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Exploring Perceived Barriers in Career Planning And Counseling Among Students

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Abstract

Career planning is an intensive process that is directed towards the achievement of career goals. One needs to have a career direction to move forward, along with a passion for that career. People desire to achieve professional goals through career planning and seeking counselling at various stages. This research explores the understanding of career planning and counselling among the students and identifies the factors playing a critical role in the career choice of an individual. It also focuses on hurdles faced during the process and the ways to address those issues. The results suggest that factors affecting career planning are environment-based. The hurdles that students come across are also aligned with that. Therefore to strengthen the ability of individuals to have better career planning, career counselling is required to tone up the thoughts of students and make them productive human resource for the country. The practical implications and prospects are discussed.

Key Words: Career Planning, Counselling, Student's Perceptions, Attitudes

Introduction

Most of the studies in the field of career management are focused on factors that bring in success in careers (Furnham, 1997), various successful professions (Newton, Grayson, & Thompson, 2005), career exploration and the impact of career selection on the larger policies (Issa, & Nwalo 2008). Career counselling plays a significant role in work readiness by enhancing self-concept (Lau, Anctil, Ee, Jaafar, & Kin, 2020). A framework of career counselling intervention is designed to help people direct themselves towards relevant careers and attain a work-nonwork balance (Hirschi, 2020). This subject area provides the basis for actions in the real world. It helps people grow and contribute positively to society.

Career planning is defined as the process whereby individuals can make decisions related to their career (Witko, Bernes, Magnusson, & Bardick, 2009). For effective career planning in life, the foundations required are career awareness and exploration (Magnuson & Starr, 2000). At this stage, knowing oneself, interests and strengths are important. These things help a person to know which career is to opt-in the future. Career counsellors guide individuals according to the contemporary needs of the world and matching them with their respective skill sets (Pryor, 2018). The focus in today's world is on acquiring multiple skills and cross-functionality to cope with diversity. Competitions and challenges are getting extensively involved in today's life; therefore, achieving career goals requires well-planned careers leading towards successful careers (Hall, 2002).

Research in this field has revealed that there is not only one factor rather many factors that affect career choice and planning. One such factor is career counselling provided by career counsellors at school. Brown & Krane (2000), while discussing career counseling build their argument by focusing on the goals of career counseling. It needs to enhance the people's ability to do goal-congruent work, to make career choices that give them satisfaction in life from their work experience and career while coping with changing society as well. Career

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counselling is linked with psychology, the global economy, industrial revolutions and technological development (Maree, 2020). This linkage designs career choices and skillsets to be adopted by individuals.

Career concepts emerged in the 1990s, and various frameworks for planning and counselling for it were designed beside the identification of various antecedents of career choice and the after-effects (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). The latest work in this domain focus on the next-generation concept of career, including integrative frameworks and hybrid careers. To develop an understanding of careers in today's dynamic work environment, research on career planning approaches, availability of career counselling, environmental factors affecting career choices are needed. This research aims at addressing these areas in the context of Pakistani culture and the environment.

Career Planning

Career planning is the process of strategizing and knowing career goals. This includes a continuous effort of self-improvement. It refers to individuals planning for future career choices and directing efforts to pursue career goals (Gould, 1979). The individual decides about the education, work experience, and timeline considering the career choice. (McMahon & Merman, 1987). Career planning starts at a very early stage, i.e. childhood, where one starts to explore his/her interests. The adolescents' goals and interests define the direction of their efforts and the career they want to pursue. It reflects the anticipated development of the child over the life span. With the passage of time, from the middle level to higher-level education, the planning and concerns about the future increase (Nurmi, 1991). The family context, resource limitations and financial constraints influence individual future plans, career choices, and emotions. Considering the constraints and changing trends due to globalization, diversity and technology, Lent (2013) revisited the term of career planning to career life preparedness. Individual needs to show and practice readiness to respond to uncertain outcomes, both in terms of setbacks and opportunities arising.

