

## Determinant of Career Choices Awareness Among Undergraduate Students

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### ABSTRACT

The increasing number of unemployed and job competitiveness causing the students to have a hard time choosing their career choices. Thus, this research aims to study on influential factors affecting awareness in career choices among UiTM Kota Bharu students. The factors included in the study are family influence, personality, peer influence, environment and economic consideration. Stratified random sampling was used and the population involved in the study was undergraduate full-time students from UiTM Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The students were drawn from two faculties that are available in the campus. The students in semester three until seven for Faculty of Computer and Mathematical Science (FSKM), and the students in semester one until six for Faculty of Business Management (FBM). The primary data was obtained through a survey where the questionnaire that was distributed to the 328 samples. Based on the result, it was found that family influence, personality, peer influence, environment and economic consideration have a positive relationship with career choice awareness. Other than that, family influence, personality and environment are the factors that influence career choice awareness among student since it has a p-value that is lower than 0.05.

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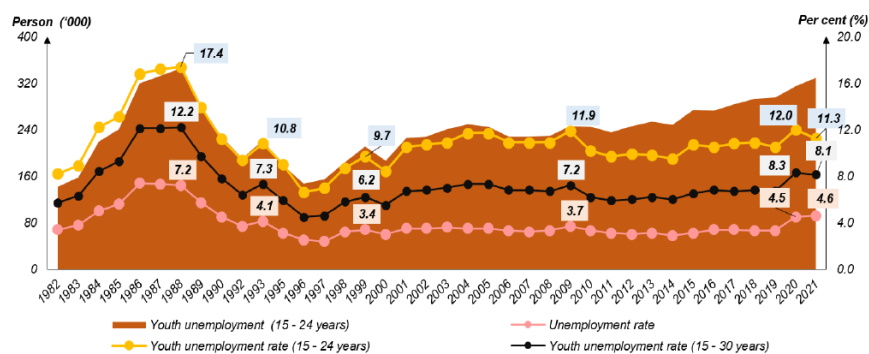
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**Contribution/Originality:** This study contributes to the literature review by understanding students' awareness of choosing a career that matches the course they are attending at university.

## 1. Introduction

Choosing the wrong career due to not having career awareness might contribute to the country's high unemployment rate in the future (Wong et al., 2019). This is frequently related to the fact that they are only looking for a job they "like" and preferred to be an unemployed until they find the right job (Kozhakhmet & Ibrayeva, 2016). According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2022), Malaysia's unemployment rate rose from 4.5% in 2020 to 4.6% in 2021. The rate of the country's unemployment can be referred to in Figure 1. The high unemployment rate will give a negative effect on a country's economic status (Kukaj, 2018). Kukaj (2018) reveals in the study conducted in Western Balkan that the Gross Domestic Product growth of the country in Western Balkan fluctuated by 0.5% given that the unemployment rate increased by 0.1%. This highlight that it is best for undergraduates to have awareness of choosing a career because unemployment will lead to a decrease in the country's economic growth.

Figure 1: Unemployment Rate for Malaysia (1982 - 2021)



Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia (2022)

There are a few researchers that had conducted studies to determine the factors that influence career choice awareness. The factors that include in this study are family influence, personality, peer group influence, environment and economic consideration. In Pakistan, Humayon et al. (2018) were conducting research to reveal the determinant of career choice among undergraduate students in higher education institution located in Vehari. Islam and Rahman (2021) and Siddiky and Akter (2021) were interested in studying the factors that influence the career choice of university students in Bangladesh. Other than that, there are also researchers from Sri Lanka, Oman, Kenya, Nigeria, Yemen and Indonesia that had conducted a study about students' career choice (Abdo, 2016; Adetola et al., 2021; Al-Abri & Kooli, 2018; Ayodele, 2018; Fayadh et al., 2017; Mberia & Midigo, 2018; Shanthrakumar, 2021). In Malaysia, Omar et al. (2021) and Wong et al. (2019) were also conducting research to reveal the determinants of career choice among undergraduates. Thus, we are interested in conducting a study that involves career choice awareness among UiTM Kota Bharu students since it is related to unemployment and economic growth problems.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Career Choice Awareness

