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Factors Which Promoted the Interest of the Selected Professionals in Jolo in Obtaining A Master's Degree

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ABSTRACT

This research studied the factors which promoted the interest of the selected professionals in Jolo, Sulu in obtaining a master's degree. The theory and explanation on interest of Silvia, Kashdan, and Berlyne were used to support the study. The study sought to answer the following questions: 1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, and occupation? 2. What are the factors which promoted the interest of the selected professionals in Jolo in obtaining a master's degree? 3. What is the level of interest of the professionals in obtaining a master's degree? 4. Is there significant difference among the factors which promoted the interest of the professionals in obtaining a master's degree? 5. Is there any significant difference in the interest of the professionals according to their profile? The samples used in this study were the selected professionals in Jolo. They were thirty (30) respondents. The researcher used the following statistical treatment for the hypotheses: Percentage was used in the first question. Weighted mean was employed to treat the second and the third questions. The fourth question used the Friedman Test using the chi-square. The fifth question was analysed with the Kruskal-Wallis Test using chi-square. After the thorough analysis and interpretation of the data, these were the following results: The factors which promoted the interest of the selected professionals in Jolo were prospective rank and promotion, financial condition, aspiring for leadership, staying marketable, community, and a ladder to doctorate. There were ten (10) identified concepts of interest. These were the following: concentration to the lectures, awareness of new-found knowledge, curiosity to further learning, attention to oral reports, readiness in attending classes, willingness to comprehend lectures, eagerness to accomplish researches, enthusiasm to expand skills, keenness to explore broader education, and achievement of wisdom. The level of interest of the selected professionals in Jolo in obtaining a master's degree in relation to the ten concepts of interest and the factors mentioned was high. In addition to this, their levels of interest in relation to the ten concepts of interest do not differ with each other in terms of their age, civil status, degree obtained, position, length of service, and income. However, in terms of gender, the male and female professionals differ only in their interests as to readiness in attending classes and keenness to broader education.

1. Introduction

The question of where this master's degree going to bring a person is always asked.

Many professional opportunities in any services require additional education beyond the bachelor's degree. Anyone considering attending graduate

school has a series of important decisions to make. The bottom line: most persons interested in sustaining a career will benefit considerably from additional education beyond the bachelor's (<http://www.publicservicecareers.org/index.asp?pageid=567>). In some situations, a job search can



actually hurt a person with little or no job experience (Hansen, 2009). But true enough, obtaining a master's degree can lead to job security and more opportunities for advancement.

Everyone has a different career goal and ideal, and that is why everyone's career decision is different. In today's highly-credentialed world, skills may not be the sole requirement in meeting the work and service standards. So, even if two people are in the same environment, their career planning and aspirations may also be different.

Holding a master's degree has become one of the needed competencies not only in landing a job but also in rising up the ladder of success and achievements such as getting promoted and having a better pay. In the life of an individual, one angle of it is his ambition to obtain a degree so that he can get a job which will help him survive in the daily living. But the truth about the development of the employment standards and policies of the present generation conceives the new desire in an individual to attain more. This gives rise to the acquisition of the master's degree.

Experts feel that the bachelor's courses need to give every student a full mobility and a ready encounter to innovations in the community, particularly in the employment society. There is no guarantee that one can become, for instance, a faculty member, after four years of specialization, or immediately get hired after finishing college. This is true in the world today. This is the crossroads at where the master's degree stands today. Professionals want to pursue courses that will put them on the fast track to jobs. Every professional is on the race. The demand here is to have terminal degrees that are accepted by the industry and help one get going.

The ideal policy in hiring is to get the best and the brightest (Sison, 2003). The best person to look for are those who have an advanced degree. This serves as one of the purposes why many professionals seek a master's degree. They do not only decide merely because of the thirst for more knowledge, but their interest is touched by the policies of the industrial society.

