



Journal of International Students
Volume 16, Issue 11 (2026), pp. 357-374
ISSN: 2162-3104 (Print), 2166-3750 (Online)
jistudents.org
<https://doi.org/10.32674/xq2svx27>



Mapping Determinants of Career Choice among Omani University Students: Institutional, Social, and Personal Influences

*Diana Fernandez
Renjith Kumar Raveendran
Nahid Abdullah Sulaiyam Al Shukaili
University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Oman

*Corresponding Author Email: diana.fernandez@utas.edu.om
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9960-5901>

ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors influencing career choice certainty among university students in Oman. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Social Capital Theory, eight domains are analyzed: academic background, on-the-job training, institutional support, finances, personality, social influences, sectoral opportunities, and public policy. Data from 380 students across seven campuses were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis and regression. Academic specialization, mentoring, risk-taking, and extracurricular involvement emerged as significant predictors, whereas financial and policy factors were less influential. The findings emphasize the critical role of institutional support systems in shaping career development, with implications for enhancing student readiness and support strategies in both domestic and international mobility contexts in higher education.

Keywords: career, institutional support, factor analysis, student mobility

© Author(s), 2026. This article is distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

INTRODUCTION

Career decision-making is a complex, multilayered process shaped by academic, institutional, social, economic, and psychological influences. A growing body of global research has examined these factors, yet studies rarely offer a holistic synthesis, especially within emerging policy-driven systems such as Oman. While some local studies explore employability trends or graduate aspirations, few empirically test how multiple dimensions interact to shape career certainty among students still enrolled in university.

This study addresses that gap by examining eight potential predictors—educational background, on-the-job training (OJT), university-level support, financial considerations, personality traits, social influences, sector-specific exposure, and government policies—framed by three theoretical lenses: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Social Capital Theory. These frameworks allow us to examine how career decisions emerge from both personal resources and institutional ecosystems.

In an increasingly globalized higher education landscape, career decision-making is closely linked to international student mobility, employability, and cross-border educational transitions. Understanding how institutional and social ecosystems influence students’ career certainty is therefore critical not only for domestic systems but also for institutions supporting internationally mobile students.

The research focuses on students within the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), Oman’s largest public higher education network. It uses quantitative methods to test how each factor contributes to career choice certainty, with implications for graduate readiness and student mobility. Given the expanding role of the country in regional education, these findings may help inform guidance policies in similar education systems.

The selection of the eight factors- educational, on-the-job training (OJT), university-level influences, financial considerations, personality traits, social factors, industrial growth and technology, and governmental support - is grounded in three theoretical frameworks: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Social Capital Theory. These theories emphasize the interconnected roles of personal, institutional, and environmental influences in shaping individual development and decision-making. Furthermore, these variables are supported by a robust body of empirical literature from diverse regional and global studies (e.g., Agarwala, 2008; Siew et al., 2019; Fernandez et al., 2022), which identify them as recurring determinants in student career decisions. The chosen factors reflect both micro-level influences (such as personal interests and academic specializations) and macro-level drivers (such as sectoral employment trends and public policy). This comprehensive selection enables a holistic analysis of the determinants of career choice certainty among university students in Oman. The objectives of the study are listed below:

1. To investigate the major factors that influence the career choices of university students.

2. To determine the effects of educational, on-the-job training (OJT), university, financial, personality, social, industrial growth and technology, and governmental factors on students' career choices.
3. To identify which of these factors are the strongest predictors of students' career choice certainty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic and Institutional Drivers

Academic specialization and perceived program quality have long been associated with students' career preferences (Myburgh, 2005; Siew et al., 2019). In regional studies, alignment between interests and majors, mentorship, and the availability of academic resources significantly shaped aspirations (Roknuzzaman & Akter, 2021). Lamichhane et al. (2022) note, however, that academic performance influences career certainty only when it is paired with structured support.

