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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Study on Factors Affecting for Selecting Human Resource Management Specialization

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
  *Corresponding Author: nm.rathnayakemudiyanselage@utas.edu.au	The purpose of this study is to identify the factors that affect students' selection decisions for Human Resource Management (HRM) specialization. Students often face a competitive situation when choosing a major specialization among various options. This study employed a quantitative research design, collecting data from 164 business undergraduates from both a private and a public university, ABC University and XYZ University. One hundred seventeen HRM students' responses were analyzed to meet the study's objectives. The analysis identified eight factors that contribute to 69% of the decision making process for selecting their HRM specialization. These factors include interest in the field, aptitude in the subject, personality traits, course content, reputation of the subject and the university, job characteristics, other influences, and occupational prestige. The results revealed that social factors are the most influential in the selection of HRM specialization. Additionally, the study found a relationship between students' selection decisions and their personal, academic and social characteristics. The implications of this study suggest that understanding these factors can help universities and policymakers develop better support systems and guidelines, enabling students to make more informed and competitive decisions among various specializations.

INTRODUCTION

Every year, thousands of people enter universities worldwide as undergraduates. Adapting to new life and making academic decisions are common challenges that undergraduates face. Selecting academic majors is one of the most important and difficult decisions in undergraduates' academic life that influences their subsequent career process. Students have competitiveness among them to select their specialization. Some universities conduct interaction sessions with undergraduates, industry professionals, recruiters and professors before selecting academic majors. Consequently,

students have better chances to select the best choice as their academic major within different sets of majors according to their ability, capacity, unique interest and needs (Stock & Stock, 2018).

Selecting the most appropriate specialization area which suits individual capacity and other preferences is not an easy task. Sometimes it may be stressful and pressurizing for students because they must pay attention to different kinds of factors before taking this life changing decision. Decision affects not only students' academic lives but also it affects their future personal lives. Satisfaction, career opportunities, employment opportunities, continuity of academic life, financial stability, financial status and social status are some of the main things which affect students' future lives. Students need to follow "Good" selection to reach better educational goals and post educational goals (Sawar & Masood, 2015).

Universities are providing different kinds of competitive degree programs and specialization areas under those degree programs. Students can choose one of those specialization areas. Human Resource Management (HRM) is also one of those specializations coming under Business Administration degree programs. It can be considered as a well-recognized field in the world that provides a path to achieve organizational success through creating, maintaining and improving an appropriate and contended workforce. HRM mainly focuses on enhancing the standards of living of the people who are engaged with the organization. The problem is there are not any sets of guidelines, or a sort of standards issued under University Grants Commission in Sri Lanka for Human Resource Management specialization (Opatha, 2019).

Many studies have focused on factors affecting the selection of other specialization areas such as Agriculture, Information Technology, and Management Information Systems (Fizer, 2013). However, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding the factors influencing the selection of HRM specialization. Local and international researchers have not paid considerable attention to this area. For instance, Negt and Haunschild (2024) highlight a significant research-practice gap in HRM, emphasizing the need for more empirical investigations into specific areas, including the factors influencing HRM specialization decisions. Similarly, Fernando et al. (2021) underscore the changing trends in students' choice of specialization and the necessity for further studies to understand the factors influencing the selection of HRM specialization. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into the factors affecting the selection of HRM specialization, as identified by previous studies as a potential area for future research.

The main purpose of this study is to provide a deep understanding of the factors affecting the selection of HRM specialization. By addressing this research gap, this study aims to contribute to the theoretical understanding of how various factors influence students' decisions in selecting HRM as their specialization. This investigation will add value by providing insights that can help universities and policymakers develop better support systems and guidelines for students making this critical decision.

LITERATURE REVIEW

After secondary education, every student chooses a variety of career paths in their lives. Most students tend to higher studies from any university. But they entered universities or colleges without knowing what career path they want. They try to find out the most suitable area for their higher education. Everyone likes to live happily for the rest of their lives. Therefore, students should make good decisions before they entered the university (Fizer, 2013). According to Kim et al., (2002), suggested that some factors that influence the student's choice of major can be identified. According to that interest in career associated with major, opportunities for self-employment, good match with student abilities and projected earnings are top five reasons that influence to the student selection on the other hand the reputation of the major at school, perceived quality of instruction, amount and type of promotional information, influence by parents and friends create the less impact on that

student choice. Moreover, they find out the reason for interest in work related to a major was given higher influence for choosing that field. And, they noted some factor differences among the business majors when students chose their business majors.