Based on [Jusoh et al. \(2021\)](#), the students need early exposure to career awareness to do initial planning in career choices. The Economic Action Council performed a study where it emphasized that graduates had difficulty getting a job because of a lack of awareness in knowing different career options ([Jusoh et al., 2021](#)). The absence of exposure to early education in a career will decrease the awareness of career choice in students. Some students only learn without knowing what they are interested in or in the direction of their future careers. Based on [Janse and Goede \(2020\)](#) study, it is mentioned that university students are oblivious of careers that include career opportunities, paths and descriptors related to occupations in information technology. It shows that there are students that have little knowledge about the existence of a variety of career choices. Hence, awareness of career choices among students remains a current issue in our country.

### 2.2. Family Influence

Family also plays an important part in determining undergraduates' career choice, especially parents ([Humayon et al., 2018](#)). Child's admiration of their parents' job can influence their future career plans ([Gwelo, 2019](#)). Parents' profession, income level, knowledge about occupations, norms, and many more factors will influence the children's career choices ([Saleem et al., 2014](#)). Furthermore, [Gwelo \(2019\)](#) found that family influence and career choice were positively related based on the result of determinants of career choice among university students, which was proven by the coefficient method. Similar to [Adetola et al. \(2021\)](#), there is strong involvement between the parents and their children's education and career choice. In addition, there is a positive relationship between family influence and career choice using correlation coefficients based on the research of [Abdo et al.\(2016\)](#). Moreover, it is also supported by [Maina \(2013\)](#) that parents have an influence on their children's career choices by supporting specific manners that can inspire them about their interests or capabilities.

### 2.3. Personality

Personality is characterized as "somewhat persevering through examples of contemplations, sentiments, and ways of behaving that mirror the propensity to answer in some ways under particular conditions" ([Kankaras, 2017](#)). Based on the study by [Omar et al. \(2021\)](#) the type of career students pick is influenced by how they assess themselves in relation to a personality attribute. According to [Gwelo \(2014\)](#), students choose a career path that fits precisely with their personality. Students' behavior and attitudes can determine their career choice and whether they can perform within their selected job. [Wong et al. \(2019\)](#) highlighted in his study that an individual's personality can contribute in achieving success in their career. It is because some job recruiters might set specific criteria for the applicants to ensure that they can commit to the job that they applied for. If the students neglect these values in their career choice, many crises will ensue when they start working. Different personalities with different environments can cause them to lose interest in continuing their career for a long period. For example, if a person is likely to work individually but has chosen a career that requires working in teamwork circumstances, the work can be affected, and a stressful working environment can occur.

## 2.4. Peer Group Influence

A peer group is a social group that a person associates with and is likely to have an impact on their attitudes and behavior. These individuals are often of a similar age, background, and social standing (Furrer, 2016). Wong et al. (2019) claim that peers provide emotional support and offer advice regarding the career choices of undergraduate students. If the students are pressured to decide on the same career path as their peer group, which they can make a wrong decision, they will find difficulties with their chosen career soon (Gwelo, 2014). It has been proven by Islam and Rahman (2021) stated on their research that peer factor had a high influence on the career choice but may have a less influential role than parents in influencing students' career choice. Meanwhile, a study by Omar et al. (2021) indicates that there was a negative relationship between peer groups and student career choices based on students' viewpoints. In addition to encouraging teamwork and collaboration, the socially friendly workplace also creates the conditions for individual career growth (Wong et al., 2019).

