



ANALYSING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE UNDERGRADUATE MUSIC STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA ON CHOOSING A CAREER IN MUSIC

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Choosing a profession is a vital stage in life. It is a complex process that leaves an enormous impact on student life. This research examines the factors which influence undergraduate music students' career choices in Malaysian public universities. A total of 489 respondents responded to the questionnaire using a survey method. The results indicate that the individual factors are the most influential factors that affect undergraduate music students' career choices. The results also show that male students are influenced by individual and societal factors in their decision to pursue a career in music. The One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test reports a significant difference between the type of instruments they play and the universities they attend on factors influencing the choice of music career among undergraduate music students. The students, educators, and instructors in learning institutions will find the information very useful to prepare students for their future careers.

KEYWORDS: Music Career, Individual Factors, Socioeconomic Factors, Societal Factors, Multicultural/Religious Factors

INTRODUCTION

Career is a word that is widely used to refer to a person's professional life. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word 'career' is defined as an individual's "course or progress through life". The definition of the word refers to a variety of aspects of a person's life, including study, learning, work,

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job, occupation, and employment.

There have been many comparative studies done to understand what factors affect the way music students around the world make career decisions. However, there is a lack of information that is specific to Malaysian music students. Since a person's career choices can have a long-term impact on their lives, this issue must be paid attention to. Not only can making the wrong career choice have negative impacts on one's psychology and emotions new problems such as financial difficulties could arise. Today, career choice is no longer a private issue that should not be discussed openly or left completely to fate and chance. Instead, people have now understood why it is crucial for students to precisely choose a major when applying to college or university. According to [Mohd et al. \(2010\)](#), students' decision-making skills are still developing both cognitively and emotionally when they are in secondary school. Therefore, there must be guidance or assistance given to the youth so that they do not find themselves lost in a world where everything seems to move so swiftly.

Several studies have been conducted by educational researchers such as [Jones \(1964\)](#), [Bernstein \(1986\)](#), and [Nagel \(1988\)](#) on the process of decision-making of undergraduate music students and students who are majoring in music education ([Bates, 1997](#); [Bright, 2006](#); [Burgstahler, 1966](#); [Gillespie & Hamann, 1999](#); [Rickels et al., 2010](#); [Russell, 2008](#); [Thornton & Bergee, 2008](#)). Yet, there is a limited study on factors that influence music students' decision to major in music education ([McClellan, 2007](#)). It seemed that music educators and academicians could help give guidance to their students and increase the effectiveness of teaching by trying to understand their personality profiles and career interests, hence suiting the teaching method accordingly.

According to [Rauduvaite and Lasauskiene \(2013\)](#), researchers tend to begin to focus on students between the time they graduate from high school and enter the workforce. It is a stage where the students are deciding on a career, starting school, and gaining experience, where they are most vulnerable and clueless. Choosing to pursue a music career is one of the most important decisions made by young people, usually made before beginning their musical education. Since it is not an easy choice, to do so consists of several individuals' decisions, which are the students themselves, and the decisions must be made as early as in their childhood, together with the assistance of adults.

The earliest study in the field of a music career was discussed in [Jones \(1964\)](#)'s study. He noted that the field of music seems to be a logical place for the primary study of factors that influence the career decision-making process in a specific career. Jonas also stated that it is important to consider the rigid curriculum and the longitudinal preparation which are necessary for most music students. It has become apparent that decisions and choices must be

made very early in life, and these must undergo adjustment and revision over a long period if the student is to be successful in music. Jones (1964) added that the overall period of development seems to be a ripe field for an investigation of the career decision-making process in a specific career as pursuing a music career can appear challenging and complicated.

THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Students who have a goal to pursue music as a career may be motivated solely by their love for what they do. In today's world, there are countless doors of opportunity in a variety of industries and sub-fields in the music business. For example, students might focus their studies on music education, music management, or music engineering technology to prepare for careers in these fields.