Malgawi et al., (2005) identified factors to relate their selection of college major and why and which factor that positively and negatively affect to do the later changes of their choices. When many students are entering into business schools, they do not have a proper understanding about which subject or area suits their career. They are struggling with some factors when they select their choices. In this study, they found some factors related to the students' choice of majors upon entrance to college. It can be identified as interest in subject, aptitude in the subject, collage's reputation, parents, high school guidance counselor, high school teachers, potential job opportunities, potential for career advancement and the level of pay/compensation. This study was found the factor of interest in the subject was a strongly influenced factor to initial major choice by both men and women as well as the aptitudes of the subject is a factor that strongly affected to women's initial choices, but it less affected to the men. By the level of pay in the field significantly more influenced to men than women.

Perera & Pratheesh (2018) which was conducted in Sri Lanka, to understanding the factors which influence the choice of specialization in a group of management students of the Trincomalee Campus. The study population consisted of all students pursuing the undergraduate degree in faculty of management at the campus and their sample consisted of 75 respondents from different majoring. According to them, they identified some common factors that affect the student's selection decision such as personal, academic quality, job factors, nature and the influence. According to their analysis they said job factors and academic factors are the most important factors in choice of specialization.

A study which has been done by Balsamo et al., (2012) founded individual differences in personality come first than socialization effect while it seems plausible to assume that personality domains had significant impact on intention to enroll in a specific university major. Researchers have identified personal factors, academic factors and social factors as mostly influenced factors which affect the selection decision of undergraduates after referring to past literature.

Personal Factors

When many students enter a business school, they do not have a proper understanding about which subject or area suits their career. They are struggling with some factors when they have to select between choices (Malgwi et al., 2005). Each student has different kinds of perspectives about specialization area, and they make decisions regarding selection of best choice according to his or her personal belief (Sarwar & Masood, 2015).

The effect of the factors relating to personal conditions more influence towards the decisionmaking process of undergraduates regarding his/her selection of specialization compared to the other factors (Sarwar & Masood, 2015). Most of the studies identified that factors such as interest in the field, aptitude in the field, personal image, personality, student's needs, his/ her mental ability, personal goals and motivation are the personal factors which influence the decision-making process of selecting their specialization area (Fizar, 2013; Malgwi et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2002).

Personal goals and aptitude level of students are some factors that affect the decisions of a student while interest in the field taking considerable value for the decision regarding specialization area (Sarwar & Masood, 2015). Interest in the subject was a strongly influenced factor to initial major choice not only for the men and but also for the women while the aptitude of the subject is a factor that strongly affect to women's initial choices compared with the choice of men (Malgwi et al., 2005). Downey et al., (2011) suggested that attitudes towards a person's choice of major significantly influenced their intention to work in the major field and further mentioned that interest is the most important factor that influences the student's choice of major among other factors. Fizer (2015)

emphasized that academic ability and aptitude always interconnect with students' ability and work habits to reach success in some subjects. Levels of ability differ from student to student. Some students may require more time to study, and some students may not require more time to study for the same subject. Therefore, students make their decision based on the level of ability. Academic majors should suit with unique interests and needs of students as well (Stock & Stock, 2019).

Most of the past researchers have found that there are individual differences in personality when making a choice of an academic major or specialization. Individual differences in personality come first when comparing socialization effect, while individual differences in personality seems plausible to assume personality domains show significant impact on intention to enroll in a specific university major (Balsamo et al., 2012). Those personality factors help students to plan their degree offerings and help college advisors to guide students according to their personalities, goals and skills (Stock & Stock, 2019).

Academic Factors

Students consider various kinds of criteria which relate to the educational background when they enroll in higher studies and most importantly when they select their specialization area. Education elements, course attended, assignment, perceived difficulty, teachers' characteristics, entry requirements and opportunity to gain practical experience are some academic factors influence to students' specialization decision (Bobâlcă et al., 2014). Academic consideration has shown considerable impact on students' decisions in selecting a specialization. Moreover, academic factors include quality of course content, workload, difficulty level of the subject, knowledge limit and the instructor's experience and competency (Sarwar & Masood, 2015). Most universities, support students to select their specialization area by providing opportunities to meet and interact with industry professionals and academic professionals to be aware about possible majors which relate to undergraduate's ability and needs. This opportunity makes massive use of selecting the most suitable specialization among different specialization areas for the undergraduates (Stock & Stock, 2019). A study conducted by Rajumesh & Kumaradeepan (2018) identified that every student used to consider about two – three other specializations besides their preferred one and give the priority for the one specialization based on structure of the course, learning materials, and good communication level of the teachers as well.