Career Counseling

Career counselling is referred to as seeking advice and information about career choices and opportunities. Career counselling has got its origin from the work of Frank Parsons, the social reformer, organizer of vocational guidance. According to him, career counselling involves three elements, i.e. counselling involves guiding the client about self -analysis (knowing himself/herself), gaining knowledge about the different fields of work/opportunities, finally matching the two, i.e. the information obtained through self-analysis and professions/occupations (Jones, 1994). An important aspect of career planning and counselling is self-analysis because it's a customized task and training. Based on self-analysis, counsellors can guide individual about what type of work someone could do or how they could progress in that, the skills required for that field etc. It is a customized task that is a highly creative and dynamic process designed individually (Gysbers, Heppner, & Johnston, 2003)

The research findings of Whiston (2002) suggests that individual-oriented career classes are the most effective methods for career counselling. Career interventions involving counselling are more effective in comparison to those not having career counselling. Besides, individualized attention in career counselling, building a social support network, and written exercises are effective tools to make career counselling more beneficial (Brown & Krane, 2000). The factor of "interest" is a prime factor in this field of career counselling. The career counselors need to have an expanding knowledge base of the individual's interests, their career needs, contemporary careers, and possible threats and hurdles to achieve that.

Career counselling is lacking the factor of knowing the need of clients, i.e. what is going to work for whom, under what conditions (Whiston, 2002). Research in the domain of understanding the career counselling needs across various cultures/populations needs to be done.

Factors Affecting Career Planning

Children are dependent upon others for their learning opportunities; the early years are critical for grooming, interest identification, knowing oneself and the working of the world. Encouragement by elders gives them the

confidence to explore the world, develop themselves accordingly to survive the good and bad. Their ability to develop alternatives, making a selection, setting goals and continuous self-assessment to manage the changing environment will only come from the elder's encouragement. Individuals having a supportive environment to explore, plan, decide, experience, learn from failures, celebrate success, working hard to move ahead in life develop the habit of progression and tackling hard times. They are more into career planning because its a "habit-of-the mind" for them as compare to others (Magnuson & Starr, 2000). It will give them confidence. Research among high school students found that self-efficacy and early work experiences affect career planning/exploration (Creed, Patton & Prideaux, 2007).

While selecting a career the society plays a very important role. Initial career decision-making is affected by many factors like cultural dynamics, development level and expectation from adults (Super, Savickas & Super, 1996). At the exploration stage, the culture and social context of family and society guide individual about available career options and choices that can be opted (McMahon, Watson, & Lee, 2019). Among Asian Americans, the factors of acculturation, family background, and self-efficacy are very important (Tang & Smith, 1999). In various cross-cultural studies, it is suggested that the certainty of career, foremost interest, and environmental factors influence student career choices. The most important influencing factor among Asian students is the level of career certainty as compared to other nationals (Singaravelu, White & Bringaze, 2005). For Hong Kong and Taiwanese students, the emotional factor plays a significant role in career choice (parental influence, peer influence, teacher influence, and association with others in the field). However, for Australian students, the interest and aptitude for the subject matter are most important while making a career choice (Wong, & Yuen, 2019).

Besides these social factors, individual factors are also significant. Research findings suggest that "Skills, competencies, and abilities" are the most important factor. In the patriarchal culture of India, where the decision is central, the "father" choice about the career of the son/daughter is going to be the final decision (Fouad, Kim, Ghosh, Chang, & Figueiredo, 2016; Agarwala, 2008). In a study of multi professions and diverse backgrounds, it was concluded that when choosing a career, the perception about the importance of "Interest in the career field" remains very high among all categories of respondents (Alexander et al., 2011).

The studies related to the identification of barriers and hurdles faced by students while planning a career and making a career choice are very limited. Poynton, Lapan, & Marcotte (2015) concluded that most of the youth consider a lack of financial resources as a major barrier when considering joining a particular school and relevant training. The second most highlighted barrier was college admissions, merit list and being capable of successfully graduating. On the other hand, the skilful and graduated youth mentioned the lack of employment opportunities in their respective fields as a barrier to achieve their career goals.

