

AN ASSESSMENT OF CAREER COUNSELING FACILITIES FOR GRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract

In modern education, career counseling is very important for the students to choose the best field matching their skills and interest to perform at their utmost level. The present study investigated the awareness, availability, effects and views of student about career counseling. Random sampling technique was used for 400 participants with equal percentage of males and females. A self-prepared closed-ended questionnaire approved by experts was used to collect the data from the participants of the study. Both validity and reliability of questionnaire was ensured through pilot testing. The data was collected from four universities with equal number of participants. It was found that present situation of Career Counseling is not satisfactory and majority of respondents were not guided by career counselor but parents. Private institutions had satisfactory performance regarding career counseling while government institution's performance was not satisfactory. Further research on career counseling in major cities of Pakistan is needed. It is recommended that government should create at least one post or department of career counseling for each Institution and held seminars at the end of each academic session.

Keywords: Career Counseling, National Education Policy

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Background of the Study

Education enables human being to live in such a way that is beneficial for human and rest of the creation. Education teaches the person to live in suitable and contributing way in the society to become its effective member. In modern technological world, everything is changing at very rapid pace; same is the case with education. Many new fields of education and professions are emerging so in this modern age it is very important to choose right education to secure the future life, to balance the unemployment and utilize person's skills at utmost level. For choosing right education field, it needs good career counseling. After industrial revolution we have so many fields to work on. Two main factors are important in selection of career (Yaqoob, Arif, Samad & Iqbal, 2017). First is Personal factors like interest, skills and personal values and second is the environment in which person is living like market requirement and analysis of jobs. Oxford Dictionary defines career counseling as "A process by which a counselor, a qualified professional or an experienced person, helps, students to learn about and select a program of studies, and prepare for a career."

In 20th century many countries recognized the importance of career counseling due to industrialization (Sarwar & Azmat, 2013). For the first time in world, movement started in America for career counseling due to social disturbance characterized by host of economic issues like loss of jobs in agriculture sector due to use of tractor, increasing demand of workers and professionals in rapidly grooming industries, people started shifting to urban areas and returning veterans from World War 1. Frank Parsons who is founder of career counseling started working as social worker influenced by work of Jane Addams in Chicago (Afzal, Raza & Khan, 2018).

Career counseling is a nonstop process throughout the life span and making the right career choice is to choose what you want to do in life (Avery, Fairbanks & Zeckhauser, 2008). Career related practices provide the understanding of personal attributes, skills and knowledge required for the work life. It is essential to guide the young individuals to be self-controlled and be able to deal with the life challenges, to explore themselves, their educational and social setup, and to identify the chances available for them in the world of work. (Shareen, Muhammad & Amina, 2017). In Pakistan Education vision is first educational consulting organization providing quality career planning services and systemized educational guidance to the students and parents since 2001 (Zahid, Hooley & Neary, 2020). Recently some news channels started holding some expos and seminars which is a good move.

Statement of the Problem

As career counseling influences throughout various stages of student's life so taking right decisions at the right time can bring in wonderful

opportunities than the wrong decisions which can ruin student's future due to their irreversibility mostly in latter stage. It has been observed from many students about their wrong choice of major subject or field after completing their education (Ali & Shah, 2013; Khalid & Khalid, 2015). So, it becomes very important to investigate the situation of career counseling in our country Pakistan as well as city Islamabad. Students except some elite class school do not have enough counseling session and seminars either by institutions or by counselors. Mostly students are guided by their family, friends and some teacher who are not trained enough for counseling. Institutions do not have separate departments or trained career counselors. Teachers are also not trained for career counseling. Current study proposes assessment of career counseling of Islamabad's graduates and undergraduates of different major subjects. Less expensive way has been considered to assess the problems of career counseling. For collection of data, questionnaire has been used and research method is quantitative. So by providing sufficient training to career counselors and arranging career counseling awareness seminars in school, colleges and universities we can solve the problem of unavailability of career counseling at various academical stages.

