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Analyzing the Career Motivations among Secondary Schools' Students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract

Motivation for a career is a significant indicator for the determination of future careers among secondary school students, therefore; the study aimed at analyzing the career motivations of secondary school students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Objectives of the study were to find out career motivations among secondary school students and recommend strategies for appropriate career motivations among secondary school students. The design of the study was quantitative survey with population of 30439 secondary school students from public sector secondary schools of district Swat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The sample of the study was 380 and it was selected with simple random sampling procedure. A questionnaire containing information about career motivations was developed, validated and pilot tested for the collection of data from respondent students. Data were gathered with self-administered questionnaires and analyzed with mean scores, standard deviations and the chi-square test. The study found medical, teaching, engineering, computer and information technology and business as dominant career motivations of secondary school students. The study recommended the strategies of providing career guidance facilities, mechanism for understanding students' interest and aptitude for careers and provision of information regarding career outcomes for development of appropriate career motivations among secondary school students.

Keywords: Career Motivations, Secondary School, Students, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.



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Introduction

According to Karim (2010), career motivation is the wish of an individual to adopt a certain profession in future. The stage of secondary school is the stage where students select different courses of study, therefore; career motivation is at the peak during the stage of secondary schooling. It is a terminal stage for higher education. It is a stage where students study courses of study, i.e. Science, Arts, Commerce and technical education which determines their future careers in their desired fields, therefore; the career motivations of students at this level pave the way for their future careers. The aim of Secondary education is preparation for life. It serves two important functions by providing skilled people to the job market and students for higher professional learning (National Educational Policy, 2009). Wright (2005) by considering the career motivations of students in secondary schools termed the period of secondary schools as that of transition from the world of school to that of the world of work. Students in secondary schools are full of motivations for their future careers and on the basis of these aspirations they select subjects and courses at this level which determines their future careers.

Shumba and Naong (2012) found that career motivations are the foundations of future careers for students which are laid at the stage of secondary school level and it determines the future careers of students. Keeping their career motivations in mind, students select subjects and courses for their study at this level and they determine the future careers of them. Framing appropriate career motivations is an important issue for the students of secondary schools which can ensure right career choices for students and may draw a line between satisfactory and un-satisfactory professions for them in future (Watson, McMahon, Foxcroft & Els, 2010). Keeping in view, the importance of career motivations of students at this level, the National Education Policy of Pakistan (2009) recommended the provision of career guidance facilities for the students of secondary schools to address the career motivations' issues of the young students and may encourage them to select subjects on the basis of their aptitudes other than the conventional ones.

About the career motivations in secondary schools, Ohiwerei and Nwosu (2009) reported that majority of students in secondary schools aspired for prestigious careers like medical, engineering and law though they did not have aptitudes for success in such challenging careers. Majority of students are unaware from the skills and abilities required for such challenging and competitive careers. That is the main reason that many secondary school graduates are not in a position to pursue their desired career aspirations in future after their graduation from schools. This attitude of students results in the frustration of youth, as they are unable to get occupations and prestige what they desired, therefore, students of secondary schools need proper career guidance at the level of secondary schools to make realistic career planning for students of secondary schools. Salami (2002) found that young students often select inappropriate careers because of high salaries, social status, power and prestige attached to the professions. Salami (2000) reported that majority of secondary school students were motivated for the careers of medical, engineering, architecture, banking, pharmacy and law because of the glamour, prestige and social recognition attached with these careers in the society but they are not equipped with necessary skills and abilities required for such competitive careers. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate the career motivations among secondary school students and develop strategies for the appropriate career motivations of students at secondary level the will assist youth in making appropriate career goals at the level of secondary schools.

