct experience, leaving recent graduates struggling to meet workplace expectations (Yong & Ling, 2023).

According to Oyadiran et al. (2023), the recruitment and selection process plays a critical role in forming a pool of job applicants and identifying individuals suited for positive organizational outcomes. When graduates lack practical experience, their chances of securing relevant roles diminish, reinforcing the disconnect between university education and labor market demands. This misalignment may lead to skill underutilization, delayed career progression, and an increased likelihood of accepting positions that do not fully align with their academic training.

To address this issue, universities could integrate work-integrated learning, industry collaborations, and structured internship programs into their curricula. Strengthening experiential learning opportunities would enhance graduates' job readiness, making them more competitive in professional environments. Bridging this gap requires institutions to align educational content with evolving industry needs to ensure graduates are adequately prepared for workplace expectations.

5.3.2.2 Adaptation to industry demand

As finding suggests, graduates often struggled to adapt to rapidly changing industry demands, particularly in sectors where technology, processes, and employer expectations evolve continuously. Many found that their academic training, though theoretically comprehensive, lacked the practical applications necessary for immediate workforce readiness. As finding indicates, this gap in applied skills made them less competitive in recruitment processes, prioritizing hands-on experience and industry exposure.

As this finding highlights, the Work Adjustment Theory explains that successful employment outcomes depend on the congruence between an individual's abilities and the requirements of the job. Findings show that the model demonstrates, when such congruence is lacking, maladjustment, leading to dissatisfaction, underperformance, or early job turnover (Ma et al., 2023). As finding reveals, a lack of structured exposure to industry standards further reduces graduates' ability to prepare for workplace competencies, widening the gap between education and employment readiness (Yi & Park, 2024).

As finding underscores, bridging this divide requires stronger integration between academic institutions and industry through experiential learning, mentorship programs, and practical skill development. Findings suggest, ensuring graduates receive early and continuous exposure to evolving job market trends would enhance adaptability, reducing the risk of career mismatch and improving long-term satisfaction.

5.3.3 Emotional pressure

A significant psychological barrier faced by graduates during their career transition is emotional strain, categorized under the theme of Emotional Pressure. Two distinct subthemes emerged within this category: Perceived Limitations in Low Motivation and Fear of Risk-Taking. These psychological factors hinder career progression, decision-making, and overall job search outcomes.

5.3.3.1 Perceived limitations in low motivation

Findings show a noticeable decline in motivation during their job search, particularly after repeated rejections or prolonged unemployment. This low motivation often resulted from a growing sense of inadequacy, helplessness, and reduced confidence in their competencies (Low et al., 2024). Graduates who were unable to secure positions within their area of study often expressed disengagement from the job search process altogether, leading them to settle for roles that did not reflect their qualifications or aspirations (Othman et al., 2023).

From the lens of Work Adjustment Theory, low motivation can be seen as a reaction to a poor match between personal work values and the external rewards or conditions offered by available jobs (Biscontini, 2024). When graduates perceive that the labor market does not value their skills, they begin to detach emotionally, which reduces the likelihood of proactive engagement in career development (Ping Yong & Ling, 2023). A lack of reinforcement, such as acknowledgment of qualifications or progress toward long-term goals, erodes their psychological investment in the job-seeking process.

According to the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making, perceived limitations also arise from negative observational learning and lack of self-efficacy (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012). When students and graduates observe peers struggling in similar circumstances, they may internalize these failures and develop a sense of inevitability regarding career misalignment. Without effective coping mechanisms, this creates a cycle where negative outcomes are both anticipated and reproduced through inaction or lowered expectations (Nadeem et al., 2023).

5.3.4 Salary expectation in the competitive market

The final theme focuses on the tension between high salary expectations and the reality of the job market, particularly in entry-level positions. Many graduates entered the labor market expecting compensation that matched their educational qualifications (Zakariya, 2014; Salas-Velasco, 2021). However, this expectation often clashed with employers' preferences for experienced candidates or budgetary constraints in the hiring process (Jain & Bhatt, 2015; Pol & H, 2025).

This misalignment between expectations and market realities resulted in low employment rates among graduates with rigid salary demands (Zakariya, 2014). From a Work Adjustment Theory standpoint, the mismatch between an individual's expectations and the reinforcement system of the job environment leads to dissatisfaction and a reluctance to accept otherwise available positions (Pan et al., 2024).

Based on Gu and Zhu (2023), salary expectations are often shaped by learned behaviors, including social comparisons, family expectations, and media portrayals of success. When these expectations are unmet, individuals may either delay employment while holding out for higher pay or accept lower-paying roles with diminished satisfaction.

5.4 Effect of mismatched career on development in job satisfaction among university graduates

This section discusses the effects of career mismatch on university graduates, focusing on how working in roles unrelated to their academic qualifications impacts their skills, personality development, and future career plans. Three core themes emerged from the analysis: Effect on skill, personality development, and future career decision. These themes reflect both the challenges and adaptive responses graduates experience as they attempt to navigate careers misaligned with their educational background.

5.4.1 Effect of skill

The first major theme centers on the erosion of professional skills due to prolonged employment in fields unrelated to graduates' academic training. This theme is captured under the subtheme skill decay.

Findings found that a progressive decline in the relevance and retention of the knowledge and technical abilities they had acquired during their university education. Because of not able to apply these skills in their current roles, finding found that expressed concern over their diminishing competence in their original field of study. This skill decay was described as both a cognitive and emotional setback, particularly for those who had initially aspired to work in professions directly tied to their academic specialization (Klostermann et al., 2022).

This experience is well-explained by Akram and Choudhary (2024), which emphasizes that a mismatch between individual capabilities and job requirements can lead to dissatisfaction and underutilization. When a job fails to reinforce the values and competencies of the individual, skills that are not used are likely to deteriorate over time (Krithika Jeganathan, 2024). From the perspective of SLTCDM, the absence of continuous learning or reinforcement in a specific field reduces opportunities for skill development and leads to a learning environment that no longer supports previously acquired competencies (Firmansyah & Saepuloh, 2022).

5.4.2 Personality development

The second theme reflects the personal and psychological effects of career mismatch. Participants demonstrated a range of personality changes based on their level of adaptation and engagement with their current jobs. Three subthemes were identified: Apathy, emotional exhaustion, and resilience in mismatched careers.

5.4.2.1 Apathy

Findings show a lack of enthusiasm and motivation in their daily work, resulting in disengagement and minimal emotional investment in their professional responsibilities. This sense of apathy often emerged from being in roles that did not align with their interests, passions, or long-term goals (Sousa & Ferro, 2025).

According to Saraiva and Nogueiro (2025), such disengagement can be understood as a reaction to unsatisfying reinforcement systems in the work environment. When work tasks fail to align with the values of the individual, such as achievement, creativity, or recognition, the person may withdraw psychologically from the job (Alabi, 2024). SLTCDM also supports this, as limited positive reinforcement and learning opportunities can condition individuals to become passive or indifferent toward their career progress (Mohd Yunus et al., 2024).

5.4.2.2 Emotional exhaustion

Another common response to career mismatch was emotional exhaustion, particularly among those who continued in misaligned jobs over extended periods. Participants described high levels

of mental fatigue, lack of fulfillment, and in some cases, symptoms associated with psychological distress.

