

Can Gender and Location Create Career Indecision among the Undergraduates of Management Studies in State Universities of Sri Lanka?

P. N. Kumanayake, Bandula Lanka Galhena*


Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka

Abstract

Career indecision that refers to the inability to make a decision about an occupational field one wishes to pursue has been a focus of academic research over the last few decades. Career indecision, especially among university undergraduates, is a dynamic phenomenon that is being vicariously explored presently. Research has drawn attention to explore the determinants and consequences of career indecision among undergraduates. However, little is known about whether there is a significant difference of career indecision particularly among state university management undergraduates in Sri Lanka based on their gender and location. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore whether there is any significant differences in

Correspondence should be addressed to **Dr. Bandula Lanka Galhena, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka*

Email: blgalhena2@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8561-9202>

(Received 29th December 2020; Revised 15th November 2021; Accepted 01st December 2021 © OUSL)



This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License (CC-BY-SA). This license permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium; provided it is licensed under the same terms and the original work is properly cited.

How to Cite: Kumanayake, P.N. and Galhena, B.L., 2021. Can Gender and Location Create Career Indecision among the Undergraduates of Management Studies in State Universities of Sri Lanka?. *OUSL Journal*, 16(2), pp.99–120.
DOI: <http://doi.org/10.4038/ouslj.v16i2.7497>

career indecision among state university management undergraduates in Sri Lanka, when it comes to the segregation of the target population based on the gender as well as the geographical location of the state universities. A sample of 153 final year management students were selected using stratified sampling techniques from two metropolitan and two rural state universities. Both physical and online self-administered questionnaires were used to collect the data. Independent sample t-test was used to test the hypotheses. As per the key findings of the study, it was revealed that career indecisiveness was higher among males and the difference in career indecision between male and female management undergraduate is significant. Moreover, this study found that there are no significant differences in career indecision between students studying in peripheral or urban universities. These findings would be beneficial to undergraduates, policy makers and government institutions as well as for the society at large, when it comes to devising human resource development programs, related policies etc. As this study found empirical support for significant differences in career indecision between male and female management undergraduates, the authorities who design career counseling interventions need to pay attention on this. As male undergraduates experience relatively high degree of career indecisiveness, separate strategies are required to address the differences.

Keywords: Career indecision, Management Undergraduate, State University, Gender, Location

Introduction

Career indecision which refers to the inability to resolve on a chosen profession (Feldman, 2003) is recognized as a noteworthy issue among many university graduates. With increased choice of courses at universities, and more opportunities and options to pursue tertiary education, in addition to expanding work opportunities globally, the career decision-making process has become more complex, and as such, more challenging for students (Winderman, Martin, & Smith, 2017; Jordaan, Burger, & Smithard, 2009). Making an appropriate career decision is critically important and it has been a pressing issue especially for young students (Ukil, 2016). This phenomenon has been explored by many researchers throughout several decades mainly to identify key factors contributing to career indecision among various individuals (Pesch, Larson, & Seipel, 2017; Lee & Woo, 2016; Germeijs & Boeck, 2001; Osipow, 1999; Taylor & Betz, 1983).

Most of the previous studies on career indecision were aimed at exploring significant factors influencing career indecision among college students and were conducted in the West. No such studies

have been conducted among university students in a Sri Lankan context. Further, it is challenging to generalize the findings of these studies that were based on students in developed economies, to the Sri Lankan context. This lack of compatibility would be due to the vast differences in the cultural settings, demographics, and economic aspects, disparities in financial situations and so on of the developed and developing contexts (Yeager, 2018; Mueller, 2004).

In Sri Lanka, entering state universities is highly restricted owing to the GCE Advanced Level (A/L) examination being competitive. Approximately 20% of those who are qualified at the A/L examination gain entrance to the universities. At the same time, according to statistics released by the University Grants Commission, it is evident that the intake of students to state universities has gradually risen, especially in the management field, during the past few years. This is yet another factor, for deriving the target sample out of final year students. Graduates passing out from state universities could be considered as a major asset for uplifting the country's economy (Ukil, 2016). Their contribution towards the enhancement of the educated workforce is immense. Their knowledge at the managerial level is a key factor in the growth of state as well as private institutions. However, the issue at hand is, at present the economy of the country has not expanded in order to create more employment opportunities for graduates. Thus, the graduates are unable to make correct decisions about their career prospects. This leads to underemployment which is a deterrent as far as gainful employment is concerned. It is imperative to have a high-growth trajectory in terms of the country's economy. Thus, the objective of the present study is to explore whether there is any significant differences in career indecision in light of state university management undergraduates in Sri Lanka, when it comes to the segregation of the target population based on the gender as well as the geographical location of the state universities.