## 2.5. Environment

There are different environmental perspectives that can affect undergraduate students' career choice awareness. The community environment is one of the environment factors that can affect students' career choice (Adetola et al., 2021; Kumazhege, 2017). Environment factors also found to influence career choice in the technical education profession in Nigeria (Adetola et al., 2021). Similar study conducted by Omar et al. (2021) also found environment factor to be significant in determining career choice. According to Omar et al. (2021) environment elements include the home location, nature of business and services, and socio-economic environment (Omar et al., 2021).

## 2.6. Economic Consideration

Economic consideration can be defined as the economic factor that is being weighted in a decision-making process (Abdo et al., 2016). Pearson correlations were used by Humayon et al. (2018), Abdo et al. (2016) and Ayodele (2018) to determine the strength of the relationship between economic consideration and career choice. There is a weak positive relationship between economic consideration and career choice (Abdo et al., 2016) meanwhile in other studies there is a moderate positive relationship between economic consideration and career choice (Humayon et al., 2018; Ayodele, 2018). Even though the strength of the relationship is different in those studies, the directions are all the same which are positive. However, Omar et al. (2021) provided an argument in their research since economic consideration was found not significant in determining career choice among undergraduate students. The downside of Omar et al. (2021) research was they did not include strong reasoning on why their findings are not in line with most of the studies conducted among the students. Thus, this study was intended to determine the influence of economic consideration on the career choice of students from UiTM Kota Bharu.

## 3. Research Methods

### 3.1. Research Design and Instrument

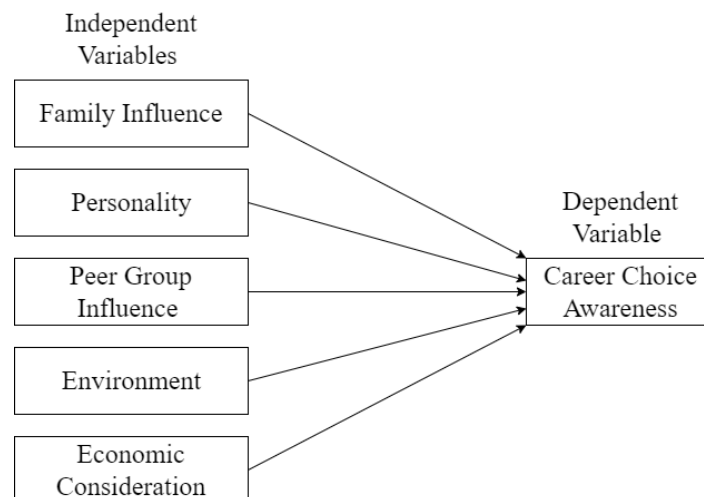
In this research, a quantitative method was used to approach the relationship between the variables, which are the factors considered and the career choice. The independent

variables are the UiTM Kota Bharu students' family influence, peer group influence, personality, environment and economic consideration in choosing the career, and the dependent variable is the career choice awareness of the students. A cross-sectional research design was used to accomplish the research objectives. The survey was the primary strategy as it had been performed to collect all data correlated to the variables mentioned. The questionnaire in this study was divided into seven parts. Starting from Part A is the questions about the information on the demographic profile of the respondents which are gender, age, faculty and semester. Whereas, Part B to G contain questions related to dependent and independent variables which represented in [Table 1](#) and relates the variables based on the theoretical framework as indicated on [Figure 2](#).

Table 1: Instrumentation

Part	Variable	Number of Question	Sources
A	Demographic	4	-
B	Career choice	7	<a href="#">Ozlen and Arnaut (2013)</a> and <a href="#">Abdo et al.(2016)</a>
C	Family Influence	7	<a href="#">Olaomi (2018)</a>
D	Personality	8	<a href="#">Adetola et al. (2021)</a> and <a href="#">Kumazhege (2017)</a>
E	Peer Group Influence	6	<a href="#">Olaomi (2018)</a>
F	Environment	6	<a href="#">Olaomi (2018)</a>
G	Economic Consideration	6	<a href="#">Abdo et al. (2016)</a>

Figure 2: Theoretical Framework of the Study



### 3.2. Sample

This study utilized probability sampling which are proportionate stratified sampling as sampling technique in this study. Stratified sampling is utilized when the population from which the sample is to be selected does not have a homogenous group and is often employed to generate a representative of a decent sample ([Etikan & Bala, 2017](#)).

