

# Writer inserts title of essay research paper

Profession, Student



## **ABSTRACT**

Career plans are a vital requirement for students pursuing higher learning. With respect to international students in the United Kingdom, there are numerous factors that influence career planning, with a significant consideration on the role that the post study work visas play in such scenario. This research identified whether most of the international students in the United Kingdom have a career plan. In addition, the study also identified the kind of the career plans they have and their viewpoint regarding the post study work visa. The participants in this research involved a sample of 50 students from the Kaplan International College London as a representation of the larger community of international students in UK. It was established that international students in UK have career plans, although their career plans are significantly determined by the PSW in the sense that most of the respondents who opted to stay and work in the UK cite the PSW as the reason for this career path. At the same time, most of those who opted to return to their home countries after completion of their studies cited that the government's attempt to terminate the PSW is the prime reason for this career path.

## **INTRODUCTION**

International students usually have varying attitudes with respect to the experiences of career planning. This is normally due to the fact that different countries have different educational systems; as such, the validity of some educational certifications may not be valid in other countries. Such factors play an integral role in determining the attitudes and experiences of

international students; those studying at Kaplan International University are not an exception (Davey 2008). A significant consideration that international students must put into consideration during career paths is recognition of their educational credentials. Limited research has been conducted in order to determine the attitudes and experiences of international students with respect to their career objectives and planning.

## **Research objectives**

To investigate whether or not most foreign students have a career plan in the UK

To identify what the career plans of the international students are

To have an in depth understanding of their attitudes regarding post study worker visas

## **Research Questions**

The following are the research questions, which will facilitate the realization of the research objectives:

Do students at Kaplan International College London (KICL) have a career plan?

What are their career plans?

What do they think about PSW visas?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Career plans are an integral element of successful higher learning, this is due to the fact career plans and objectives normally form the framework for higher education. The career path normally determines the grade course that foreign students undertake. Furthermore, their career plans helps them

discover what motivates them as well as identify the skills that they can offer their potential employers (Foskett & Foskett 2006). The students also like the UK because when they study there, they are able to gain the skills that are needed for the current working environment in that they gain updated skills as well as technical knowledge. Qualifications of the UK are highly recognized and upheld over the world. These foreign students also go for internships in the UK (Bryman & Bell 2000). The advantage of this is that while they work in different fields and industries, they are better able to decide the one that suits them best because they get hands- on experience.

Internships give students the opportunity to work in their areas of interest after they complete college therefore is beneficial to their career planning. Furthermore, as they work as interns, they make use of the knowledge and skills they have gained while under the supervision of a mentor who help them gain a sense of direction of where they want to be. Some foreign students however have their career plans outside the UK especially when the government said that it would withdraw the post study work visas (Mahroum 2002). This is because in as much as they will be employed, they will not enjoy the benefits that the other normal employees will have. Their studying there is for the high quality of education that the UK offers and the good standards that the education system is known for (Cowen 2005).

The students at KICL have career plans depending on their success of the completion of the courses that they have undertaken. At Kaplan international college London, if a student completes a graduate diploma course to the level and standards that are required, they are given permission to go on to

Cranfield University and start their postgraduate university qualification. This of course depends on the fields of their interest. The type of education offered at KICL also puts emphasis on networking (Hotcourses 2008).

Networking helps in career planning in that by building relationships with other people, they give you back valuable feedback and this feedback will help one make informed choices.

In addition, it helps one understand a variety of careers because not all companies can be found by surfing the web. Armed with such information, their career planning will now have its basis on concrete information and help one make decisions that concern their careers (Ivor & Ball 2007).

Kaplan international college London has academic preparation course which help international students develop career plans and once they have identified what they want to do, they are then given places in the partner universities of KICL (Goodman 2009).

For example KICL has partnered with Cranfield University to help international students gain entry for postgraduate courses in fields such as technology, management and engineering. Cranfield University of the UK is the only higher education institution that wholly offers postgraduate programs. Most of the career plans of the KICL students involve furthering their studies to include Master's and Doctorate levels of education. Few are contented with the academic qualifications received from KICL, meaning that they will build their careers using the certificates obtained from KICL without furthering their studies (Davey 2008).