The proposed research project would most importantly be beneficial for the new students, who will have to choose their career to avoid wrong selection of major subject or field. Students will know the importance of career counseling for their future career. Students will know so many fields for future and they may choose that field which will match their skills and interest. This assessment is also very beneficial for Institutions, as they may know the current situation of career counseling in their Institutions. They may also know the importance of career counseling for the students. They may train teachers and hold career counseling seminars to aware their students.

Research Objectives

The major purpose of this study is to achieve the following objectives:

1. To investigate the awareness and availability of career counseling at school, college and university level.
2. To find out the views of students about career counseling.

Review of Related Literature

Career counseling is distinctive for the students. Career counseling has so many benefits to the students. Clear vision and pathway leads to the success in student's future life. Some of the important benefits of career counseling are given below (Saleem, Hanan, Saleem & Shamshad, 2014) . Persons' career counseling model was based on simple logic, common sense

and relied on observing and interviewing skills of counselor. He stated three broad factors: (1) knowledge of self, (2) knowledge of requirement to be successful in different occupations, (3) matching these two groups of facts. Initially there were six stages of career counseling:

1. Job placement service (1890-1919),
2. Educational guidance in school (1920-1939),
3. Colleges and Universities and training of Counselors (1940-1959),
4. Meaningful work and Organizational Career Development (1960-1979),
5. Independent Practice Career Counseling and Outplacement Counseling (1980-1989),
6. New Directions (1990-Present).

According to Singh (2007) and Reid (2015) career counseling basically consists of four elements:

- (a) helping individuals to gain greater self-awareness in areas such as interests, values, abilities, and personality style,
- (b) connecting students to resources so that they can become more knowledgeable about jobs and occupations,
- (c) engaging students in the decision-making process in order that they can choose a career path that is well suited to their own interests, values, abilities and personality style, and
- (d) assisting individuals to be active managers of their career paths (including managing career transitions and balancing various life roles) as well as becoming lifelong learners in the sense of professional development over the lifespan (Ali & Shafiq, 2019) .

God has gifted everybody with some of special strengths and skills. It is very important to identify them and use in appropriate way. Career counselor takes series of tests like personality, IQ and aptitude tests to investigate and calculate the strengths and weakness of the student. This type of information plays a vital role in choosing suitable career pathway. Career counselor will advise student to work on the weak areas to get in the field interested by student (Maqsood, Sahar& Malik, 2020).

Due to industrialization of the modern age, there are so many career choices available for the students. Students often get confuse in choosing correct field having so many options. To eradicate the confusion, career counselor assists the student to focus on the area of career path that works best for the student. It saves time and efforts of the students to achieve realistic and clear career choices. Mostly in the beginning of the academic career, students have no clear goal. It is duty of career counselor to help student to identify the steps needed to reach the primary. Career counselor helps students to set appropriate goal of academic life according to the strengths and weakness. If student is struggling in reaching goals then career guider is the perfect person to assist the student.

Unemployment is one of the major economic problems which most of the countries are facing. There are several factors for unemployment but one of the factors is wrong selection of career. It is seen that students select the subject for the career but when they come to professional life or job life then they realize that they have made mistake as their field doesn't match their skills, they would have selected other field (Rahman, Rahman, Ali & Khan, 2016). They become less competent to get the job thus leading to the unemployment in the country. Career counseling leads to correct selection of career which has further impacts on the skills and performance of professional in the market (Parcover & Swanson, 2013). Correctly guided graduates successfully present themselves to the market as brands. Employers find competent employees which boosts the revenue of organization thus stabilizing the economic condition of the country.

Career Counseling and National Education Policy

It is duty of ministry of education to implant career counseling in the national education policy of the country. After doing critical review of national education policy in terms of career counseling it was found that there is no clause about career counseling of the students (Ahmad & Hussain, 2014). This is one of the effecting problems in the NEP. In the modern technological educational system, career counseling is the one of the important part of educational policy. National Education Policy 2009 is an effective and operative policy with respect to education in Pakistan. It addressed career education in curricula for all the levels of education. The adequate and proper introduction of career education as missing in the policy as per demands of the society ((Ahmad & Hussain, 2014). Policy focuses on the progress of healthy citizens of Pakistan with less concern via curricula on its propagation. Finally curriculum reform section states that curriculum should be progressive nature for students instead the link to career education is missing in the policy document. Pakistan as a developing country is encountering issues of low economy, downsizing workerless factories and lack of wellness and unemployment that may be addressed through career education. (Shahbaz & Shahbaz , 2017)

Method

This is quantitative research study in which survey method was employed.