Social Factors

The effect of factors related to the social environment also have a relationship to the decisionmaking process regarding student's selection of specialization. There are several parties that may impress students to go for that specialization or major. Similarly, families, especially parents, normally encourage or even force their children to pursue a specific degree. Friends are also a factor that can be influenced student regarding this decision (Sarwar & Masood, 2015). The top factor for management majors was student's parents (Stock & Stock, 2019). Most of the time parents and friends play a large role but teachers, coaches and lectures and college instructors also have a huge impact on student's life (Wild man & Torres, 2002). Peers are another group of people who influence students. Students are more likely to discuss and be influenced by their peers in making their choice of academic major (Hussin et al., 2019). Those people help students to do better in their academic life to get on a better path. The influence that these characters have on students can have a major influence on their choice of major (Fizer, 2013). Some social influences, those that are based on the specialization, are job characteristics which include job availability, job security and projected salary. Most researchers have found that job security and job availability are important in student's choice of major when they enter college or university as those both factors refer to the difficulty or ease will be having their jobs after graduation and likely availability of jobs throughout their careers (Downey et al., 2011). There should be make sure sufficient jobs for related fields are available for students after their graduations because limited employment opportunities nowadays encourage

undergraduates to choose majors that provide sufficient preparation before moving into the realm of employment (Hussin et al., 2019). Further, social image or prestige or status on the occupation can also affect a student selection of a college major whereas studies report that students preferred to choose majors and careers with a higher social image (Downey et al., 2011). Students' desire for status inclined them to select major which was perceived to have a higher social image.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main objective is to identify the factors affecting the selecting HRM specialization.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Using the past literature and background of the study, the following conceptual framework was created in order to identify the factors that influence the student's selection of Human Resource Management in Figure 01. Each student thinks of each specialization field differently and make decision about it on the basis of his/her personal believes (Sawar & Masood, 2015). This conceptual framework (See figure 01) is author developed one and consisted of independent and dependent variables where the dependent variable is selecting Human Resource Management and independent variables are factors affecting for selecting specialization and independent variable is divided into three main categories as Personal factors, Academic factors and social factors.
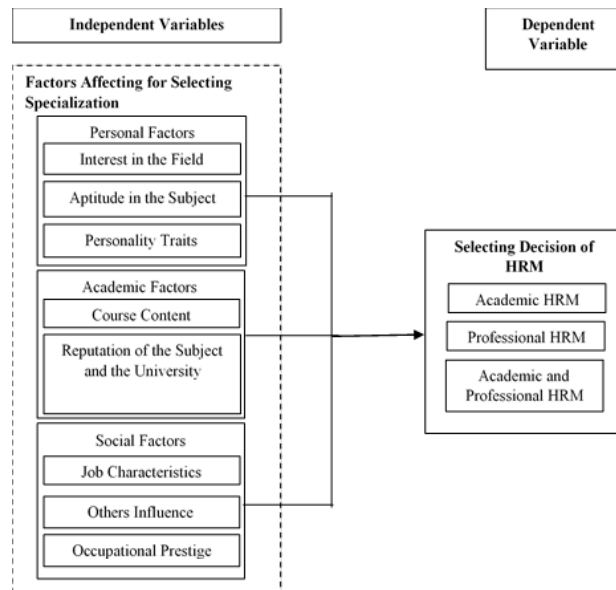
Figure 01: Conceptual Framework.

Source: Author Developed

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to identify the factors that affect undergraduates' decisions when selecting HRM specialization, aiming to explore why students choose a particular specialization and which factors influence their competitive decision. This study adopts a deductive and correlational research design, as it seeks to identify significant factors influencing students' selection decisions for HRM.

