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Investigating the Career Guidance Needs of Secondary School Students in Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Abstract

The study investigated students' career guidance needs at secondary schools. The study's objectives were to find out the career guidance needs of students in secondary schools and recommend career strategies for career guidance. The design for the research was quantitative. 30439 students were in the population. Using a simple random procedure, 380 respondents were selected. A data gathering tool of a questionnaire was prepared, validated, and piloted. Self-visits were made to schools for collecting data. Mean scores, standard deviations, and chi-square test were used for data analyses. Students' need for career guidance and trained guides to careers was found. The study found the need for career guidance and trained career guides in schools. Assistance in selecting subjects of study and planning careers is needed. Identification mechanisms for students' interests to plan for careers are needed. Recommendations were forwarded for guidance facilities of career planning and support for selecting the right choice of subjects for students.

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Title

Investigating the Career Guidance Needs of Secondary School Students in Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Contents

Abstract

The study investigated students' career guidance needs at secondary schools. The study's objectives were to find out the career guidance needs of students in secondary schools and recommend career strategies for career guidance. The design for the research was quantitative. 30439 students were in the population. Using a simple random procedure, 380 respondents were selected. A data gathering tool of a questionnaire was prepared, validated, and piloted. Self-visits were made to schools for collecting data. Mean scores, standard deviations, and chi-square test were used for data analyses. Students' need for career guidance and trained guides to careers was found. The study found the need for career guidance and trained career guides in schools. Assistance in selecting subjects of study and planning careers is needed. Identification mechanisms for students' interests to plan for careers are needed. Recommendations were forwarded for guidance facilities of career planning and support for selecting the right choice of subjects for students.

Keywords: Career, Guidance, Needs, Secondary, School, Students

Introduction

Secondary education aims to prepare a skilled workforce in the job market as well as equip students with a higher level of professional learning (Education Policy, 2009). Considering students' career guidance needs in schools, Wright (2005) termed the period of secondary schools as transitioning to the world of work. Considering the context, for the need of students' career guidance at this level, Pakistan's educational policy (2009) suggested guidance provision in secondary schooling so that young students may be facilitated and motivated to study the subjects according to their talents and not according to tradition. In secondary schools, students usually have the intention to pursue careers that are charming, but they don't have the abilities and aptitude for such careers. This attitude of students leads them to failure and frustration in the future, resulting in their inability

to achieve desired career goals (Ohiwerei & Nwosu, 2009). This behavior of students leads to the frustrations of the young people because they cannot secure occupations and prestige that they wanted; thus, the students in secondary schools require appropriate career guidance to make realistic career plans (Younos & Ahmad, 2024).

According to Salami (2000), most of the students in secondary schools dreamt about having careers in medicine, law, engineering, and other charming careers, with few skills and aptitudes to meet the challenges of such professions in the future. Students in secondary schools don't know about the right kind of subjects for study suited to them (Onoyase & Onoyase, 2009). The research established that students want to have charming careers irrespective of personal traits due to the non-availability of guidance at schools (Hooley & Rice, 2023). Career choice decisions are difficult for students who are unaware of the professions in the world and the skills needed for these. They consider that, like a dream, they would enter into professions they desired, but it is not the case practically (Olamide & Salami, 2013).

Most of the students wanted to join medicine and engineering. In the case of male students, when they get an education at schools, whereas the female students want to become health professionals or teachers in education (Kiani, 2010). Karim (2010) highlighted that the secondary level is an age when students choose their disciplines, i.e., science, arts, or technical education, through which they pursue further careers in their preferred fields; hence, the future careers of students at this stage are mapped by the career dreams they have. The research by Khan (2011) established that students in the secondary stage select subjects for study, and teachers assist them in making appropriate career decisions.

Tabassum (2012) highlighted the absence of career guidance in secondary schools, and students are unaware of careers and professions, and usually go with the traditions instead of personal characteristics; therefore, they mostly opt for medicine and engineering. It is concluded that secondary school students need career guidance, and for the development of appropriate career guidance, the study investigated the students' needs for career guidance.

Literature Review

Students want to make decisions about future careers at secondary schooling; therefore, they need the assistive services of career guidance that would enable them to make the correct decisions about their career when they select the correct subjects to study (Oomen & Vandenguen, 2023). Kiani (2010) has indicated the necessity of guidance for career planning in the Pakistani secondary schools, where the majority of the secondary schools have no guidance for careers to give appropriate information on careers, and they only have teachers to help them with career planning. Teachers in such schools have only superficial knowledge of careers and usually have few skills to satisfy the needs of students who are compelled to rely on the scanty information of teachers. According to Karim (2010), career guidance was needed, and for successful career planning, this facility needs to be established in every school. In this context, Kiani et al. (2013) proposed the availability of such facilities in schools.