The total students who registered as full-time UiTM Kota Bharu students for session October 2022 - February 2023 is 1315 population. The sample size selected using [Krejcie and Morgan's \(1970\)](#) table. Since [Krejcie and Morgan's \(1970\)](#) table did not have an exact

value for 1315 population, so interpolation was done on it and got the approximate number of sample size is 297.75 ~ 298 respondents. However, the sample size for each faculty depends on the population of each faculty that have shown on table 3.2 where the numbers of sample that calculated are the 20 minimum sample size. Meanwhile, this study also considered for non-responds from the respondent. So, it was estimated ten percent non respond for each strata that make the total sample size reduced. Thus, the total sample size after adding ten percent to consider the non-respond from the respondent are 328.

### 3.3. Multiple Linear Regression

Multiple linear regression is a statistical technique that predicts the result of a dependent variable by combining more than one independent variable. Thus, this method was used to answer the second research question which is to identify which factors are affecting the career choice of UiTM Kota Bharu students. The general estimated model of regression is as follows;

$$\hat{y} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k \quad (3.2)$$

Where:

$y$  = Predicted of  $y$  value

$\beta_0$  = Estimated of the regression (intercept)

$\beta_k$  = Estimated of the regression slope

$X$  = Value of  $x$  for observation  $i$

### 3.4. Model Adequacy Checking

The basic assumptions regarding multiple linear regression are there is no multicollinearity issue in the data, the error term must be normally distributed, the error term must have constant variance (homoscedasticity) and the error term need to be independent (Damodar, 2021). This assumption must be fulfilled before analyzing the findings with multiple linear regression.

Multicollinearity issue arises when there is a strong correlation between the independent variables. The existence of multicollinearity in the data for this study will be detected by using tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) value (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). These values show the extent to which one independent variable can be explained by another independent variable. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), tolerance and VIF that is less than 0.1 and more than 10 respectively indicate multicollinearity issue exist.

The next assumption which is the error term must be normally distributed will be checked by using the Q-Q plot. The error terms can be said to be approximately normal if the data are distributed near the normal line. The constant variance of the error term will be assessed by plotting the residuals against the predicted variable. The variance of the error term can be concluded as constant if the plot is randomly scattered without any patterns. If these two assumptions are not met, transformation on the independent variable needs to be done. The last assumption which is the independence of the error term will be checked by plotting the residual against the order plot. The randomly scattered plot is needed to conclude that there is no relationship between the error term.

### 3.5. Overall Significance of the Model (F-Test)

F-Test in the ANOVA table will be used to test the overall significance of the model. The hypothesis for this test is as follows:

$H_0$ : The model is not significant

$H_1$ : The model is significant

The 5% significance level was used in this study as suggested by [Sekaran and Bougie \(2016\)](#). Thus, the null hypothesis will be rejected if the  $p$  value of the F-test is lower than 0.05 and the model can be concluded as significant in determining the career choice awareness among UiTM Kota Bharu undergraduates. It means that at least one of the independent variables significantly influences the career choice awareness of UiTM Kota Bharu students.

### 3.6. Selection Method

The best-estimated model for this study was chosen by using the backward elimination method. This method will initially consider all the independent variables in the study before dropping the independent variable that has a  $p$  value that is larger than the predetermined alpha value which is 0.05 ([Kutner et al., 2004](#)). Then, the fitting process will begin for the remaining variable to select the next variable to be dropped. The dropping processes were conducted step by step and will continue until there are no variables that have a larger  $p$  value than 0.05.