According to Yang (2023), emotional exhaustion results from the ongoing strain of working in an environment that fails to meet an individual's personal or professional needs. Over time, the imbalance between expectations and job realities creates dissatisfaction, eroding emotional well-being. SLTCDM explains that individuals under chronic stress from a poor career fit may internalize these experiences as failure, which reduces their perceived self-efficacy and discourages proactive behavior (Mohd Yunus et al., 2023).

5.4.2.3 Resilience in mismatched career

Despite the challenges, findings show that demonstrating resilience, using their mismatched career experiences as opportunities for personal growth and adaptability. Developing new skills, found ways to manage work-related stress, and gained perspective on their strengths under pressure.

This adaptive response is a positive outcome aligned with the adjustment aspect of the Work Adjustment Theory. While the original job-person match may have been poor, some individuals modified their behaviors and expectations to better align with their roles, resulting in a more tolerable or even productive work experience (van Zyl et al., 2022). In terms of SLTCDM, these individuals often relied on self-directed learning, role modeling, and reflective thinking to navigate their situation, illustrating how learning and adaptation can occur even in non-ideal circumstances (Coetzee, 2017).

5.4.3 Future career decision

The third major theme involves the impact of mismatched careers on future career planning and decision-making. This includes both proactive intentions to return to aligned career paths and uncertainty about long-term professional direction. Two subthemes were identified: Career transition and uncertainty in career path.

5.4.3.1 Career transition

Findings show a strong desire to transition back into fields related to their academic background once conditions allow. These individuals remained committed to their original career goals and were actively planning steps to reenter aligned roles in the future, such as gaining certifications, building relevant experience, or job hunting within their trained domain.

This intention reflects the satisfaction component of Work Adjustment Theory, where the individual is still seeking congruence between personal preferences and occupational demands (Truyens, 2019). The mismatch is seen as temporary, and actions are directed toward re-establishing alignment. SLTCDM provides additional context by highlighting the role of outcome expectation, self-efficacy, and goal setting in guiding such career reorientation efforts (Mohd Yunus et al., 2024).

5.4.3.2 Uncertainty in career path

Conversely, findings show uncertainty about their future direction, unsure whether they would return to their trained field or continue exploring unrelated options. This indecision was often a result of prolonged mismatch, skill decay, or disillusionment with the industry they had originally intended to enter (Brunello & Wruuck, 2021).

From a Work Adjustment Theory standpoint, this uncertainty suggests a state of continued misfit, where the person cannot clearly identify a work environment that satisfies both ability utilization and psychological needs (De Cooman & Vleugels, 2022). SLTCDM explains this ambiguity as a consequence of limited reinforcement, role confusion, and unclear modeling, which can disrupt an individual's ability to make confident, informed career decisions (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012).

5.6 Recommendation for future research

Future studies could expand on the issue of career mismatch among tertiary level graduates from public universities by adopting a more comprehensive and targeted research design. A mixed methods approach is recommended to provide both breadth and depth in understanding the

complex dynamics involved. For example, researchers could collect data using stress inventories, motivation scales, and job satisfaction indicators alongside interviews to explore personal experiences, internal conflicts, and external pressures.

In particular, future research should explore more deeply the personal and family-related factors that contribute to career mismatch. This includes the influence of parental expectations, cultural values, and socioeconomic background. Additionally, examining experiences of rejection during university admission or job application processes could provide greater insight into the emotional and psychological challenges faced by graduates.

To better understand how career mismatches occur and how they might be addressed, future research could identify the common characteristics or patterns among mismatched graduates. This information would be useful for helping students find suitable academic paths early in their university journey and for improving academic advising systems.

While online interviews offer convenience, using physical interaction in data collection could enhance the quality of findings. Face-to-face interviews allow researchers to observe nonverbal communication such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice, which are essential for interpreting sensitive issues with more depth and accuracy.

Future work might also explore how graduates cope in the workplace when they find themselves in roles that do not match their academic background. This includes looking at how individuals maintain motivation, develop new skills, or adapt to unfamiliar job demands. Understanding these coping mechanisms can help universities and employers create better support systems for mismatched graduates.

Expanding the participant pool to include students from a variety of academic programs, institutions, and year levels would also improve the relevance and generalizability of the research. Furthermore, including the perspectives of academic advisors, counselors, and career service staff can provide a clearer picture of how institutional support currently functions and where it can be strengthened.

Altogether, future studies that examine this issue from multiple perspectives using a mixed methods approach can help design more effective strategies to improve career alignment, job satisfaction, and the overall well-being of graduates.

Conclusion

This study illuminates the multifaceted phenomenon of career mismatch among graduates of public universities, drawing from real-life narratives and theoretical perspectives such as Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making and the Theory of Work Adjustment. Four key areas were explored: the criteria influencing career choice, the factors contributing to mismatch, the challenges faced in securing aligned employment, and the effects of mismatch on job satisfaction and career development.

Findings reveal that career choices are shaped not solely by personal ambition but by an interplay of family expectations, financial constraints, job market unpredictability, and limited institutional support. Graduates often enter mismatched roles out of necessity, leading to skill decay, emotional strain, and, paradoxically, the development of resilience. The lack of exposure to labor market realities and practical training further compounds their struggle.

Yet, these mismatches are not purely deficits—they offer a landscape for growth, adaptability, and new self-understandings. Many participants expressed a desire to eventually return to careers aligned with their educational background, underscoring the importance of career guidance, experiential learning, and flexible mindset-building during university years.

In essence, this research contributes to the growing discourse on employability by humanizing the statistics through lived experiences. It calls for a more dynamic synergy between academic institutions, labor market demands, and graduate readiness—so that futures are not compromised by mismatches, but shaped by informed, empowered decision-making.

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Borang Persetujuan Termaklum

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

Tujuan saya menjalankan kajian ini yang bertajuk "*Mismatch career among tertiary education level graduate among public university*" bagi tugasan Projek Tahun Akhir adalah untuk meneroka persepsi, cabaran, faktor yang mempengaruhi, serta strategi daya tindak kaunselor pelatih tahun empat dalam membuat persediaan menghadapi dunia pekerjaan. Kajian ini akan dijalankan menggunakan kaedah Kualitatif. Hasil kajian ini akan membantu saya sebagai penyelidik mengetahui dengan lebih mendalam berkaitan dengan persediaan kaunselor pelatih tahun empat dalam membuat persediaan menghadapi dunia pekerjaan 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 disebarikan 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 diperolehi 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

()

Interview protocol

Demographic

1. Name
2. Age
3. Education history
4. Recent occupation

What are the criteria influence career choices among fresh graduate

1. In your opinion, what are the factor influence career choice among university student?
(personal factor, family factor, and economic factor)
1. How do personal interest and passions impact career choices among university
2. To what extent do job market trends and economic condition influence career decisions?
3. How important are salary and benefits in determining career choices for recent graduates?
4. How do family expectations and cultural background affect career selection?
5. How does availability of career advancement opportunities influences career decision?

What are the factors affecting mismatched careers among university graduates?

1. What role does a lack of career guidance and counseling play in career mismatch?
2. How do economic pressures and job availability contribute to career mismatch?
3. In your opinion, do unrealistic job expectations from graduates lead to career mismatches?
4. How significant is the impact of insufficient skill sets on career mismatches?
5. How do external factors such as location and family obligations influence career mismatch?
6. What is your personal perspective on the mismatch that happens to you?

What are the challenges faced by university graduates when seeking employment in a field that matches their qualifications?