This current study could provide relevant data regarding the various factors, namely individual, socioeconomic, societal, and multicultural/religious, on the career decision-making of undergraduate music students. Since undergraduate music students are likely to be faced with many decision-making processes before and after graduating from university, they need to choose the correct career path as they complete their education. Thus, more information is needed on how music students in general, and undergraduate music students, can go about choosing their careers.

Though there have been several studies on the said field, a clear view of the Malaysian undergraduate music students still needs to be investigated as there is a shortage of study that focuses on Malaysia. With the available literature to the researchers' awareness, deeper analysis and knowledge, this study will likely offer a clear overview of factors that influence undergraduate music students' career choices in Malaysian public universities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ahmed et al. (2017) expressed that 'career' is a word derived from French and Latin provenance. They discovered this straightforward definition identified by Geçikli (2002) as the occupational, commercial or industrial activity that a person may experience throughout his/her educational journey or in some other period of his/her life or until his death. Vilhjálmsson and Arnkels-son (2013) and Bubnys and Zydziunaite (2008) described career choice and individual career path design as a responsible process that has a significant impact on an individual's quality of life, future visions, and professional self-awareness. Accordingly, when students choose a profession between graduating from high school and joining the job market, they continue their education

and begin collecting professional experience (Holland, 1996; Schmidt, 2010; Super, 1985; Veldman et al., 2013).

A music career can be exceptionally rewarding to those who are passionate about the vocations of teaching and performing. Parkes and Jones (2012) investigated the motivational dimensions that influence undergraduate students' decisions to become classroom music teachers or music performers. They discovered that students chose a profession in music for a variety of reasons, including that they loved music and believed that they were competent at educating, the profession in teaching was meaningful, and they particularly considered themselves educating as a part of their job.

Research by Cooley (2007) and Luftig et al. (2003) found that by examining the specific career decision-making process of college students in the arts, career development experts can improve the quality of services provided to them. As stressed by Jones (1964), Baxter (1977) and L'Roy (1983) music students must emphasise their decision-making selections early in life. To achieve their professional goals, these freshmen music students must frequently update and change their career choices over time to attain their professional ambitions.

Many factors were found to determine the intention to pursue a career in music. Jones (1964) included in his study that influence from parents and teachers, self-satisfaction, confidence in skills, passion, reputation, previous experience, and economic concerns defined the factors that influence students to pursue a career in music. It is also noted that when college students mature and become more self-reliant, the influence of parents on their decision-making and career choices started to decrease (Davidson et al., 1996; Jones, 1964; Zdzinski, 1992).

This study investigates factors influencing students' choice of music career namely individual factors, socioeconomic factors, societal factors, and multicultural/religious factors. Individual factors include what people believe of themselves, along with their talents, passions, beliefs, and demands to succeed, while social factors involve values, behaviours, and practises that society places on different career choices (Middleton, 2015). Moreover, societal factors are usually associated with learning experiences, influence from peers, and depictions on public perceptions. Furthermore, in socioeconomic factors, O'Neil et al. (1978) examined that this factor relates directly to the subjects' social class, race, gender, supply and demand of jobs, and general financial considerations. The study was mainly conducted in Malaysia; thus, multicultural/religious factors present in the study were related to the ethnic group in Malaysia namely Malay, Chinese, and Indian. The beliefs, traditions, cultures, norms, and values of these three dominating ethnic groups will influence their attitudes and actions. Multicultural/religious factors are to

prepare students to be responsive to socio-cultural consciousness such as racial and ethnic lifestyles (Wong & Chiu, 2016).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to identify factors influencing students' choice of music career among undergraduate music students in Malaysian public universities. The following research questions were addressed to achieve the purpose of the study:

1. What do music students perceive regarding factors influencing students' choice of a music career (individual factors, socioeconomic factors, societal factors, multicultural/religious factors) in the universities?
2. Are there differences in factors influencing students' choice of a music career with selected demographic profiles (gender, universities, and instruments played)?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative approach to obtain data from the respondents. The survey technique will portray the students' perceptions on factors that influenced their choice of music career as the main concept in data analysis.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

A primary survey of undergraduate music students was conducted from September 2019 to February 2020. The survey sample included music students who are studying at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS). These are the seven public universities that were chosen because they are offering music courses and music programmes. A total of 838 questionnaires were distributed using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. To reduce biases, the questionnaires were assigned randomly to the respondents. The rate of return was 58% of which 489 sets of questionnaires were returned.

