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Identifying Career Tendencies: An Exploratory Study of University Students in Oman

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ABSTRACT

The ever-increasing rate of failure among undergraduate students in universities is a major issue in most Arab countries. Their inability to perform effectively after they graduate from the universities might reflect the inadequate quality of education provided by the university. Little that we know, quality education is not always the main cause of failure among students. Hence, this study examined the sex differences in career tendencies using the Holland test, and the associations between them and specialty of subjects among universities students in Oman. In total 533 students (236 men and 297 women) with the mean age of 22.7 were assessed at Dhofar University in Oman. Male students recorded a significantly higher score on Realistic career tendency, while female students have significantly higher scores on Artistic career tendency. Female students also recorded significantly higher scores on Social career tendency compared to male students. Parental educational levels were significantly and positively associated with Realistic, Investigative, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional career tendencies, but were not associated with Artistic career tendency. The results also show that the students in engineering specialization are more likely to have Investigative and Social career tendencies than students in Applied and Humanity subjects. On the contrary, the students in applied specialization are less likely to have Social career tendency, but more likely to have conventional career tendency. Besides, the result shows that students' specialization in Humanity and Applied have negative significant correlation with family income and age factors, respectively. The result of the study is expected to contribute to the current body of knowledge regarding the association of career tendency with demographic factors and student's specialization, specifically in the context of tertiary education in Oman.

Keywords: Holland test, career tendencies, student's specialization

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1. INTRODUCTION

The study of career tendencies and their impact on the process of career selection has been of great importance by researchers, specialists and scholars in the psychological and educational fields, because tendencies push the individual towards many things of life, and affect his choices, especially in the choice of the profession that will shape his future life. The decision to choose a job or career is one of the most difficult decisions facing the individual in his life, and it is not easy for the individual, as there is no one who wants to spend more than half his life in a work that he does not enjoy or like. Choosing a career or educational program that fits the individual's tendency is one of the most important steps to achieve job welfare, job satisfaction, good grades and graduation on time.

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1.1. Career Tendency

Guilford defined the tendency as a general behavioral tendency for an individual to be attracted to a particular type of activity, suggesting that the tendency is placed in the public sphere of motivation. Thus, tendencies are strongly associated with motivation and emotional responses (Snossy, 2003). Al- Galbi (2005) defined the career tendencies as the sum total of acceptance responses related to a career. This includes patterns of emotional responses, or habits prevalent in the individual, and emotional stability. Consequently, a career tendency is not a behavioral unit or a single choice, but a complex behavioral organization that relates to the sum of acceptance responses to a particular career activity. Carson defined professional tendencies as part of the central character structure, which has decision-making in career selection and adaptation to the chosen profession, and refers to activities and processes that relate to the profession (Arnold, 2004). Thus, the career tendency is the tendency of the individual to practice a career, work or any particular activity in which he finds psychological pleasure as a result of his love for it, which leads to the concentration of his mind and satisfaction with the maximum effort and practice as long as possible (Al- Messaoudi, 2007). The tendencies are like other attributes that contribute to the individual's appetite to practice a particular activity and adapt to it, as the individual increases his efforts and energies during the performance of the activities that he tends to and loves.

Career tendencies are of great importance in many fields. In the educational field, they help to improve academic achievement, increase student participation in education, and achieve the highest rates of student performance. In the social sphere, they help to improve working standards, performance and job satisfaction, reduce unemployment and mental illness, and reduce violence towards society. In the economic field, they help to maximize the costs of education, improve national income, and increase worker productivity (Al- Ezza, 2001; Khan, 2018). Career tendencies have distinct characteristics, including: It is a personal behavioral tendency of the individual to be attracted towards a particular activity of different scientific activities. It is directly related to learning. It is measurable and assessable through verbal responses of the examined individuals or by observing the behavior and scientific activities of the individual. It is self-fulfilling and is associated with behavior (Al- Badri, 2011). Career tendencies are influenced by several factors: individual factors such as: genetic traits, age and gender, and environmental factors such as: family, school and community (Tien, 2011; Azgın & Şenler, 2019; Bozyiğit & Gökbaraz, 2020).