Literature Review

According to Okafor (2004), the desire for the future career is very high among secondary school students as they are about to enter in the world of work and professional institutions for the development of skills and knowledge. Therefore, majority of secondary school students are motivated for the careers of medical, engineering, business administration, accounting, teaching, nursing, civil service and armed forces. Egwuchukwu (2007) explored the career motivations of secondary school students and factors affecting their choices at the level of secondary schools. The findings of the study reported Medical, Engineering, Law, Pharmacy and Accounting as the most favorite career aspirations of the secondary schools' students and majority of students aspired for these careers. The students showed motivations for these careers because of high income and salaries, social recognition and prestige of these careers in society. The students were motivated least for artistic, spiritual and psychological careers. Nworah (2007) explored the career motivations of students and reported that male students preferred the careers of medical and geology while females preferred the careers of banking, broadcasting and teaching. The study reported that students mostly preferred these careers because of prestige, recognition and honor of such careers in the society. Onoyase and Onoyase (2009) found that secondary school students are unaware about the selection of right type of subjects and their type of personality which suits the specific careers. Therefore, they often make improper subjects selection and aspire for careers which are not fit for their personalities. The study found students preferred careers as medicine, law and engineering which were not based on the traits of their personalities. This was due to social charm of these careers and the lack of career guidance in secondary schools.

According to Salami (2013), the most important developmental task for the students of secondary schools is to plan for their future careers. Students in secondary schools explore career opportunities for their appropriate career choice decisions. The students of secondary schools are not equipped with the skills of making suitable career choice decisions; they usually select careers on the basis of apparent appeal of the careers and are unaware from the requirements and demands of those careers and this results in their failure and frustration when they are not in a position to achieve their desired careers. According to Olamide and Salami (2013) career choice decisions are a nightmare for the adolescents, when they are unaware about the competitive world of work and the skills required for it. The students in secondary schools believe that their future career exploration would be a smooth sailing and with the completion of their education at the schools, they would get their desired occupations. Most students in secondary schools plan to become doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers and others in future. They love to enter prestigious careers like medical, engineering and other white collar jobs, wherefrom, they may get material and financial rewards but are unaware that the job market can only provide opportunities to the most competitive ones in future. How successfully adolescents proceed in their future desired careers, depends upon proper career guidance and planning at the level of secondary schools. Therefore, parents, teachers and career guides must work in collaboration for career planning and development of students in secondary schools which are based on their interests, aptitudes and future prosperity.

In secondary schools of Pakistan, majority of students are motivated for the careers of medical, engineering, teaching and armed forces. Students select these careers without information about themselves and the careers they opt for. In this context, Kiani (2010) found that majority of male students aspired to be doctors, engineers and officers of the armed forces while female students aspired to be doctors, teachers, lawyers and nurses in secondary schools. According to him, Pakistan is a developing country and has achieved little progress in various walks of life. Though

the country has made some progress in economic development but still it is quite far away from developing the professional and vocational skills of its treasure of the human resources. There is scarcity of skilled work force for making the economic sector of the country vibrant and productive. The youth of the country is an important asset to put life in the slowly progressing economic sector of the country but they are unaware about proper aspirations for careers in secondary schools according to their personalities, aptitudes and interests. Therefore, it is extremely important to guide students at the level of secondary schools for having proper career aspirations and information about their personalities, aptitudes, interests and career aspirations for selection of appropriate careers according to their personalities. Khan (2011) identified that secondary schools' level is a stage where students select their subjects of study and aspire for the future careers; therefore, the teachers of this level play a significant role in the development of proper career aspirations for the future career choices of students at secondary schools.

Kiani, Hassan and Irfan (2013) studied the vocational motivations of secondary schools' students in their study entitled "Vocational Aspirations of High School Students". The findings of the study highlighted the vocational motivations of secondary school students for the professions of doctor, engineer, army, teacher, and lawyer. Gender differences in career aspirations and match between vocational aspirations and occupational interests were identified. Moderate match for the occupational aspirations of doctor and teacher and no match for army, lawyer and engineer were found with the occupational interests. The career aspirations of male were more conventional and investigative while the aspirations of female were more social and artistic. Tabassum (2012) argued that in Pakistan students at the secondary level do not have the facility of career guidance and therefore, majority of students at this level are unable to make proper career motivations for their future, they blindly follow the directions of those who comes in front of them and are unable to achieve their desired career outcomes in future. Majority of students at the secondary schools' level select traditional careers i.e. doctor, engineer and waste their potentials in pursuit of these professions even if they are not meant for them.