Sample and Sample Selection

Sample includes an equal number of males and females graduates. Respondents were randomly selected from different universities including government and private. 100 students from each university were added in

the pool. To ensure equal participation of males and females so there were 200 male and 200 female students enrolled in postgraduate (16-years) degree programs in different faculties respectively. The details is as under:

University	AIOU		QAU		IIU		COMSATS	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No of students	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Total	100		100		100		100	
Grand total	400							

M: Male, F: Female, AIOU: Allama Iqbal Open University

QAU: Quaid-e-Azam University, IIU: International Islamic University,

COMSATS : COMSATS university

To ensure maximum participation of all four hundred respondents, the data was collected by the researchers personally by visiting these universities. Authenticity of data was made sure by letting respondents to sign the questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared taking constructs from the literature. It was consisting of initially 25 items. Its construct validity was ensured by getting expert opinion from 3 academicians having PhD Education. At this stage, 4 items were discarded and finally the tool was consisting of 21 items. It was pilot tested on a sample of 32 students, who were not part of the sample. Its reliability was 0.73 Cronbach Alpha.

Results

Demographic Information

Table 1: Guides of Career

Category	Frequency	Percentage
School	24	6.0
Parents	192	48.0
Teacher	72	18.0
Friends	40	10.0
Other source	72	18.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 1 shows that in response to the question who guided about careers, 6% respondents were guided by school, 48% were guided by parents, 18% were guided by teachers, 10% were guided friends and 18% were guided by other sources.

Table 2: Knowledge about Career Counseling

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	188	47.0
Yes, Up to some extent	144	38.0
No	32	8.0
Dont know'	28	7.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 2 shows that in response to the question that do you know about career counseling.47% respondents know about career counseling and 38% know up to some extent.

Table 3: Availability of Department of Career Counselor in Institution

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	44	11.0
Yes, Up to some extent	64	16.0
No	220	55.0
Dont know'	72	18.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 3 shows that in response to the question that was there any department or career counselor in your Institution.11% had department of career counseling in their institution and 55% had no department of career counseling in their school.

Table 4: Satisfaction with Career Selection

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	188	47.0
Yes, Up to some extent	104	26.0
No	72	18.0
Dont know'	36	9.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 4 shows that in response to the question are they satisfied with their career selection and scope of career in Pakistan.47% were satisfied with their career selection and scope of their career in Pakistan, 26% were up to some extent, 18% were not satisfied.

Table 5: Guidance by Teacher about Future Scope of Subject They Teach

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	140	35.0
Yes, Up to some extent	120	30.0
No	100	25.0
Dont know'	40	10.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 5 shows that in response to the question that do their teacher guide about future scope of subject they teach. 35% said their teachers guided them the scope of subject they taught, 30% respondents said up to some extent and 25% said no.

Table 6: Career Counseling at Academic Level

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary level	112	28.0
Graduation level	68	17.0
University level	36	9.0
At all levels	184	46.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 7 shows that in response to the question that at what level there should be career counseling. 28% respondents said career counseling should be at secondary level, 17% said at graduation level, 9% said at university level and **46%** said at all levels.

Table 7: Responsibility of career counseling

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Government	48	12.0
Institutions	116	29.0
Teachers	92	23.0
Parents	56	14.0
All of them	88	22.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 7 shows that in response to the question about responsibility of career counseling. 12% respondents said that career counseling is responsibility of government, 29% said Institutions, 23% said teachers 14% said parents and 22% said all of them.