There are many theories and classifications of the career tendencies, such as Kuder, Carson, Guilford, Strong, Thorndike, and Holland. The last is one of the most prominent and most famous of those theories and classifications, for accuracy and conformity to reality. Holland (1997) said that career tendencies are behavior that reflects an individual's personality, inclinations, abilities, and preparations, which motivates him to choose certain careers over others. He also said that individuals are categorized into six personal styles, corresponding to six occupational environments, and that an individual's choice of a particular career depends on being attracted to an occupational environment that corresponds to his or her personality pattern.

In his studies from 1952 to 2008, Holland found that there are consistent and distinct differences between individuals in their career tendencies. Holland linked the aspirations of individuals towards practicing the career with the existence of occupational environments with certain attributes and characteristics, which may be commensurate with the individual personality and career aspirations. These environments are variable, not static, easy and smooth. He noted that the overlap between personality traits and similar ecological patterns leads to occupational and psychological stability (Brown, 2002). These studies concluded that individuals can be classified into six personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. These patterns correspond to six occupational environments with the same names, and this classification was abbreviated as (RIASEC).

Holland explained that individuals may find themselves in more than one of the six categories and environments, although there must be a distinct and unique link between the career personality and the corresponding environment (Brown & Lent, 2005). Through his studies and early experience as a career counselor and psychotherapist, he has tried to provide tools to help individuals know and recognize their personal patterns and their corresponding occupational environments, including the VPI (Inventory Preference Vocational). Holland referred to four important diagnostic indicators: congruence, consistency, differentiation and identity.

Brown and Lent (2005), Gysbers, Heppner, and Johnston (2003) illustrate these four indicators as follows:

Conformity is a term that Holland has developed to obtain a degree of congruence between the individual and the occupational environment in which he will work in the future. This can be seen by placing each of the patterns within a certain point on the hexagonal model, and within a certain order, where the beginning is in realistic and then the investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional recently. Consistency is the second indicator, and it is another important concept that helps an individual to make the career decision or adapt to it. Understanding the relationship between style and a similar occupational environment shows how Holland's theory can easily predict or make it difficult for the individual to make the career choice. Differentiation refers to the character of the individual. For example, does the character of an individual clearly resemble some patterns and differ from others? Differentiation helps individuals refine or adjust their professional expectations. The distinctive pattern may be strongly correlated in one professional environment, while a weak one in another. So the principle of differentiation helps in the practical use of Holland's theory.

The idea of professional identity is an attempt by Holland to refine his theory. It reinforces the clarity of an individual's image about his current career plans, goals, inclinations, talents and abilities. In other words, where the individual is located in the career awareness. So Holland developed a tool called My Vocational Situation to determine an individual's career identity. Holland's theory has clearly demonstrated that career selection is easy for some and difficult for others.

The implications of Holland's theory in career counseling applications are summarized as follows (Gysbers, Heppner, & Johnston, 2003), (Holland, 1997):

1. Help guides in evaluating their personalities and work environments, and then help them to know the relationship between personality and work environment.

2. When applying professional guidance with individuals, consider using a professional classification card, which classifies all professional titles within the Holland Hexagon model.

3. Help individuals to know their characteristics, life goals, values, preparations, and abilities. Their achievements can be linked to the corresponding personal and professional environment.

4. Use the lists and tools Holland has developed to meet the needs of the advisors.

5. The guide organizes his career information by referring to Holland's list of career classifications and using the Holland Dictionary of career Titles, which classifies careers into easily accessible codes.