### 3.7. Goodness of Fit of the Model

The goodness of fit of the model can be determined by the value of coefficient of multiple determination,  $R^2$  and  $R^2$  adjusted value.  $R^2$  which is the coefficient of multiple determination value dependent variable's total variation, which indicates the proportionate decrease in overall variation caused by the use of the independent variable. The higher coefficient of multiple determination value is preferable since it shows that adding the independent variables will reduce the total variation of the dependent variable which is career choice awareness.

$$R^2 = 1 - \frac{SSE}{SSTO} \quad (3.3)$$

$$R_a^2 = 1 - \left( \frac{n-1}{n-p} \right) \frac{SSE}{SSTO} \quad (3.4)$$

Where:

$SSE$  = sum of squares error

$SSTO$  = total sum of squares

$n$  = number of observations

$p$  = number of predictors

### 3.8. Significance of the Individual Variable in the Model

The significance of family influence, personality, peer group influence, environment and economic considerations towards career choice awareness of UiTM Kota Bharu undergraduates will be tested by using  $t$  statistic. This test will determine whether all explanatory variables' coefficients are equal to zero in the population. The hypothesis for the test is as follows;

$H_0$ : The independent regression coefficient is equal to zero.

$H_1$ : The independent regression coefficient is statistically significant from zero.

The null hypothesis will be rejected if the  $p$  value of this test is lower than 0.05 and it can be concluded that the independent regression coefficient is statistically significant from zero. Thus, the independent variable can be said to be significant in determining career choice awareness. This test will be performed on each of the independent variables which are family influence, personality, peer group influence, environment and economic considerations. This test only can be proceeded if the model is found to be significant in determining career choice awareness.

$$t' = \frac{b_k}{s\{b_k\}} \quad (3.5)$$

Where:

$b_k$  = slope

$k$  = kth independent variable

$s$  = standard error

### 3.8. Estimated Regression Model

The estimated regression model for this study will be constructed by using the output from the 'Coefficient' table. The model for this study is as follows;

$$= \hat{\beta}_0 + \hat{\beta}_1 X_1 + \hat{\beta}_2 X_2 + \hat{\beta}_3 X_3 + \hat{\beta}_4 X_4 + \hat{\beta}_5 X_5 \quad (3.6)$$

where;

$Y$  represents career choice awareness.

$X_1$  represents family influence.

$X_2$  represents personality.

$X_3$  represents peer group influence.

$X_4$  represents environment.

$X_5$  represents economic consideration.

$\beta_0$  represents the intercept

$\beta_1$  represent the slope for coefficient family influence

$\beta_2$  represent the slope for coefficient personality

$\beta_3$  represent the slope for coefficient peer group influence

$\beta_4$  represent the slope for coefficient environment

$\beta_5$  represent the slope for coefficient economic consideration

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows summary of descriptive analysis for variable of family influence, personality, peer influence, environment, and economic consideration towards career choice awareness of UiTM Kota Bharu Students.

Based on Table 2, the total number of respondents after removing the outliers process is 304, consisting of students UiTM Kota Bharu. In career choice awareness, the minimum of 1.86 shows that there are students who have a low career awareness while the maximum of 7.00 indicated that there are students who have a high awareness in career choice (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). While the maximum of 7.00 at the other variables such



as family influence, personality, peer influence, environment and economic consideration reveals that there are students who strongly agree with the statement in the questionnaire. From the results, the mean on each variable is high for a seven-point scale. The standard deviation indicates that there is a variety of answers since the value is rather high.

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Variable Table

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Career Choice Awareness	304	1.86	7.00	5.4483	0.98107
Family Influence	304	2.71	7.00	5.6922	0.93666
Personality	304	3.50	7.00	5.7939	0.71772
Peer Influence	304	2.33	7.00	5.5872	0.94968
Environment	304	2.33	7.00	5.7456	0.75887
Economic Consideration	304	4.50	7.00	6.4282	0.57819

#### 4.2. Normality Assumption

Table 3 shows the skewness for each variable, Family Influence, Personality, Peer Influence, Environment and Economic consideration towards Career Choice Awareness among students after removing the outlier. All variables are in the range of normality in skewness which is between  $-1.5$  to  $1.5$ . Hence, the data fulfilled the requirement to proceed with Pearson's Correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis.