Target Population and Sampling Technique

The target population for this study comprises business undergraduates from both private and public universities, specifically XYZ University and ABC University. A snowball sampling technique was used

to identify the sample size, resulting in data collection from 164 respondents. Out of these, data from 117 HRM students were used to analyze the research objective.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A: This section was designed to collect demographic information of the respondents, including gender, age, and engagement in HRM. The demographic data was analyzed using frequency distribution to provide a clear and understandable view of the sample characteristics. Section B: This section aimed to gather data on the independent variables of the study, comprising 36 questions to understand the factors affecting the selection of HRM specialization. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure responses, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Various quantitative data analysis techniques were employed, including reliability analysis, factor analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing, to identify and interpret the factors influencing students' HRM specialization decisions.

FINDINGS

Reliability Analysis

Table 1 contained Cronbach's Alpha of the main three variables which are personal factors, academic factors and social factors. Sum of those factors featured a high Cronbach's Alpha of 0.939 which suggested that the data set was extremely reliable. Among those three factors social factors contained higher reliability which is 0.892. According to table 4.2 all the dimensions of the variables were featured Cronbach's Alpha greater than 0.7, ultimately the results of the data set based on the Cronbach's Alpha, determines that all the components were reliable within the dataset.

Table 01 - Cronbach's Alpha for the variables of the factors affecting for selecting

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Personal Factors	13	0.874
Academic Factors	10	0.855
Social Factors	13	0.892
All factors affecting for selecting specialization	36	0.939

Source: Author's Creation (2024)

Factor Analysis

Prior to conducting factor analysis, in order to test whether the sample size was satisfactory to run factor analysis, the value of Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test were obtained. The KMO degree changes between 0 and 1 and values closer to 1 are superior. It is insufficient in the event that the value is less than 0.50. The KMO test identifies whether sufficient items are anticipated by each factor.

Table 02 - KMO and Bartlett's Test. Source: SPSS Output KMO Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .803		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2713.007
	df	630
	Sig.	.000

Source: Author's Creation (2024)

Table 2 shows the KMO and Bartlett's test statistics. KMO measures the adequacy of sampling, and it was found to be equal to 0.803 which should be greater than 0.05 to indicate the goodness of sample. The sigma value of the Bartlett's test of Sphericity should be less than 0.05 in order to be significant. In the current study it represents 0.000 which supposes the validity of the data.

Exploratory factor analysis is used to explore the dimensions of a multi-item measure of a theoretical construct. As the extraction strategy, Principal Component Analysis was utilized and Varimax, an orthogonal strategy with Kaizer Normalization was conducted in order to decide the factor structure of the scale. 36 components were considered to the factor extraction and total variance explained that the variance accounted for by each factor.

Table 03 - Total Variance Explained. Source: SPSS Output

Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	10.575	29.376	29.376	3.988	11.077	11.077
2	3.755	10.432	39.808	3.952	10.977	22.053
3	2.689	7.469	47.277	3.703	10.286	32.339
4	2.248	6.244	53.521	3.608	10.022	42.362
5	1.659	4.607	58.129	3.043	8.454	50.816
6	1.495	4.154	62.283	2.478	6.884	57.700
7	1.375	3.820	66.102	2.274	6.318	64.018
8	1.129	3.136	69.238	1.879	5.221	69.238
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

Source: Author's Creation (2024)

Table 3 corresponds to the number of components retained and the present study retain eight components with initial eigenvalues more than 1.0. The eight components selected are responsible for more than 69.238% of the total variance and have been given most importance by the undergraduates for the selection decision of HRM. Out of the 36 components, the first component contributes 29.38% variation whereas second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eight have accounted variance 10.43%, 7.47%, 6.24%, 4.61%, 4.15%, 1.37% and 1.13% respectively for each component. Because, the total variance value of eight components have taken 69.238% and it portraying that the total variance covers 70% of total questionnaire. Therefore, it can be proved that this questionnaire is valid, and study can be continued.

The table of rotated component matrix of the current study represents the loadings that are less than 0.50. The rotation reduces the number of factors on which the variables under investigation have high loadings. The items which were suggested to measure personal, academic and social factors have been divided into eight main components without any issue.

Therefore, researchers can continue the study further.

Finally, researchers have identified that the eight components for better understanding of factors affect the decision of HRM undergraduates and to find out the most influential factor for selecting HRM specialization.