Table 8: Match of major field or subject with skills

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	5.0
Yes, Up to some extent	88	22.0
No	172	43.0
Dont know'	120	30.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 8 shows that in response to the question that their field or major subject matches with their skills. 5% respondents agreed that their major subject matches their skills, 22% said up to some extent, **43%** said that their major subject doesn't match their skills, 30% respondents were not sure.

Table 9: Suggestions about Results, if a Person Selects Career by Interest

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	224	56.0
Good	88	22.0
Satisfactory	80	20.0
Not too much	8	2.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 9 shows that in response to the question that what is their suggestions about results if a person selects career by interest. **56%** respondents agreed that when a person selects career by interest then it will give excellent results, 22% respondents said good, 20% said satisfactory and 2% said not too much.

Table 10: Respondent's Satisfaction with Private Sector's Performance Regarding Career Counseling

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	124	31.0
Yes, Up to some extent	156	39.0
No	68	17.0
Dont know'	48	12.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 10 shows that in response to the question about respondent's satisfaction with private sector's performance regarding career counseling. 31% respondents were satisfied by private sector's performance towards

career counseling, 39% respondents were up to some extent, 17% said no and 13% were not sure.

Table 11: Responses on Establishment of Private Career Counseling Organization for Profit Making Purpose

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	124	31.0
Yes, Up to some extent	140	35.0
No	80	20.0
Dont know'	56	14.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 11 shows that in response to the question that private sector organizations are established for only profit making purpose. 31% respondents agreed that private career counseling organizations are for only profit making purpose, 35% respondents said up to some extent, 20% respondents disagreed and 14% didn't know.

Table 12: Research Before the Selection of Career

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	52	13.0
Yes, Up to some extent	176	44.0
No	136	34.0
Dont know'	36	9.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 12 shows that in response to the question that have they done research before the selection of career. 13% did research before the selection of their career, 44% said up to some extent 34% said no and 9% didn't know.

Table 13: Hurdles in Career Counseling

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of investment	48	12.0
Lack of knowledge	220	55.0
Political factors	32	8.0
Economic Instability	100	25.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 13 shows that in response to the question that what are hurdles in career counseling. 12% respondents said that lack of investment is hurdle in career counseling, 55% respondents said lack of knowledge is hurdle, 8% said political factors and 25% said economic instability is hurdle.

Table 14: Requirement of Cost and Budget for Proper Career Counseling

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	140	35.0
Yes, Up to some extent	140	35.0
No	76	19.0
Dont know'	44	11.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 14 shows that in response to the question that cost and budget require for proper career counseling. 35% respondents agreed that cost and budget required for career counseling, 35% respondents agreed up to some extent, 19% disagreed and 11% were not sure.

Table 15: Satisfaction on Contribution by Government Regarding Career Counseling

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	44	11.0
Yes, Up to some extent	112	28.0
No	176	44.0
Dont know'	68	17.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 15 shows that in response to the question that are they satisfied by government's contribution regarding career counseling. 11% respondents said that government is contributing in career counseling, 28% respondents said up to some extent, 44% respondents disagreed 17% didn't know.

Table 16: Need of Establishment of Career Counseling Department in Institutions

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	328	79.0
Yes, Up to some extent	52	13.0
No	8	2.0
Dont know'	24	6.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 16 shows that in response to the question that are they satisfied on government's contribution regarding career counseling. **79%** respondents said that there is need of establishment of career counseling department in our educational institutions, 13% were agreed up to some extent, 2% were disagree and 6% were not sure.

Findings

There were 50% males and 50% females in the study. It was found that 37% respondents belong to rural area and 63% respondents belong to urban area. In status of life of respondents there were 51% respondents who were studying and 42% doing their job and 4% doing nothing. Most of the students with percentage of 48 were guided about their career selection by their parents and only 6% respondents were guided by school. 85% respondents knew about career counseling and only 8% didn't know. Only 11% respondents had department of career counseling in their institution while 55% had no such department in their institutions. In terms of satisfaction of career selection and scope of career in Pakistan, there were 47% respondents who were fully satisfied while 18% were not satisfied and 26% were satisfied up to some extent. Interestingly, 81% respondents were fully or up to some extent had defined their aim of life clearly while 15% didn't define. There were 35% and 30% respondents who were guided by their teachers teaching the subject fully and up to some extent respectively. 46% respondents said that there should be career counseling at all academic level including early, primary, secondary, college and university level. In terms of responsibility of career counseling there were random opinions, 29% said institutions and 23% said teachers 22% said all of them and only 12% said government. Only 5% agreed that their major subject or field matches their skills while 43% no. 56% respondents said results will be excellent if a person selects career by interest while only 2% said not too much. 31% respondents were satisfied by the private sector's performance towards career counseling and 39% were up to some extent while 17% were not satisfied.