The UK government has a post-study program that allows foreign students to stay and work in the UK after graduation, so that the visa holders can have some work experience in the UK before going back to their countries or they may apply for a further stay. Students in the UK have different reactions about the government's plan to close the post study work visas (Wiseman 2010). This is because they like the UK as it gives them the great opportunities to make their contributions to the social and economic life of the country. The post study work visa is also a great attraction to top notch students from both developed and developing countries (Foskett & Foskett 2006). A study was conducted and it was discovered that 87% of students have a positive attitude towards post study work visas. In addition, the study by Foskett and Foskett (2006) reported that international students were highly motivated by the PSW visa in the United Kingdom, implying that any attempts to terminate the PSW will be a significant blow to international education in the UK. The study also cited that the post study work visas gives international students in the UK many opportunities for earning their living, during their studies as well as after. The visa also helps them acquire full time jobs for a period of two years . with the visa, they do not need an employer to sponsor them with a work visa and gives them the opportunity to take on any form of employment (Zadja 2005). Little research has been conducted in order to determine the relationship between the post study work visa and career planning by international students. The students at KICL highly regard the post study work visas as it helps them gain experience and knowledge that is required in the current job markets (Foskett & Foskett 2006).

## **SUMMARY**

It is arguably evident from the above that the PSW visa as an important tool to facilitate international education and provide further opportunities for career development overseas. Basing on this, this research aims to determine whether the international.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Research methods depend on structure of the research questions and research objectives. When carrying out a research, the researcher can choose between Qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitative approach entails the collection and analysis of quantifiable data and statistics to infer a conclusion; it involves collecting data through investigative units such as questionnaires (Harvey 2000). This research required both the analysis of both qualitative data from a sample of the students at the Kaplan International University. Therefore, the research design implemented qualitative approaches, with the data acquisition methods consisting of mainly primary sources. This is because the data collected will be in form of questionnaires, which is used for gathering qualitative data (Ivor & Ball 2007).

### **Data collection**

Data consists of two types: primary data, which is collected by the researcher, and secondary data that is collected by other researchers. The research will utilized mainly primary data sources.

## **Primary research/primary data sources**

Primary research involves the data acquisition based on first hand information by the researcher. This was carried out using questionnaires, which were distributed among the students at KICL

## **Questionnaire**

Ruane (2005, p. 123) defines questionnaire as “ self-contained, self-administered instrument for asking questions”. The questionnaire was used to gather information regarding their views on the PSW visas, whether they have career plans and the nature of their career plans. The use of questionnaire was preferred because it facilitated the acquisition of enormous amounts of data within a limited period (Ruane 2005).

The primary objective of a questionnaire is to encourage and offer motivation to the respondent to participate actively in the research. The questionnaire comprised of structured and unstructured (open) questions. A structured question can be either in form of multiple choices, dichotomous questions or scales. Dichotomous are designed to collect the fundamental data from respondents such as Male or Female, age and country of origin. Dichotomous questions will save time required for the respondents to answer the questions. They were a simple format involving Yes or No multiple-choice questions.

This research collected 50 questionnaires from various students at Kaplan International University that were sampled randomly, because of random selection of respondents facilitates equality in the distribution of the sample population.



## **Sample selection**

The population that will be chosen for research was from international students in the United Kingdom, with Kaplan International University serving as the reference point. The sampling approach that will be employed will be quota sampling and convenience sampling. Quota sampling refers to a situation whereby the researcher chooses a proportion of the elements that will be investigated during the study.

The quotas chosen for this research were categorised into three distinct age groups: 20-25, 26-30, and above 30 years. According to Blackwell et al, this chosen set represents a diverse people with diverse interests and perceptions towards advertising campaigns.

## **Method of Analysis**

The analysis of data will primarily use descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistical method will be deployed to exemplify the fundamental characteristics of data and summary of analysis on the data. The presentation of information used graphical methods such as graphs, tables and charts. In addition, inferential statistical approach will be used to derive at the conclusion of the research study after data analysis and evaluation.

## **Specific Ethical or Legal concerns with the research project**

There were number of ethical and legal issues concerning the research study. Firstly, the questionnaire was devoid of sensitive questions. Majority of people fear for their views to be known and they seek confidentiality. The

following are other ethical and legal concerns taken into consideration during the research study.

### **The principle of voluntary participation**

The principle of voluntary participation requires that no correspondent be forced into participating. In order to achieve these, the questionnaires were issued only to participants who were willing to participate in the research study (Laurel 2003).