1. How does the lack of practical experience affect graduates' ability to find relevant employment?
2. What impact does the oversaturation of certain job markets have on job-seeking graduates?
3. How do changing industry requirements and technological advancement pose challenges for graduates?
4. What are the barriers related to networking and professional connections for recent graduates?
5. How does competition from more experienced candidates affect new graduates' job prospects?
6. Have you ever gone through an experience where the skills you have are insufficient or out of qualification

What are the effects of mismatched careers on career development in job satisfaction among university graduates?

1. How does working in an unrelated field impact long-term career growth and development?
2. What are the psychological effects of career mismatches on job satisfaction and mental health?
3. In what ways do career mismatches influence job performance and productivity?
4. How do the experiences of a mismatched career affect future career decisions and transitions?

Contoh transkrip responden

Pengkaji	1. Thank you Kat ***** for participating my FYP research. So 2. sebelum kita start go through the question, boleh tak minta 3. Kak *** perkenalkan diri dari segi nama, umur, Sejarah 4. pendidikan dan pekerjaan terkini.
Responden	5. Okay, hi Aiman. Ada beri salam ke tadi? Waalaikumsalam lah, 6. tak ingat. Waalaikumsalam, selamat malam. Thank you sebab 7. pilih saya. I feel like and honoured lah to be your participant 8. for your research. Okay ke, I guna bahasa English boleh?
Pengkaji	9. Boleh, boleh, boleh
Responden	10. Ke nak satu bahasa je?
Pengkaji	11. Mana-mana, boleh je.
Responden	12. Mana-mana lah. Okay, nama penuh saya *****, umur 13. *** tahun. Latar belakang pendidikan, recently saya baru 14. bergraduasi daripada Ijazah Sarjana Muda Kaunseling 15. UniMAS dengan kepujian pada November 2024. Sebelumnya 16. bersekolah dekat SM Sains Kucing Utara untuk sekolah 17. menengah. Untuk recent occupation, saya sekarang ni kerja 18. sebagai eksekutif proton di HQ Proton Shah Alam. Specifically 19. dekat Centre of Excellence Perusahaan Automobil Nasional 20. Sdn Bhd which is Proton lah.
Pengkaji	21. Okay, thank you Kak *** for the introduction. Okay, sekarang 22. kita go through for the question. Okay, bagi pendapat awak, 23. apakah faktor yang mempengaruhi pilihan kerjaya dalam 24. kalangan pelajar universiti dari segi faktor peribadi, faktor 25. keluarga dan juga faktor ekonomi?
Responden	26. Pada pendapat saya, ketiga-tiga faktor tersebut sangat 27. mempengaruhi tapi secara peribadi, saya sendiri melihat 28. kepada faktor ekonomi iaitu gaji yang ditawarkan dan career 29. growth yang akan saya perolehi kalau saya dapat jawatan 30. tersebut lah. Personal factor lebih kepada minat dan juga 31. relatable which is perkaitannya dengan background degree 32. saya. Sementara family factor turut memainkan peranan 33. penting di mana kena consider tempat bekerja jauh ataupun 34. dekat dengan keluarga serta decision making yang kena 35. buatlah dengan keluarga serta perbincangan kalau dah dapat 36. pekerjaan tersebut.
Pengkaji	37. Faham faham
Responden	38. That is my opinion Aiman
Pengkaji	39. Akak ada mention pasal gaji, so soalan saya sejauh mana gaji 40. dan juga benefit penting dalam menentukan pilihan kejayaan 41. untuk graduan baru?
Responden	42. Sangat penting sebab kita berada dalam ekonomi yang 43. mencabar and commitment yang semakin banyak dari tahun 44. ke tahun jadi benefit pun sangat penting bukan setakat minat

	45. ataupun aa faktor geografi lah iaitu tempat kerja dengan rumah 46. antara sebabnya adalah kalau company tersebut ataupun 47. owner tak memberikan benefit dari segi medical, insurance 48. tak berbaloi sebab kita tak tahu apa kemalangan ataupun 49. perkara-perkara yang tak diingini akan berlaku. Jadi benefit 50. yang saya dapat currently lebih kepada insurance, 51. hospitalization, maternity leave, maternity allowance 52. allowance minyak, rumah yang itu sangat penting khususnya 53. dalam pemilihan kerja untuk fresh graduate lah.
Pengkaji	54. Faham, faham. Okay. Bagi akak bagaimana minat dan passion 55. mempengaruhi kepada pemilihan kerjaya dalam kalangan 56. pelajar universiti?
Responden	57. Pada pendapat saya minat dan juga minat dan juga keinginan 58. lah keinginan sangat penting dalam pemilihan kejayaan sebab 59. perkara tersebut akan mendorong kepada motivasi untuk 60. bekerja. Bekerja dengan belajar perkara yang berbeza. Kalau 61. belajar mungkin kita ada aim untuk graduate tapi kalau 62. bekerja it is a never ending daily routine. Maksudnya kita kena 63. bekerja no matter what no matter how and benda itu hanya 64. akan habis kalau kita decide nak berhenti or berpencen. Jadi 65. secara conclusionnya sangat penting minat tersebut untuk 66. mempengaruhi motivasi untuk bekerja.
Pengkaji	67. Faham, Okey bagi akak sejauh mana job market trend dengan 68. economic condition mempengaruhi kepada career decision?
Responden	69. Sejauh mana market trend and economic condition boleh 70. explain tak untuk soalan ni?
Pengkaji	71. Macam contoh job market trend mungkin trend sekarang 72. lebih kepada teknologi. Itu contoh job market trend. Economic 73. condition macam akak dah mention tadi pasal sekarang ni 74. agak tough dalam kehidupan. So that's boleh kategori sebagai 75. economic condition lah. So benda itu macam sejauh mana 76. benda itu mempengaruhi kepada career decision bagi akak?
Responden	77. Okey saya cuba jawab lah. Pada pendapat saya market trend 78. pekerjaan dan juga kondisi ekonomi sangat-sangat 79. mempengaruhi pemilihan kerja atas faktor kita bekerja untuk 80. memenuhi keperluan dan juga membayar commitment. 81. Sebagai contoh keperluan harian khususnya kalau dah habis 82. belajar lebih kepada makan minum, kehendak dan juga 83. commitment harian. Contoh nak beli kredit, nak tengok Netflix 84. ataupun nak tengok wayang, hiburan. Jadi market trend 85. pekerjaan itu memang kita tak dapat jangka tapi disebabkan 86. oleh ekonomi seseorang tersebut bagaimana dia punya 87. belanjaan harian dia akan ada perkaitanlah kalau dia punya dia 88. tak ada tekanan ataupun dia ada good income daripada 89. keluarga. Keluarga pun tak kisah kalau dia tak bekerja. 90. Mungkin dia punya market trend personally dia tak akan kisah.