The use of education by people to further the wide view of their career has been undertaken for a long time. It is considered that this should provide value for both the employer and the employee. In other words, it shows that a master's degree will not only give profit to the exclusive interest of the professional, but his employer as well and the company as a whole. However, the reasons why professionals decide to begin a journey on a master's degree and what they hope to gain out of it is one that is subject to misinterpretation by the very individuals who embark on this course, the companies who recruit them, and the entire industry as well. Stepping on a master's degree course does not necessarily mean that the individuals would find themselves the dream job they have always craved for, although this desired job usually becomes the top reason for getting interest in obtaining a master's degree.

There are certain jobs that do not need to have educational qualifications. In addition to this, there are still jobs wherein advancement and postgraduate studies are not the requirements to get ahead. Rather, greater emphasis is placed on the individual's work experience, skills, and talents. Some employers would just settle for a mere bachelor's degree and the skills which are substantial to the kind of service required.

But many now require a specialization which is surpassing the usual four-year course in college before the professionals can benefit on a number of career options, higher positions and promotions, and can go to places where many employment alternatives are available to apply for.

A master's will be much more useful to one's self, and it is more highly valued than a college degree in terms of employment.

Every year, hundreds of people embark on master's degree courses up and down the country, hoping to utilize its use in the job market. One main reason is to have one's job secure no matter how the work industry fluctuates. This is now the century of "the fittest – the most qualified," of which an advanced degree comprises the qualifications. It now becomes a ticket to the world of employment.



One could generalize that everyone has different expectations on the quality of life they desire to have and their future development.

In various fields of profession, practical knowledge, theory, and training in a skill must be in place to guarantee desirable outcomes. Change was the function of the rapid expansion of graduate education, to strengthen access and opportunity at all levels.

Weston (2009) emphasized that when one goes for a degree – including the bachelor's degree -, he or she should be looking out far enough to see what it is paying.

2. Related Literature and Studies

It seems like all the pieces are in place for the next giant leap in one's career. But before an individual pursues a master's degree or other advanced degree, he or she owes it to himself or herself to think more deeply about this major fork in the road of work and life (Rossheim, 2009).

A number of people say that having a master's degree does not guarantee one's success. Finkle (2000) recommends that an individual should thoroughly research the employment opportunities for the graduates of the program that one is considering. Yet many people prefer pursuing an advanced degree, of course, with varying reasons.

This section discusses the facts about a master's degree, and the factors that motivate the interest of the professionals in obtaining it.

All available evidence shows that the graduate of master's degree programs are extremely competitive in today's employment environment, and earn more and acquire more responsibility as a consequence of their graduate education. That said, there are many degree programs available to interested persons offering alternatives when it comes to access to employment opportunities and other factors (<http://www.publicservicecareers.org/index.asp?pageid=567>).

Master's degree is offered in a variety of fields, just as bachelor's degrees are offered in many fields. Some fields have special degrees

(<http://gradschool.about.com/od/choosingaprogram/a/masters.htm>).

Teaching in universities, managing a company, running a huge business, nursing and curing sick people, and analyzing human behavior were only carried out by people who were properly qualified. In the same way that a carpenter would pass through the grades of apprentice to attain the status of master carpenter when fully qualified, the teacher, the doctor, the biologist, the nurse, the accountant, and others would become a master when they had been licensed by their profession.

Cawsey (2007) indicated that the competition in various fields of profession has been rising steadily in recent years. There are several good educational and medical institutions, and business establishments coming up that are looking for the best quality of teaching and administrative staff and manpower services to deliver product par excellence to the students and the customers. This has resulted in a demand for good teachers, medical practitioners, agriculturists, economists, engineers, biologists, psychologists, etc. with higher qualifications such as a master's degree.

A master's degree is a graduate degree earned after completion of a bachelor's degree. It indicates mastery of a vocation or field of study. It recognizes heightened expertise in an academic discipline or professional field of study, gained through intensive course work and, in most cases, the preparation of a culminating project, scholarly paper, thesis, or comprehensive examination. Within the area studied, graduates possess advanced knowledge of a specialized body of theoretical and applied topics; high order skills in analysis, critical evaluation and/or professional application; and the ability to solve complex problems and think rigorously and independently (Kuther, 2009).