Table 3: Summary of Normality Assumption Results

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	
Career Awareness	304	1.86	7.00	-0.636	0.140
Family Influence	304	2.71	7.00	-0.672	0.140
Personality	304	3.50	7.00	-0.242	0.140
Peer Influence	304	2.33	7.00	-0.657	0.140
Environment	304	2.33	7.00	-0.562	0.140
Economic Consideration	304	4.50	7.00	-0.909	0.140

#### 4.3. Linearity Analysis

Table 4 shows Pearson Correlation of family influence, personality, peer influence, environment, and economic consideration towards career choice awareness of UiTM Kota Bharu Students.

Based on Table 4, the  $p$  value for all variables are less than 0.001 which is less than alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It indicates that there is a significant relationship between the independent variables which are family influence, personality, peer influence, environment and economic consideration and dependent variable which is career choice awareness among UiTM Kota Bharu students.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Results

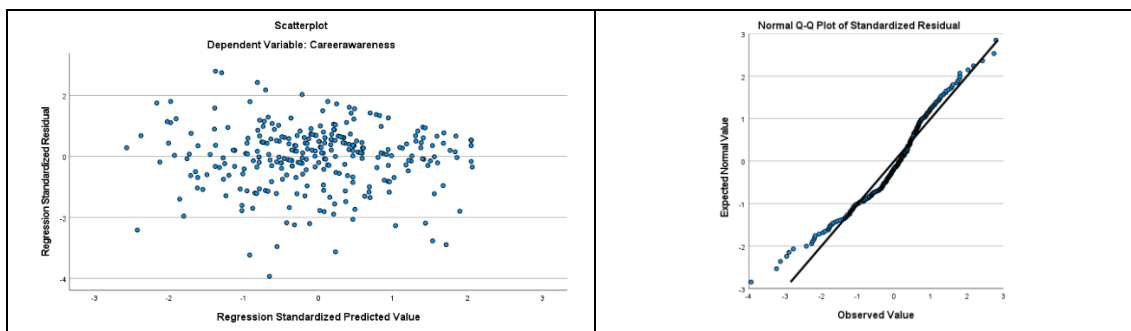
Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Career Choice	Family Influence	0.408	<0.001
	Personality	0.486	<0.001
Awareness	Peer Influence	0.329	<0.001
	Environment	0.350	<0.001
	Economic Consideration	0.204	<0.001

The Pearson Correlation value shows that there are moderate positive correlations between family influence and personality towards career awareness which are 0.408 and 0.486 respectively. Meanwhile for another variables which peer influence, environment and economic consideration have weak positive relationship with career awareness with the correlations value of 0.329, 0.350, 0.204 respectively. It can be concluded that family influence, personality, peer influence, environment and economic consideration significantly influence career choice awareness of UiTM Kota Bharu students.

#### 4.4. Model Adequacy Checking

The result model adequacy checking for multiple linear regression will be divided into four sections which are the test on constant variance of error term, test on normality of error term, test on independent of error term and test on multicollinearity. Figure 3 illustrates the scatter plot of regression standardized residual against regression standardized predicted value.

Figure 3: Graphical representation for model adequacy checking



According to Figure 3, all the plots are randomly scattered and do not show any obvious pattern. The randomly scattered plot indicates that the error terms have constant variance and are independent. Thus, the assumption of constant variance of error term and independent of error term are met in this study. All the plot in Figure 3 lies approximately close to the line. It indicates that the assumption of normality of error terms is met for this study.