Demographics Factor Analysis

Table 04 - Selecting Decision of HRM. Source: SPSS Output Frequency Statistics

HR Qualification				
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Academic HR	89	76.1	76.1	76.1
	Professional HR	9	7.7	7.7	83.8
	Both	19	16.2	16.2	100.0
	Total	117	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's Creation (2024)

Table 4 shows how the respondents are categorized based on their selection decision of HRM. Accordingly, from both universities a higher number of respondents had selected Academic HRM. Consequently, 76.1% of respondents selected academic HR out of total respondents.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 5 consists of the details of data which were gathered from 117 HRM students. The analysis of demographics data represents the analysis of different characteristics of the respondents of the study. The total sample size 117 which 70 respondents were male, and 47 respondents were female. Accordingly, from both universities higher number of females had taken part in the sample compared to the male respondents. Consequently, there were 59.8% respondents are female out of total respondents. Age is categorized include five labels such as less than 19, 19-29, 30-40, 41-51 and above 51 years old. Though the questionnaire categorized five age labels, the respondents were only related to three age groups. According to the frequency of age, the highest number of respondents are from the age category of 19-29 years old, and they represent 94.9% of the whole sample. The respondents from the age category of 30-40 years old represent the minimum number of participants when compared with the other age categories.

Table 05 - Demographics Profile of Respondents. Source: SPSS Output Descriptive Statistics

Demographics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	70	59.8
	Female	47	48.2
Age	19 - 29	111	94.9
	30 - 40	2	1.7
	Less than 19	4	3.4

Source: Author's Creation (2024)

Descriptive Analysis

Table 06 - Summary of the Descriptive. Source: SPSS Output Descriptive Statistics

Factors	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
Personal Factors	3.8895	3.9231	.60959
Academic Factors	3.9214	4.0000	.55999
Social Factors	3.4122	3.3077	.61988

Source: Author's Creation (2024)

Table 6 shows how Mean and Median are distributed throughout the personal, academic and social factors. The mean value of the personal factors 3.88 is close to 4 which represents most of the

respondents are decided to "agree" with the statements under personal factors. Also, the mean value of the academic factors 3.92 is close to 4 which represents most of the respondents are decided to "agree" with the statements under academic factors. When it comes to the social factors,

3.41 of mean value generated and it is close to 3 which represents most of the respondents "either agree or disagree" with the statements under social factors. When compared to mean and median, as the values of personal, academic and social factors are closely relatable to each, the data set is normally distributed.

Correlation Analysis

Table 07 - Summary of Correlations. Source: SPSS Output Correlation

		Personal Factors	Academic Factors	Social Factors	HR Qualification
Personal Factors	Pearson Correlation	1	.680**	.438**	-.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.811
Academic Factors	Pearson Correlation	.680**	1	.543**	.084
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.371
Social Factors	Pearson Correlation	.438**	.543**	1	.207*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.025
HR Qualification	Pearson Correlation	-.022	.084	.207*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.811	.371	.025	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

Source: Author's Creation (2024)

Table 7 shows correlation between the personal, academic, social factors and selecting decision of HRM (HR Qualification). According to the correlation value between social factors and selecting decision of HRM is 0.207 and it represents moderate positive relationship. Therefore, among all three variables the correlation shows that academic factors and social factors have a positive relationship with selection decision of HRM when compared to the personal factors. Therefore, it is revealed that social factors and academic factors influence the dependent variable of selecting decision of HRM and competitively, social factors have major influence when compared to other independent variables.

Hypothesis Testing
In here, it was assumed that, if the p value was less than 0.05 (p =< 0.05) then the alternative hypothesis would accept, and the null hypothesis reject. Alternatively, if the p value was greater than 0.05 (p> 0.05) it would fail to reject the null hypothesis and would not accept the alternative hypothesis. In that case, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 08 - Summary of the Hypothesis Testing. Source: SPSS Output Correlation

Hypothesis	Correlation (P value)	Accepted/Rejected
$H1_0$ - There is no relationship between personal factors and selecting decision of HRM.	0.811	Accepted
$H1_1$ - There is a relationship between personal factors and selecting decision of HRM.		Rejected
$H2_0$ - There is no relationship between academic factors and selecting decision of HRM.	0.371	Accepted

H2$_1$ - There is a relationship between academic factors and selecting decision of HRM.		Rejected
H3$_0$ - There is no relationship between social factors and selecting decision of HRM.		Rejected
H3$_1$ - There is a relationship between social factors and selecting decision of HRM.	0.025	Accepted

Source: Author's Creation (2024)

The above table shows the results of Correlation that were applied to test a number of hypotheses which were built to identify the significant relationship between the personal, academic and social factors and selecting decision of HRM (HR Qualification).