Research problem

Graduates passing out from state universities are considered as a significant resource, which would benefit the overall economy of the country in the long run (Brown et al., 2013). Career indecision is a complex issue which affects the overall growth of an economy. There are over 400,000 unemployed persons in Sri Lanka. According to the Department of Census and Statistics, the unemployment rate was 4.2% at the end of the first quarter of 2016. Career indecision hampers not only the personal advancement of the job seeker, but also undermines the expansion of

the national economy (Jordaan, Burger & Smithard, 2009). Unemployment is the most significant, immediate consequence of being career indecisive.

The overall unemployment figures for the past few years are depicted in Table 1. When analyzing these statistics, it is apparent that the unemployment rates have either varied insignificantly or risen. This too could be considered as proof of an impending issue about career indecision among young adults, which then leads to the economic development of a country. The number of graduates who are engaged in vital professions are far less than the number of graduated who are engaged in unimportant professions i.e. Development Officers and Management Assistants. These posts were created in order to find solutions to the problem of graduate unemployment. The country's economy gains very little from them whereas the other professionals' contribution is immense.

Table 1.

Statistical Data on Unemployment Trends

Unemployment rate by Gender	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Male	2.7	2.8	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.9
Female	7.1	6.3	6.6	6.5	7.6	7.0
Unemployment rate by age group						
20 – 29	12.4	11.3	13.1	13.6	14.2	14.2
20 – 24	17.7	16.7	19.3	19.9	19.7	19.9
25 – 29	7.7	6.6	7.6	8.2	9.4	9.2
Unemployment rate by education (OL and AL)						
Male	5.4	4.6	5.7	5.4	4.8	4.9
Female	13.2	10.8	11.8	11.1	13.5	11.9

Note: *Annual Bulletin (2016), Department of Census and Statistics*

Many students are indecisive when it comes to generating the initial occupational preferences (Brown et al., 2013). Arriving at a career decision is a difficult and anxious task for many students. It has been estimated that more than 25% of all students entering universities do so without having decided on a career (Rogers & Westbrook, 1983). Thus, career indecision can be cited as a complex issue which affects the overall growth of an economy (Lent & Brown, 2006).

In order to identify the prevalence of the issue among management undergraduates in a Sri Lankan context, a mini survey was

conducted, comprising of twenty Management undergraduates of the University of Ruhuna. As statistical sample is not required to conduct a pre-study (Zikmund et al, 2010), the final year and third year undergraduates were selected for this mini survey by means of convenient sampling technique. Interviews were conducted with the selected respondents using an interview checklist. Out of them, 66 percent indicated that they were undecided on a clear-cut career path to embark on, once the degree was completed while only 34 percent precisely stated that they have specifically decided on their career. Though Hackett & Betz, (1995) contend that career/occupational decisions are among the most powerful decisions that influence people's lives, the findings of the mini survey was inconsistent.

People must make occupational decisions over their entire lifespan (Porfeli, Hartung, & Vondracek, 2008). Hence, inappropriate decisions regarding the career could bring about many negative consequences to both the employee as well as to the employing organization. Being undecided can hinder people from taking control of their careers (Savickas, 2013). An employee entering a particular profession in an indecisive nature would become dissatisfied, demoralized and demotivated easily. On the other hand, the organization in which individual is employed could also face losses due to lower productivity, efficiency and effectiveness, wastage of hiring, induction and training costs, extensive grievance handling (Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk, 2010). Furthermore, the employee will not be in a position to use his or her full potential. Employee has to confront serious limitations in terms of gaining professional achievements. His/her skills will not be fully utilized in the job market.

In boosting the economic growth, the contribution of the educated youth cannot be underestimated. When a graduate faces impediment in choosing his/her career, invariably it negatively affects the socio-economic development of the country. Unemployment of state university graduates is considered a national issue as billions of rupees are invested each year to provide free university education to the students who obtained the highest score in each stream and thus returns of these investments are worth investigating at institutional level and national level (Liyanage, Kumara, and Withanawasam, 2017). Graduates should be able to reach their full potential. However, there are multitudes of challenge faced by them in selecting their career paths. More pathways should be made, and more and more opportunities should be provided.

Many differences can be cited among males and females generally, especially when it comes to cognitive skills. Their thinking processes are also quite different to each other (Reber, & Tranel, 2017). Likewise, decision making skills and abilities too would differ based on the gender. Cognitive or mental abilities could vary among males and females perhaps due to the genetic, biological and hormonal differences, along with the discrepancies in cultural and environmental backgrounds. The processing speed and the perception about certain facts and figures too tend to vary among males and females. Moreover, significant variances have been identified when it comes to attention to detail and accuracy, responsiveness to sensory stimulation, reasoning skills, probability measurements, reading comprehension skills etc. based on the gender (Powell, & Ansic, 1997). Basically, it has been established through previous studies that the manner in which individuals process, store and apply information, when it comes to various social situations, tend to differ based on either masculinity or femininity.