Khan et al. (2012) found about teachers' role in career guidance of their students, and came out with career guidance as the most needed issue that secondary school students have. Tabassum's (2012) study concluded that secondary school students need career guidance when selecting subjects and courses to be studied at school, and also the career guidance would assist when selecting careers to study, so that they can join professional colleges to study further careers. Another study by Sculli (2011) suggests career guidance for students who receive their education at the secondary level. The necessity in the delivery of information regarding the professional colleges, requirements to study at different careers, and the process of integrating their interests and abilities with their subsequent careers was felt by male as well as female participants. Borgen and Hiebert (2006) had recommended that the school authorities develop their programs in a way that not only bases them on what they perceive the students may feel towards their career guidance but also bases the plans on the self-

reported needs and wishes of the students. Exposing the youth to career advice at tender ages in schools so that the teenagers feel prepared in their decisions towards their careers should be encouraged. It is, hence, inalienable that the career guides use the above as a foundation for career guidance of students instead of false beliefs and assumptions (Lam & Cheung, 2023).

In the same way, Hiebert (2002) proposed that for better career planning, guides need to consider the personal traits of students to have effective guidance regarding careers. Education should require all students to pass through career guidance, and this must be included in the school programming at an early stage of education, to tertiary and beyond education (Gothard et al., 2001). With reference to Salami (2008), the process of decision-making by young students in choosing the right type of careers amongst several types and combinations of career opportunities available to them is difficult for students and has serious implications for their future. Hence, special arrangements are needed to have successful career planning for students of the schools. This is an important duty of the school to help with regard to their careers based on their personality, interests, and aptitudes. As discovered by DFES (2004), the following approaches to education of careers in most schools are the basis of the development of careers among the school students. Such events may be orientations for careers, seminars, and the use of literature to make students aware of the different opportunities. UNESCO (2002) cites career guidance as the ability to provide career information. Mapfumo and Chireshe (2006) found that guidance for careers enables students to make free and independent career choices, keeping in view realistic interpretations of their skills and personal traits.

The research by Merchant (2008) revealed that the network of the civil education sector is providing career guidance services by providing career information through a number of seminars, workshops, books, and an introduction to practical careers through field visits, internships, and scholarships to pursue studies in a career of interest among school-going children. The school career guides can contribute hugely to the implementation and growth of the general career guidance programs of the schools in creating the appropriate career choice decision plans (Tang 2008). Secondary schools suffer from the absence of guidance assistance for students, and students have no choice except to act on the advice of parents and charm of careers (Adegoke, 2003).

Among career mentors and guides, Osakinle (2008) notes that they ensure guidance, inspiration, and nurture the skills of students towards future careers. These draw up career plans that are in line with student interests and aptitudes as pertaining part of the future career option (DFES, 2003b), that Career guidance and guides young schooling students within a school is aimed at educating and equipping the students with knowledge and skills to make real-life decisions on career choices, and make education choices when preparing to enter the world of employment out of schools in an effort to facilitate proper decisions by the learners concerning the career choices. Craig (2012) confirms that career guidance led to the proper selection of the right subjects and proper career advancement of the student. It is through these career guides that information concerning careers and opportunities is delivered to the student and parents. Therefore, the parents and the family must be involved in career guidance by the career guides at the schools to enable proper career guidance of the learners. Career guidance in schools enables the learning of career-making and career choices that the students will make in their future.

Salami (1999) found that school teachers do not possess the skills needed in the provision of appropriate career guidance to the students, nor were they trained on how to attend to the career guidance matters concerning the students. Since the majority of teachers are little informed on matters pertaining to career guidance, most students have problems in selecting the right kind of subjects. Olamide and Salami (2013) suggested the match between traits of personality and the choice of subjects for study. They as well proposed the application of portfolios in so doing so as to be able to engage in the critical reflection of the interests and the potentials of the

students to attain the right vocations during secondary school level.

It has been observed that as a major aspect of the holistic school guidance guide, as far as assisting the students and their parents is concerned, one is the prospect of providing the students with career information so as to enable them to make the right choices in regard to the career choice of children (Dykeman et al., 2001). Having elaborate guidance programs is an effective tool when it comes to schools in making informed decisions for careers. Schools that were characterized by career development facilities helped in planning for future professions of students in an effective manner (Whiston et al., 1998). The low preparation during career development due to the absence of information and career exploration in most of the students in secondary schools leads to career choice applications by the majority of the students (Salami, 1999).