Institutional factors, especially access to guidance counselors, mentoring, alumni networks, and placement services, are consistently linked to greater career clarity (Karakiraz et al., 2021; Fernandez et al., 2022). Career-focused interventions, such as credit-bearing courses or experiential learning, further strengthen decision-making efficacy (Zeng & Ma, 2025). Cocurricular engagement (e.g., clubs and peer mentoring) has also been shown to increase career confidence by expanding students' social capital and workplace readiness (ACT, 2025).

In international education contexts, students' decisions are influenced not only by academic factors but also by cultural and religious compatibility, affordability, and the perceived cultural safety of the host environment, which together shape both study destination choices and long-term career orientation (Bayraktar & Yorganci, 2025).

Building on these insights, institutional support systems in international student contexts play a critical role in shaping both career confidence and social integration (Myers et al., 2023; Li et al., 2024). These studies highlight the importance of institutional agents such as faculty, mentors, and advisors in enhancing students' sense of belonging and career development self-efficacy, particularly during periods of uncertainty. Overall, these findings underscore the need for structured and accessible university support mechanisms across both domestic and international student populations.

Personal, Social, and Economic Influences

Psychological traits, including self-efficacy and decision-making styles, influence how students explore career options. Aydemir Dev & Bayram Arlı (2025) reported that risk-takers are more confident in career planning, whereas

those with avoidant tendencies experience greater indecision. These traits often mediate the impact of external constraints.

Social influences, particularly parental expectations and peer pressure are especially salient in collectivist cultures (Agarwala, 2008; Sharif et al., 2019). However, few studies quantify how these social inputs interact with institutional support or personality variables. Financial considerations, often assumed to dominate decisions, yield mixed results. While salary expectations remain relevant (Ahmed et al., 2017), other studies suggest that students increasingly seek purpose-driven, stable careers over purely monetary incentives (Asad et al., 2018).

Sector-Specific Opportunities and Policy Alignment

Sectoral awareness, especially in technology, tourism, and manufacturing, has emerged as an underexplored influence. Nassor et al. (2022) reported that students' interest in these sectors is often shaped by exposure and perceived growth potential, yet policy incentives frequently fail to translate into student awareness. National visions such as Oman Vision 2040 aim to shift these trends, but research suggests that unless universities actively integrate such macro level initiatives into advising, their influence remains limited (MOHERI, 2025; Stellmacher et al., 2025). This study addresses these gaps by empirically testing how eight factors—academic, institutional, financial, personality, social, sectoral, policy-related, and experiential—predict career-choice certainty among students in a public university system.

Synthesis and Research Gap

Across diverse national contexts, three broad patterns consistently emerge: (1) academic fit and university support systems strongly influence students' career clarity, (2) personal traits and social networks shape how students make decisions, and (3) financial and policy incentives often have an indirect or context-specific effect. However, in the Gulf, particularly Oman, few quantitative studies integrate all these dimensions into a unified model. This study addresses that gap by examining eight domains - educational background, university support, financial considerations, personality traits, social influences, sector-specific exposure, governmental policies, and on-the-job training (OJT) - using primary data from the UTAS network. However, research on how these factors operate within systems increasingly connected to global student mobility and international education frameworks remains limited. The study also contributes to the global conversation on student mobility by highlighting how localized interventions such as academic advising, mentoring, or cocurricular engagement may be adapted to support international students through bridge programs or alumni-led predeparture orientations (Renée, 2025; Zeng & Ma, 2025; ACT, 2025; MOHERI, 2025). This gap is particularly significant in the context of global higher education, where understanding how institutional and social ecosystems

influence career decision-making can inform support strategies for both domestic and internationally mobile students.