Many studies have focused on career tendencies as a character trait from different directions and their relationship to many other variables such as achievement, sex, specialization, parental profession, etc. The study of Khairallah (1981) aimed to identify the impact of tendency and some mental abilities on academic achievement in social subjects among secondary school students. The study concluded that the tendency determines the type of academic competence to which the individual is heading and the school success in the courses. Another study conducted by Athanasou (1994) aimed to determine the relationship between career tendencies and academic achievement among university students. The study found that (3.66%) of students with excellent attitudes matched their preferences with their preferred study disciplines, and (55%) of students with poor attainment did not match their professional orientations with their specializations. Al-Khatib (2005) conducted a study on a sample of (747) secondary school students in the UAE, which found an association between some types of career tendencies and both academic achievement and specialization. In the same vein, Ayad (2011) conducted a study on career tendencies and values and their relationship to future perceptions on a sample of students of the Community College in Gaza. The study found that there are statistically significant differences in the career tendencies due to the specialization variable in the realist, social, traditional, and artistic tendencies. The study of Uitto (2014) aimed to reveal the tendency of secondary school students towards biology and self-efficacy, where a set of questionnaires were applied to a sample of (321 students). The results showed that there are no gender differences in the tendency towards biology, and there is an increase in the tendency of students towards Study of human biology and gene technology. Also, another study was carried out by Mahasneh and Farajat (2015) who aimed to determine the effectiveness of a practicing-based training program in the development of career tendencies and career awareness among tenth grade students in Jordan. The results of the study showed that the students' career interests increase when they increase their career awareness during secondary school. The study of Ismail (2017) aimed to determine the dimensions of career awareness, and chemistry-related careers among the secondary stage in Saudi Arabia, and the design of enrichment activities based on the STEM approach to develop awareness of scientific careers and career tendencies. The results of the study showed that the group of students with a deep learning strategy is superior to the group of superficial learning strategy in the development of career awareness and acquisition of career tendencies. The career tendencies are measured in several standardized methods such as: Strong tests, Kuder tests, Holland tests, Minnesota tests, as well as in non-codified methods such as: interview, observation, assessment scales, image tests, knowledge tests, and preference method (Omar, et al., 2011).

The focus of this study will be on the John Holland scale, which aims to determine the type of career tendencies among the individuals. The scale, which contains (48) paragraphs, reflects the personal qualities of the individual and a lot of information that relates to the person's relationships, tendencies and abilities to careers and social conditions as well as opportunities in the community (Al-Daheri, 2008). It is recommended to use this scale with high school students, college students, universities and working adults.

Reliability and validity of the instrument have been established in numerous studies. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic and used in many Arabic studies (National Center for Measurement, KSA, 2018).

1.2. Objectives

The current study aimed to examine the associations between gender, career tendencies and specialization of subjects among the students at Dhofar University in Oman, as well as their associations with demographic variables such as parental educational levels, income, and age. These objectives will be used to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the gender differences in career tendencies among the students at Dhofar University in Oman?

2. What are the associations between career tendencies and demographic factors among the students at Dhofar University in Oman?
3. What is the association between career tendency and students' specialization at Dhofar University in Oman?

4. What is the association between students' specialization and demographic factors at Dhofar University in Oman?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Sample

This research study was administered in Dhofar University in the Sultanate of Oman. 533 students (236 males and 297 females) from different colleges (College of Arts and Applied Sciences, College of Engineering, and College of Commerce) had been randomly selected as the samples of the study, whose ages ranged between 18 to 39 years (Mean =22.7, SD = 3.91). The stratified random method was used to select the study sample.

2.2. Data Collection

The main instrument used for this study was the Holland RIASEC test (Holland, 1997). This instrument has been used in several studies (Leong, Austin, Sekaran, & Komarraju, 1998; Long, Adams, & Tracey, 2005; Stead & Watson, 1998) and has been translated into many languages to explore the students' career tendency in many countries. The instrument will provide the interest profile which match to different career areas. Based on Holland's theory, people and work environments can be classified into six different groups. People with different personalities tend to find working environments that they prefer. The questionnaire consists of 48 items that assess six broad categories of career interest/tendency. Respondents are required to respond to each item by choosing either "interested" or "not interested". Holland code will be generated based on the three main career tendencies chosen by the respondents.

For the demographic information, respondents were asked to give response on parental educational levels (0=no education, 1=basic learning, 2=general diploma, 3=bachelor degree, 4=MA/PhD); while income and specialization of study were measured by a three-point measure, namely (1= low, 2=middle, 3=high) and (1=humanity, 2=applied sciences, and 3=engineering), respectively.