The benefits of career planning have been researched in previous work, though not directly rather from an economic perspective. During development phases, when society progress towards development and an industrialized-based economy, the employment opportunities get diversified (Watts, 1996). As a result, enhancement in career opportunities brings in career confusions, and students get into uncertainty while deciding about professional development and skill learning. Career planning and counselling are needed at this time to direct the youth for the upcoming professional needs of the country. Directing the potential employees towards a career that can be toned up with their interest and have many employment opportunities is the task to be done by the career counsellors. Due to the ill-directions and lack of proper guidance, many employees mismatch the career lines, and they end up doing jobs for satisfying their basic needs rather than their higher-level needs. Upon this, the conflict arises between the employees and employers, and they are unable to contribute positively towards society (Issa, & Nwalo, 2008). If career planning is done properly, they will be the assets of the country. This study in Pakistan, a developing country, will give the perspective about career planning and counselling needs in such economically struggling countries having youth bulge.

Significance of the Study

In Pakistan, it is observed that only a few careers are in focus; the rest of the careers are not given due importance. It is needed to explore the orientation of students toward career planning. In this study, the phenomenon of career planning is studied. This research study aims to cover that what is the attitude of students towards career

planning, what are the various factor that is critical to career planning, the level of interference by their parents and counsellors, do the students feel any benefit from that counselling. In this research, the career planning phenomenon will be studied in a new light, exploring the students' understanding and the critical factors involved in a career decision.

The objectives of the study are stated as under:

1. To identify the understanding of career planning and counselling among the students
2. To study what is the attitude of students while planning their careers
3. To identify the problems faced by students while seeking career counselling
4. To analyze how the students and counsellors cope with the problems faced by the students while career planning

Methodology

To address the given research questions, qualitative research was considered to be the most suited because it develops an understanding through a detailed description (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The data was collected via semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews help the researcher approach the issue from the subject's perspective by adjusting the level of language and freedom of probing questions that arise from the interview process (Flick, 2009). Data for this study came from students and counsellors, as they are considered the main stakeholders in this entire process of career planning and counselling. The focus was on the university students and the counsellors dealing with those age group students, i.e. 18 to 24 in Pakistan.

The students are the main actors in career planning. For this study, university students from various programs like medical, management sciences, computer sciences, telecom engineering, electrical engineering, etc., were interviewed. The total sample size was 20. The details of the sample are given in Table 1. The counsellors interviewed for this research include the career counsellors in the universities and the counsellors who are providing career counselling online, primarily to the students of Pakistan.

Table 1. Overview of Interviews

Primary Data	Total Number of Interviews
Students	15
Counsellors	5
Total	20

The analysis is based on the template that is having themes and subthemes, which were drawn from the literature. The template was improved; the themes and subthemes that were discussed and highlighted by the respondents besides the literature have been added. The template displaying themes and subthemes is given in Figure 1.

Themes	Subthemes
Understanding of Career Planning	• Basic Concept
	• Criteria for Career Selection
	• Career Counseling
How career is actually planned	• Institutional
	• Elders and Peers
	• Career Counselor
	• Random Choice
	• Money
Factors Affecting Students Career Plans	• Interest
	• General Trend
	• Fear

Hurdles Faced by Students While Career Planning	• Family Choice
	• Clash of Interest with Family
	• Confusion and Indecisive
	• Financial Issues
	• Gender Biasness
	• Peer Pressure
	• Comments (social)
	• Psychological Issues (previous failures)
	• Lack of Resources
	• Discussion
Ways to Address these Hurdles	• Focus on Your Own Will
	• Analysis of Pros and Cons
	• Recommending Options
	• Referred to Professional
	• Psychological Test and Tricks
Benefits of Career Planning and Counseling	• Society
	• Individual