Hypotheses

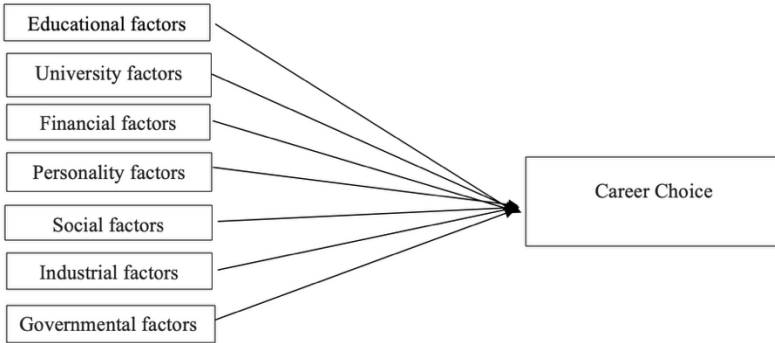
The following hypotheses were proposed:

- H1: Educational and academic factors significantly influence students' career choice certainty.
- H2: University support systems significantly influence students' career choice certainty.
- H3: Financial considerations significantly influence students' career choice certainty.
- H4: Personality traits significantly influence students' career choice certainty.
- H5: Social influences significantly influence students' career choice certainty.
- H6: Opportunities in sector-specific industries (e.g., tourism and technology) significantly influence students' career choice certainty.
- H7: Governmental factors and policy initiatives significantly influence students' career choice certainty.
- H8: On-the-job training (OJT) participation significantly influences students' career choice certainty.

Conceptual Framework:

The conceptual framework guiding this study is anchored in the three complementary theories mentioned above. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory offers a multilayered view of human development, highlighting how individual decisions are shaped through dynamic interactions within the microsystem (e.g., university clubs, mentorship), mesosystem (e.g., institutional support), and macrosystem (e.g., governmental policy, labor market trends). Human capital theory posits that investments in education, skills, and training increase employability and future earnings (Becker, 1993; Sweetland, 1996). In this study, variables such as academic specialization, academic performance, and OJT experience reflect how students develop marketable skills and credentials. Social capital theory emphasizes the value of social networks, relationships, and shared norms in accessing career-relevant information and opportunities (Bourdieu, 1986). Parental influence, peer support, role models, and club participation illustrate how relational resources shape decision-making, particularly in collectivist societies. Together, these frameworks position career choice certainty as the dependent variable shaped by multilayered and interdependent drivers. They also guided the construction of our survey instrument and the interpretation of the results.

Model



Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. It aimed to identify and predict key determinants of students’ certainty about career choice using validated measures. The design was explanatory and correlational, incorporating exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and multiple regression analysis. The participants included undergraduate students enrolled across all seven branches of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), Oman. A total of 380 valid responses were collected through stratified random sampling to ensure representation across campuses and programs. Eligibility required at least one year of university enrollment.

Instrumentation

The survey included 32 items, grouped under eight constructs derived from theory and prior studies:

- Educational and academic factors
- On-the-job training (OJT)
- University support systems
- Financial considerations
- Personality traits
- Social influences
- Sector-Specific Opportunities (Tourism, Technology, Manufacturing)
- Governmental policies

Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The tool was adapted to the Omani higher education context and was pretested for clarity.

Reliability and Validity

To assess internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for all the subscales, with the results ranging from 0.58 to 0.82. The overall instrument reliability was 0.89, indicating strong internal consistency. For validity, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) = 0.802 and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2 = 2064$, $df = 406$, $p < .001$) confirmed the sampling adequacy and justified factor extraction. See Appendix Table A1.

Data collection

The instrument was distributed online via institutional platforms. Students received a consent form at the beginning of the survey, outlining anonymity, voluntary participation, and data protection. Ethical approval was granted by the UTAS Research Ethics Committee.

Data Analysis

All analyses were conducted using Jamovi statistical software. Three steps were followed:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** To summarize demographic characteristics and item-level responses.
- **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA):** Principal component analysis with varimax rotation identified eight latent factors explaining 65.1% of the total variance. Only components with eigenvalues >1 were retained. Principal component analysis (PCA) was employed as an extraction method within the exploratory factor analysis framework, as the aim of this study was to identify the underlying factor structure and reduce data dimensionality.
- **Multiple Linear Regression:** Composite scores from the EFA were used as predictors of career choice certainty. The model's explanatory power was assessed using R^2 , F-statistics, and p-values.