The poor female labor force participation rate in Sri Lanka does not necessarily mean that it is attributed due to the indecisive nature of making career decisions. It could be mostly due to other, more pressing social and cultural constraints. But then again, it is a well-documented fact that there are some discrepancies when it comes to career related choices and decision making, among males and females.

With regard to the geographical location of the state universities, it is a commonly held perception that the provision of all sorts of facilities is higher within the universities located at close proximity to the city center. Table 2 depicts the ranking of state universities in Sri Lanka. Highlighted are the four universities which the researcher based this study on. The researcher categorized University of Colombo and University of Sri Jayewardenepura as metropolitan universities and University of Ruhuna and Sabaragamuwa University as rural universities purely based on the proximity to the city center. When analyzing the rankings, it is apparent that the two metropolitan universities are ranked much higher, when compared to the two rural universities.

These rankings are done based on various criteria such as the teaching and learning environment, research volume and reputation, research influence based on the number of citations, international outlook on staff and students, student retention rates, the level of knowledge transfer, academic reputation held, graduation rates, level of faculty resources, the average class size, the student – faculty ratio, number of students admitted per academic year, financial resources per student and so on. Thus, based on the assumptions given above,

the problem statement of the study is whether there are any significant differences in career indecision in light of state university management undergraduates in Sri Lanka, when it comes to the segregation of the target population based on the gender as well as the geographical location of the state universities?

Table 2.
University Rankings

Rank	University
1.	University of Peradeniya
2.	University of Colombo
3.	University of Kelaniya
4.	University of Moratuwa
5.	University of Ruhuna
6.	University of Sri Jayewardenepura
7.	University of Jaffna
8.	Rajarata University
9.	General Sir John Kotelawala Defense University
10.	Eastern University of Sri Lanka
11.	Open University of Sri Lanka
12.	Sabaragamuwa University
13.	Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
14.	Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology
15.	South Eastern University of Sri Lanka

Note: Web Ranking (2017), Webometrics.info

Review of Literature

Career Indecision

Emphasizing the unfavorable aspects of the phenomenon, the traditional definition conceptualized career indecision as a barrier in career development. Scholars offer mixed ideas in their definition of career indecision as a wavering, pause, or hesitation in career development (Savickas, 2011), an openness to alternative career pathways (Krumboltz, 2009), and a state of adaptive uncertainty (Krieshok, Black, & McKay, 2009; Phillips, 1997). Due to the dynamic nature of the phenomenon a comprehensive literature review was

carried out on theoretical definition of the ‘career indecision’. The definitions of career indecision have evolved over decades and most widely used definitions in the extant literature are listed down in the Table 3. As illustrated in the Table, there are certain inconsistencies as well as similarities in the definitions of career indecision. “Inability” and “Uncertainty” seem to be the widely used terminology in describing this phenomenon. Thus, after reviewing extant literature, the present study defines career indecision as a state of being undecided about one’s career-related path as it covers the necessary dimensions of the phenomenon.

Table 3.
Evolution of the definition of career indecision

Author and Year	Definition
Maree (2016)	Inability to make a decision about the vocation one wishes to pursue.
Penn (2016)	Difficulty or inability to learn about the self, learn about careers and integrate both sources of information to make a career decision.
Lam (2016)	A normal developmental phase that many individuals go through as they make career decisions.
Hartley (2009)	A serious, possibly detrimental, multi-faceted attribute, which may persist throughout an individual’s lifespan.
Lopez and Ann-Yi (2006)	Inability or feeling of higher extent of perceived uncertainty to choose a specific career goal.
Germeijs and Boeck (2003)	Denotes problems during the career decision-making process.
Guay, (2003)	The inability to make a decision about the vocation one wishes to pursue.
Osipow (1999)	Repeatedly having trouble making career decisions to the point where closure is not reached in time to implement appropriate behavior.

Drivers of Career indecision

Career indecision has become one of the most vital considerations in career counseling program and counselors who intend to design initiatives to reduce the career indecisiveness. In this concern, they mainly aim at two parameters of career indecision such as levels of career indecision and sources of career indecision (Osipow, 1999).