RESEARCH TOOLS USED

Using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23, the sample size was sufficient to interpret the data collection. Inferential statistics such as

independent samples t-test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test were used in the study and descriptive analyses using percentages, means and standard deviation were employed. The instrument used in the study is a questionnaire that was adapted from O'Neil and Borger (1978) and modified by the researcher based on a previous literature review on a choice of a music career. Using a Likert-type scale of 1 to 5, the questionnaire comprised twenty-two (22) statements based on various factors namely individual, socioeconomic, societal, and multicultural/religious. Students were instructed to choose at the end of each statement in the following columns, from 1 to 5: (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; and (5) Strongly Agree.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

A total of 489 respondents participated in the study. The result of the demographic profile shows that there are 302 (61.8%) females and 187 males (38.2%). Participation of respondents from UPSI were the highest ($n = 107$ or 21.9%) followed by UiTM ($n = 85$ or 17.4%) and UNIMAS ($n = 78$ or 16%). Respondents from UMS, UPM and UM had an equal number which is 60 (12.3% each). Respondents from USM have the lowest number with only 39 or (8%) respondents. Malaysian Chinese students contribute to the majority of the respondents (34.3%), while Malay students make up 32.2 per cent. Native Sabahans (Kadazan, Dusun, Bajau and Murut) comprised 23.9% followed by the native Sarawakians (of the ethics Bidayuh, Iban and Melanau) who comprised 7.6%. Indian respondents make up the least percentage (2%) of the population. Most of the respondents in this study played the piano ($n = 171$ or 35%) and students who played brass instruments make up the fewest number ($n = 20$ or 4%). Regarding their music career preferences, the majority of the respondents (83.8%) wished to become a music teacher/lecturer/educator followed by a performance artist (59.1%) as the second-highest percentage. Slightly more than a third of the respondents decided to pursue a career in music after they finished secondary school (33.9%). In this study, respondents have considered pursuing music as their future career as the majority (77.5%) of the respondents have already decided that music is their future career in their life.

Perception of Individual Factors

Table 1 shows the perception scores on the individual factors. The overall mean average is 3.93 which indicates that the respondents agree that the individual factors did influence their decision on their career choice.

All the respondents agree that they already have an interest in music as their career (mean score of 4.23) and they are looking forward to relating their current study to their future career (mean score of 4.13). They also agree that

their music education did influence their career (mean score of 3.93), they already have the skill in playing their instrument that influenced their future career (3.90), and they are concerned with choosing a major in music or as an occupation (mean score of 3.82). However, they are relatively less likely to agree that they are already talented in their studies (mean score of 3.56).

Table 1
Descriptive Analysis on Individual Factors.

Items	Mean	SD
I am interested in a music career	4.23	0.72
I am looking forward to relating my current study to my future career	4.13	0.80
The music education I had influenced my career decision	3.93	0.85
I have the skills in playing my instrument that influenced me in my future career	3.90	2.02
I am concerned about choosing a major in music or an occupation	3.82	0.91
I am talented in my study right now	3.56	0.89
Individual Factors	3.93	0.68

Perception of Socio-economic Factors

Table 2 shows the mean scores of statements that were assessed by respondents to measure their perceptions of socioeconomic factors and their related statistics. The overall mean score of 3.66 based on all the five statements indicates that the respondents are relatively most likely to agree that they can do a free-lance job after their working hours/study as the music career is flexible (mean score of 3.81). They also almost agree that with a higher level of education, they can choose a career with a higher income level (mean score of 3.70). However, the respondents are relatively least likely to agree that the availability and the demands of a career in the music field influenced their career choice (mean score of 3.60 and 3.59 respectively), with the lowest being the opportunity for a high income in a music career (mean score of 3.58) can influence their career choice. Their involvement shows consistency across the five (5) statements as indicated by the range in SD values relative to the mean score values.