Based on Table 5, tolerance values for family influence, personality, peer influence, environment and economic consideration are more than 0.1. A tolerance value that more than 0.1 indicates that there are no correlations among all independent variables. Other than that, variance inflation factors (VIF) values that are less than 10 also indicate that there are no correlations among independent variables. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity issue occurs in this study.

Table 5: Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Independent Variables

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Family Influence	0.726	1.377
Personality	0.694	1.441
Peer Influence	0.727	1.375
Environment	0.710	1.408
Economic Consideration	0.814	1.228

#### 4.5. Overall Significance of the Model (F-Test)

Table 6 shows the analysis of variance for family influence, personality, and environment in determining career choice awareness of UiTM Kota Bharu undergraduates.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	88.349	3	29.450	43.460	<0.001
Residual	201.939	298	0.678		
Total	291.637	303			

Based on Table 6, the null hypothesis was rejected since the  $p$  value of overall  $F$ -Test is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the model is significant in determining the career choice awareness. It means that at least one of the independent variables significantly influences the career choice awareness of UiTM Kota Bharu students.

#### 4.6. Goodness of Fit of the Model

Table 7 shows the R-Square Value for this study. This R-Square value was obtained by using the backward elimination method. Out of five variables in this study, only three variables were found significant in determining career choice awareness of students which are family influence, personality and environment.

Table 7: R-Square Value

R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square
0.550	0.303	0.296

According to Table 7, the R square and adjusted R square values are 0.303 and 0.296 respectively. From the results, it can be concluded that there are only 30.30 percent of the total variation in the career choice awareness of UiTM Kota Bharu undergraduate can be explained by family influence, personality and environment. While the other remaining 69.70 percent of the variation might be explained by other variables that are not investigated in this study.

#### 4.7. Significance of the Individual Variable in the Model

Table 8 shows the significance value for family influence, personality, environment and in determining career choice awareness of UiTM Kota Bharu undergraduates. Based on Table 8, the  $p$  value for family influence, personality and environment are less than 0.05. The null hypothesis for these three independent variables was rejected. Hence, the

variables that were found to be significant in determining the career choice awareness are family influence, personality and environment.

Table 8: T-Value of Independent Variables

Variable	Coefficient Value	Standard Error	t-Value	Sig.
Family Influence	0.217	0.058	3.744	<0.001
Personality	0.473	0.075	6.317	<0.001
Environment	0.185	0.070	2.663	0.008

## 5. Conclusion

In summary this study has achieved its objectives in identifying the significant factors contributing the career choice among undergraduate students of a public university in Malaysia. The finding of this study is consistent with the research from [Gwelo \(2019\)](#), [Abdo et al.\(2016\)](#), [Maina \(2013\)](#) and [Adetola et al. \(2021\)](#) who found that family influence has a relationship with students' career choice awareness. For personality variable, this research has a similarity with the past research conducted by [Afaq Ahmed et al. \(2017\)](#) that found that there is a relationship between personality and career choice awareness. A significant positive relationship between all factors and career choice awareness that was found in this study is in line with the study conducted by [Omar et al. \(2021\)](#). Other than that, for variable economic consideration there is a similarity between the finding of this study with the study conducted by [Abdo et al. \(2016\)](#) that indicated a weak positive relationship between economic consideration and career choice awareness.

Using multiple linear regression analysis, there are only three variables that have a significant effect on career choice awareness which are family, personality and environment. While the remaining variables which are peer influence and economic consideration had no significant effect on career choice awareness. The finding of this study is similar to the study conducted by [Omar et al. \(2021\)](#) which revealed that family, personality and environment were found significant in determining the career choice awareness of students. However, in the study conducted by [Omar et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Gwelo \(2019\)](#), variable peer influence was also significant in determining the career choice awareness of students.

## Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The researchers used the research ethics provided by the Research Ethics Committee of Universiti Teknologi Mara (BERC). All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants according to the Declaration of Helsinki.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors reported no conflicts of interest for this work and declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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