Although structural equation modeling (SEM) could offer detailed path analysis, it was not applied because of the study's exploratory scope and moderate sample size ($n = 380$). Future research may use SEM to further validate the factor structure and intervariable relationships.

RESULTS

To determine the underlying structure of the survey instrument, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal component analysis with varimax rotation was conducted. Sampling adequacy was confirmed with a KMO value of 0.802 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2 = 2064$, $df = 406$, $p < .001$). Eight distinct components emerged, explaining 65.1% of the total variance. Each item loaded strongly (≥ 0.65) onto a single component, with no significant cross-loadings. The first component alone accounted for 24.2% of the total variance, highlighting its dominant explanatory power. These results confirm

the robustness and construct clarity of the extracted factor structure. The retained factors were labeled as follows:

- University support (e.g., access to counseling, mentorship)
- Governmental Initiatives
- Financial considerations
- Personality traits
- Technological sector opportunities
- Academic factors (e.g., major selection, performance)
- Tourism sector opportunities
- Student involvement (e.g., clubs, peer influence)

The factor labels were assigned based on the conceptual similarity and thematic grouping of items with the highest loadings within each component. See Appendix Tables A2–A3 for the loading matrix and reliability scores

Table A1. Scale Statistics and Reliability of Study Measures (N = 380)

Scale/Factor	Items	M	SD	CV (%)	α
Career Choice Certainty	2	3.34	1.12	33.53	.73
Educational Factors	3	3.54	0.91	25.56	.60
University Factors	8	3.11	0.78	24.98	.82
Financial Factors	2	3.54	1.16	32.77	.64
Personality Traits	3	3.62	0.92	25.39	.68
Social Factors	3	3.33	0.95	28.38	.58
Opportunities – Tourism	2	2.51	1.12	44.62	.80
Opportunities – Manufacturing	2	2.79	1.13	40.50	.73
Opportunities – Technology	2	3.19	1.18	36.99	.74
Government Factors	4	3.03	0.93	30.66	.82
Overall (All Items)	32	3.20	0.58	18.19	.89

Note: CV = coefficient of variation. Cronbach’s α values ≥ 0.60 indicate acceptable internal consistency for exploratory work. The overall scale reliability of 0.89 indicates strong consistency.

Table A2. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sampling Adequacy

Measure	Value
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.80
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, Approx. χ^2	2064.00
df	406
p	< .001

Note: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values > 0.80 indicate notable sampling adequacy. Bartlett's test which is significant at $p < .001$ confirms that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, thus factor analysis is appropriate.

Table A3. Rotated component matrix (principal component analysis)

Each item is listed with its highest loading on the associated component (factor). All loadings shown are ≥ 0.64 , indicating that each item loaded strongly on a single factor.

Factor	Item Code	Factor Loading
University Factors	UF17	.83
	UF20	.81
	UF19	.73
	UF16	.71
	UF21	.69
Government Initiatives	G39	.80
	G37	.70
	G38	.68
	G40	.65
Monetary Benefits	F23	.73
	F24	.69
Personality Traits	P28	.72
	P29	.68
Technology Sector	T33	.71
	T35	.66
Academic Factors	M34	.72
	M36	.70
	A10	.68
Tourism Sector	TS41	.70
	TS42	.69
Student Involvement	SF30	.77
	SF31	.75

Factor	Item Code	Factor Loading
	SF32	.74

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression was conducted using composite scores of the eight factors as predictors of the dependent variable, career choice certainty. The model was statistically significant: $F = 28.7, p < .001$, with an adjusted $R^2 = 0.40$, indicating that the predictors explained 40% of the variance in career certainty.

Significant predictors:

- Academic Specialization ($\beta = 0.462, p < .001$)
- Involvement in Student Clubs ($\beta = 0.369, p < .001$)
- Access to Career Guidance ($\beta = 0.277, p = .013$)
- Mentorship / Academic Advising ($\beta = 0.269, p = .013$)
- Willingness to Take Risks ($\beta = 0.320, p = .001$)

Nonsignificant predictors:

- Financial considerations
- Sector-specific exposure (tourism, technology)
- Governmental programs

The findings indicate that personal, academic, and institutional support play a more influential role in shaping career certainty than economic incentives or national employment strategies do. Multicollinearity diagnostics were assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF), with values ranging from approximately 1.11 to 2.48, well below the threshold of 5, indicating no multicollinearity concerns.