Hypothesis 1: As the P value of Personal factors is 0.811 and it is greater than 0.05 (p> 0.05), so

it is systematically insignificant because the Null hypothesis was accepted. Thus, H11 is rejected, which means Personal factors have no relationship with students' selecting decision of HRM.

Hypothesis 2: As the P value of Academic factors is 0.371 and it is greater than 0.05 (p>0.05), hence providing a strong evidence to reject H21 portraying that there is no relationship between Academic factors and selecting decision of HRM.

Hypothesis 3: Here the Null hypothesis was rejected as the P value of social factors is 0.025 and it is less than 0.05 (p<0.05). As result the result, alternative hypothesis H31 would be accepted. Thus, it could be stated that there is a relationship between social factors and selecting decisions of HRM.

DISCUSSION

When comparing the results of past investigations with the current study, several similarities and some contradictions were identified. Downey et al., (2011) suggested that a student's attitude significantly affects the intention to choose a major, along with factors such as interest in the field, job security, job availability, aptitude, social and personal image. The current study corroborates these findings, revealing that interest in the field, job security, job availability, aptitude, and social factors significantly influence the selection decision for HRM specialization.

Sarwar & Massood (2015) identified career development as the most influential factor in the selection of specialization among business graduates. Our research aligns with this, categorizing career development under social factors and finding a moderate positive relationship between the social factors and selecting decision of HRM.

Perera & Pratheesh (2018) found that job factors, similar to job characteristics, predominantly influence students' course selection. This study supports their findings, showing that job characteristics, categorized under social factors, significantly impact the selection decision for HRM specialization. Both studies highlight the relationship between social factors and the selection decision for HRM.

Stair et al., (2016) discovered that students consider the job market, potential income after graduating, and working with people as critical factors when selecting an academic major. They also identified the influence of others, such as parents, guardians, and personal role models, as significant. These influences, categorized under social factors in the current study, show similar results, emphasizing the importance of social influences on students' selection decisions.

Additionally, Negt and Haunschild (2024) highlighted a significant research-practice gap in HRM, emphasizing the need for more empirical investigations into specific areas, including the factors influencing HRM specialization decisions. Fernando et al. (2021) also underscored the changing

trends in students' choice of specialization and the necessity for further studies to understand the factors influencing the selection of HRM specialization.

The results of this study reveal that the majority of HRM undergraduates consider social factors more than personal and academic factors when selecting their specialization. This finding emphasizes that students are considering the competitiveness of the job market when choosing HRM specialization. Understanding these factors can help universities and policymakers develop better support systems and guidelines for students making this critical decision.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to identify the factors affecting the selection of specialization by HRM undergraduates. Factors such as academic, personal and social influences were identified as significant in the decision-making process of HRM undergraduates. Deductive and correlation analysis was conducted to gain the result of this study and distributed questionnaire as the tool for observation. A snowball sampling technique was employed to identify 164 respondents, with 117 selected for analysis. The results revealed that social factors are the most influential among the various factors affecting the selection decision of HRM undergraduates. As the job market becomes increasingly competitive, students particularly focus on job characteristics, occupational prestige, and other influences when selecting HRM specialization due to the real competition for workforce positions.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have several practical implications. Understanding the factors that influence students' selection of HRM specialization can help universities and policymakers develop better support systems and guidelines to assist students in making informed decisions. Additionally, this knowledge can aid in curriculum development and career counseling services, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the competitive job market.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the use of a snowball sampling technique may limit the generalizability of the findings, as the sample may not be fully representative of the broader population of HRM undergraduates. Second, the study was conducted at only two universities, which may not capture the diversity of experiences and factors influencing students at other institutions. Finally, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, as respondents may not accurately recall or report their decision-making processes.

Future research should consider using a more diverse and representative sample to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how students' decision-making processes evolve over time and the long-term impact of their specialization choices. Incorporating qualitative research methods, such as interviews and focus groups, could offer a richer understanding of the nuanced factors influencing students' decisions. Further research could also explore the role of additional factors, such as cultural influences and economic conditions, in shaping students' specialization decisions. Finally, comparative studies across different countries and educational systems could provide a broader understanding of the factors influencing HRM specialization selection globally.

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