Galbraith (1969) stated that there are a range of pathways to the degree, with entry based on evidence of a capacity to undertake higher degree studies in the proposed field.

Master's degree is the mid-point to the doctorate, the terminal degree for most professions, and a source of enrichment in the chosen field of study. It



exceeds other graduate degrees in its diversity, validating successful completion of a program in numerous disciplines and subfields of study.

A concerted effort is needed to focus on the master's degree – its academic strengths and weaknesses, its diffuse character, and its importance in the hierarchy of degrees. The master's degree is distinct from other graduate degrees. While its relationship to the baccalaureate and doctorate is important, it is increasingly sought as a credential on its own merits.

As the reach of master's education has expanded, the population of students earning the degree has diversified. The percentage of women earning master's degrees increased steadily over the past three decades. During this time frame the proportion of part-time and older students enrolling in master's programs shifted considerably (Harrison, 2003).

The growing practitioner orientation that has accompanied the increasing professionalization of the master's degree has led to several interesting curricular changes in master's programs. The inclusion of part-time instructors who have extensive practitioner-based professional experience has become commonplace. Increasingly common as well is the inclusion of relevant professional work experience as a requirement for admission.

Most master's degree programs require students to complete a master's thesis, or an extended research paper. Depending on the field, the master's thesis may entail conducting a thorough analysis of the literature or a scientific experiment.

In addition to the regular course examinations, a final comprehensive examination representing a culminating experience for a degree is required of all candidates for the master's degree in which a student is expected to integrate prior learning.

Education and other disciplines are fast becoming expanding fields, and an advanced degree is one of the best ways to ensure a secure and rewarding future.

3. Rationale and Purpose

The role of a graduate degree program has been getting more universally substantial as years go by. The demand is vital across professions as it can definitely benefit and sustain knowledge, skills, proficiencies, and success. Every country has some form of educational and human resource reward. The need for highly educated, exceptional performance, and well-trained workforce has been long recognized by different states. Obtaining a master's degree can be grueling at times but it is very much fulfilling in the end. Having this can help one achieve a notable path in his or her career. A lot of opportunities could come to one's occupation, or even personal life. Increased income, greater respect, and job offerings are at hand can be just a few of the many chances an individual can obtain a master's degree.

A professional who takes up a master's degree can experience more time to learn, as well as acquire an enduring associations with other professionals and business agencies. Having more connections could mean having more chances of learning different business strategies and opportunities. This could result to a more rewarding professional and personal life.

This paper was accomplished with the intent of discovering the factors which promoted the interest of the selected professionals in obtaining a master's degree, thus, inspiring the other professionals to secure the same degree. The institutions of higher education could also be motivated to labor for more improvement in delivering learning to master's degree students. The levels of interest, as well as the purpose, in obtaining the said degree vary among different professionals, therefore, schools that offer graduate school programs could be enthused through this research to strive to produce graduates who are loaded with learning and training, and knowledge-driven, as well.

4. Research Questions

Employment is expected to grow along with the globalization. To advance into a more prestigious jobs and positions, a master's degree is becoming essential.



This study sought answers to the following questions:

What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, and occupation?

What are the factors which promoted the interest of the selected professionals in Jolo in obtaining a master's degree?

What is the level of interest of the professionals in obtaining a master's degree?

Is there significant difference among the factors which promoted the interest of the professionals in obtaining a master's degree?

Is there any significant difference in the interest of the professionals according to their profile?

5. Methodology

The respondents of the study were the selected professionals (in any field of discipline) in Jolo, Sulu who are master's degree holders. These individuals were selected without predilection with regards to their age, gender, years in service, and other attributes true to them.

In conducting the study, the researcher followed these steps: first, reasons of professionals in obtaining a master's degree were surmised; second, the respondents were identified; third, questions to provide possible answers to the problem were formulated; fourth, the researcher did some probing and read books, encyclopedias, journals, and related studies and articles, and explored the worldwide web; and fifth, some ways to prove the hypotheses were done.