Table 2**Descriptive Analysis on Socio-economic Factors.**

Items	Mean	SD
My music career is flexible where I can do my freelance job after working hours/study.	3.81	0.93
I believe with a higher level of education; I can choose a career with a higher income level	3.70	1.01
The availability of a career in the music field influenced my career choice	3.60	0.92
Demands for a career in the music field influenced my career choice	3.59	0.94
The opportunity for a high income in a music career influenced me to choose a career in music	3.58	0.96
Socioeconomic Factors	3.66	0.75

Perception of Societal Factors

Table 3 shows the perception scores on the societal factors. The overall mean average is 3.23 implying that on the average, the respondents' perception level of societal factors is moderate.

The respondents are not able to decide whether social media did play a part (mean score of 3.47) and whether the mass media on TV did influence them in choosing music as their career (mean score of 3.44). This is followed by whether their class teacher (mean score of 3.12) and their school career days influence their career choice (mean score of 3.07). Finally, the respondents are relatively least likely to agree that their friend's advice did influence their career choice (mean score of 3.06).

Table 3**Descriptive Analysis on Societal Factors.**

Items	Mean	SD
Social media influenced me to choose a career in music	3.47	1.11
Mass media on TV influenced me to choose a career in music	3.44	1.09

Continued on next page

Table 3 continued

My class teacher at school influenced the career I wanted to pursue	3.12	1.19
School career days influenced my career choice	3.07	1.81
Friends' advice influenced my career choice	3.06	1.07
Societal Factors	3.23	0.88

Perception of Multicultural/Religious Factors

Table 4 represents the perception scores on Multicultural/Religious Factors. Based on the overall average mean scores, the respondent's perception of multicultural/religious factors is moderate (mean score of 3.13).

Based on the individual statements, the respondents are relatively most likely to agree that God does not forbid them to choose music as a career (mean score of 3.71). However, the respondents are moderately likely to agree with the rest of the statements which are, they enjoyed joining religious occasions (mean score of 3.28), religious factors have received more attention in the mass media (mean score of 3.18), and that nowadays entertainment programmes have more religious contents (mean score of 3.02). On the lower end, respondents relatively disagree with the statements that attending religious occasions as well as their religion have influenced them to pursue a music career (mean score of 2.82 and 2.72, respectively).

Table 4

Descriptive Analysis on Multicultural/Religious Factors.

Items	Mean	SD
I believed that God does not forbid us to choose music as a career	3.71	1.15
I enjoy joining religious occasions (non-Muslim - singing at church / Muslim - singing Islamic Nasyid) when being invited	3.28	1.29
I realise nowadays that religious factors (religious entertainment) have received more attention in mass media	3.18	1.17
Nowadays entertainment programme has more religious factors	3.02	1.09

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Table 4 continued

Attending religious occasions influenced me to pursue a music career	2.82	1.29
My religion influenced me to pursue a music career	2.72	1.26
Multicultural/Religious Factors	3.13	0.97

Inferential Statistical Analysis on Students' Choice of Music Career (Individual, Socioeconomic, Societal and Multicultural/Religious Factors) between Gender

Four factors namely individual, socioeconomic, societal and multicultural/religious factors were presented in Table 5. The summary statistics of the independent samples t-test shows there are differences between the gender of respondents. Individual factors and societal factors are statistically different at 0.01 ($p < 0.01$) and 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) as shown by the mean scores. In regard, it is observed that the mean scores on individual and societal factors differ between gender. Male respondents agreed with individual and societal factors more as compared to female respondents.

The mean scores of socioeconomic and multicultural/religious factors are not statistically different at 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). As a result, mean scores on socioeconomic and multicultural/religious factors do not differ between gender. Therefore, whether the respondents are male or female, their perceptions of socioeconomic and multicultural/religious factors are almost similar.

Table 5

Independent samples t-test on Factors Influencing Music Career Choice between Gender.