Figure 1: Themes and Subthemes

Research Informants/Sample

The university student from various public and private sector universities of Islamabad, Pakistan, was considered as a sample for this study. Islamabad being the capital of the State, has got the best institutes and has representation from all the provinces of Pakistan. As the university students were considered, so it was very much needed that the counsellors should also be from the same level, i.e. university. But unfortunately, most of the universities in the region do not have any formal setup and professional counsellors available for the students. They have an informal setup of counselling services to be provided by the faculty members to the students. Those faculty members were not even trained for carrying out counselling activities. Therefore, they were not considered appropriate as the sample for this research study. The search of actual counsellors led to the online counselling facility, i.e. Career Counseling Portal of Pakistan, which comes up at the top and most common platform for seeking advice from multi-dimensional professionals and experts in the field. The researcher contacted the counsellors via website management and provided them with the project overview. They were asked for their willingness to participate, their basic introduction to a Performa designed, and the interview was scheduled via Skype/telephone. Only 5 counsellors were finally interviewed based on the response rate.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The standard procedures for conducting the qualitative semi-structured interviews were followed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Interview guides were designed, representing the set of reminders questions (Yin, 2016), not to be asked in the exact wording. They were separately designed for the students and the counselors. The interview guide was semi structured. The interview protocol for the counselor was organized in two parts; first covered the areas of the field of interest, education, career path, career shifts, experience, details about counseling provided till now, the second included the more detail view of career counseling, benefits, criteria of career planning and hurdles faced. For example, we asked the counselor about what are the common hurdles stated by students when they come for counseling. Probing questions were asked to know about any new issue highlighted by the counselor. The students were also asked probing questions when exploring the hurdles faced and the career shifts they have made. The interviews were conducted in mixed languages i.e. English and native language (Urdu) to have ease for the informants so that they can openly share the required information. Interviews lasted for 35 and 90 minutes. The interviews were recorded, transcribed into a written format, and coded so that the emerging themes could be identified and summarized (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was carried out using NVivo 10. The most important step was coding of the data from the transcribed interviews as it was to make up to the themes in template analysis, where the coding trees represent the themes (King, 2004). Immense care was taken that the themes identified and researched are the representation of the entire sample and not a particular individual.

The template was designed earlier by the researcher based on research objectives, general observations, and literature support. But the template kept on modifying during the analysis, focusing more on the issues highlighted by the respondents rather than researcher self-preference. By carrying out research this way the researcher was able to identify, analyze, and report the patterns observed in the data. Analysis of qualitative data brought forward the consensus and difference between the perspective and viewpoint of students and the counselors.

In the first step of data analysis data was linked with the codes that addressed the main area of this research. In the second step when all the data sources coding got complete, then the interpretation was started, the common trends and the proposed reason from within the data have been selected and presented.

Findings

The analysis is based on the template designed as given earlier in Figure 1. While each theme is discussed as under:

Career Planning

The basic concept and understanding of career planning were inquired from the students as well as the counsellor to know that we are moving in the right direction before the other questions were to be asked. Almost all have a common concept of career planning as a futuristic approach towards the career. While discussing the selection criterion that is being used when multiple career options are there, it was revealed that among the students, they prefer to go by their interest; they are driven by that and career growth and security. As narrated by a student-CPT6/M: "First of all comes the career growth, after that comes the interest and afterwards come to the money associated with that career."

However, the counsellor experience says that the students usually prefer that they should go for a career that is more rewarding in terms of finances. As one of the counsellors (SA/C5/F) said: "for boys, it's more about money (…). They lack vision according to their aptitude. They just want to have short cuts to earn more and more money."

They attributed this finding to the fact that social classes have an impact on career choices and as most of the population belongs to the middle class so they have to earn at the earliest after completing their degree.