	91. Maksudnya atas secara conclusion apa yang saya dapat 92. simpulkan dari soalan Aiman ni atas individu itu sendiri. 93. Macam tu
Pengkaji	94. Faham, faham. Okay next bagaimana family expectation 95. dengan cultural background.
Responden	96. Eh jap, tiga belum eh? How important salary benefit? Itu dah 97. ke?
Pengkaji	98. Dah, dah, dah
Responden	99. Oh you tukar?
Pengkaji	100. Saya tanya yang awal-awal tadi. Sebab saya ikatkan macam 101. akak dia cakap pasal pendapat tu kepada faktor, bagi 102. pendapat akak apakah faktor yang mempengaruhi pemilihan 103. kerja, akak mention pasal gaji. So saya tak proceed lah gaji.
Responden	104. Oh awal sekali, alright
Pengkaji	105. Okay next bagaimanakah family expectation dan cultural 106. background influence kepada career choice?
Responden	107. Family expectation and cultural background affect career 108. selection. Bagi saya family saya tak meletakkan harapan yang 109. tinggi untuk pekerjaan yang saya pilih atas faktor mereka 110. adalah seorang parents yang mempercayai saya untuk 111. membuat keputusan. Jadi disebabkan oleh kepercayaan yang 112. diberikan tu saya nak bagi yang terbaik. Jadi family 113. expectation dari segi personal view tidak menjadi masalah. 114. Cuma saya adalah individu yang nak memberikan terbaik 115. dalam decision yang saya buatlah. Sebab kalau Aiman nak 116. tahu lepas daripada grad saya memang aa tak tak ada suka 117. suka masuk kerjalah like macam masuk retail masuk aa kerja 118. F&B tak sebab saya tahu peluang pekerjaan itu untuk bayar 119. setimpal dengan apa yang saya korbankan ataupun apa yang 120. saya aa buat masa degree saya perlu dibayar setimpal dengan 121. gaji degree rather than retail walaupun awak ada degree ke 122. diploma ke awak masih dibayar seribu lapan dua ribu. Aa 123. kalau master pula aa sama juga. Either you have the master, 124. awak akan still dibayar setimpal dengan orang yang SPM. Jadi 125. saya nak dibayar setimpal dengan apa yang saya ada. Jadi apa 126. yang saya boleh katakan how do family expectation and 127. cultural background affect career selection? It's affected me in 128. term of the trust they have given on me. Aa begitu.
Pengkaji	129. Faham, faham, faham. Okey aa next bagaimana aa ability of 130. career advancement opportunity mempengaruhi kepada 131. career decision akak?
Responden	132. Career advancement opportunity contoh macam mana ni?
Pengkaji	133. Aa contohnya akak kerja sebagai aa dekat Proton sekarang 134. kan? Aa akak diberi macam naik pangkat promote. Okey. So 135. bagaimanakah benda itu aa aa influence akak punya aa career 136. decision.

Responden	137. Oh aa yang ni saya rasa faham lebih kepada career growth lah 138. eh.
Pengkaji	139. Ermm
Responden	140. Aa yang ni sangat penting. Sangat penting sebab relatable 141. kepada jawapan saya untuk aa salary and benefit tadi kita 142. bekerja bukan nak graduate bukan nak kerja aa sekadar nak 143. dapatkan gaji tapi kita kena bekerja memikirkan motivasi dan 144. juga apa yang kita buat itu. Jadi aa before nak pilih pekerjaan 145. itu kena tahulah apa background syarikat tersebut how good 146. the reputation of the company and how could we grow if we 147. join the company, macam saya why I choose proton rather than 148. aa I work nearby macam dekat Kuching ke, dekat Samarahan 149. sebab saya tengok bila saya join aa proton ni saya ada satu 150. peningkatan ataupun saya tahu mana halatuju saya within five 151. years. Aa itu adalah short term aa short term career growth 152. yang saya tahulah. Aa sebab before saya masuk pun 153. saya undergo few aa assessment aa which quite challenging 154. and bila saya tahu aa the interview is was quite challenging 155. and I know aa those yang akan masuk or those yang masuk 156. proton ni is not those selected aa suka hati. Aa jadi daripada 157. situ before nak memilih pekerjaan sangat penting untuk tengok 158. how far we can go with the company. And what is your 159. objective in joining them? Aa macam itu
Pengkaji	160. faham faham. Okey aa next apakah peranan aa kekurangan 161. bimbingan dan kaunseling kejayaan terhadap career mismatch 162. bagi akak.
Responden	163. What role does a lack of career guidance and counselling play 164. in career mismatch? Hmm macam mana ni eh? What role does 165. a lack career?
Pengkaji	166. Aa contoh macam kita sebenarnya sebab aa pelajar kaunseling 167. macam kita tak nampak kepada aa bimbingan itu. Cuma might 168. be kita akan perasan aa satu dua benda yang might be dia 169. macam benda ni tak diterapkan kepada semua. Kita pelajar 170. kaunseling kita dapat. Tapi how about others? Dapat tak? 171. Benda itu untuk guide dia orang kepada kerjaya?
Responden	172. What role? Maksudnya aa macam mana kita nak educate orang 173. yang tak ada tahu hala tuju kejayaan dia ke? Macam itukah? 174. Aa bimbingan macam mana kita nak bagi bimbingan 175. kaunseling kepada orang yang tersalah pilih kejayaan ke?
Pengkaji	176. Soalan dia lebih kepada contoh akak not a kaunseling student.
Responden	177. Okay. I'm not a counselling student
Pengkaji	178. Okay and then aa akak rasa macam sekarang ni aa contoh akak 179. aa student aa HRD.
Responden	180. Okay.
Pengkaji	181. But then akak kerja dalam bidang ekonomi. So basically dia 182. mismatch lah kat situ kan?

Responden	183. Okay.
Pengkaji	184. So dari sudut kaunseling apa yang macam apa benda yang 185. macam okay sepatutnya benda ni diberitahu awal kepada kita. 186. Aa so macam kita rasa macam dia aa kekurangan dari segi 187. guidance kaunseling tu. Faham tak?
Responden	188. Oh kiranya aa betul tak kepahaman saya kalau bukan apa apa 189. pesanan ni? Kiranya apa apa yang perlu orang tu tahu kalau 190. dia salah mismatch. Betul. Macam itukah?
Pengkaji	191. Betul
Responden	192. Aa okay. Personally because I'm an observant person aa I 193. viewed that my friends yang aa yang kerja dalam bidang yang 194. bukan diorang belajar tak kisahlah kaunseling kerja sebagai aa 195. researcher ke kaunseling graduate kerja sebagai pegawai aa 196. apa nama dia? Pusat Nadi ke ataupun kaunseling student 197. graduate yang kerja sebagai cikgu ke aa apa yang penting 198. adalah aa adaptation. That is the key point yang saya boleh 199. simpulkanlah. Sebab saya pun taklah. Bukan taklah memang 200. baru je bekerja. Baru je empat bulan. And then I can say much. 201. So this is based on what I am observing for this few months. 202. Which is the importance of having adaptability ataupun new 203. word for you maybe if you have heard it maybe it's good for 204. you. Agility. Agile. Maksudnya kalau aa you are not aa you are 205. not an economy graduate tapi you are willing to learn that will 206. not be a big problem for you. As long as you want to learn and 207. you want to adapt in the new situation. Kita kena tahu sebab aa 208. peluang pekerjaan sikit. Demand sikit tapi dia punya eh 209. demand banyak tapi opportunity itu ataupun aa apa dia punya 210. kerja itu aa nak masuk itu bukan mudah. Aa nak masuk aa 211. sesuatu pekerjaan tak kira lah cikgu ke nak jadi pegawai tu ni 212. ke pegawai kerajaan ke kaunseling aa psikologi aa sekalipun 213. pegawai psikologi ke nak masuk itu kita kena berhadapan 214. dengan ramai candidates. Jadi kalau kita dapat pekerjaan yang 215. bukan aa bidang kita ataupun mismatch which in your aa 216. question the important thing the role that they need to do is to 217. be an agile person lah. AGILE. Agile. Aa dia kena dia adapt to 218. bawah. Agile itu tinggi lagi. So agile itu kalau situasi itu you 219. tak suka you need to learn on how to work under pressure. Aa 220. macam itu. Agile lah. Agility.
Pengkaji	221. Faham? Faham? Faham? So maksudnya agile agile ni macam 222. contoh kita pressure untuk adapt juga. Sebab kan..
Responden	223. Yes.
Pengkaji	224. We have no aa pilihan
Responden	225. Yes
Pengkaji	226. Okey faham. Okey next question. How do economic pressure 227. and job availability contribute to career mismatch?
Responden	228. How do?.