Factors	Gender	Mean	t	p
Individual	Male	4.09	4.09	0.00**
	Female	3.83		
Societal	Male	3.35	2.39	0.02*
	Female	3.16		
Socioeconomic	Male	3.64	-0.38	0.70
	Female	3.67		
Multicultural / religious	Male	3.22	1.66	0.10
	Female	3.07		

*sig at 0.05

Inferential Statistical Analysis on Students' Choice of Music Career (Individual, Socioeconomic, Societal and Multicultural/Religious Factors) among Universities and Instruments Played by Respondents

a) ANOVA Test of Various Factors on Students' Choice of Music Career among Universities

The focus of this section is on the difference in individual, societal, socio-economic, and multicultural/religious factors, if any, among universities. Following the result of the normality test and the test of significant difference, the parametric tool employed in this section is ANOVA because it involves more than two groups. Table 6 provides a summary of the statistics.

Table 6
ANOVA Test on Factors Influencing Music Career Choice among Universities.

Factors	df	F	SS	MS	Sig
Individual Between Group	6	4.18	11.15	1.86	0.00*
Within Group	482		214.23	0.44	
Societal Between Group	6	7.47	31.81	5.30	0.00*
Within Group	482		341.96	0.71	
Socioeconomic Between Group	6	1.77	5.93	0.99	0.10
Within Group	482		269.77	0.56	
Multicultural/religious Between Group	6	14.37	69.53	11.59	0.00*
Within Group	482		388.80	0.81	

*sig at 0.05

The results reveal that the various factors influencing students' choice of music career among universities had a significant difference on individual $F(6,482) = 4.18$, $p = 0.00$, societal $F(6,482) = 7.47$, $p = 0.00$ and multicultural/religious $F(6,482) = 14.37$, $p = 0.00$. Further, a post hoc using Duncan Multiple Range Test was conducted on the significant variable to look for differences between groups.

With regards to individual factors, the results of the Duncan Multiple Range Test (Table 7) reveal that respondents from UPM, UPSI, UiTM, UMS and UM ($m = 4.07, 4.06, 4.02, 3.99$, and 3.84 , respectively) are relatively the most likely to have influenced them to choose a music career, and those from UNIMAS and USM ($m = 3.72$ and 3.63), are the least likely to choose so.

Moreover, viewed from societal factors, results from Duncan Multiple Range Test (Table 8) show that the results of respondents from UMS, UPSI,

UNIMAS, and UiTM (m = 3.48, 3.47, 3.35 and 3.27, respectively) are relatively the most likely to influence in choosing a career in music than those from UPM, USM and UM (m = 3.07, 2.82, and 2.78, respectively).

Table 7
Duncan’s Multiple Range Test for Individual Factors between Universities.

University	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
USM	39	3.63	
UNIMAS	78	3.72	
UM	60	3.84	3.84
UMS	60		3.99
UiTM	85		4.02
UPSI	107		4.06
UPM	60		4.07
Sig.		0.09	0.08

Table 8
Duncan’s Multiple Range Test for Societal Factors between Universities.

University	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
UM	60	2.78		
USM	39	2.82		
UPM	60	3.07	3.07	
UiTM	85		3.27	3.27
UNIMAS	78		3.35	3.35
UPSI	107			3.47
UMS	60			3.48
Sig.		0.07	0.07	0.22

Table 9

Duncan’s Multiple Range Test for Multicultural/Religious Factors between Universities

University	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
UM	60	2.41		
USM	39	2.69		
UPM	60		3.03	
UiTM	85		3.18	
UNIMAS	78		3.23	
UPSI	107		3.25	
UMS	60			3.81
Sig.		0.09	0.22	1.00

Regarding multicultural/religious factors, the results of the Duncan Multiple Range Test (Table 9) indicate that respondents from UMS ($m = 3.81$) are relatively the most likely to have the influence to choose a music career, and those from UPSI, UNIMAS, UiTM, UPM, USM and UM ($m = 3.25, 3.23, 3.18, 3.03, 2.69$ and 2.41), are the least likely to has so.