2.3. Data Analysis

The Holland Questionnaire was administered to the participants in a single evaluation session. The time frame adopted for students to respond was open. All the collected data were analyzed using The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22). One-way analysis of variance was conducted to answer research question one (gender differences in career tendencies), while correlation analysis was conducted to answer the remaining research questions (associations between gender, career tendencies, subject specialization, and demographic variables).

Once completed, an interest profile is produced to match the different career areas of specialization among the students. Based on Holland's theory, people and work environments can be loosely classified into six different groups. Different personalities may find different environments more to their liking. While one may have some interests in and similarities to several of the six groups, one may be attracted primarily to two or three of the areas. These two or three letters are the Holland Code. The questionnaire consists of 48 items that assess six broad personality types.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first objective of this study is to identify the gender differences in career tendencies among the students. Table 1 shows the descriptive analysis of the six types of career tendencies between male and female students.

Based on the ANOVA analysis, the result shows that there is a significant difference in Realistic ($p<0.01$), Investigative ($p<0.01$), Artistic ($p<0.01$), and Social ($p<0.05$) career tendencies between male and female students. The mean value for male students is higher than the female students for Realistic, Investigative, and Social career tendencies, while female students have higher mean value in Artistic.

Table 1.
Means and SDs of the six career tendencies

Subscale	**Male**			**Female**			**ANOVA**
	N	**Mean**	**SD**	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**p**
Realistic	235	3.15	1.59	293	2.59	1.65	<.001
Investigative	235	4.00	1.51	290	3.57	1.56	.001
Artistic	234	3.36	1.86	295	4.11	1.64	<.001
Social	234	5.59	1.68	296	5.24	1.45	.011
Enterprising	234	4.17	1.78	293	4.05	1.93	.467
Conventional	234	4.04	2.10	294	3.71	1.80	.051

These results are in line with the previous findings reported by Tien (2011) that male adults have significantly higher scores on Realistic career tendency and female students have significantly higher scores on Artistic career tendency. Various types of career with a realistic environment are mechanic, engineer, electrician, pilot, or carpenter. These students like to work mainly with their hands, a doer to be exact, assembling, or operating equipment, fixing or making things, and enjoy outdoor informal environments rather than indoor formal environments (Tlaiss, 2015). As proven by Ergün and Balçın (2018), even the secondary school students perceived Realistic career as a career suitable for men. Since these work environments are more challenging with masculinity perception, and require higher resilience, most female students will opt for an Artistic career tendency.

Artistic work environment generally avoids highly ordered or repetitive activities, and involves directly in art, drama, crafts, dance, music, or creative writing. Since these careers are marginally freelancers, they are more suitable for female students if they took into account their marital status, maternity leaves, and flexible working hours to manage a well-balanced family and career at the same time (Liu et al., 2017). Women in Arab Middle Eastern context perceive career success on a continuum between objective and subjective measures, and most likely to avoid the hegemonic masculinity embedded in their workplaces (Tlaiss, 2015). Even for married career women, they prioritized attending to the needs of their husbands and children, which play an essential part of their career success (Tlaiss, 2015). Artistic work environment is more prominent to fill the needs of women in ensuring their success in their career.

In the present study, male students also have significantly higher scores on Investigative career tendency (p=.001). This is in accordance with the phenomenon that men tend to choose a career in sciences stream such as “physics”, “astronomy”, “using a chemistry set”, “working in a lab”, “building rocket models”, and “doing puzzles” which require the ability to “solve math problems” as stated in the items of the subscale. The prospective careers in this tendency are much related to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). In the Chinese context, parents encourage their sons to pursue a career in Investigative, Social, or Enterprising environments, instead of Realistic, Artistic and Conventional environments because of the prestigious image of the former career tendencies (Liu et al., 2017). The notions of future father or brother are prevalent due to patriarchal ideology rooted in their society, similar to among the Arabs, where they will soon become the breadwinner and head of their own family (Namourah, 2016). The imbalance in favor of men compared to women in Saudi Arabia & Gulf States also contributes to the great gender imbalance in STEM (Islam, 2017). This is why the scores for Investigative career tendency among male students are higher than that of female students.