Kiani (2010) found that secondary curricula do not guide students on career and have no facility for guiding students on the selection of subjects for future courses. Osborn et al (2011) discovered that within the recent couple of years, the use of social media has increased for purposes of career guidance. The internet these day also helps in career planning for students. UNESCO (2002) suggested that career guidance ought to equip the students with materials and information so that they can make individual decisions concerning career selection. To this effect, career guidance centers should be equipped with books, journals, videos on careers, recent news on careers, career tests, and computer-based materials. In view of students' needs for career guidance at the secondary level, the study investigated students' career guidance needs at the secondary level.

Methodology

The design of this study was quantitative as it dealt with numerical data. 30439 students in the government secondary schools of the district Swat, KP, were the population of the study. 380 students were chosen as a sample for data gathering using a simple random procedure. Raosoft online calculator was used to bring out an appropriate sample size from the population. A questionnaire was made to be used as a data collection tool; experts validated the tool, and then it was piloted for reliability. The reliability was 0.824. It was adequate according to the parameters of Law (2004) for data collection instruments. Self-visits were done for gathering information using questionnaires. Data analyses were done with mean scores, standard deviations, and the chi-square test. Research ethics for the study were followed.

Results

Table 1

Needs of Students' Career Guidance

Statements	Number	Mean	S. D	χ²	P
Facility of career guidance	380	3.69	.45	67.19	.000
Career Guide	380	3.75	.56	82.77	.000
Teachers' Assistance in selecting subjects	380	3.66	.37	71.54	.000
Guidance for careers	380	3.84	.89	37.89	.000
Career planning support	380	3.93	.43	43.65	.000
Interest identification mechanism	380	3.58	.54	49.26	.000
Integration interest with careers	380	3.97	.32	76.64	.000

Statements	Number	Mean	S. D	χ²	P
Career information	380	3.87	.93	83.19	.000
Career guidance subjects	380	3.61	.68	64.55	.000
Using the internet and the library for career guidance	380	3.63	.48	26.39	.000

Table 1 highlights the needs of students with respect to career guidance. The mean scores of 3.69, 3.75, 3.66, 3.84, 3.93, 3.58, 3.97, 3.87, 3.61 and 3.63 identifies that respondent students agreed that they need career guidance in schools, career guides, teachers' assistance in selecting subjects, guidance for careers, career planning support, interests' identification mechanism, integration of interests with careers, career information, subjects for guidance in curricula and using internet and library for guidance on careers. The chi-square test provided significant findings.

It demonstrated that students' career guidance needs in secondary schools were career guidance facilities in schools, career guides, teachers' assistance in selecting subjects, guidance for careers, career planning support, interests' identification mechanism, integration of interests with careers, career information, subjects of career guidance in schools' curricula and using internet and library for guidance about careers.

Discussions

The study highlighted that that students' career guidance needs in secondary schools were career guidance facilities in schools, career guides, teachers' assistance in selecting subjects, guidance for careers, career planning support, interests' identification mechanism, integration of interests with careers, career information, subjects of career guidance in schools' curricula and using internet and library for guidance about careers. Similar to the findings of this study, Kiani (2010) suggested the need for the availability of a career guidance facility in schools. Similarly, Karim (2010) also recommended the provision of a facility for career guidance, as he felt the need for it through his study. Sculli (2011) again found this need for students' career guidance. Salami

(2008) and Khan et al. (2012) also came up with the need for career guidance in schools. Kiani et al. (2013) further found the need for appointing career guides in schools to assist students. Tabassum's (2012) study also demonstrated this need. Moreover, Osakinle (2010) also suggested the need for career mentors at schools. Marshal et al. (2007) suggested the use of the internet for career guidance purposes. Osborn, Dikel, and Sampson (2011), Holland (1992), and Lent et al. (1994) also recommended the need for career guidance. The study demonstrates theoretical and practical implications for students' career guidance in schools.

Conclusions

The study demonstrated that students' career guidance needs in secondary schools were career guidance facilities in schools, career guides, teachers' assistance in selecting subjects, guidance for careers, career planning support, interests' identification mechanism, integration of interests with careers, career information, subjects of career guidance in schools' curricula and using internet and library for guidance about careers. The findings have implications in theory and in practice for developing career guidance in secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the objectives and findings of the study, the following recommendations were forwarded for the satisfaction of students' career guidance needs:

1. Career guidance may be made available by the government for the career planning of students.
2. The government may appoint career guides who may provide career information and assist students in career planning.

3. Parents and teachers need to communicate to assist students in career development.

4. Career orientation sessions may be arranged to inform students and parents about career opportunities.

5. Career guidance may be included in teacher education to equip teachers with the skills of career guidance for students.

6. The Internet and digital technologies may be provided to schools for career guidance.

Areas for further research

1. Similar studies may be conducted in higher education.

2. Such studies may be conducted in private schools.

3. Research of a similar nature may be conducted in other provinces and in the international context.

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