However, there is no significant difference at 0.05 ($p > 0.05$) in socioeconomic factors. It can be concluded that socioeconomic factors do not differ among universities and the respondent’s perceptions of socioeconomic factors are the same.

b) ANOVA Test of Various Factors on Students’ Choice of Music Career among Instruments Played

The summary statistics of the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) comprising the four components of students’ choice of a music career are presented in Table 10 to see whether the perceptions on the above-mentioned differ among respondents who played the piano, string, woodwind, brass, percussion, and vocal instruments. ANOVA test is used in this section to compare more than two groups of instruments.

Table 10**ANOVA Test on Factors Influencing Music Career Choice among Instrument Played.**

Factors	df	F	SS	MS	Sig
Individual					
Between Group	5	2.91	6.60	1.32	0.01*
Within Group	483		218.79	0.45	
Societal					
Between Group	5	5.98	21.76	4.35	0.00*
Within Group	483		352.01	0.73	
Socioeconomic					
Between Group	5	2.04	5.71	1.14	0.07
Within Group	483		270.00	0.56	
Multicultural/ religious					
Between Group	5	5.62	25.20	5.04	0.00*
Within Group	483		433.14	0.90	

*Sig at 0.05

The results reveal that the various factors influencing students' choice of music career among instrument played had a significant difference on individual $F(5,483) = 2.91$, $p = 0.01$, societal $F(5,483) = 5.971$, $p = 0.00$ and multicultural/religious $F(5,483) = 5.62$, $p = 0.00$.

Further, viewed from individual factors, the results of the Duncan Multiple Range Test (Table 11) indicated that the results of respondents who played woodwind and brass ($m = 4.26$ and 3.99 , respectively) are relatively the most likely to have an influence to choose a career in music than those who studied vocal, played string, piano and percussion ($m = 3.96$, 3.94 , 3.84 , and 3.81 , respectively).

With regards to societal factors, the results of the Duncan Multiple Range Test (Table 12) reveal that respondents who studied vocal, played brass, string, woodwind and percussion ($m = 3.60$, 3.43 , 3.28 , 3.26 , and 3.26 , respectively) are relatively the most likely to have the influence to choose a music career, and those who played the piano ($m = 2.99$), are the least likely to have so.

With respect to multicultural/religious factors (Table 13), respondents who played the percussion, studied vocal, played brass, string and woodwind ($m = 3.42$, 3.35 , 3.28 , 3.27 , and 3.11 , respectively) are relatively the most likely to have the influence to choose a career in music than those who played the piano ($m = 2.84$).

However, there is no significant difference in socioeconomic factors among instruments played ($p > 0.05$). It is concluded that their agreement level towards socioeconomic factors among instruments that the respondents play has no difference. For all the instruments played, perceptions towards socioeconomic factors are the same.

Table 11

Duncan’s Multiple Range Test for Individual Factors between Instruments Played

Instrument	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Percussion family	37	3.81	
Piano	171	3.84	
String family	143	3.94	
Vocal	76	3.96	
Brass family	20	3.99	3.99
Woodwind family	42		4.26
Sig.		0.25	0.06

Table 12

Duncan’s Multiple Range Test for Societal Factors between Instrument Played.

Instrument	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Piano	171	2.99	
Percussion family	37	3.26	3.26
Woodwind family	42	3.26	3.26
String family	143	3.28	3.28
Brass family	20		3.43
Vocal	76		3.60
Sig.		0.13	0.09

Table 13**Duncan's Multiple Range Test for Multicultural/Religious Factors between Instrument Played.**

Instrument	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Piano	171	2.84	
Woodwind family	42	3.11	3.11
String Family	143		3.27
Brass Family	20		3.28
Vocal	76		3.35
Percussion Family	37		3.42
Sig.		0.16	0.15

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to examine the perception of the four factors that influenced undergraduate music students in Malaysia in choosing a career in music as well as to determine the differences in factors influencing students' choice of a music career with selected demographic profiles. All the objectives in the study have been achieved accordingly.