Percentage is the statistical tool used to treat the first question to the problem. This tool points to a proportion or share in relation to a whole. The Weighted Mean was used to analyze the data gathered for question number two which determined the factors which affect the interest of the respondents in obtaining master's degree, as well as the third question. It was Friedman Test using the chi-square that was used to probe the data gathered for the fourth question which pointed to the significant difference among the factors. In the fifth question, Kruskal-Wallis Test using the chi-square was used.

In this study, survey questionnaire was constructed. The questions stemmed out from the main focus of the problem. The survey questionnaire directed on the factors which affect the interest of the respondents in obtaining a master's degree in relation to their age and gender, employment background which includes the salary, years in service, and position, their college degree, and marital status.

After conducting the survey, the results were tallied. The results were analyzed and arranged to find answers to the questions. This result will also show if the factors presented really existed at a higher rate. The analysis of the data gathered was done on the extent of the certainty of the factors as experienced essentially by the respondents.

6. Result and Discussion

A. Profile

Age			Gender			Civil Status			Degree Finished		
Age	N	%	Gender	N	%	Civil Status	N	%	Degree Finished	N	%
20 & below – 25	3	10	Male	8	26.7	Single	9	30	MA/MPA units	1	3.3
26-30	6	20	Female	2	73.3	Married	21	70	MA/MPA holder	2	83.3
31-35	9	30							Ed.D./Ph.D. units	3	10
36-40	12	40							Ed.D./Ph.D. holder	1	3.3
Total	30	100%	Total	30	100%	Total	30	100%	Total	30	100%



In terms of age, twelve (12) or 40% of the total number of the respondents, which serves as the majority, ranges from 36 to 40 years old. As to gender, the dominant population is female, summing up to twenty-two (22) or 73.3%. In terms of civil status, twenty-one (21) of the total respondents are married, while the singles are only nine (9). Concerning the highest degree obtained, the

topmost percentage is 83.3% which is the MA/MPA holder.

The survey showed that it is the older professionals who are more interested in obtaining a master's degree. The singles ones are more enthusiastic pursuers of the degree than the married ones. A large number of master's degree holders are female.

B. Employment Position

C. Length of Service

D. Income

Employment Position	N	%	Length of Service	N	%	Income	N	%
Teacher	22	73.3	1-6	10	33.3	P 10,000 & below	13	43.3
Principal	2	6.7	7-12	12	40	P 11,000 – P 15,000	13	43.3
Guidance Counselor	1	3.3	13-19	6	20	P 16,000 - P 20,000	3	10
Administrative Officer	3	10	20-26	0	-	P 21,000 – P 25,000	-	-
Academic Coordinator	2	6.7	27-30	2	6.7	P 26,000 & above	1	3.3
Total	30	100%	Total	30	100%	Total	30	100%

As seen in table for the employment position, the prevailing is the teaching position. Table C shows that those who have been in the service for seven (7) to twelve (12) years have the highest interest in getting a master's degree. As of the income, those who are receiving the salaries of P10,000 to P 15,000 have more interest in a master's degree.

The interest of those in the teaching employment in terms of getting an advanced degree is higher than that of the other employment positions. Many of

those who are reasonably new in service are more interested in elevating their educational attainment. Many of those who belong to the lowest rate of income give more attention to obtaining a master's degree. It means that professionals believe that an advanced degree will help boost salaries.