It is concluded that career motivations are of prime importance at the level of secondary schools and there is scarcity of research studies on the vocational interests of Pakistani youth in general and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular at the level of secondary schools. Therefore, there is the need of studies on the career motivations of secondary school students in Pakistan. It is assumed that in secondary schools of Pakistan students aspire more for the careers of doctors, engineers, army, lawyer and teachers hence there is the need for exploration of the career aspirations of secondary schools' students and recommend effective strategies for proper career motivations among secondary school students.

Research Methodology

The design for the conduction and reporting of the study was quantitative survey to analyzed the career motivations among 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 potential prominent future careers for secondary school 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 0.81. 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: *Career Motivations Among Secondary School Students*

Statements	Number	Mean	S. D	χ^2	P
Medical	380	4.53	.27	43.89	.000
Teaching	380	4.42	.55	56.45	.000
Engineering	380	4.39	.49	34.59	.000
Computer and IT	380	4.13	.43	67.41	.000
Business	380	4.07	.52	89.63	.000
Civil Service	380	3.44	.89	45.75	.000
Law	380	2.93	.74	87.36	.000
Agriculture	380	2.64	.23	52.92	.000
Armed Forces	380	2.57	.46	26.39	.000
Sports	380	2.43	.21	46.14	.000
Any Other	380	1.23	.67	38.06	.000

Table 1 identifies the career motivations among secondary school students. The mean scores of 4.53, 4.42, 4.39 and 4.13 demonstrated that respondent students were agree that they had career motivations for the careers of medical, teaching, engineering, computer and IT and business. On application of the Chi-square test, the findings were found statistically significant. It identified medical, teaching, engineering, computer and IT as the dominant career motivations of secondary school students.

Discussions

For the analyses of career motivations of secondary schools' students, the study found medical, teaching, engineering, computer and Information technology and business as dominant career motivations among secondary school students. It identified that students were motivated for the most popular and prestigious careers. The findings of the study are in conformity with the findings of Kiani, Hassan and Irfan (2013) that highlighted the vocational aspirations of the secondary schools' students for the professions of doctor, engineer, army, teacher, and lawyer and that the career aspirations of males were more conventional and investigative while that of females were more social and artistic. Similarly, Tabassum (2012) also reported that in Pakistan, majority of students at the secondary schools' level are motivated for traditional careers i.e. doctor, engineer. In the similar vein Kiyani (2010) found that majority of students aspired to be doctors, engineers and officers of the armed forces while female students aspired to be doctors, teachers, lawyers and nurses in secondary schools of Pakistan. Likewise, the studies of Olamide and Salami (2013); Salami (2000); Okafor (2004); Nworah (2007) and Onoyase and Onoyase (2009) have also identified similar findings about the career aspirations of students. Unlike the other studies of these scholars, the study teaching as an established career motivation for secondary school students. It is an important addition to the body of literature and now the study has significant and theoretical implications for the career guidance of secondary school students.

Conclusion

The study highlighted the career motivations among secondary school students and brought into light the dominant career motivations of medical, teaching, engineering, computer and IT and business which students have at the level of secondary schools. It showed that students have career motivations of the most prestigious and charming careers. These motivations are traditional and points towards career orientations and career guidance for the secondary school students.

Recommendations

Based on the objectives of the study, following recommendations were made for the appropriate career motivations and career guidance of students at secondary

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 have appropriate career motivations and select appropriate subjects of their study at this level, which are based on their interests, aptitudes and knowledge of the career opportunities.
2. There must be collaboration between parents, teachers and schools' authorities for the support of students in career choice decisions. As a friendly relation between home and school is compulsory for making conducive environment regarding career choice decisions of students, therefore, it will help the teachers and parents to know the interests and abilities of the students for making proper subjects selection that may lead them to their desired future destinations.
3. The information about career outcomes 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.
4. 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.
5. The study recommends the incorporation of career guidance subjects in the schools' curricula for the provision of career information and knowing the requirements for the entry into the professional colleges.

Areas for further research

1. Future studies may be conducted on the career motivations of students at the primary level.
2. Similar studies may be conducted in the institutions of higher education.

One potential area may be the conduction of such studies on the career motivations of students in the private sector schools.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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