First parameter refers to whether a person is undecided or decided to pertain the career field while the second parameter focuses on drivers/determinants/sources of one's career indecision. Most of the previous studies on this phenomenon aimed at addressing the second parameter and embarked studies to explore the determinants of career indecision in many contexts. In order to identify those determinants, an extensive literature review was carried out covering the empirical studies conducted during last decades. By reviewing extant literature on career indecision, it is quite evident that the particular phenomenon is being discussed and looked into over the span of many decades until most recent years (Ukil 2016; Atli 2016; Lee & Woo 2016; Thomas & Feldman 2009; Hartley 2009; Salami & Aremu 2007; Guay et al 2003; Germeijs & Boeck 2001; Taylor & Betz 1983). However, relatively fewer studies have been conducted to identify the sources of career indecision particularly among Management undergraduate of the Sri Lankan context (Liyanage, Kumara, & Withanawasam, 2017; Ariyawansa, 2013).

By reviewing previous literature, the researchers found certain similarities as well as inconsistencies with regard to research methodology used, independent variables specified to determine career indecision and the findings. As far as the determinants of career indecision is concerned, previous studies explored the influence of many individual level and societal factors on career indecision. Most widely used factors include parental interest, impact from the university, financial support, national shortage of jobs, career counseling, career education, lack of information, lack of personal ability and political and social reference, personality traits, interpersonal relationships, internal locus of control, positivism, Parental attachment and psychological separation, role of peers, self-efficacy and autonomy (Ukil, 2016; Atli, 2016; Lee & Woo, 2016; Thomas & Feldman, 2009; Hartley, 2009; Salami & Aremu, 2007; Guay et al., 2003; Germeijs & Boeck 2001; Jones 1989; Taylor & Betz 1983, Kumanayaka & Galhena, 2017).

As discussed above, depending on the second parameter of the career indecision most of the studies focused on identifying the sources of career indecision among different respondents' groups. However, the researchers observed that no adequate studies have been undertaken by the scholars to deal with the first parameter of the career indecision, i.e. different level of career indecision among different groups such as gender (Male/female) and location (Urban/rural). Thus, to fill the gap in the literature this study aims at exploring whether there are any significant differences among such groups.

Hypotheses

In general, decision making is quite a complicated process. It includes so many steps such as identifying the problem, developing alternative solutions, evaluating alternatives, selecting the best solution, making a decision, evaluating the results and following up (Robins, 2000). Thus, career related decision making is also a similarly complex process. That too would have to pass through so many stages such as career exploration, determine career goals, evaluating career strategies (Greenhaus, et al. 2010).

Decision making among individuals, especially when segregated gender-wise, has so many discrepancies (Reber, & Tranel, 2017). According to previous research work, it has been revealed that there are significant differences among males and females, when it comes to focusing on various aspects related to decision making. Males tend to be high risk takers when it comes to decision making, they are said to be more independent, analytical, goal - oriented as well as more lenient towards quick decision making (Francis, Hasan, Park, & Wu, 2015). Assertiveness, competitiveness, confidence and aggressiveness are much more prevalent with regard to decision making among males (Koch, D'Mello, & Sackett, 2015).

On the other hand, females are said to be more risk-averse, dependent, rational and empathy based, emotionally biased etc. when it comes to decision making (Sovet, & Metz, 2014). Collaboration and compassion are visible within decision making done by females. Intuitive, flexible and long-term oriented decision-making patterns are said to be more apparent among females (Greenhaus, et al., 2010).

Likewise, it is clear that there is a significant difference among various traits of decision making, between males and females. Similarly, the same differences and discrepancies apply to career decision making among males and females. Accordingly, the researcher built-up the below hypothesis:

H 1: There is a significant difference in career indecision among male and female management undergraduates

University systems can be categorized based on so many factors such as staff size, the degrees offered, number of faculties and so on (Dill, & Soo, 2005). One such factor is the location of the university, which can be further categorized as rural and metropolitan. Based on this classification, students are said to be exposed to different opportunities.

The differences in the exposure of opportunities arise due to various factors such as the availability of resources differ between rural and urban state universities, the access to information is somewhat curtailed when it comes to rural universities, the ability to network and direct access to employment opportunities is higher for students studying at metropolitan universities, availability of facilities such as career counseling and the organization of related workshops is much more prevalent within urban universities (Johnston, & Huggins, 2016).