### **Preservation and anonymity of respondents**

All research projects should aim at guaranteeing the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents. All the information gathered is not to be revealed to anyone under any circumstance. In addition the questionnaires did not ask the respondents their names and associated personal information (Nardi 2003).

### **Potential harm or good that may be as a result of the project**

An ethical requirement of research study is that the researcher should not put the respondent in a harmful situation through his participation in the project. All participant shall receive equal treatment without prejudice and they will be informed the reasons for the research prior to their participation (Fisher 2007).

### **Research findings**

A total of 50 questionnaires were issued among 26 men and 24 women. Most of the respondents were from the Republic of china, while a few from other Asian countries such as Thailand and Vietnam. There was one respondent

from Russia and one also from Turkey. The following Table 1 shows the age groups and corresponding number of respondents.

Almost all of the participants in the research were not currently employed in the United Kingdom. In order to meet the first research objective, students were asked whether or not they had a career plan, and 50 percent of respondents stated that they had career plans, while the other 50 percent did not have. Only 28 per cent of the students having career plans intended to stay in the United Kingdom after completion of their studies, with most of them being of the opinion that a cancellation of the post study visa could ultimately change their minds regarding their stay in the United Kingdom after the completion of their studies. The rest of the students who had career plans and had no intentions of working in the United Kingdom cited uncertainties regarding the post study work visa's withdrawal attempts by the government, and therefore preferred working in their countries of origin despite the fact the working conditions in the United Kingdom are far much better than in their home countries. Those who had no career plans generally had no intention of working in the United Kingdom after the completion of their studies, and majority of them had no idea concerning the post work study visa (Ritchie & Lewis 2003). Those who had their career plans and intended to stay in the united kingdom claimed that their decision to pursue their careers in the United Kingdom is significantly because of the added advantages associated with the post study visas, otherwise, any attempts to withdraw the post study work visa will result to a change in their career plans outside the United Kingdom. In addition, there were a small percentage of the respondents who had no information regarding the post study work

visas, this comprised of mainly students who had no well laid career plans in the United Kingdom (Neuman 2003). A summary of the findings are shown in the following figure 1 and figure 2.

In order to meet the second research objective, participants were asked to explicitly state their career plans using multiple choice questions such as whether they have plans of furthering their education in the UK, working and living in the UK. With respect to this, 30 percent of the participants opted to further their studies and work outside the UK, 30 per cent opted to further their studies and work in the UK while the remaining 40 per cent had no well laid plans of either furthering their studies of working in the UK. This is represented in the following figure 3.

In addition, 30 percent of the students willing to study in the UK cited the significance of overseas work experience, 50 per cent claimed that they were motivated by the PSW, while 20 per cent claimed that the quality of education in UK is more superior compared to their countries of origin. This is shown in the following figure 4.

In order to achieve the third research objective, respondents were asked to choose on a scale of between 1 and 5, their perceptions concerning the PSW and how it has contributed towards their participation in higher education in the United Kingdom. A scale of 1 meant not significant, 2 implied less significant, 3 implied significant, 4 implied a more significant while 5 implied extremely significant. 5 per cent had no idea of what a PSW is, 5 percent choose 1, 10 percent chose 2, 20 percent choose 3, 20 per cent choose 4,

while 35 per cent chose 5. These findings are summarized as follows in figure 5.

Among those who had career plans of staying in the United Kingdom after completion of the work, 60 per cent claimed that a cancellation of their PSW would make them to change their decision concerning their stay in the UK for practice skills., 30 per cent said that they would not change their mind while 10 per cent were not sure of the next step they would take a cancellation of the PSW. These findings are represented in the following figure 6.

## **Discussion of the results**

It is arguably evident from the research findings that the research objectives of the study were met. This is because all the respondents provided the relevant information needed to facilitate the realization of the study objectives. All the respondents, who were mainly foreign students, provided relevant information concerning their career plans and their perceptions concerning the post study work visas. These were essential for ensuring that the research achieved its stated objectives.

