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Developing Effective Career Guidance Interventions for Secondary Schools' Students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract

This study aimed to develop effective career guidance interventions for students of secondary schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Study's objectives were, to find out effective career guidance interventions for students of secondary schools and recommend strategies for effective career guidance of students. Study's design was quantitative survey having population 30439 secondary school students. Study's sample was 380, selected with stratified random sampling. A questionnaire about effective career guidance interventions was developed, validated and pilot tested for the collection of data. Data were gathered with self-administered questionnaires and analyzed with using mean scores, standard deviations and the chi-square test. The study found provision of career guidance facilities, appointing of trained career guides, collaboration of parents, teachers and schools' authorities, career orientations for students, assessment mechanisms, incorporation of career guidance subjects in schools' curriculum, developing career guidance as an integral part of teachers' education, the use of books, brochures and social media for the career guidance and active role of the policy makers for the provision of resources to establish career guidance facilities in schools. The study also recommended the provision of career guidance, career orientations sessions and the use of technology for the career guidance of students at secondary level.

Keywords: Effective, Career Guidance, Interventions, Secondary Schools, Students, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.



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Introduction

Secondary education prepares students for careers and higher education, therefore; keeping in view the career guidance needs of students at this level, the National Educational Policy of Pakistan (2009) recommended the provision of guidance facilities in secondary schools that may assist students in appropriate subjects' selection based on the interests and aptitude of the students that may ultimately lead them to appropriate career development in future. Career guidance interventions are strategies that provides assistance to students in understanding their interests, aptitudes and information of career outcomes and providing them with the confidence to make informed decisions about their future careers (Elizabeth, 2012). For the effective career guidance interventions of secondary school students, Kiani (2010) recommended the provision of career guidance facilities in secondary schools of Pakistan and the appointment of trained career guides for the assistance of students in career choice decisions at the level of secondary schools. Cannan (2008) identified the need of comprehensive school counseling program for secondary schools which may address the career choice issues of the students, satisfy the career planning needs of the students and prove fruitful in successful entry to their desired careers after their schooling. The American School Counselor Association (2007) provided National Standards for the school career guidance programs and recommended that school career guidance must enable students to (1) Develop skills for understanding the occupational opportunities with respect to personal attributes and make well considered career choice decisions. (2) To be able to apply strategies and techniques to achieve the desired career goals and objectives. (3) To comprehend the mutual relationship between personal attributes, academics, training and work opportunities.

Branham (2010) studied the effects of career counseling on young students and found that students with little or no career counseling had no planning for future success in various careers as compared to those who had adequate of this facility. Legum and Hoare (2004) in their study on the effects of the career interventions on career progression of students found that such interventions increased the career awareness, self-esteem, motivation and love for hard work in the classroom activities among those who received them. Dellana and Snyder (2004) identified the facility of the career counseling as an important factor for shaping the better career outlook of students for future. The comprehensive schools' counseling program suggested by Gysber and Handerson (2000) is composed of competencies and skills necessary to be achieved by secondary schools' students, career guidance curriculum, career planning, students' support services, and counselors' work, financial and legislative support for the full implementation of this program. This helps students in the mastery of the decision making skills by participation in the activities of career development and development of self-career plans for themselves. It is concluded that students at secondary level need career guidance and career guidance interventions assist students in making informed career choice decisions, therefor; the study aimed to develop effective career guidance interventions for the students of secondary schools.

Literature Review

For developing career guidance interventions to assist students in secondary schools, Kiani, Hassan and Irfan (2013) studied the vocational aspirations of secondary schools' students and recommended the facility of career guidance and appointment of career guides in government secondary schools of Pakistan. Onoyase and Onoyase (2009) recommended the efforts of government in training and appointing trained career guides to help students in secondary schools for the selection of subjects based on their personality, intellectual abilities, interests and aptitudes and may aspire for the right type of careers. The career guides must arrange career days at the school with the help of schools' administrators to guide students for the right combination of subjects that are fit to their personalities. The government must provide financial support to schools for the arrangement of such activities and

schools' administrators must be bound for the arrangement of such facilities. Swift (2009) recommended the need for the establishing of proper formal career guidance and career education services with the appointment of trained career guides and logistic support in all schools for the young students. He further recommended that authorities must legislate for compulsory career guidance in secondary schools. The schools must bring speakers from various occupations for interaction and career information of students.

Salami (2007) recommended that career planners in schools must encourage students for the better achievement motivation required for their choice careers and appropriate outlook to job market factors for making proper career choice decisions in their desired occupations. Salami (2008) recommended that career guides in schools must identify the personality, occupational interests, academic achievement, socio-cultural, socio-economic conditions and demands from extended families for the effective career guidance of students at the level of secondary schools. He further recommended for career development of secondary schools' students that they must evaluate personality factors, academic achievement and socio-cultural factors to plan for their suitable careers. Mekingwe (2010) recommended the collaboration of parents and teachers for the proper career development and help of students in the career choice decisions at the level of secondary schools. He further recommended the facility of career guidance, availability of trained career guides and teachers and career guidance units for career guidance in schools.