Therefore, it is quite apparent that there is a difference in terms of the access to these resources and facilities, between the two types of universities and it is safe to say that more support is being given to career decision making for students of metropolitan universities and the level of opportunities that they are exposed are much higher. Thereby, such students would be at a much more advantageous position when it comes to making precise career related decisions. Thus, the following hypothesis was developed:

H 2: There is a significant difference in career indecision among management undergraduates studying in rural and urban locations

Methodology

The aim of the present study is to identify whether there is a significant difference in career indecision, based on the gender of the target population and the physical location of state universities. Hence, out of the three research designs of exploratory, descriptive and causal, the current study is to be categorized under descriptive research designs (Zikmund et al, 2010). The research question of the study is to identify whether there is any significant differences of career indecision based on the gender and the geographical location of the state university. Thereby, the respondents to the survey research would ideally be final year, university undergraduates. Thus, the unit of analysis for the present study is “individual”.

The research was carried out in a Sri Lankan context as no previous scholarly works had dealt with the career indecision phenomenon in a local context (Kumanayaka & Galhena, 2016). The tertiary education sector was selected as it held the most probable segment to become career indecisive. Ultimately, final year, management students were focused upon due to applicability of the phenomenon interested in this study. At the same time, by reviewing the annual intake and university admission data released by the University Grants Commission of Sri

Lanka, it can be observed that there is a steady growth in the Management stream. Thus, it is apparent that this segment of students would be quite viable when it comes to measuring career indecision.

The target population of the study includes all undergraduates in state universities in Sri Lanka. The exact sample which was derived from this population was 153 final year, management undergraduates from the state universities of Ruhuna, Sri Jayewardenepura, Colombo and Sabaragamuwa; with approximately 30 participants from each university. As shown in Table 4, the stratified sampling technique was used to draw the sample. The main purpose of the study was to explore the significant differences of the career indecision among management undergraduates studying in state Universities located in different locations in Sri Lanka. Thus, respondents from the university of Sri Jayewardenepura and University of Colombo were selected as they were located in the Colombo which is the capital of Sri Lanka. On the other hand, University of Ruhuna and Sabaragamuwa were selected as they are located away from the capital of Sri Lanka. As indicated in Table 4, stratified sampling technique employed to draw the sample as the study focused on final year management undergraduates of the four state universities in Sri Lanka. From each strata 10 percent were selected for data collection altogether sample size was determined as 218 management undergraduates.

Table 4.
Sampling

University	Batch size	10% of the target population	Actual no. of respondents
University of Colombo	421	42.1	39
University of Sri Jayewardenepura	1089	108.9	33
University of Ruhuna	315	31.5	44
Sabaragamuwa University	352	35.2	37

Note: *University Grants Commission*

Non-interactive methods were used in the data collection procedure. Under that, self-administered survey questionnaires were used. This method was adopted due to its advantages such as the cost effectiveness, anonymity of the respondent, absence of any interviewer bias, ability to use standardized, structured and undisguised questions (Hair, Money, Samouel, & Page, 2007). The questionnaire was designed with the guidelines suggested by Churchill & Iacobucci, (2002) in a manner where the first section dealt with the demographic

variables and general questions, section two included questions raised on the dependent variable of career indecision. The questionnaires were distributed both as internet survey questionnaires and physically distributed questionnaires. The word format questionnaires were converted into Google Forms using the Google drive, and the link was shared among the targeted group of undergraduates. On the other hand, with the help of lecturers and students of some of the respective universities, the questionnaires were physically distributed after taking printouts of the word format. As a result, 98 responses were received from the internet survey questionnaires and the rest of the 55 responses were obtained via the physically distributed questionnaires. The previously established and empirically tested scale was extracted from Germeijs & Boeck (2001) consisting of 22 items, as well as the scale by Callanan & Greenhaus (1990) consisting of a total of 32 items, which were adjusted and appropriately used for the present study.

Data collected thorough questionnaire survey were feed into the SPSS and were consequently examined for outliers and missing values. Frequency distributions were used to analyses the sample profile of the mk,respondents and Coronbach alpha test run to confirm the reliability of the construct. Independent sample t-test was performed to test the hypothesis as the two hypotheses of the present study aims at explained the significant differences among the two groups that is Male – Female and Urban - Rural (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

Findings and Discussion

Respondent error, which results from some respondent action or inaction (Zikmund et al., 2010), leads to distorting the results of survey research. In the present study, two major types of respondent error—nonresponse error and response bias—were considered. Nonresponse error is viewed as “the statistical differences between a survey that includes only those who responded and a perfect survey that would also include those who failed to respond” (Zikmund et al., 2010, p. 190). Nonresponse error was assessed by comparing early and late respondents in terms of all variables of the study. In order to find whether there is a significant difference, t-tests were run first between early and late respondents of the e-mail survey; second, between early and late respondents of the personal survey. The findings of the t-test indicated that there was no significant difference in the responses between early and late respondents. Further, to find out whether there is a significant difference of the responses among

respondents of the two data collection medium, t-test was carried out for the study variables. T-rest revealed that there were no significant differences of the responses of the study variables among two data collection mediums: e-mail survey and direct contact survey. This leads to the conclusion that nonresponse bias is not a serious concern in the present study.