From the findings, it is arguably evident that there is a balance between the foreign students in the United Kingdom having career plans and those who do not. An inference that can be made from this is that half of the foreign students in the United Kingdom have career plans, with an equal proportion not having career plans also. The equal percentages regarding the foreign students in UK having career plans can be attributed to a small sample size. There is a probability that there could have been a marginal difference in the percentages if the research could have adopted a larger sample size than 50

students. Of those having a career plan, only 28 percent were willing to stay and work in the United Kingdom after the completion of their studies. This represents a small percentage of foreign students willing to work and stay in the United Kingdom owing to the fact that there is a probability that those who do not have career plans are less likely to stay in the United Kingdom after their studies. The implication from this finding is that foreign students in the United Kingdom have no intention of working and staying in the United Kingdom after completing their studies irrespective of whether they have career plans or not. This trend can be significantly attributed to the uncertainties that the government can withdraw the post study work visa. Therefore, a correlation exists between the post study work visa and career planning by the foreign students in the United Kingdom in the sense that the post study work visa plays contributes significantly to the career planning of the foreign students in the UK, and ultimately their working and stay in the country.

From the findings of this study, it can be inferred that foreign students in the United Kingdom have a career plan, although their working and staying in the UK after completion of their studies significantly depends on the government's policies regarding the post study work visa. This is because most of the foreign students who had career plans and intended to stay in the UK claimed that if the government withdraws the PSW, then they would have to reconsider their career plans of working and staying in the UK. The basic argument is that the PSW is an essential determining factor of career planning among the foreign students in the UK. Their fear lies in the termination of the post study work visas because they will be forced to work

in their institutions of study. Once they complete their studies they will be required to re-apply for other visas to permit them to stay in the UK, which is a complex process. The research findings of this study are comparable to other studies conducted earlier regarding the foreign students perceptions concerning the PSW and career planning. Previous studies by Foskett and Foskett (2006) reported closely related findings that international students have a positive attitude towards the PSW, although most of them are significantly worried in the event the government revises its regulations concerning the PSW especially have they have set their career plans. This is in concurrence with the findings of this study.

### **Limitations of the research**

The significant constraint that the research faced was time constraints. This resulted to inadequate collection of questionnaires. There is a possibility of a higher marginal error.

Another notable problem is that some target respondents were not interested in answering the questions during the research. Some respondents might have provided inaccurate information.

### **CONCLUSION**

Most international students usually enroll for higher learning in the United Kingdom because of the high quality of education that the countries. As a result, the students also have to adjust their career plans in order to further exploit the good working conditions in the UK, which is facilitated by the PSW. The PSW is a vital aspect of international education. This research attempted to establish whether international students in the UK have career

plans and their attitudes towards the career plans. The research also discussed the relationship between the PSW and career planning by the international students in the United Kingdom. The findings of this study played an integral role in helping to establish the relationship between career planning by international students and their perceptions towards the Post Study Work visas. The most important finding from the study is that the formulation of career plans by international students in United Kingdom is majorly influenced by their perceptions towards the PSW.

The research also offered the answers to the research questions; as a result, the research objectives were met. The following is a discussion of the research questions and the extent to which the research provided the solutions to the questions.

From the research findings, there are an equal percentage of international students at KICL having career plans and those who do not have. The study focuses on the students having career plans and the findings reveal that 50 per cent of the students have, which is a significant percentage to conclude that students at KICL have career plans.

With respect to the second research question, the findings from the study reveal that only 28 per cent of the students having a career plan were willing to work and live in the UK. The remaining opted to complete their studies and return to work from their countries of origin because of the possibility that the government may terminate the PSW. Therefore, a conclusion regarding this research question is that the career plans of international



students is to return to their home countries and work from their after the completion of their studies.

According to most of the international students, PSW visa is a vital requirement in career development at the international level due to the fact that it offers a framework through which they work in foreign countries, this means that it serves to open an opportunity for an international student to explore the international labor market. This is a core requirement for career success. In addition, the PSW visa eliminates the hassles associated with attaining a work permit in a foreign country. A significant attribute of the PSW visa is that it can be used to integrate both higher learning and working at foreign country by the international students.

### **Value of the study**

The findings from this research can be used in evaluating the trends in international education in the United Kingdom. In addition, the government and education authorities in the UK can use the findings of this research to help them revise their policies towards the PSW.

### **Recommendations for improving this research**

It is arguably evident that the sample size and time are significant limitations associated with this research. Therefore, further research on a large scale is required and incorporates other international universities in the United Kingdom in order to enhance the accuracy of the results.

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