How Students Plan their Career

About the career planning method and ways followed by students, both students and counselors were of the same view. As per the view of counsellors, the students do not properly plan their careers. It's a random choice in most cases as per the student's point of view. Either they follow the common trend going on, or they move with any of the options that come their way. It is linked to the lack of opportunities for career counseling at the institutions they study in. They usually don't make a wise, thoroughly thought out choice. One of the students (CPT6/M), having an exact plan in his mind of starting up a business but haven't worked it out, stated: "My idea is still in the air and hasn't planned it properly. I will formally plan my idea and career when I'm actually in it."

Only one out of the ten student interviews made the career choice in a properly planned manner, exploring the various available options and focusing on her interest. It can be attributed to the fact that she was the only one out of the sample which was provided with career counselling at the very early level of education, i.e. O levels. It not only guided her in identifying her choices but also provided her with the ability to decide for herself. The rest of the sample though might have their own choices but due to the unavailability of career counseling, they were unable to tap their interests, convince their parents and family, and lack the decision making power.

So as per the counsellors' view, the fear-based approach has conditioned them in such a way so that they are unable to stand up and speak for their right to career selection.

Though the institutes are not providing a career counselling facility, our society and family structures provide it. It sometimes acts positively and at times, acts negatively depending upon the exposure and awareness among the family members. Therefore data supports the point that those who are guided for career planning are having the consultation of their elders and peers. Student (CPT1/M) view about being guided by elders for making a career choice: "I have to select either medical or engineering, at that time I got consultation from my teachers, parents, and elders."

Factors Affecting Students Career Plans

The interviews highlighted a few factors out of which the most frequently discussed factor was "Interest". Among the five factors identified by both the counselors and students, segregation in their viewpoint was observed. The counselors focused more on the factor of money. They were of the view that students are short term oriented and more money-focused. They have to abide by their family choices in a career. While students were of the view that they focused more on pursuing a career which is of their interest and the general trend that is prevailing in the society. They just go with the social trends which is also narrated in one of the comments by the counselor that fear has conditioned them so much so that they cannot even express their feelings and choices. Their inner self is being suppressed to the level that they don't even know their strengths. The factors identified are linked together to each other and the hurdles faced by the students as well. Table 2 gives an overview of factors affecting students career plans as per respondents of this study.

Table 2. Factors Affecting Students Career Plans

Factors	Interview/Survey Quotes
Interests (R-7)	"My own interest guided me more, and also some of my friends." *Student-CPT2/M* But it's my experience, that once the things are presented in a way that is of interest and easily understandable for the students, they are surely going to excel in that *Counselor-ND/C4/M*
Family choice (R-3)	"In our culture for its more about what their family advise them" *Counselor-SA/C5/F*
General Trend (R-6)	"Career choice was a difficult decision because my decision was not my own, I was also following the trend i.e. doing engineering because everyone was doing it. I didn't take any specific decision of going for some specific career choice". *Student- CPT10/M* They usually follow the common trend, earlier it was computers IT, people started doing that, a few years back it was MBA, so people started doing that, ultimately resulting in a huge bulk of that field graduates *Counselor-AD/C3/M*
Money (R-4)	"We get education not because we want to learn but because we want to **earn money, have status and have the living needs fulfilled".** *Counselor-AD/C3/M*
Fear (R-1)	"Students usually chose their career on the basis of fear". *Counselor-AD/C3/M*

Issues Faced by Students in Career Planning

The subthemes identified under this theme are eight in number, i.e. resources, psychological issues, peer pressure, gender biases, financial hurdles, family and society comments, confusion and indecisive behaviour, and a clash of interest with family. The most common issue student come across is a clash of interest. Pakistan is a collectivist society, and parents are the ones who usually make the decisions for the children in every aspect of life. Career is also one of those. The other most narrated issue is indecisiveness, unable to choose out of the

available choices. It can be attributed to a lack of awareness about the various available choices; besides that, the children are very much on the spoon-feeding side; they are just provided with the guideline to do this and to do that, so their decision making power is very weak. They also lack confidence because of having less and limited exposure. Children's decisions are not very much supported in general. But the trends are now changing as more educated the parents are, the more they give space to their children's decisions and guide them accordingly. Table 2 gives an overview of the references to each of the factors identified.