In order to ensure the face validity, the present study used pre-established scale by reviewing previous literary work (Zikmund et al, 2010). In order to establish the reliability of the data, the Cronbach Alpha values were tested, and results confirmed that career indecision (0.872) that is the key construct of the study met the threshold values of 0.6 confirming the reliability of the measures. Independent sample t-test was conducted to test the pre-established hypotheses of the research. When observing Table 5, the mean value of career indecision for males is 2.62, while the mean value for females is only 2.15. Thus, the mean value of males is greater than 2.5, which is the mid-point of a 1 – 5 scale, and it is much closer to five. At the same time, when reviewing Table 6, the significance values depicted are less than 0.05. Thus, it reveals that the output received can be interpreted in a manner where career indecisiveness is said to be higher among male undergraduates. This means that there is a significant difference in career indecision among male and female management undergraduates.

Table 5.
Impact upon Gender

Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	2.62	.991	.075
Female	2.15	.664	.044

Table 6.
Independent Samples Test (Gender)

	t-test for Equality of Means					Df
	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Career	394	.000	.465	.083	.301	.629
Indecision	283.3	.000	.465	.087	.292	.638

With regard to the segregation of the four selected state universities based on their geographical location and the proximity to the city center, it was revealed that being a metropolitan university or a rural university is immaterial upon being career indecisive. This conclusion

was arrived at by first reviewing the mean values depicted in Table 7. Upon initial observation, it seems as if career indecision is higher among peripheral universities; since the mean value for peripheral universities is 2.49, while the mean value for metropolitan universities is only 2.31. But this observation should continue to the next table, which is Table 8, where both the significant values are exceeding 0.05, therefore proving that the above observation is insignificant. This means that there are no significance differences in career indecision among management undergraduates studying at the urban and peripheral universities.

Table 7.
Impact upon Region

	Region	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Career Indecision	Peripheral	2.49	.973	.095
	Urban	2.31	.803	.046

Table 8.
Independent Samples Test (Region)

	t-test for Equality of Means						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Career Indecision	1.83	394	.068	.178	.097	-.013	.370
	1.67	153.63	.097	.178	.106	-.032	.389

Hypothesis 1 claims that there is a significant difference in career indecision among male and female management undergraduates. Hypothesis 1 was supported through the t-test analysis ($F= 119$; $df =283.30$ $p = 0.000$). This means that level of career indecision is significantly different between male and female management undergraduates. This further supported that the career indecisiveness is higher among male management undergraduates. Through previous studies conducted on this regard, it was well established and documented that, certain cognitive and behavioral patterns such as inattentiveness, restlessness, impatience, aggressiveness were observed among males (Koch, D'Mello, & Sackett, 2015). Females are said to be more focused and alert when making serious decisions (Sovet, & Metz, 2014). Consistent with the previous work this study found empirical support for this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 postulates that there is a significant difference in career indecision among management undergraduates studying in rural and

urban locations. Hypothesis 2 was not supported through the results obtained via the T-test findings. This means that whether the university is in urban or peripheral location is not a significant factor differentiating the degree of career indecision among management undergraduates. This finding is inconsistent with the previous work of Johnston, & Huggins, (2016) who argued that career counseling opportunities are prevalent in the universities located in urban areas compared to universities in peripheral locations. The possible reason for these inconsistent findings would be that even though the physical location of each university might differ from each other, the student body in any given university comprises of students from all over the country. Therefore, a university would not hold an exclusive cultural setting, but it would be an amalgamation of so many. Also, it proves that fact the level of resources and facilities available within a given university does not account to a student being career indecisive.

Implications

The aim of the study was to identify whether there was any significant impact on a student being career indecisive or not, based on his or her gender as well as the geographical location of the university to which the student is attached to. Based on the T-test findings, it was revealed that there is a significant difference in career indecision of the male and female management undergraduates while the physical location of the university was an immaterial factor when it comes to being career indecisive. As indicated in the literature section the career indecision phenomenon was explored mostly in line with the second parameter that is the source of career indecision. As no adequate studies were conducted addressing the first parameter that is the level of career indecision among different groups, the findings of this study would be significant on filling the gap in the literature in this respect.

From a practical perspective, there are various contributions that could be drawn from this study. The research findings could be applied in providing government sponsored career guidance programs within state universities, career counseling facilities and career guidance units established at school levels and so on. Various institutions such as National Human Resource Development Council of Sri Lanka, Vocational Training Institutes (VTIs) and even non-governmental organizations (NGOs) would benefit from the research findings when designing human resource development programs; especially if they are to focus on and emphasize on the development of various facets in terms of cognitive discrepancies between males and females.