Pengkaji	229. Economic pressure
Responden	230. Economic pressure. And job. Soalan berapa ni?
Pengkaji	231. Soalan yang kedua
Responden	232. Kedua okey. Eh bukan what impact does the over saturation 233. tu?
Pengkaji	234. Aa tu belum lagi.
Responden	235. Oh saya punya what impact does the over saturation? Aa lain 236. eh?
Pengkaji	237. Lain.
Responden	238. Okey okey
Pengkaji	239. Okey aa okey saya bahasa Melayu lah
Responden	240. Okay boleh boleh
Pengkaji	241. bagaimanakah? Economic pressure dan juga job availability 242. tersediaan pekerjaan menyumbang kepada career mismatch.
Responden	243. How do economic pressure and job availability contribute to 244. career mismatch? Aa macam mana nak cakap eh? Dia lebih 245. kepada aa atas individu itu sendiri. Ada sesetengah aa pihak 246. akan rasa aa tak kisah menganggur dalam tempoh masa lama. 247. Tiga bulan, enam bulan selepas grad. Tapi kalau saya sendiri 248. saya merasakan penting untuk saya ada kerja cepat walaupun 249. sebelum grad kerana saya adalah individu yang tak suka duduk 250. diam. And saya tahu nak dapatkan kerja itu susah. Jadi 251. daripada situ apa yang saya boleh katakan aa lebih kepada 252. economic pressure lah which I want to fulfill my needs. I want 253. to give back to my parents and I want to experience the 254. working the working day, the working style. Aa as soon as 255. possible. Aa kiranya I am excited to start my new phase of life 256. lah macam tu. Aa dulu lah sekarang macam alamak macam tu.
Pengkaji	257. Oh okay faham
Responden	258. Oh macam tu lah, lebih kepada diri sendiri
Pengkaji	259. Erm faham faham, okay next bagi pendapat akak, do 260. unrealistic job expectation from graduate cause career 261. mismatch
Responden	262. Do job. Saya tengah cari. Nombor berapa ni?
Pengkaji	263. Yang dia kat atas kak
Responden	264. Do job. Saya tengah cari dekat gambar Aiman bagi aa do
Pengkaji	265. aa do unrealistic job expectation from graduate cause career 266. mismatch
Responden	267. Do alamak kejap eh kejap eh. Nombor berapa ni Aiman? Ni 268. dalam screenshot ke dalam word Aiman bagi aa
Pengkaji	269. Dua dua ada
Responden	270. Dua dua ada? Jap
Pengkaji	271. Yeah..
Responden	272. Nombor berapa ni? Do aa in your opinion
Pengkaji	273. Yes

Responden	274. Do unrealistic job expectation from graduate lead to career mismatch. Aa yes. In my opinion unrealistic job expectation from graduate lead to career mismatches. Aa kadang-kadang aa ni kalau dari perspektif saya boleh lead tapi kalau personal aa opinion saya akan elakkan benda itu terjadilah. Aa jadi secara conclusionnya yes it may lead to career mismatch if they have the unrealistic job expectation if they are not finding the information very well. I see.
Pengkaji	282. Faham faham faham.
Responden	283. Ya faham begitu.
Pengkaji	284. Okey aa next sejauh aa to what extent does a lack of skill impact to career mismatch. Jumpa tak soalan itu.
Responden	286. Aa nombor berapa ni?
Pengkaji	287. Aa dia basically bawah soalan faktor.
Responden	288. Bawah soalan faktor.
Pengkaji	289. Tengok.
Responden	290. Aa boleh ulang Aiman?
Pengkaji	291. Aa sejauh mana impact kekurangan kemahiran terhadap aa career mismatch.
Responden	293. Kejap sorry. I'm lost. Sejauh mana impact.
Pengkaji	294. Kekurangan kepada kemahiran..
Responden	295. Kekurangan kepada kemahiran. How significant is the impact of insufficient skill tu ke? Nombor empat?
Pengkaji	297. Bukan.
Responden	298. How significant?.
Pengkaji	299. Bukan. Aa dia dekat my god
Responden	300. Takpe Aiman saya faham..
Pengkaji	301. Ya betul betul. Dia soalan kat saya lain sikit
	302. Okey. How significant is the impact of insufficient skill set on career mismatch? Aa macam mana nak jawab eh? Kejap. How significant is the impact? How significant betapa pentingnya impact insufficient skill?
Pengkaji	306. Aa saya ringkaskanlah.
Responden	307. Saya boleh katakan boleh tak awak rumuskan soalan itu?
Pengkaji	308. Okey dia macam lebih kepada aa lebih kepada aa apa impact kepada insufficient skill untuk career mismatch. Macam itulah
Responden	310. Impact ke atas saya ke macam mana? Atau atas mana-mana pihak?
Pengkaji	312. Mana-mana pihak ataupun akak sendirilah.
Responden	313. If you have opinion. Okey I think I I am understand already. It give a huge impact especially if you are not ready to learn. And then if you are new to that thing and worst thing case scenario if my superior had a huge or big expectation from you. Ha macam itu. So jawapan yang saya boleh bagi it may ah lead to a big impact Uh if the superiors had or have a high expectation on you. Saya mudahkan awak untuk buat

	320. transcript. Okey.
Pengkaji	321. Okey. So and then next aa how do external factors such as 322. location and family obligation influence career mismatch?
Responden	323. How do? Okey. Aa the external factor aa for example location 324. and family obligation may influence career mismatch if the 325. relatable career with my degree or with my ah with my 326. background of study ah is not offered in my nearby area. So 327. what I can say is that the external factors may be influence the 328. career mismatch in term of the geographical factor. Ah contoh 329. kan kalau macam counseling kalau Aiman nak tahu dekat 330. Sarawak it may hard to find. Dia ada. Macam saya beritahu 331. tadi if you are a person want to have a good career grow you 332. need to be brave to to to explore aa tempat lain. Rather than 333. you stay in your area. Macam itu. Because I do and I did my 334. research dekat area Sarawak. Boleh survive dalam counseling. 335. Tapi dia punya long term long term career growth tu depends 336. on you on how you want to survive. Dia lebih kepada jadi 337. freelancer ataupun company company kecil and then the the 338. the amount of wages also not be macam tak setimpal lah 339. dengan skill yang dia ada. But if you want to be paid higher. 340. Aa sebenarnya banyak. Aa that's why I made a decision to 341. move here. Begitu.
Pengkaji	342. So aa saya bagi satu statement. Maksudnya akak okey untuk 343. berjauhan dan juga aa meninggalkan family sementara di 344. Kuching untuk aa kerja
Responden	345. Ehemmm, yeahh
Pengkaji	346. Erm okay
Responden	347. Tak la tinggal, ada je balik, nak balik baliklah. hehe
Pengkaji	348. Haha okay, Next aa what is your personal aa perspective on 349. mismatch that happened to you?
Responden	350. In my opinion, uh I couldn't say that I'm having a career 351. mismatch on me. Because uh from counseling itself, um I am 352. actually um practicaling, practical, macam mana aa Doing 353. practical, practicaling pula. Doing practical on what I studied 354. in my counseling towards my task or job. Tapi kalau nak 355. practice counseling betul-betul like uh during internship or 356. during uh practical, hari-hari ada client, hari-hari ada uh 357. program, yes. I as for now, I'm not uh being delegating for that 358. task. Tapi it depends on me. I can propose that thing to my 359. superior as I have notified uh my HR, the one who recruited 360. me that I am a registered counselor. Ha macam tu. Jadi secara 361. conclusionnya, personal perspective on the mismatch on me is 362. not uh happen due to external factor like economic tadi ke 363. ataupun family obligation ke ataupun uh apa apalah yang 364. berkaitan atas tadi. Tapi uh I'm playing a role as a graduate 365. counseling. Uh where I'm uh using the counseling skills in my