Table 3. Issues Faced by Students in Career Planning

Issue	Interview/Survey Quotes
Clash of interest (R-9)	"My father is against this decision because it can't opt as a career." *Student-CPT5/F* "Financial, Psychological, gender-biased, previous failure, clash of interest, decision making by kids is hard and all acts as hurdles.." *Counselor-SA/C5/F*
Financial Constraints (R-5)	Yes, finance is a problem. Like … CSS is not a career that could be just opted by anybody, having no running source of income, and the family depends on him. *Student-CPT2/M* Usually, middle-class people go for more stable professions due to their financial conditions. *Counselor- AR/C2/M*
Comments of society (R-4)	"the hurdle in this decision was the family comments …." *Student-CPT1/M*
Psychological/ previous failures (R-3)	"Anxiety and stress-energy are there, but the outlet and track are not there." *Counselor-AD/C3/M*
Indecisive (R- 8)	"At sometimes I got confused that whether I would be successful in that field or not" *Student- CPT1/M*

Ways to Address the Hurdles Faced in Career Planning

To address the above-mentioned issues, either the children/ students go for career counselling through counsellors or their elders. The various options they opt for when they are to address these issues are given in Table 4. These are the common options, while the other two being discussed by only 1 reference are referring the students to professionals and psychological tests and tricks. Discussion works in most cases, like if they face a clash of interest, they can communicate and convince their parents, in case of psychological issues also if they can discuss and speak out their heart the issues could be resolved. Next, is to focus on your own will and interest i.e. if you love doing something continue doing it so that your heart doesn't fade out. If it cannot be opted as a career continues doing it as a hobby, to keep your interest alive. Consistency and discussion can resolve the issues too much extent. Besides that, if the student is unable to consult any counselor they can just sit and write the pros and cons of all available options and go with the best option if the issue is of indecisiveness.

Table 4. Ways to Address the Hurdles Faced in Career Planning

Ways	Interview/Survey Quotes
Discussion (R-10)	"Convince your parents by something they would like e.g. good marks, awards etc. mostly parents do agree to their kids." *Counselor-SA/C5/F*
Recommending Options (R-3)	"Usually I handle student's issues by properly counselling them and providing them examples of successful professionals." *Counselor-AR/C2/M*

Ways	Interview/Survey Quotes
Focus on your own Will (R-8)	"When they are going to see me doing good works, they will make me happy and will ultimately get convinced. My mother is my support. She will help in convincing my father." *Student-CPT5/F*
Pros and Cons analysis (R-3)	"Like a typical girl, I start up with crying, but after that, I think crying won't solve the issue. Then I take a paper and start writing the pros and cons of the various options available" *Student*
	"I make them have an analysis of the pros and cons of the issue…" *I counsellor/C4/M*

Benefits of Career Planning and Counselling

From the data, two types of benefits were in focus, i.e. individual and social. It is quite obvious that students having less exposure to the environment in comparison to the counsellors were more focused on the individual benefits like time-saving, direction, an effort focused, etc. while the counsellors focused on the individual and social benefits, they stated that the society would ultimately benefit from such directed individual and we can have a strong, directed and impactful youth if we focus on the career planning and counselling of the students at the national level.

Discussion

Research in the field of career planning and counselling gives an overview of what it is; this study supports the definition stated by earlier researchers. The counsellors interviewed for this study were of the view that the functions and provide counselling to students by having /her background knowledge, knowing their interests, and matching it with the updated career opportunities and occupations (Jones, 1994). The research findings of Whiston (2002) were supported as the counsellors would provide individual career counselling and found it to be more effective.