Shumba and Naong (2012) recommended the cooperation between parents, teachers and school authorities for addressing the career choice issues of the secondary school students. They recommended that parents and families must not force their children for the career choices against their will and interests. As teachers are the best source of guidance for the students at the school because of their knowledge about the interests, abilities and aptitudes of the students, therefore, they must guide them to take up studies based on their aptitudes and interests at the level of the secondary schools. Schools must provide career guidance programs to help students in making proper career choices at the stage of secondary schools. Rauf (2013) recommended that parents need to be aware of their role in the career planning of students. It was recommended that parents must not impose their decisions on their children rather they must facilitate their children for independent selection of schools' subjects and career choices at the secondary level.

Elizabeth (2012) recommended awareness programs for parents, community, school authorities, teachers and students for the proper career planning and development of students' careers through career workshops, seminars, parents' days and community campaigns and for this purpose books, brochures and pamphlets must be used. Otta and Williams (2012) recommended the arrangement of well-planned workshops and seminars on regular basis, a coordination committee for coordination with parents, teachers and counselors on self-concepts, interests and needs of the students. Merchant (2008) found that the private education network is providing career guidance services through the provision of career information, with the help of seminars, workshops, publications, practical exposure to careers through field visits, internship and scholarship for the future studies of students in their desired careers. Mutekwe, Modiba & Maphosa (2011) recommended the active role of the school teachers for facilitating students regarding their career development in the school for teachers are the ones who know the interest and aptitudes of their students very well and they can effectively provide career guidance to their students.

Salami (2008) recommended that in secondary schools, career guidance interventions must be focused on the career planning, identification of students' self-concept, career interests and the appropriate career choice decisions to enable them for getting appropriate occupations in future. For this purpose, he suggested career development orientations and workshops at schools where students and their parents may interact with teachers and career guides for assisting them in making realistic

career choice decisions. This will help students in attaining maturity for their future career development. Olamide and Salami (2013) recommended the establishment of mechanism for the identification of students' interests, abilities and aptitudes in order to adjust them with the future career choice decisions of students. They also proposed the use of portfolios for this purpose in order to have critical reflection about students' interests and potentials for the selection of proper vocations at the level of secondary schools. Migunde, Agak and Odiwur (2011) in their study of career aspirations and career development barriers of adolescents recommended that career counselors and other people who guide adolescent students must help them in selection of careers based on their interests, aptitudes, potentials and capabilities.

Folsom and Reardon (2003) reviewed several studies on career guidance curriculum interventions and identified that such courses developed the decision making skills, career maturity, career decidedness, career development and job satisfaction of students. These days, comprehensive career guidance programs in schools are composed of guidance curriculum with major focus on the career development and career development activities, i.e. career information, exploration, planning, career workshops and observance of the career days at schools. According to Irving and Malik (2005) there is the need of career guidance curriculum in secondary schools which will be a set of techniques and strategies that would help students in their preparation for successful life, after their schooling. Its scope will also cover the life of students after secondary schools, therefore, it needs to be future oriented, must satisfy local needs and overall global obligations.

The study of Khan (2011) established the need for formal training of teachers in the provision of career guidance and to equip them with the necessary skills for the career guidance of students at secondary level in order to facilitate the students of secondary schools in the selection of school subjects and career guidance. Yeung (2013) conducted a study on the need of career guidance training for teachers and reported that teachers need training in career guidance for the effective career counseling of students. UNESCO (2002) recommended that career guidance should provide students with resources and information to make independent career choices. For this purpose, career guidance centers must have books, journals, videos about careers, latest information about careers, career tests and computer based resources. According to Rothwell et al. (2005) the use of technology for the career guidance of students is an established fact. Technology is an important tool for the career guides to assist students in career guidance. One such tool is the computer based vocational information system DISCOVER by the software company, International Business Machine (IBM) which has provided help to students in their career choice decisions. Interactive career guidance soft wares help career guides to make appropriate career choice decisions for students. According to Zunker (2011) the advancement in technology has provided online career guidance services available for every student. Lamichane (2012) highlighted that students can easily access online career guidance services available for every student and can make their career choice decisions appropriate for them. Many improved versions of the computer based career guidance soft wares are available in the market. Some popular software tools like Big Five Personality Tests, Career Fit Test, Career Interest Inventory, Career Planner etc are available both in the market and online for the assistance of career guides in the career planning of students.