Employers as well as the management of various organizations would be in a beneficial position in identifying how to appropriately

disseminate and delegate the decision-making authorities within a workplace, yet again by recognizing the level of indecisive nature between the two genders. Government institutions and related policy makers too would be able to identify drawbacks and to rectify errors when formulating relevant policies. As this study found empirical support for significant differences among career indecisiveness among male and female management undergraduates, the authorities who design career counseling workshop and interventions should pay attention on this matter. As male undergraduates experience relatively high degree of career indecisiveness, separate strategies are required to address the differences.

Limitations and Future Research

Major limitation of this research is the limited sample size of respondents. Though the researcher intended to collect responses from a sample size comprising of at least 200, due to the poor response rate, was forced to settle for only 153 responses. If the sample size could have expanded beyond this, more vigorous results could have been obtained, which could have been generalized in a broader manner. Regarding the context of the sample derived, the researcher was limited to using only four state universities out of a total count of thirteen state universities within Sri Lanka.

Major issue in terms of the research design was the cross-sectional data collection carried out by the researcher. That is, the data was collected only during one instance. Career indecision is a phenomenon that could change over time. Theories dealing with social sciences have a tendency of changing with the progress of time. Ideally, in order to get a reliable output, the collection of data should have done over the expanse of a particular time span. Yet another similar limitation was in terms of the data collection tool used by the researcher. Only self-administered survey questionnaires were used to collect data from the sample group. If multiple tools were used to collect data, it would have been easier to statistically prove the findings. At the same time, the very same survey paper was used to collect data on both the dependent variable as well the independent variables.

The classification of the universities as metropolitan and rural was done on an arbitrary basis, purely based on the proximity to the city center. The rankings of the universities is also a very dynamic fact, since it keeps on altering on a yearly basis.

As future research implications and directions, impending researchers could expand the sample size, as a start. With the expansion of the

target population size, it would be easier to generalize the findings and the output received would be much more vigorous. At the same time, a greater number of universities could be included to derive the sample. So as to further elaborate this point, if geographic-wise the impact on career indecision is to be measured, more number of both rural as well as metropolitan universities could be selected, rather than being limited to only two from each.

Without limiting to only survey questionnaires, future researchers could use multiple data collection methods such as coupling the self-administered questionnaires with interviews and focus-group discussions, so as to derive much more in-depth information from the sample set. Different modes and methods could be appropriately applied to collect data on the dependent variable and the independent variables separately. Even through from a practical perspective it could be a bit challenging, it is always advisable to opt for longitudinal data collection methods rather than sticking to cross-sectional data collection. That is, the data could be collected at various points in time so that the changes in the responses over time could be identified.

Future researchers could opt for a more appropriate basis of categorizing universities as metropolitan and rural. Facts and figures could be gathered on the provision of specific facilities within each university, and identify whether there are underprivileged universities, when compared against each other. Such information would be helpful in further establishing the categorization of state universities within Sri Lanka.

References

- Ariyawansa, R. (2013). Employability of Graduates of Sri Lankan Universities. *Sri Lankan Journal of Human Resource Management*, 2(1), 91–104.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4038/sljhrm.v2i1.5107>
- Brown, S. D., Abrams, M., Carr, A. & Hacker, J. (2013). Development of the Career Indecision Profile: Factor Structure, Reliability, and Validity, *Journal of Career Assessment*, 21(1), 32-41.
DOI:10.1177/1069072712453832
- Callanan, G. A. & Greenhaus, J. H. (1990). The career indecision of managers and professionals: Development of a scale and test of a model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 37(1), 79-103.
DOI:10.1016/0001-8791(90)90008-p

- Churchill, G. A. & Iacobucci, D. (2002). *Marketing Research: Methodological Foundations* (8th ed.): Harcourt Collage Publishers.
- Dill, D. D. & Soo, M. (2005). Academic quality, league tables, and public policy: A cross-national analysis of university ranking systems. *Higher education*, 49(4), 495-533.
DOI: 10.1007/s10734-004-1746-8
- Feldman, D. C. (2003). The antecedents and consequences of early career indecision among young adults. *Human Resource Management Review*, 13(3), 499-531.
DOI:10.1016/s1053-4822(03)00048-2
- Germeijs, V. & Boeck, P.D. (2001). Career Indecision: Three Factors from Decision Theory. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 62, 11-25.
DOI:10.1016/S0001-8791(02)00055-6
- Greenhaus, J. H., Callanan, G. A. & Godshalk, V. M. (2010). *Career management*. Sage.
- Guay, F., Senecal, C., Gauthier, L. & Fernet, C. (2003). Predicting Career Indecision: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50(2), 165–177.
- Hackett, G. & Betz, N. E. (1995). Self-efficacy and career choice and development. In *Self-efficacy, adaptation, and adjustment* (pp. 249-280). Springer, Boston, MA.
- Hair, J. J. F., Money, A. H., Samouel, P., & Page, M. (2007). *Research methods for business*: John Wiley.
- Hair, J. J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J. & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis: A global perspective* (7th ed.): Pearson Education, New Jersey.
- Jordaan, Y., Burger, E. & Smithard, C. (2009). Comparing levels of career indecision among selected honours degree students at the University of Pretoria. *Meditari Accountancy Research*, 17(2), 85-100. DOI:10.1108/10222529200900013