66% respondents had opinion that private career counseling organization established only for profit making purpose while 20% disagreed the opinion. 44% respondents did research before the selection of their career up to some extent while 34% didn't do that. 58% respondents had an opinion that interest is the main source in achievement of goals while only 9% disagreed that. 55% respondents said that lack of knowledge is the hurdle in career counseling while 8% disagreed. 70% agreed that cost and required for career counseling while 19% disagreed. 44% said government is not contributing in career counseling while 11% said yes. 57% respondents were not satisfied by government contribution in career counseling. 79% respondents said that there is need of establishment of departments of career

counseling in institutions. 52% male and 42% females were satisfied with their career selection and its scope in the country and 14% males and 22% females were not. 48% males and females were guided by their parents, 27% and 26% respondents doing job and studying respectively were not satisfied by government contribution. 43% respondents were not satisfied with resemblance of their skills with their subject guided by any of conventional sources like school, parents, teacher friends and other sources.

Discussion

This was attractive result that most of the respondents knew about career counseling, aligned with a research conducted by Amani & Sima (2015). As it was found that most of the respondents were guided by their parents, so there may be force guidance by parents, parents may emphasize while guiding about the subject which they had like if anyone in parent is doctor so he or she will guide about medicine field. This type of guidance may not lead good results in academic life as well as practical life if child had different skills or interest. The same findings has been reported by Akyol & Bacanlı (2019). So there must be separate department in every institution with expert career guiders or only there should be an expert career guider who calculates the skills, intelligence and interest of students and future scope of subject in the country and then guide them, which has also been recommended by Ali, Rafi, Rehman, Tariq, Zafar, Naeem & Nawab, 2020; Akhter, Ali, Siddique & Abbas, 2021). Every teacher should guide their students about present and future scope of the subject they are teaching. This will lead to the quick solution of the problem. There is need of guidance of career at all academic levels. Majority of respondents were not having resemblance of their skills with their major subject or field, if they were properly guided by experts then they would have full match of their skills with their career field. It is good indication that private institutions are having enough facilities of career counseling. The worse situation in government intuitions should be solved by allocating some budget and hiring some experts on immediate basis. Government, private institutions and private organization may hold seminars at the end of each academic session so that students may have clear pathway for the good future. previous researches (Donald, Baruch & Ashleigh, 2019; Ismail, Abdullah, Mohamad & Khairuldin, 2018) recommend that the governments should appreciate the private NGOs and organizations doing career counseling. It was concluded that present situation of career counseling of students in the capital city is not satisfactory. Parent guide that field which they had ignoring future scope and child's skills. Government institution has no satisfactory facilities regarding career counseling. Private Institutions are having satisfactory performance regarding career counseling. Students have an opinion that career counseling need cost and budget and career

counseling is responsibility of all relevant stake holder. Despite of having worse situation of career counseling, students are having positive opinion regarding their satisfaction.

Recommendations for Future Researches

It is recommended that there is need of further research on assessment of career counseling in all schools, colleges and universities of all the provinces of Pakistan. Ministry of education, Higher Education Commission and all the boards should have proper check on availability of career guider in the institutions. Teachers should guide about future scope of the subject they teach in the beginning of the academic session.

This research has been conducted with university students experiencing career indecision. In future studies, it can be repeated with the clients at various developmental stages and training levels (adolescents, undergraduate students, graduates, etc.) who experienced different career problems such as career inadaptability and career development problems.

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