However, in Tien’s report (2011), females also have significantly higher scores on Social career tendency, while in the present study, the findings are contrary. This, in part, might be due to the different social conditions between the two countries of the studies. Social work environment involves more with humans, rather than Realistic work environment. Social personality type students value people who are helpful, friendly, and trustworthy. For example, there are more people having ‘Social’ personalities in hospitals, schools or counseling service centers, than Realistic people. A study proved that the Arabs perceived more personal discrimination compared to other ethnics in their country, where Arab women may suffer from double discrimination at this level (Lipshits-Braziler & Tatar, 2012). This is a strong fact supporting the results of the current study, where male students scored higher Social career tendency compared to female students. Female students are vulnerable to the discrimination of gender in Arab countries, hence reluctantly choose Artistic career tendency instead.

According to Table 2, Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, and Conventional career tendencies have a significant correlation with gender. Meanwhile, all the career tendencies have shown significant correlations with the students’ age Except for investigative tendencies. Besides, only Social career tendency has a positive significant correlation with parental income (r=0.09). In addition, both Realistic (r=0.15) and Social (r=0.11) career tendencies also show a positive significant correlation with father’s and mother’s education.

Table 2.
Correlations Analysis between Career Tendency and Demographic Factors

	Gender	Age	Income	Father's education	Mother's education
Realistic	-.17**	.19**	.07	.15**	.11*
Investigative	-.14**	.04	.03	.06	.13**
Artistic	.21**	-.13**	-.04	.11*	-.02
Social	-.11**	.09*	.09*	.12**	.17*
Enterprising	-.03	.09*	-.06	.06	.16**
Conventional	-.09*	.27**	.06	.05	.13**

**p<.05; **p<.01*

Another correlation analysis was conducted to identify the relationship between students' specialization with types of career tendency. The results are depicted in Table 3, where it was found that there is no significant correlation between student's specialization (Humanity and Engineering) with the six types of career tendency. However, the result also shows that there is positive and negative significant correlation between Applied specialization with the Conventional (0.09) and Social (-0.10) career tendencies.

The Holland Code (RIASEC) by John Holland is a very helpful tool that has been used until now in clustering the personality types and careers. People can use this tool as a guideline to help them in exploring their own personality traits and lifestyle preferences. Therefore, Table 2 shows the correlation analysis between career tendencies (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional) and demographic factors (Gender, Age, Income, Father's Education and Mother's Education) based on the RIASEC.

The findings show that there is a significant correlation between career tendencies (except Enterprising) with gender. This result is supported by a previous study (Morris, 2016). However, based on the result it is also shown that there is no significant relationship on Enterprising career tendency across gender (Donnay, et. al., 2004). Furthermore, the findings show that the correlation values are very low. This is aligned with the previous finding by Su et. al., (2009) that described the gender differences in career tendency as substantial, and the differences are small to nonexistence. Indeed, Leuty and Hansen (2014) summarized previous cited literature and concluded that the overall career tendencies among female and male students are not much different.

Age also plays a significant role in selecting the career pathways. Based on the result, it shows that there is a significant correlation between career tendencies (except Investigative) with age. However, age increases exponentially with maturity during young adulthood, consequently affecting selection of different career pathways (Hoff, Briley, Wee, Rounds & James, 2018). According to Table 2, there is no significant correlation between career tendencies (Investigative) with age. Investigative career tendency is suitable for thinkers who like to observe, learn, investigate, analyze, do research, evaluate, solve problems, and can be independent. Thus, it is clearly shown that the RIASEC test is good and moderate fit for the college and middle school students, but may not fit for the younger or elementary school students (Tracey & Ward, 1998) since the students still need guidance and support from adults. The career pathways cannot be traced since they must be independent and competent at a certain age.

Regarding the results of correlation between career tendency with parents' income, only Social career tendency has significant positive correlation with parents' income. As suggested by McGue, Bacon and Lykken (1993), environmental factors such as the increase of household income will affect the development of personality traits. These results indicate that parents play an important role in personality formation (Cunha & Heckman, 2008). However, the results showed that the remaining career tendencies are not correlated with parents' income. This is contrary to the previous study, which indicates that higher household income will improve the children's personality traits (Akee, Copeland, Costello & Simeonova, 2018). This can be attributed to the factor of respondents' age for this study. Previous studies suggested that the effect of household income towards one's personality is more significant at younger age and early teenage years (David, Erik, Robert & Björn, 2015), but less significant among adolescence and even less among young adult (Tetsuya &Toshihiko, 2015).