A summary of the coefficients is provided in Table A4.

Summary Equation

$$\text{Career choice certainty} = 0.462 (\text{Academic Specialization}) + 0.369 (\text{Student Club Involvement}) + 0.277 (\text{Access to Career Guidance}) + 0.269 (\text{Mentorship}) + 0.320 (\text{Risk-Taking}) + \epsilon$$

Table A4. Significant Predictors of Career Choice Certainty (Multiple Regression)

Dependent variable: Career choice certainty (self-reported clarity/confidence in career decision)

Predictor Variable	Standardized β <i>p</i>	
Academic Specialization	.46	< .001
Involvement in Student Clubs	.37	< .001
Access to Career Guidance	.28	.013
Mentorship/Academic Advising	.27	.013
Willingness to Take Risks	.32	.001

Note: Standardized coefficients reported. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

DISCUSSION

The analysis confirmed that academic specialization was the strongest predictor of career choice certainty, followed by student involvement and personality traits, with university support systems, particularly career guidance and mentorship, also playing a significant role. These results align with global research highlighting the impact of structured advising, mentoring, and career development interventions on students' decision-making confidence (Renée, 2025; Zeng & Ma, 2025). In the Omani context, the findings are consistent with those of Fernandez et al. (2022), who reported moderate but meaningful effects of institutional support on career outcomes, emphasizing the need for proactive university-level career services. Similar patterns have been observed in international student contexts, where institutional agents play a critical role in enhancing both integration and career clarity (Myers et al., 2023; Li et al., 2024).

These results also have important implications for international students navigating unfamiliar academic and cultural environments. Like their domestic counterparts, international students depend heavily on structured institutional support, mentoring, and peer networks to develop career clarity. Strengthening such support systems can therefore contribute not only to improved career outcomes but also to more effective academic and social integration within global higher education contexts.

Psychosocial traits also played a critical role. Students who reported a stronger willingness to take risks were more likely to express clarity in their career decisions. This finding supports Aydemir Dev and Bayram Arlı (2025), who reported that students with proactive or confident decision-making styles showed greater career certainty, while indecisive tendencies led to increased confusion, although our study did not directly assess indecision. These results reinforce the idea that decision-making style matters and that risk-tolerant or action-oriented students benefit from earlier career clarity. Additionally, our findings align with

those of Smith (2011) and Jonck (2021), who linked certain personality traits, such as openness and perseverance, with positive career decision-making outcomes.

Social factors, including peer and family influence, also had meaningful effects. The prominence of student club involvement in the findings highlights the role of peer networks and extracurricular activities in shaping students' confidence and readiness. This finding resonates with research from collectivist societies where social capital, especially support from family, peers, and role models, plays a substantial role in shaping career paths (Bourdieu, 1986; Agarwala, 2008; Sharif et al., 2019). These patterns were also emphasized by Stellmacher et al. (2025), who reported that student engagement and social support could buffer uncertainties and amplify the effects of motivation and academic resources.

Interestingly, financial considerations and sectoral policy awareness had limited effects. This diverges from traditional human capital assumptions (Becker, 1993; Sweetland, 1996) that place earnings potential at the center of career decisions. In Oman, where higher education is government-funded and job security is often tied to public-sector employment, financial drivers may appear less urgent to students. These findings echo those of Nweke (2025) and Ahmed et al. (2017), who reported that while monetary rewards were considered, non-monetary factors like institutional support and career relevance were more influential among students in similarly structured economies. Additionally, Fernandez et al. (2022) found that while students acknowledged government policies, they rarely translated them into concrete career plans unless they were accompanied by institutional mediation. While our previous study (Fernandez et al., 2022) reported only moderate institutional influence in Oman, the current findings show a stronger impact, likely reflecting improvements in support systems across UTAS campuses.