- Johnston, A. & Huggins, R. (2016). Drivers of university–industry links: The case of knowledge-intensive business service firms in rural locations. *Regional Studies*, 50(8), 1330-1345.
- Koch, A. J., D'Mello, S. D. & Sackett, P. R. (2015). A meta-analysis of gender stereotypes and bias in experimental simulations of employment decision making. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(1), 128.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0036734>
- Krieschok, T. S., Black, M. D. & McKay, R. A. (2009). Career decision making: The limits of rationality and the abundance of non-conscious processes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75(3), 275-290.
DOI: 10.1016/j.jvb.2009.04.006
- Krumboltz, J. D. (2009). The happenstance learning theory. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 17(2), 135-154.
DOI:10.1177/1069072708328861
- Lee, S. & Woo, S. (2016). The Mediation of Worry about Career between Career Indecision and Career Search Behavior in South Korean College Students. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 9(41).
DOI: 10.17485/ijst/2016/v9i41/103839, November 2016
- Lent, R. W. & Brown, S. D. (2006). On conceptualizing and assessing social cognitive constructs in career research: A measurement guide. *Journal of career assessment*, 14(1), 12-35.
DOI:10.1177/1069072705281364
- Liyanage, P. T. D., Kumara, U. A. & Withanawasam, M. P. K. (2017). Employability of The Management Graduates in Sri Lanka: A Case Study, 12th FMSC Symposium, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.
- Mueller, S. L. (2004). Gender gaps in potential for entrepreneurship across countries and cultures. *Journal of developmental entrepreneurship*, 9(3), 199.
- Osipow, S. H. (1999). Assessing Career Indecision. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 55, 147–154.

- Phillips, S. D. (1997). Toward an expanded definition of adaptive decision making. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 45(3), 275-287.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.1997.tb00471>
- Porfeli, E. J., Hartung, P. J. & Vondracek, F. W. (2008). Children's vocational development: A research rationale. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 57(1), 25-37.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2008.tb00163>
- Powell, M. & Ansic, D. (1997). Gender differences in risk behaviour in financial decision-making: An experimental analysis. *Journal of economic psychology*, 18(6), 605-628.
- Reber, J. & Tranel, D. (2017). Sex differences in the functional lateralization of emotion and decision making in the human brain. *Journal of neuroscience research*, 95(1-2), 270-278.
DOI:10.1002/jnr.23829
- Rogers, W. B. & Westbrook, B. W. (1983). Measuring career indecision among college students: Toward a valid approach for counseling practitioners and researchers. *Measurement & Evaluation in Guidance*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00256307.1983.12022337>
- Robins, S. P. (2000). *Management today*. Prentice Hall.
- Savickas, M. L. (2013). Career construction theory and practice. *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work*, 2, 144-180.
- Sovet, L. & Metz, A. J. (2014). Parenting styles and career decision-making among French and Korean adolescents. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 84(3), 345-355.
DOI: 10.1016/j.jvb.2014.02.002
- Taylor, K. M. & Betz, N. (1983). Applications of Self-Efficacy Theory to the Understanding and Treatment of Career Indecision. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 22, 63-81.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791\(83\)90006-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(83)90006-4)

- Ukil, M. I. (2016). Career Barriers to Career Indecision: A Final Year BBA Students View. *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 13. DOI:10.17512/pjms.2016.13.1.18
- Winderman, K., Martin, C. E. & Smith, N. G. (2017). Career Indecision among LGB College Students: The Role of Minority Stress, Perceived Social Support, and Community Affiliation. *Journal of Career Development*. DOI:10.1177/0894845317722860
- Yeager, T. (2018). Institutions, transition economies, and economic development. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429499760>
- Zikmund, W., Babin, B., Carr, J. & Griffin, M. (2010). Business research methods (8th ed.): South Western, Cengage Learning.