The results showed that various personalities have significant correlation either with father's education (Realistic, Artistic and Social) or mother's education (Realistic, Investigative, Social, Enterprising and Conventional). This is aligned with past literature stating that parents' education level will have direct relation with the children's career tendencies and occupational success (Dubow, Boxer & Huesmann, 2009). As household income increases, the amount of parental support especially in terms of financial support given to their children will be greater and simultaneously influences the students' interest, directly related to career tendencies (Halim, Rahman, Zamri, & Mohtar, 2018).

The correlation analysis was also conducted to identify the relationship between students' specialization with career tendencies. The result shows that there is no significant correlation between students' specialization (Humanity and Engineering) with the six career tendencies. However, the result also shows that there is a very small positive and negative significant correlation between Applied specialization with Conventional (0.09) and Social (-0.10) career tendencies.

Table 3.
Correlations Analysis Between Career Tendency and Student's Specialisation

	Realis	Invest	Artist	Social	Enterp	Conv
Humanity	-.03	-.08	-.01	.02	.05	-.04
Applied	-.04	-.03	-.01	-.10*	-.01	.09*
Engineering	-.01	.06	.07	-.03	-.01	.08

*Note: Realis=realistic, Artist=artistic, Enterp=enterprising, Conv=conventional, Hum=humanity, Appl=applied. *p<.05; **p<.01.*

The correlational analysis between career tendencies and students' specialization is not significant and not aligned with previous studies (Onoyase & Onoyase, 2009) but aligned with the investigation done by Melissa (2001). Elam (1994) noticed that students with all personality types are attracted to choose applied science specialization (medical program) for their undergraduate course. The findings suggested that certain students with certain types of personality do not have a tendency to select any specialization (Melissa, 2001). Research by Melissa (2001) also found similar results as the current study where students who choose Psychology (Humanities) and Engineering specializations have the same personality types as hypothesized.

The low correlation value can be attributed to the specific program of applied specialization. A study proved that students with Realistic and Investigative career tendencies tend to choose a career as orthopedic surgeons, while students with Realistic and Enterprising career tendency prefer to pursue their career as radiology (Elam, 1994). This result showed that students' specific program will act as a moderator in determining the correlation between career tendency and students' specialization. In short, additional variables have potential to affect the students' selection of their specialization (Melissa, 2001).

The non-significant results can also be attributed to the complexity of the current world which is surrounded by career indecision problems among students', leading to the uncertainty in selecting specialization regardless of their personalities (Stead & Harrington, 2000). The findings of previous studies in the context of west and east countries also support this fact (Abdul-Reda & Abouchedid, 2003). Students in high school, somewhat undecided in choosing their major, will eventually also be uncertain in selecting their career path (Herr & Creamer 2000). The undertaking of career paths that mismatch to study specialization without considering their personality traits will result in dissatisfaction among the students during the learning process (Abdul-Reda & Abouchedid, 2003). The mismatch of students' specialization with their personality types will lead to frustrating experience, since the specialization is not aligning with their personality, hence resulting in the non-alignment with their interest, values, and ability (Godia, 2009).

Based on Table 4, the result shows that students' specialization in Humanity and Applied have negative significant correlation with family income (-0.09) and age (-0.13) factors, respectively. Meanwhile, there is no significant correlation between student's specialization in Engineering with all the five demographic variables.