E. Factors which Promoted the Interest of the Selected Professionals in Obtaining their Master's Degree

Factors	Sum	N	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Financial Condition (Job Security, Family Pressure)	113	30	3.93	High
Aspiring for Leadership (Sense of Accomplishment, Enhancement of Knowledge)	118	30	3.93	High
A Ladder to Doctorate	117	30	3.90	High
Staying Marketable	116	30	3.86	High
Prospective Rank and Promotion (Career Change)	113	30	3.76	High
Community (Recognition, Competition)	109	30	3.63	High

Legend: 1 – 1.49 - Not a factor at all



1.5 – 2.49	-	Very low
2.5 – 3.49	-	Low
3.5 – 4.49	-	High
4.5 – 5.0	-	Very High

All six factors attained the descriptive interpretation “High,” which means that these have strong effect in the interest of the respondents. Considering the result of the survey, the researcher assessed that money, rank, promotion, leadership aspirations, profitability, job security, and competition in jobs are existent reasons why one

goes for a master’s degree. The researcher reckoned these as apparent support in the assertion of Franco (1994) that the appeal of the master’s degree expanded a great deal during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

F. Level of Interest

Concepts	Sum	N	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Awareness of new-found knowledge	132	30	4.40	High
Curiosity to further learning	132	30	4.40	High
Enthusiasm to expand skills	131	30	4.36	High
Willingness to comprehend lectures	131	30	4.33	High
Eagerness to accomplish researches	131	30	4.33	High
Readiness in attending sessions/classes	128	30	4.26	High
Concentration to the lectures	125	30	4.16	High
Achievement of wisdom	124	30	4.13	High
Keeness to explore broader education	124	30	4.13	High
Attention to oral reports	116	30	3.86	High

Legend: 1 – 1.49	-	No interest at all
1.5 – 2.49	-	Very low
2.5 – 3.49	-	Low
3.5 – 4.49	-	High
4.5 – 5.0	-	Very High

The table shows that the level of interest of the respondents as they obtained their master’s degree

was high, proving their eminent concentration in having the said degree.

G. Difference among the Factors which Promoted the Interest of the Selected Professionals in Jolo in Obtaining a Master’s Degree

Factors	N	Mean
Financial Condition (Job Security, Family Pressure)	30	3.93
Aspiring for Leadership (Sense of Accomplishment, Enhancement of Knowledge)	30	3.93
A Ladder to Doctorate	30	3.90
Staying Marketable	30	3.86
Prospective Rank and Promotion (Career Change)	30	3.76
Community (Recognition, Competition)	30	3.63
$df = 5$ $L = .05$ $P = .648$ $\chi^2 = 3.34$ Decision = Accept Ho at 5 <i>df</i> with .05 level of significance		



The result shows that there is no significant difference among the factors which promoted the interest of the professionals in obtaining a master's degree. Although, looking at the mean of each factor, a very little difference can be seen. The greatest driving factors, garnering the same mean, are the financial condition and aspiring for leadership. Since the present generation is confronted with the higher cost of living, most of the professionals consider the salary in landing a job. And they believe that a master's degree is one way to get a higher pay. It has now become a belief that to possess an advanced degree means being able to easily rise up the ladder of success in professional careers, and eventually boosts one's sense of achievement.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that anyone who is planning to obtain a master's degree should first take time deciding upon reasons which are justifiable, because taking this degree may not entirely guarantee advancement in a field or change of career or even immense salary.

It is suggested that any learning institutions should produce more quality master's graduates rather than paying close attention only to offering graduate programs because of accreditation.

The heads or supervisors of any companies and learning institutions should highly encourage their employees to obtain master's degree not only for money purposes but also for increased learning and training.

8. Recommendations

After a scrupulous analysis and interpretation, the researcher arrived at the following conclusion: first, prospective rank and promotion (career change), financial condition (job security, family pressure), aspiring for leadership (enhancement of knowledge, sense of accomplishment), staying marketable, community (recognition, competition), and a ladder to doctorate are manifest reasons why the professionals pursue a master's degree; second, with the six features mentioned the level of interest

of the professionals in obtaining a master's degree is high; third, the professionals were more often than not motivated to get a master's degree because of financial condition and leadership aspiration; fourth, the level of interest of the professionals in obtaining a master's degree in relation to ten concepts indicated was high; and fifth, there was no significant difference among the six factors in promoting the interest of the professionals in Jolo in obtaining their master's degree.

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