	366. job. Uh macam tu.
Pengkaji	367. Okey, faham, faham. Maksudnya akak cakap uh skill 368. counseling tu still dapat digunapakai dalam current job 369. sekarang.
Responden	370. Betul. Still dapat digunapakai. And boleh je buat part time but 371. I'm not starting it yet.
Pengkaji	372. Faham, faham. Okey, next. Uh how do the lack of practical uh 373. experience affect graduate ability to find relevant 374. employment?
Responden	375. How does the lack of practical experience affect graduate 376. ability to find relevant employment? Ni lebih kepada 377. kaunseling ke tak kisah?
Pengkaji	378. Uh since um boleh kepada faktor counseling ataupun faktor 379. faktor yang lain.
Responden	380. Okey. Uh how does the lack of practical experience affect uh 381. how does the lack of practical experience affect graduate 382. ability to find relevant employment? Lack of practical 383. experience. Uh pada pendapat saya, aa kekurangan ataupun aa 384. ketidakcukupan pengalaman menjalani latihan dalam apa-apa 385. bidang untuk dapat kerja yang sesuai adalah macam mana nak 386. cakap eh? Planning over. How does? Menjadi isu kalau saya 387. sendiri tak bersedia untuk belajar. Tapi kalau sekiranya 388. pekerjaan yang saya dapat tersebut aa dia away dengan 389. background study saya and then saya pun aa nak belajar benda 390. baru aa that would not be a problem lah. Faham ke? Aiman
Pengkaji	391. Faham, faham. Maksudnya akak lebih kepada
Responden	392. Menjawab ke? Ke saya salah bagi jawapan?
Pengkaji	393. Uh dia taka da salah taka da betul so basically akak cakap yang 394. aa you akak just ready untuk belajar. So lack of practical 395. experience tu macam kita boleh belajar. So boleh avoid.
Responden	396. Yeah betul
Pengkaji	397. Okey faham? Okey next aa what impact does the over 398. saturation of certain job market have on job seeking graduate? 399. What impact does the over saturation of certain job market? 400. Contoh over saturation job aa tahap macam akak tadi dah buat 401. research kepada aa pekerjaan kosong aa untuk bidang 402. kaunseling di Sarawak sangat limited. Okey. Sebabkan aa aa 403. jawatan-jawatan yang dah ada dalam jabatan dah diisi dengan 404. oranglah.
Responden	405. Betul
Pengkaji	406. So basically. 407. Betul.
Pengkaji	408. Unimas mengeluarkan graduate aa kaunseling.
Responden	409. Okey
Pengkaji	410. So dia jadi jadi banyak.
Responden	411. Betul.

Pengkaji	412. So apakah impact kepada aa faham tak?
Responden	413. Aa Apakah impact kepada job seeking graduate? Aa dia bagi 414. impact yang besar atas faktor aa apa? Lambakan graduate lah. 415. Dia bukan sekadar Unimas sahaja yang produce graduate 416. kaunseling.
Pengkaji	417. Betul
Responden	418. Universiti Malaya, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Universiti 419. Kebangsaan Malaysia. Jadi lambakan kaunseling sendiri dia 420. tak setanding dengan aa peluang pekerjaan yang ada lah. Jadi 421. nak tak nak aa kalau saya sendiri, saya sudah bersedia untuk 422. belajar dan kemudian impaknya itu mungkin secara personally 423. Aiman boleh summarize kan, jap kenapa suara saya echoing? 424. sekejap, suara saya echoing Aiman ada buka tempat lain ke?
Pengkaji	425. tak ada
Responden	426. suara saya echoing sekejap, okay sekarang suara saya dah 427. okay, okay , saya rumuskanlah what impact does the 428. oversaturation of certain job market have on job seeking 429. graduate dia lebih kepada impak transitional period itulah bila 430. kalau Aiman nak tahu before saya pindah dekat Shah Alam ni 431. saya dekat Tanjung Malim Proton HQ Tanjung Malim whereby 432. I am I was I was and I was tasked to be with the production 433. team bayangkan daripada budak kaunseling daripada belajar 434. kaunseling yang buat sesi hari-hari yang dengar masalah client 435. tiba-tiba kena hadap machine which is on how those engineer 436. make a car that was a huge transitional phase of life walaupun 437. benda itu tak lama memang HQ cakap 3 bulan je diorang nak 438. saya expose kepada on how the production going tapi disitu 439. berlakunya berlakunya impact ke atas motivasi saya untuk 440. bekerja kerana saya kena hadap machine robot-robot suasana 441. bising semua pekerja dia lelaki tak ada staff perempuan and 442. my bosses are all males and I am I was the only one female 443. staff jadi impactnya lebih kepada motivasi dan juga apa ya 444. motivasi dan juga productivity saya bekerja lah macam tu
Pengkaji	445. faham faham so bagi akak apakah impact kepada over 446. saturation pekerjaanku tadi macam akak -
Responden	447. How do changing
Pengkaji	448. -dah share
Responden	449. Ha ha apakah impact
Pengkaji	450. impact kepada ketepuan pasaran kerja
Responden	451. impact dia aa aa adakah
Pengkaji	452. adakah dia akan ramai graduate yang akan mencari kerja baru 453. ataupun diorang adakah macam still ongoing untuk apply
Responden	454. impact dia kalau kepada orang yang saya tengok kenalan 455. kenalan saya dia lebih kepada impak emosi lah jadi dia akan 456. menyebabkan seseorang berada dalam keadaan burn out cari 457. kerja tak dapat and then dia akan menyebabkan dia rasa