Table 4.
Correlations Analysis between Student's Specialization and Demographic Factors

	Gender	Age	Inc	FE	ME
Humanity	.02	.07	-.09*	.08	-.02
Applied	-.01	-.13**	.03	-.07	.03
Engineering	-.01	.06	.07	-.03	-.01

*Note: FE=Father's education, ME=Mother's education, Inco=income, Realis=realistic, Artist=artistic, Enterp=enterprising, Conv=conventional, Hum=humanity, Appl=applied. *p<.05; **p<.01.*

The choice of career upon graduating plays an important role when a student chooses their study specialization. It will determine where the individual lives, and the financial resources that will be at their disposal. Each individual has a different view of the career path they choose to follow. Factors influencing high income differ from the desire for high income, to the pure intention of serving people making the world a better place to live (Ashiyat et al., 2018). Hence, it is important to analyze the relationship between a student's specialization and demographic factors, as their specialization of study is closely related to their future career.

Higher income careers are usually perceived as careers in engineering, dentistry, medical or technology background. A study by Al-hallak et al. (2018) found that 66.5% of dentistry college students perceived dentistry as a prestigious profession. Meanwhile, 87.2% of dentistry students in Turkey choose dentistry because of its high income (Çapan et al., 2018). Various studies have proven that parents' career backgrounds have a high influence on the choice of specialization among their children (Al-Subait et al., 2017). A study among students' choice of accounting major shows that parents' academic qualification has a significant relationship with the students' choice of accounting major in UAE (Rababah, 2016). The perception of high income is well-portrayed by their parents' career advancement. The students, who pursue their career with the purpose of seeking a high income job, are usually influenced by the high income earned by their parents (Çapan et al., 2018). Ehigbor and Akinlosotu (2016) also highlighted that parents' careers tend to move in tandem with their children's aspirations.

The result depicted for the final correlation among the students in Oman supports that the students originated from high income families tend to choose other study specialization than Humanity. This is because Humanity study specialization revolves around education and history studies, linguistic study, intercultural and international studies, philosophy and religious studies, as well as multi/interdisciplinary studies. The background of study suits very well for the students with Social and Art career tendencies, which involves more with humans as compared to Realistic career tendency with higher income careers. These careers are usually perceived as moderate income careers, where passion and job satisfaction play more important roles than the income generation (Schiess et al., 2015).

Family is the central domain in the UAE, and as a collectivistic society, stress from family may affect the work (and vice versa) (Jabeen et al., 2018). In this study, the tendency in choosing applied study specialization is getting lower as their parents are getting older. Since family matters will affect the performance at work, the students tend to choose specialization other than Applied. Examples of Applied science careers are radiation therapist, chemical technician, radiologist and respiratory therapist, and usually offered in the private sectors. These careers require high commitment of time, involving high risk, even though the return income is far greater than in a Humanities career.

A study found that there is a positive relationship between career satisfaction and job performance (Bhatti et al., 2017). In their context, job satisfaction is more rewarding than high income as they could spend more time with their family. Working in Social or Art career tendencies allow them to have more flexible working hours, where some of them might even be applicable to work at home. These careers are more suitable for the students of Humanity study specialization. The higher the commitment to take care of their parents, the lower their tendency in choosing applied science study specialization.

4. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The career tendency among Dhofar University students specialized in Engineering, Humanity and Applied studies have been successfully identified in this study. The job landscape in Oman is changing rapidly. The education system in Oman aims to produce high-quality graduates who can lead a high income nation. Rapid economic growth has generated a wide range of jobs in Oman. However, each individual has his or her own choice in choosing the appropriate career. Each individual has a different tendency and interest. Likewise, in career choice it needs to be selected correctly. It is important to make sure the chosen career is enjoyable. The results from this study provide clear evidence to prove that there are significant difference exists for the four career tendencies (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic and Social) across gender. Significant relationships were also found for the variables of career tendencies and demographic factors. The significant findings in this study suggest that the variables of career tendencies among students need special attention. This is important to ensure students make the right career choices. The present study was limited to only the three colleges of Dhofar University (College of Arts and Applied Sciences, College of Engineering, and College of Commerce), except for the foundation program, as well as the dimensions of the John Holland scale of career tendencies. The study recommends the necessity of discovering the career tendencies of students in the middle stage of basic education, so that they are directed to university studies in the disciplines appropriate to their tendencies. It also suggests that further studies be conducted on career tendencies and their relation to other variables.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

All information in this paper has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical concerns.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

All authors have contributed equally.

Statement of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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