Although students were aware of opportunities in tourism, technology, and manufacturing, such awareness did not consistently translate into stronger career certainty. This finding is consistent with that of Omar et al. (2021), who reported that sector-specific information alone often fails to influence decisions unless paired with practical exposure, internships, or targeted university engagement. It also highlights a policy practice gap that students may hear about macro level initiatives, but if they are not integrated into advising, coursework, or industry-linked programs, they are less likely to shape behavior. Asad et al. (2018) similarly reported that low visibility or limited access to sector-focused career pathways can weaken the influence of strategic policy initiatives.

These findings have important implications for international students navigating unfamiliar academic systems. Like domestic students, international students rely heavily on institutional support, mentoring, and peer networks to develop career clarity. The results suggest that universities aiming to enhance international student outcomes should prioritize structured advising, culturally responsive mentoring, and opportunities for social integration.

Implications

This study integrates Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory with human and social capital theories to frame the career decision-making process as multilayered. Our findings suggest that microsystem influences, such as institutional support, academic identity, and peer engagement, play a more immediate role in shaping career certainty than macrosystem factors, such as national economic policies. This calls for a reemphasis within these theories on institutional mediation on how well macro-level drivers (e.g., Vision 2040, entrepreneurship schemes) are delivered and made relevant to students through universities, mentors, and local networks.

For higher education institutions, the results affirm the need to embed career services into academic structures. Programs such as mentoring, structured advising, alumni interactions, and credit-based career-planning courses can significantly increase students' decision-making confidence. For policymakers, the findings indicate that macro-level reforms must be clearly communicated through student-facing platforms such as career fairs, bridge programs, and faculty advising/mentoring to have real influence. For international education stakeholders, the implications are broad: the same systems that foster confidence among domestic students (e.g., social networks, institutional integration and decision-making support) also promote success among mobile or international students. Universities aiming to improve both career clarity and mobility readiness must invest in culturally responsive advising and peer-based support mechanisms.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the multidimensional influences on career choice certainty among Omani undergraduates across the UTAS network. The results indicate that academic specialization, university support systems, social engagement (e.g., peer and extracurricular involvement), and key personality traits were the strongest predictors of students' certainty about their career choice. In contrast, monetary incentives, sector-specific opportunities, government policies, and on-the-job training (OJT) did not emerge as significant determinants of career decision-making in this context.

The findings also validate the use of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Social Capital Theory to frame career decision-making as a multilayered process. On a practical level, this study highlights the urgent need to reform university career support systems, integrate more real-world learning opportunities into curricula, and acknowledge the influence of peer networks and personal attributes on students' career confidence.

Interestingly, several factors traditionally assumed to influence career choices had no significant impact in our analysis. Neither financial incentives nor sector-specific opportunities (even in high-growth fields such as tourism or technology) emerged as significant predictors of career choice certainty. This suggests a disconnect between national economic development initiatives and

students' awareness of or interest in those opportunities. Strengthening communication about such initiatives and providing more experiential learning (through internships and industry partnerships) may help bridge this gap. Likewise, government-led career programs and existing OJT opportunities had minimal impact, suggesting these efforts currently lack visibility or perceived relevance among students.

By situating career decision-making within both local and global higher education contexts, this study contributes to broader discussions on student mobility, employability, and institutional responsibility in supporting diverse student populations.

Recommendations: Based on these insights, the following measures are recommended for universities and policymakers to enhance students' career development and readiness:

- Integrate career guidance into the curriculum: Embed employability skills and career development modules throughout academic programs to help students make informed career decisions.
- Establish robust career counseling services: Provide dedicated career counselors and offer for-credit career planning courses to ensure that students receive structured support in exploring and solidifying their career plans.
- Strengthening peer and alumni mentoring: Formalize mentoring programs by leveraging student clubs, leadership activities, and alumni networks so that students benefit from peer support and real-world advice during their career exploration.
- Expanding real-world learning opportunities: Increasing access to internships, industry partnerships, and other structured on-the-job training programs to provide students with practical experience and exposure to diverse career paths.
- Reframe career messaging: Shift the focus of career guidance and outreach from salary outcomes to intrinsic rewards such as personal growth, purpose, and social impact, aligning career advice with students' values and long-term fulfillment.
- Align academic advising with national development plans: Incorporate information about national initiatives (e.g., Oman's Vision 2040) into career counseling and offer targeted soft-skill development and resilience-building workshops to better prepare graduates for evolving job markets.