	458. useless dengan diri sendiri dia lebih kepada self confidence 459. and pressure from seeing a friend who already in the working 460. working phase macam tu
Pengkaji	461. faham faham faham ok next question how do changing 462. industrial requirement and technological advancement pose 463. challenge for graduate nak saya explain Bahasa melayu ke
Responden	464. boleh takutkan kefahaman lain
Pengkaji	465. ok bagaimanakah perubahan kepada keperluan industri dan 466. kemajuan teknologi menjadi cabaran kepada graduate
Responden	467. Ohh akan menjadi satu cabaran besar kita kena adapt dengan 468. industri industri yang berkembang dan kita nak dibayar 469. setimpal dengan degree yang kita ada lah sebagai contoh 470. sekarang ni saya bekerja dengan sektor otomotif kan jadi as 471. Aiman pun sedia maklum proton pun orang sebut proton tu 472. semua orang tahu kan kalau tak kena proton tu macam 473. mustahil lah proton yang ada lama dekat Malaysia so bila 474. masuk kepada company yang besar dia akan menyebabkan kita 475. kena jadi fast pacer lah kena cepat belajar so daripada situ 476. sebagai seorang yang baru bekerja kena jadi orang yang cepat 477. untuk tahu sistem mereka dan juga culture daripada situ 478. barulah dapat memenuhi keperluan industri otomotif dan juga 479. memahami teknologi yang mereka ada aa begitu
Pengkaji	480. faham faham faham so aa for the next question aa saya 481. gabungkan last dengan soalan yang satu lagi ok saya bacakan 482. eh what are the barrier related to networking and professional 483. connection for the fresh graduate dengan saya kaitkan soalan 484. dengan lack of practical experience macam akak ada cakap 485. tadi lack of practical experience akak ready untuk belajar 486. benda baru so it's not going to be lacking practical aa 487. experience lah sebab kita dah overcome benda tu
Responden	488. ok
Pengkaji	489. so what if practical experience tu aa related dengan networking 490. dengan professional connection faham tak soalan saya
Responden	491. kejam macam aa macam mana erk
Responden	492. ok macam kita bidang counselling mesti kita perlu kita 493. memang kena ada aa networking dengan professional 494. connection untuk kita dapatkan kerja untuk kita senang buat 495. event and so on so saya masukkan aa soalan networking 496. dengan professional tu dengan lacking of practical experience 497. tak macam tak ada connection tu sebagai aa lack of practical 498. experience faham tak soalan saya
Pengkaji	499. Okay okay so far faham situasinya jadi aa
Responden	500. So soalnya, apakah halangan tak ada benda tu
Pengkaji	501. Apa?
Responden	502. halangan

Pengkaji	503. apa halangan
Responden	504. hmmh
	505. aa ok saya bagi satu halangan yang saya hadapi lah aa 506. mungkin dari segi perbezaan kefahaman dan juga terma-terma 507. yang digunakan hmm faham ok terma-terma dan juga 508. kefahaman dalam bidang automotive ni aa adalah satu perkara 509. baru yang saya belajar dan saya menjadi dan perkara tu jadi 510. halangan kepada saya untuk membina hubungan bila saya rasa 511. rendah diri untuk bercakap bila saya takut apa yang saya cakap 512. tu tak betul apa terma-terma yang saya gunakan tu tak tepat 513. jadi kesannya akan menyebabkan saya low self-confident lah 514. aa bila sebelum ni kalau Aiman nak tahu lah kenapa 515. saya kata aa sebelum ni saya rasa rendah diri saya rasa 516. macam aa kurang skill aa bila kena belajar terma-terma 517. engineering semua tu saya sebelum ni dari bulan 1 sampai 518. bulan aa 4 awal bulan 4 saya dekat Poton Tanjung Malim tu 3 519. bulan je tapi lepas 3 bulan tu saya dah masuk executive dekat 520. Shah Alam aa and jaga bahagian yang customer bukan jaga 521. bahagian customer dia lebih kepada jaga bahagian service 522. operation dimana saya boleh apply kan aa and saya boleh 523. gunakan counseling seterusnya tu lah lebih empower myself more 524. rather than stay dekat manufacturing tadi jadi bila soalan 525. Aiman ni tadi saya kaitkan dengan aa experience saya bila 526. saya kena aa duduk ataupun kena mematuhi aa kehendak HQ 527. untuk berada dekat production selama 3 bulan jadi bila 528. bercakap dengan aa bos-bos besar head of shop head of shop 529. tu macam aa ketua jabatan lah aa head of shop tu macam ketua 530. kilang aa saya kena faham terma-terma yang digunakan dan aa 531. akan menyebabkan saya rasa rendah diri kalau saya tak tahu 532. apa yang diorang buatkan kesannya aa begitu
Pengkaji	533. faham-faham faham-faham so basically halangan aa halangan 534. ni kat situ adalah agak susah untuk berkomunikasi well lah 535. dengan keatasan
Responden	536. Ha betul, dia kepada communication is not delivered well
Pengkaji	537. faham-faham ok next soalan how does competition from more 538. experienced candidate affect new graduate job prospect
	539. how does competition from more experienced candidate affect 540. it may affect because aa the recruiter or the HR from any 541. company is searching or are searching for those who are more 542. experienced and are showing more interest during their 543. interview walaupun aa you score aa dekan setiap sem tapi dari 544. segi the way you communicate is not that good ataupun tak 545. deliver well masa presentation assessment pun gagal so dia 546. akan pilih orang yang lebih aa layak walaupun result dia so-so 547. je aa tak bermaksud aa tak boleh dapat exam baik tapi apa 548. yang saya boleh katakan balance during the academic and then

	549. academic thing lah aa macam the skill during the interview and 550. also how you how we write our resume and CV macam tu ni 551. advance lah yang saya boleh katakan
Pengkaji	552. aa faham faham so akak rasa aa company patut ke aa upah 553. ataupun aa buat bengkel monitor mentoring new candidate 554. instead of ambil aa candidate yang ada experience sebab 555. secara logiknya fresh graduate mana ada aa experience bekerja 556. dalam apa-apa syarikat so akak rasa patut ke syarikat invest 557. untuk aa apa namanya aa buat bengkel untuk new candidate 558. supaya aa kadar kepada career mismatch tu berkurang aa
Responden	559. tak saya tak rasa tu adalah situasi yang baik kerana aa kalau 560. tak ada siapa yang ambil fresh graduate sampai bila-bila lah 561. fresh graduate tu akan menganggur and the best way untuk aa 562. empower the company to serve longer in their industry adalah 563. untuk banyakkkan ataupun untuk lebih aa serap lah aa fresh 564. graduate and groom mereka effectively coaching mentoring 565. rather than ambil yang experience kiranya faham tak kiranya 566. macam kalau dia ambil yang experience sekalipun tapi orang 567. experience tu demand gaji lebih demand nak tu nak ni nak 568. placement position tu ni apa semua dia akan jadi issue juga 569. tapi as compared to fresh graduate they are seeking for job for 570. aa a better or for experience new experience for them jadi bila 571. mereka ni dapat a good superior ataupun boss yang coaching 572. boss yang mentoring mereka baik-baik mereka actually akan 573. jadi the best tapi akan take time aa macam tu
Pengkaji	574. faham faham faham ok pernah tak akak mengalami situasi 575. dimana kemahiran yang akak ada tidak mencukupi dan tidak 576. menepati kelayakan
Responden	577. kemahiran yang tak mencukupi untuk aa
Pengkaji	578. dia lebih kepada akak pernah tak dalam mengalami situasi 579. situasi dia dimana akak punya kemahiran skill dan juga-
Responden	580. eh black out ke
Pengkaji	581. black out
Responden	582. Astagfirullah hahahaha
Pengkaji	583. ok akak punya situasi dimana aa akak punya skill dan juga aa 584. akak punya skill tidak mencukupi dan tidak menepati 585. kelayakan, okay Nasib pakai hotspot, okay teruskan
Responden	586. HAHHAHAHAHA jap jap saya terhibur ya Allah ala ada balik, 587. ni mesti cempaka
Pengkaji	588. ok back to our discussion sebab kita kekurangan aa nak jimat 589. masa
Responden	590. ok ok astagfirullah alazim
Pengkaji	591. ok abaikan je ok
Responden	592. wah sekejap saya lupa soalan
Pengkaji	593. saya ulang balik tengok
Responden	594. Ya Allah black out tu kacau betul lah fokus saya aa