Kettunen, Vuorinen and Sampson (2013) found the effective influence of social media in career guidance services, therefore, recommended the development of training and support for enabling career guides to understand new technologies and social media and may use them for the effective career guidance of students. Jayasinghe (2001) states that effective career guidance programs have the facility of computer aided career guidance system. Chireshe (2012) recommended that a universal consensus has developed over the years that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has to play an influential role in designing and delivery of career guidance services for students.

It is concluded that for the effective career guidance of students, there is the need for development of effective career guidance interventions and then using them practically at secondary level, therefore; the study aimed at developing effective career guidance interventions for career guidance of students in secondary schools. It will have significant contributions theoretical and practical implications for the career guidance of students in secondary schools.

Research Methodology

The design for the conduction and reporting of the study was quantitative survey for developing the effective career guidance interventions for secondary school students. The population of the study was 30439 secondary school students from district Swat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The sample of the study was 380 which was determined with Raosoft online calculator for the determination of the sample for research studies. The sample was selected with using simple random sampling procedure. A questionnaire containing the effective career guidance interventions for secondary schools' students was developed, validated with expert opinion of experts in the field of career guidance and pilot tested for the reliability. The reliability of the tool was 0.812. According to Law (2004) if the coefficient of reliability is 0.80 then it is excellent and if it is from 0.60 to 0.79 then it is adequate. The data were collected with using self-administered questionnaires and analyzed with mean scores standard deviation and the chi-square test of significance. Ethical principles for conduction of the study, participants and reporting the findings of research were followed.

Results

Table 1: *Effective Career Guidance Interventions Secondary School Students*

Statements	Number	Mean	S. D	χ^2	P
Provision of Career guidance facilities for career planning at the school	380	3.98	.82	48.79	.000
Appointing trained career guides to facilitate students in career development	380	3.77	.62	61.40	.000
Collaboration of parents, teachers for support of students in career choices	380	3.85	.89	39.54	.000
Career orientations for students to know information about career opportunities	380	3.71	.24	72.36	.000
Career workshops for promoting awareness regarding career guidance	380	3.58	.47	94.68	.000
Identification of students' interests, abilities and integration with careers	380	3.54	.56	51.69	.000
Incorporation of career guidance subjects in school's curriculum	380	3.93	.43	91.41	.000
Developing career guidance as an integral part of teacher education	380	3.64	.67	57.87	.000
The use of books, brochures and social media for career guidance	380	3.57	.51	32.45	.000
Active role of policy makers for provision resources to help establish career guidance facilities at school	380	3.53	.29	59.29	.000

Table 1 presents the effective career guidance interventions for the career guidance of students in secondary schools. The mean scores of 3.98, 3.77, 4.85, 3.71 and 3.58 identified that respondents agreed about provision of career guidance facilities for career planning at the school, appointing of trained career guides to facilitate students in career development, collaboration of parents, teachers and schools' authorities for support of students in career choice decisions, career orientations for students to know information about career opportunities and job market and career workshops for the promotion of awareness regarding career guidance among students. The mean scores of 3.54, 3.93, 3.64, 3.57 and 3.53 highlights that students agreed that about assessment mechanism for identification of students' interest, abilities and their integration with the career choice decisions, incorporation of career guidance subjects in the schools' curriculum, developing career guidance as an integral part of teachers' training programs, use of books, brochures and social media for the career guidance of the students at school and active role of policy makers for the provision of material and financial resources to help establish career guidance facilities in schools, 82.4% students responded that it is very important. On application of the Chi-square test, the findings were found statistically significant.

The findings of the table identified the effective career guidance interventions for the students of secondary schools are provision of career guidance facilities for career planning of students in schools, the appointing of trained career guides to facilitate students in career development, collaboration of parents, teachers and schools' authorities for support of students in career choice decisions, career orientations for students to know information about careers and job market, career workshops for awareness regarding career guidance among students, assessment mechanism for the identification of students' interests, abilities and their integration with the career choice decisions, incorporation of career guidance subjects in schools' curriculum, developing career guidance as an integral part of teachers' education, the use of books, brochures and social media for the career guidance of students and the active role of the policy makers for the provision of material and financial resources for establishment of career guidance facilities in schools as the most effective strategies for career guidance of secondary schools' students.