The study suggests that the common career planning way is to be guided by parents, elders, and teachers or go with the common trend. It is supported by previous literature as among Asian Americans, the factors of acculturation, family background, and self-efficacy are very important (Tang & Smith, 1999). Novakovic and Fouad (2013) discussed the environmental factors, specifically the family role in making a career choice. The scale to measure this is known as the influential family-scale (FIS), focus on aspects like financial, informational, and emotional support (Fouad et al., 2016). In Indian studies, career choices are based on family influence, their origin and familial expectations (Chope, 2005). India is also a collectivist and masculine society like Pakistan, so the family head is responsible for all the decision making as he is the prime financer as well.

The study suggests that interest in the subject is an important factor for Pakistani students. It goes along with the previous study findings whereby students are influenced by having an aptitude for the subject matter (Pascual, 2014; Auyeung & Sands, 1997). However, Taiwan and other nationals are more social-oriented in their career choice. The other factors of money and fear have not been highlighted by the previous research work. Though they are significant in the case of Pakistani culture, as in most of the cases, where students have to join a professional program (primarily medicine, engineering and forces), the main two hurdles are financial and fear of examination and society (in case of failure in examination or if not on selected merit list).

The issues faced by students in career planning, as per this study, only two of them were in convergence with earlier findings. Ferry et. al, (2000) concluded that financial constraints and failures/psychological issues are found to have significant effects on learning experiences and grade performance. Counsellors in this study were also of the view that failures need encouragement from the family so that they can discuss their problems and have a solution for them.

Gender has also been discussed in many researchers in limiting the career choice and affecting the way careers are planned by males and females. The research finding of Kekelis et al. (2005) suggests that gender biases are observed in careers related to technology. However, girls can do well in the technology field as well. Our research findings support this fact of gender biases as a hurdle in career planning, as society limits the choices for females. But no significant difference in their career planning approaches was observed.

Career barriers have been related to social cognitive career theory in previous research (Lent, Robert, Brown, Steven, Hackett, & Gail, 2000). Social cognitive career theory discusses how context impacts cognition of person and influence their career development (Rogers, & Creed, 2011). In particular, this research supports previous research in terms that career barriers are context focused. Barriers vary as the context varies. Therefore the society is playing a significant role in this entire process.

The practical implication from this study, for the policy-making at the national level, is that the government should have a policy for mobilizing the youth via the Higher education commission. National policy should be based on the employment opportunities and Human Resource needs of different fields. Accordingly, the policy should trickle down into plans for higher education institutions and technical colleges. Respect should be given to all professions, and the remuneration of all should be made such that it should bring a good livelihood for the earner. It can be related to the fact that the countries allowing immigration due to the low population also focus the same thing to direct the individuals according to the jobs. The countries having youth bulge should also follow the same strategy in all careers.

Future Research

Future research in the area of career planning and counselling needs to focus more on identifying and streamlining the cultural differences and their impact on career choices, how career counselling can address them positively. This research supports the fact that the students should be provided with career counselling. The mechanism should be identified to map up how career counselling can be carried out at the institutional level. Policy students can research the policy-making aspect to address this issue as it is related to streamlining huge youth bulge to be productive nationals. It should be identified and worked on, which policy is supposed to cater it at the macro level, how it will be translated into strategies at the micro-level (provincial, colleges, and universities), and what would be the ultimate implications at the national level after having such policies designed and implemented.

Conclusion

A variety of variables impact the career choices, yielding to various threats and opportunities for the individuals. Career planning needs to focus on the changing variables, context to address these as opportunities rather than threats. Career counsellors are very crucial at this stage, as they can guide the students in such scenarios and help them tap their interests in the relevant careers. The parents, family members need to focus on the potential of the individual and facilitate decision making. The issues that come across in career planning as hurdles are to be approached proactively rather than reactively. It will ultimately bring in a well-informed youth having the potential to become a productive nation and contribute to the economy creatively; only then we can have an impactful society.

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