The results from this survey of undergraduate music students showed that they were most influenced by individual factors followed by socioeconomic factors, societal factors, and lastly multicultural/religious factors. Perceptions on factors influencing the choice of a music career also showed some differences according to gender, universities attended, and instrument played. From the survey on individual factors, most of the respondents were interested in a music career and they were looking forward to relating their current studies with their future careers. Respondents also agreed that their music education in the universities had influenced them in choosing music as a career. Most of them already have the skill of playing their instrument and they preferred to choose music as an occupation.

In terms of socio-economic factors, respondents agreed and believed that a music career will allow them to have flexible working hours. This was a plus point for students who wanted to earn extra income and financially support themselves during their studies.

When questioned on societal factors, respondents moderately agreed that social media did play a part and the mass media on TV also did influence them in choosing music as their career. This was a surprising yet expected outcome. Apart from teachers and friends, social media had also given a great impact on society. For the past 10 years, the way people socialise had been

greatly revolutionising with the use of Instagram, Facebook, Twitter- Internet in general. Getting information on everything, including music career is now at everyone's fingertips. Zucker (2016) had the same opinion and stated that social media has made music more accessible to people around the world. Today, many of them are freelancers, part-timers or casual musicians and they can now release music whenever they wish to, which has opened a new, big door to the music career.

Since multicultural/religious principles are something that many people live by, the respondents were asked some related questions. It was found that the respondents mostly agree and believe that their religion does not forbid them from choosing music as a career. This means that they were free to choose whatever career they would like to pursue in the future (if it is morally acceptable) including music. There are no restrictions to choosing a career in music as they can also be successful in choosing music as a career while still living by their religious or cultural practices. Since music also strengthens the individual characters such as discipline, skills and focus on life, it only provides more acceptance and passion for the students.

The factors mentioned above (individual, socioeconomic, societal, and multicultural/religious) have influenced students to pursue a music career after they have graduated from their universities. Results found based on gender show that perceptions on the choice of music career have differences with respect to individual and societal factors. Nonetheless, no gender differences were found in the two other factors which are socioeconomic and multicultural/religious factors. This finding supports previous research by Wei (1994) who found that individual factors were reported to be the most influential factors on students' decisions in both males and females. Male respondents had significantly higher mean scores for individual and societal factors compared to females. This indicated that male music students had a more optimistic attitude, which influenced them to choose a music career. Their interest and talents played an important role too on influencing them to choose a career in music other than family, teachers, friends, and social media.

Regarding the different perceptions on the choice of music career between universities, it was found that there are differences with respect to an individual, societal and multicultural/religious factors. Individual interests, talents and skills had an impact on the students, whether they wanted to choose a music career. Moreover, the societies around them and their religions would influence whether to choose a career in music after they graduate from university or not.

A similar result was found in the perceptions on the choice of music career between instruments played. It was found that there are differences with respect to an individual, societal and multicultural/religious factors. For indi-

vidual factors, respondents who played the woodwind and brass instruments are more concerned about choosing a career in music. In terms of societal factors, respondents who studied vocal, and played brass, string, woodwind, and percussion instruments were more concerned about choosing a career in music. Students were more likely to have an interest in a music career when they have the knowledge and skills in playing their instruments. Regarding multicultural/religious factors, the findings showed that respondents who played percussion, studied vocals, played brass, string and woodwind were more concerned to choose a music career compared to those who played the piano as they were less concerned to choose a music career. This is likely because percussion (gamelan, gendang, rebana, tabla, tamborin), wind (viola, gambus, guitar, rebab), and string (harmonium, seruling, serunai) instruments are widely used in traditional and classical music of Malaysia. To summarise, all the three factors do influence instruments played which further influenced the students to choose music as a career.

This study has contributed to a better understanding of factors influencing the choice of music career among undergraduate music students in Malaysia. Factors influencing the choice of music career may vary across cultures, ethnicities, ages, and genders, thus, more related studies in Asia and other geographical contexts may help in making research findings more widely representative. The study has also given insight into music career choices and provides educators with valuable information on the factors and variables that may affect music students' choice of a career.

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