This study contributes both empirical evidence and theoretical insights to inform higher education reforms and graduate employability strategies in Oman and similar contexts. It underscores the importance of contextually grounded frameworks in examining youth career development. Although the research focused on domestic students, the findings have broader implications for international student mobility. The same support mechanisms that strengthen local students' career clarity - comprehensive advising, mentoring, and social

integration - are likely to similarly benefit international students navigating new educational environments. Strengthening these areas can improve outcomes for both local and international students and align institutional practices with global student mobility trends. Future research could build on this work by including international student samples or conducting cross-country comparisons to further explore how determinants of career choice operate in an increasingly globalized higher education landscape.

AUTHOR NOTE:

This study was conducted with ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Oman. All the participants provided informed consent. The authors declare no conflict of interest. The manuscript has not been submitted elsewhere and is the original work of the authors.

Acknowledgment

In the preparation of this manuscript, we utilized artificial intelligence (AI) tools for content creation in the following capacity:

□ Some sections, with minimal or no editing

This article incorporates content generated by artificial intelligence (AI) tools. Specifically, AI was used to assist with drafting the Literature Review section. The use of AI tools complied with ethical standards and guidelines for academic integrity. The final content was thoroughly reviewed and edited by the authors to ensure accuracy, scholarly rigor, and adherence to academic standards.

REFERENCES

- ACT Research. (2025). *Examining the efficacy of Career & College Clubs* (Research Report, April 2025). ACT, Inc. [ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED673790].
- Agarwala, T. (2008). Factors influencing career choice of management students in India. *Career Development International*, 13(4), 362–376.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430810880844>
- Ahmed, K. A., Sharif, N., & Ahmad, N. (2017). Factors influencing students' career choices: Empirical evidence from business students. *Journal of Southeast Asian Research*, 2017, Article ID 718849.
<https://doi.org/10.5171/2017.718849>
- Asad, A. H., Raza, S., Khan, R. A., & Ansari, N. U. A. (2018). Effect of family influence, personal interest, and economic considerations on career choice among undergraduate students. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, 7(1), 129–142.

- Aydemir Dev, M., & Bayram Arlı, N. (2025). The role of personality traits and decision-making styles in career decision-making difficulties. *Behavioral Sciences, 15*(2), 159. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15020159>
- Bayraktar, F. ., & Yorganci, I. . (2025). Motivational factors shaping Muslim students' decisions to study abroad: A case study of Northern Cyprus. *Journal of International Students, 15*(3), 23-42. <https://doi.org/10.32674/a23vd967>
- Fernandez, D., Gadidiya, M., Al-Shukaili, B., Darai, N., Al-Saeghi, A., & Al-Hattali, S. (2022). A study on factors affecting the career choice of students in higher education institutions in Sultanate of Oman. *International Academic Journal of Education and Literature, 3*(2), 43–55. <https://doi.org/10.47310/iajel.2022.v03i02.005>
- Jonck, P. (2021). Psychological factors influencing career decision-making. *South African Journal of Psychology, 51*(1), 92–104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246320940156>
- Karakiraz, A., Üstündağ, A., Karataş, A., & Özdemir, Y. (2021). From realizable dreams to sustainable facts: An empirical study on the role of internships in students' career plans. *SAGE Open, 11*(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244021997417>
- Lamichhane, S., Gurung, S. K., Chapagain, R. P., Baral, R. P., & Adhikari, S. (2022). Factors influencing career choice among business administration students of Pokhara University. *The Batuk: A Peer Reviewed Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 8*(2), 14–31. <https://doi.org/10.3126/batuk.v8i2.47011>
- Li, J., Liu, X., & Mullins, P. (2024). Exploring the career development challenges and expectations of international students during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of International Students, 14*(4), 591-605. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v14i4.6511>
- Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MOHERI). (2025). *Oman higher education report 2025*. <https://www.moheri.gov.om/userupload/2025/MAR-91016-%20Oman%20Whitepaper%20v11.pdf>
- Myburgh, J. E. (2005). An empirical analysis of career choice factors that influence first-year accounting students at the University of Pretoria: A cross-racial study. *Meditari Accountancy Research, 13*(2), 35–48. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MEDAR-01-2005-0005>
- Myers, S., Myers, C., Johnson, C., & Brazill, S. (2023). Support from Institutional Agents and Perceptions of Cultural and Institutional Fit Among STEM International Graduate Students in the U.S. *Journal of International Students, 13*(4), 68-87. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v13i4.4811>
- Nassor, M. K., Muhammed, R. W., & Hamad, A. U. (2022). Effects of economic factors on career choices of university students at SUZA and ZU, Zanzibar. *Education Journal, 11*(6), 297–303. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.edu.20221106.11>