Pengkaji	595. okay
Responden	596. Okay ada tak ok skill tadi kan ada dia lebih kepada excel skill 597. aa excel skill sebab dia bukan setakat kerja automotif je tau 598. pandai pakai excel tapi rata-rata pekerjaan memang kena kita 599. kena tahu macam mana nak pakai excel tu aa secara advance 600. aa kalau macam hari tu ada situasi bos suruh buat tu buat ni 601. and then aa tu adalah new task untuk buat excel jadi akan jadi 602. isu untuk saya telah menjadi isulah untuk saya deliver well and 603. menepati aa kehendak yang dia nak lah jadi apa yang saya 604. boleh katakan aa keperluan dan juga kemahiran penggunaan 605. excel yang menyebabkan saya rasa aa lambat dan tak perform 606. tapi with a guidance aa dapat buat lah just take time
Pengkaji	607. faham faham faham ok next aa question aa how does working 608. in an in an unrelated field impact kepada their long term career 609. growth and development
Responden	610. how does working in unrelated field it may not aa impact as 611. long as aa I have the passion to learn eager to to know new 612. thing and aa have a positive mindset lah Aiman I can say 613. having a positive mentality will has apa will make you aa will 614. make you grow more lah in the career tapi kalau mentality tu 615. awal-awal dah kata tak boleh buat tak suka or you are not 616. confident with yourself memang tak kemana lah aa career tu 617. memang akan menyebabkan rasa nak aa quit tak perform 618. dalam delivering aa kerja harian and most important thing 619. motivation pun takde untuk pergi kerja
Pengkaji	620. so maksud akak adalah aa kalau ada positive thought dia 621. takkan aa affect kepada long term career growth and 622. development untuk akak
Responden	623. akak aa dia akan mengatasi akan mengatasi dan membantu 624. untuk long term career growth
Pengkaji	625. faham faham okay next question aa what are the aa 626. psychological affect of career mismatch on job satisfaction and 627. mental health nak saya bahasa Melayu ke
Responden	628. boleh
Pengkaji	629. okay apakah kesan psikologi akibat daripada career mismatch 630. terhadap kepuasan kerja dan juga kesihatan mental
Responden	631. kesan psikologi lebih kepada aa keyakinan diri daripada 632. seorang yang extrovert jadi introvert kalau pekerjaan yang dia 633. pilih tu adalah berkaitan dengan urusan dokumentasi dan aa 634. management ataupun dokumen management so daripada situ 635. dia akan affect aa perubahan emosi daripada dia seorang yang 636. ceria kepada seorang yang tak ada aa macam tak ada life lah aa 637. macam saya sebelum ni saya beritahu Aiman kan saya dekat 638. kilang and then saya kena deal with the engineers and then aa 639. deal dengan supervisors of the line, supervisors yang keras 640. kepala as well as the robot-robot inside the shop jadi disitu

	641. saya akan rasa terganggu emosi every time balik kerjalah aa 642. dan menyebabkan motivasi kurang lebih kepada motivation 643. and emotion aa negative emotion arise lah aa tu psychological 644. effect yang saya terima masa masa saya berada dekat 645. production 3 bulan.
Pengkaji	646. faham aa ok next in what way does career mismatch affect 647. work aa performance and productivity macam akak cakap tadi 648. akak dah terima apa namanya kind of pressure bila deal 649. dengan orang keras kepala so basically aa benda tu affect tak 650. akak punya work performance and productivity?
Responden	651. ok pada mulanya dia akan effect performance and productivity 652. saya tapi bila aa berubah department daripada department yang 653. deal dengan aa dengan dengan dengan engineer dengan semua 654. lelaki robot apa semua berubah department kepada apa yang 655. saya minat that eventually will aa make me more apa orang 656. kata word yang selalu orang kita pakai kat FSKPM tu aa 657. resilient
Pengkaji	658. hmm
Responden	659. yes it make me more resilient and can work under pressure lah 660. so the career mismatch may influence my job performance and 661. productivity when I try to survive and I try to aa implement a 662. good and positive mental mental perspective during my career 663. career mismatch in the production at Proton Tanjung Malim.
Pengkaji	664. Faham faham, okay next aa soalan ni ada kaitan dengan soalan 665. yang first ada soalan first saya tanya pasal aa bagaimanakah aa 666. availability of career advancement opportunity influence 667. career decision okay sekarang ni saya ubah sikit soalan tu 668. kepada how does the experience of working in mismatch aa 669. career influence future career decision and transition macam 670. saya mention tadi contoh akak diberikan aa akak dipromote 671. dalam Proton untuk kenaikan pangkat adakah akak akan 672. macam like aa stay ataupun akak aa pergi balik align dengan 673. counselling
Responden	674. aa how do the experience of bolehkah saya katakan untuk 675. masa sekarang saya tak ada decision sebab my plan is that I 676. want to make a good performance or a good resume aa as for 677. moment jadi sekiranya saya dipromote untuk kenaikan pangkat 678. and given back to aa apa given aa an opportunity to back to 679. counselling ke untuk aa yes but it depends on the situation 680. because personal opinion saya aa saya nak aa saya nak 681. contribute in the counselling as well where I would like to 682. open my own aa macam pusat ke like more to business thingy 683. lah and I can do counselling as well as a registered counsellor 684. and at the same time jadi part-timer lah dia macam my aa 685. where I can polish my skill I can help people I can aa join 686. NGO tapi at the same time I am entitled as proton executive tu

	687. aa macam tu
Pengkaji	688. Faham faham
Responden	689. jadi aa it is not a big deal actually once again it is depending 690. on your choice dia boleh je kalau nak terus lupakan 691. counselling but I am having the passion right now and saya 692. tahu dia ada jalannya macam mana saya nak practice Cuma 693. depends dengan diri lagi larat tak larat and how far the 694. limitation I'm having later jadi tu faham
Pengkaji	695. so akak rasa macam akak cakap tadi akan nak cantikkan 696. resume untuk akak might be pursue in another thing
Responden	697. Yes
Pengkaji	698. so akak rasa tempoh untuk akak cantikkan resume tu dalam 699. berapa tahun sebelum akak lonjak kepada next career
Responden	700. yang tu lebih kepada short term aa short term aa apa orang kata 701. short term planning lah aa yang tu saya letakkan dalam tempoh 702. 2 tahun lah
Pengkaji	703. faham faham faham so aa basically itu sahaja soalan saya okay 704. pada Kak *** so thank you for aa participating my research 705. tadi lah so alright untuk pengetahuan akak saya punya tajuk aa 706. research adalah mismatch career in tertiary education level 707. among university student eh among graduate university so itu 708. sahajalah terima kasih Kak *** ataupun akak ada soalan?
Responden	709. welcome so far tak ada soalan
Pengkaji	710. okay okay itu sahaja bye thank you
Responden	711. alright