Discussions

The study developed and established the effective career guidance interventions for the career guidance of students in secondary schools as provision of career guidance facilities for career planning of students in schools, the appointing of trained career guides to facilitate students in career development, collaboration of parents, teachers and schools' authorities for support of students in career choice decisions, career orientations for students to know information about careers and job market, career workshops for awareness regarding career guidance among students, assessment mechanism for the identification of students' interests, abilities and their integration with the career choice decisions, incorporation of career guidance subjects in schools' curriculum, developing career guidance as an integral part of teachers' education, the use of books, brochures and social media for the career guidance of students and the active role of the policy makers for the provision of material and financial resources for establishment of career guidance facilities in schools as the most effective strategies for career guidance of secondary schools' students. The findings of the study have also been highlighted by many other studies. In this connection, Kiani (2010) recommended the provision of career guidance facilities in the secondary schools and the appointment of trained career guides for the assistance of students in career choice decisions at the level of secondary schools in Pakistan. Cannan (2008) identified the need of comprehensive school guidance program for the secondary schools. Kiani, Hassan and Irfan (2013) recommended the facility of career guidance in government secondary schools and appointment of career guides in secondary schools of Pakistan. The findings regarding the collaboration of parents, teachers and school authorities have also been found by many

other studies. Mekgwe (2010); and Elizabeth (2012) recommended the collaboration of parents and teachers for the proper career development and help of students in the career choice decisions at the level of the secondary schools. Likewise, Otta and Williams (2012) recommended the arrangement of well-planned workshops and seminars on regular basis, a coordination committee for coordination with parents, teachers and counselors on the self-concepts, interests and needs of the students. The findings of the study about the establishment of mechanism for the identification of students' interests and abilities and their integration with the career choice decision of the students are also in agreement with the findings of Olamide and Salami (2013) recommended the establishment of mechanism for the identification of students' interests, abilities and aptitudes in order to adjust them with the future career choice decisions of the students. Like the findings of the study, the study of Khan (2011) established the need for formal training of teachers in the provision of career guidance and to equip them with the necessary skills for the career guidance of students at secondary level in order to facilitate the students of secondary schools in the selection of school subjects and career guidance. Incorporation of career guidance subjects in the curriculum of school for the career choices of the students have also been reported by other studies. Folsom and Reardon (2003) reviewed several studies on career guidance curriculum interventions and identified that such courses developed the decision making skills, career maturity, career decidedness, career development and job satisfaction. Rothwell et al. (2005) and Lamichane (2012) also highlighted that the use of technology and social media for the career guidance of students is an established fact. Similar to the findings of the study about the active role of the policy makers for the provision resources for establishment of career guidance facility in schools, other studies have also recommended the same strategy. Swift (2009) recommended that authorities must legislate for compulsory career guidance in secondary schools. These findings have significant theoretical and practical implications for the development of effective career guidance interventions in secondary schools.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated that the effective strategies for the career guidance of secondary schools' students are; the provision of career guidance facilities, appointment of trained career guides, cooperation between parents and teachers, workshops, seminars, orientations for career information, mechanism for the identification of students' interests, abilities and their integration with the career choices, development of teachers skills through making career guidance as an integral part of teachers' education programs, incorporation of career guidance subjects in schools' curriculum, use of books, brochures and social media and the active role of the policy makers for the provision of resources for establishment of career guidance facilities in schools. These will ensure a proper mechanism for effective career guidance of the secondary schools' students, will enable them to select proper career choices and there will be no wastage of students' potentials at the level of secondary schools. This will help students to have well considered and thought out career plans based on their interests, aptitudes and knowledge of the career opportunities.

Recommendations

On the basis of the objectives and findings of the study, the following recommendations were forwarded:

1. The study recommends the provision of career guidance facilities for the effective career planning of the students in secondary schools. As the career guidance facilities are not available in secondary schools, therefore, it is very difficult for the students of secondary schools to select appropriate subjects of their study at this level, which are based on their interests, aptitudes and knowledge of the career opportunities.
2. The information about job market and career opportunities is an essential element for the better

career choice decisions of the students; therefore, the study recommends career orientations, workshops and career days for the students and their parents at secondary schools, for awareness and to know information regarding the career opportunities and job market. Elizabeth (2012) also recommended awareness programs for parents, community, schools' authorities, teachers and students through career orientations, workshops, seminars, parents' days and community campaigns.

3. For the effective career guidance of the students, there is the need to know the interests and aptitudes of the students in secondary schools. Therefore, the study recommends the establishment of assessment mechanisms for identification of students, interests and aptitudes and the integration of these with the career choice decisions of students.
4. Teachers are the key players in the subjects' selection and career choice decisions of the students in secondary schools. The students at this level have maximum interaction with their teachers. So, keeping in view the role of teachers in the context of career planning of students in secondary schools; the study recommends the development of career guidance, as an integral part of teachers' education/training programs to equip them with the required skills and know how about the career guidance of students.
5. Career guidance in secondary schools needs the provision of books, brochures, social media and educational technology. Therefore, the schools must be provided with books, brochures and Internet facility for the facilitation of students, in career guidance.
6. The study also recommends the active role and involvement of the policy makers, governmental authorities and community for the provision of material and financial resources to help establish the facilities of career guidance in secondary schools.

Part - 2

Areas for further research

1. Future studies may be conducted in higher educational institution for career guidance of students.
2. It may be done for the career development interventions of private sector students.

The study may be done in other provinces of Pakistan.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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