- Nweke, C. F., & Uzun, G. O. (2025). The effect of family preference and monetary value on career choice among freshmen at universities. *The Open Psychology Journal*, 18, e18743501371896.
<https://doi.org/10.2174/18743501-v18-e18743501371896>
- Omar, M. K., Zaman, M. D. K., & Aziz, M. H. (2021). Factors influencing career choice among final semester undergraduate students in a Malaysian public university. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(2), 361–373.
- Renée, L. (2025). The long-term effects of career guidance in high school and student financial aid: Evidence from a randomized experiment. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 17(2), 165–183.
<https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20230342>
- Roknuzzaman, M., & Akter, R. (2021). Factors influencing career choice among university students: A study in Bangladesh. *Education and Society*, 39(1), 59–77.
- Sharif, N., Ahmed, I., & Rehman, A. (2019). Peer and parental influence on career decisions. *Journal of Educational Research*, 22(4), 89–101.
- Siew, S. C., Lim, J. Y., Lim, C. S., & Hong, K. T. (2019). An empirical study on career choices among undergraduates: A PLS-SEM hierarchical component model approach. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 9(2), 276–298.
- Smith, E. (2011). Exploring personality traits in career decision-making. *Career Development International*, 16(3), 238–258.
- Stellmacher, P., Reinke, H., Bülow, D., Lintorf, K., & Vogt, B. (2025). Career choice motivation, academic and social integration and dropout intentions of trainees in the German dual system. *Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training*, 17(1), Article 9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40461-025-00182-8>
- Zeng, H., & Ma, C. (2025). Assessing career decision-making interventions: Effects of career courses and group counseling on high school students. *The Career Development Quarterly*. Advance online publication.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12371>

Author Biographies

Diana Fernandez is a Lecturer in Accounting and Finance at the College of Economics and Business Administration, University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), Nizwa, Oman. She has more than 17 years of teaching experience in India and Oman and has published 25 research articles in peer-reviewed journals. Her research interests include HR, finance, higher education research, leadership, and marketing.
Email: diana.fernandez@utas.edu.om

Dr. Renjith Kumar Raveendran is a Lecturer in Marketing at the College of Economics and Business Administration, UTAS, Nizwa, Oman. He holds a Ph.D.

in Management and has over 30 years of teaching experience across India, Ethiopia and Oman. He has authored 55 research publications in reputed national and international journals. His research interests include marketing strategy, consumer behavior, leadership and higher education.

Email: renjith.kumar@utas.edu.om

Nahid Abdullah Sulaiyam Al Shukaili is a Lecturer in Marketing at the College of Economics and Business Administration, UTAS, Nizwa, Oman. With more than 12 years of teaching experience at UTAS, her research focuses on student development, marketing education, and academic guidance practices.

Email: nahid.alshukaili@utas.edu.om