Chapter 5

Personality Traits in Millennial Career Choice: International Business and Tourism

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ABSTRACT

The career choice includes factors such as personality, family, and social environment. This chapter analyzes the manner in which Millennial students choose a profession in International Business and Tourism at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico through the analysis of their personality traits. Using factor analysis and statistical independence, a Chi-square test with a sample of 419 students, the authors found that the factor structure that best fits the data was personal skills, attitudes, and academic skills. These factors provide characteristics of the type of entrepreneurial personality according to Holland’s theory. The personality differences between these two professions are three: the “willingness to serve,” which is emphasized for the tourism profession instead of for the international business profession; “mathematical and language skills”; and “economic retribution” that have a greater weight for the business profession than for the tourism profession.

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INTRODUCTION

In the short term, Millennials will transform the world of work because their main attribute is that they are the first “natives” of the Information Age. Therefore, their motivations, attitudes, skills and knowledge provided in the profession they choose will define their future work. This statement can be transferred to the career choice process because career choice is a process where many factors are involved, such as family, social environment and personality. However, in most cases, people are hardly able to tell or describe what elements they take into account when making a decision regarding their future occupation. Ross and Niabett (2011) suggest that there is a discrepancy in what people say they do from what they actually do, thus the existence of a bias towards a particular option can be assumed, given a large number of options to choose a career. This fact motivates this research on the determinants and reasons for the career options of a generation of millennials (born after 1996) that have different options within the same area of knowledge with different expectations of economic retribution.

To date, in public universities, there has been little attention paid to the subject of career choice. There are a large number of applicants, but a lack of diagnostic instruments to differentiate students based on their skills, attitudes and individual traits. The absence of formal studies on career choice inhibits the professional achievement for all those who are admitted to higher education studies. González and Maytorena (2005) argue that, in order to acquire a higher level of vocational certainty among students, it is important to pay attention to the cognitive focus and emotions experienced by students as factors that they bring into college.

In the last three decades, another phenomenon associated with careers has been strengthened in developing economies, like Mexico. According to CEPAL (2018, p.12), Brazil and Mexico are the countries with the highest direct foreign investment in Latin America. The increase in direct foreign investment and the emergence of international companies have changed the perspective of education, with foreign investment there arises a demand for a certain type of professionals addressed to the organization and development of the companies. New careers, oriented to international market requirements, were created in order to satisfy the international market requirements. For instance, the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in international trade (the first business-oriented BA in Mexico) was funded in 1986 at the University of Guadalajara after the General Agreement of Tariff and Trade (GATT) was signed by Mexico. Since the end of the 90’s, there has been growth in educational institutions with an emphasis on tourism and international business in order to satisfy this specific demand. With this trend, the desire for a career in business and tourism has grown among many young generations.

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