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Career Counseling at Grade-12 Level at a Public Sector School in Ahmedabad District

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Abstract:

This research explores effective models for delivering career counseling within the constraints of public sector schools in Ahmedabad, India. The study hypothesized that students receiving group workshops would demonstrate a greater increase in career decision-making self-efficacy compared to a control group.

A self-administered questionnaire measured students' self-belief in making career decisions before and after the intervention. The questionnaire also captured the intervention group's experiences with the program. Thematic analysis provided further insight.

Findings highlight the program's effectiveness in empowering students for informed career decisions. Students showed increased confidence and preparedness in areas like identifying interests, researching options and setting goals. However, improvement is needed to ensure all students benefit maximally. The study underscores the importance of incorporating structured career guidance in the curriculum to better prepare students for their future careers.

Keywords: Career counseling, public sector schools, grade 12 students, career decision-making self-efficacy, Ahmedabad, India

1. Introduction

This research paper investigates the current landscape of career counseling offered to Grade-12 students in public sector schools across the Ahmedabad district. The study focuses on ten purposefully selected schools, with a sample size of 100 students participating through a structured questionnaire. This questionnaire was meticulously crafted based on a comprehensive review of existing career counseling literature and tailored to the specific educational context of Ahmedabad. The research delves into three key areas: students' experiences with career counseling programs, their attitudes and perspectives towards career choices and the accessibility and utilization of career-related learning resources within Gujarati medium schools.

Ahmedabad itself presents a fascinating backdrop for this study. The city has witnessed remarkable economic development, particularly in sectors like commerce, communication and construction. Nicknamed the "Manchester of India" alongside Kanpur, Ahmedabad boasts a rich industrial heritage in cotton production and a strong financial legacy evident in its former stock exchange, once the second oldest in the



nation. Today, Ahmedabad's skyline is rapidly transforming, reflecting the city's economic diversification towards a thriving tertiary sector. This ever-evolving economic landscape necessitates a well-equipped education system to prepare its youth for future opportunities. Ahmedabad's robust educational system, with a staggering 678 schools affiliated with the Gujarat Secondary Education Board (GSEB), offers a fertile ground to examine how effectively career counseling programs are preparing students to navigate the complexities of the ever-changing job market. This research aims to bridge the gap between the city's economic dynamism and the career preparedness of its future workforce.

2. Review of Literature

Shah, Sayeda et al (2021) explore the importance of career counseling for Grade 12 students, focusing on perspectives, provision, benefits, issues and solutions. Six students from a semi-public school in Sukkur were interviewed. Findings aim to inform students, teachers, parents and policymakers, with future research suggested across various schools in Sindh for broader insights.

Herr, A. (2002) indicates that career choice is critical for individuals aged 16 to 22. With changing work dynamics, career guidance must focus on understanding interrelationships between occupations, allowing for career mobility. Despite budget cuts in schools, effective programs like "PACE" can enhance career maturity, though comprehensive restructuring of career guidance in South Africa is needed.

Nong, T. W. (2016) assesses career guidance's impact on career choices in secondary schools of Sepitso Circuit, Limpopo Province. Despite cooperation challenges during exams, findings reveal inadequate attention to career guidance, with educators and students struggling with its concepts. The study recommends elevating career guidance to a full subject for better socio-economic outcomes.

Brian Hutchison (2015) this chapter outlines developmentally appropriate career interventions for K–12 students, guided by the ASCA National Standards and the National Career Development Guidelines (NCDG). Emphasizing the connection between school activities and future careers, it stresses the importance of preparing students for adulthood and enhancing school involvement and academic success.

Brian et al (2015) the research at Makupula High School in Kayamandi township examined how Grade 12 learners make career decisions, using the Systems Theory Framework. The study highlighted the complex interplay of individual, social and environmental influences, revealing limited self-reflection, high



self-efficacy and the crucial role of family support. It emphasized the need for career counselling to enhance adaptability and resilience, addressing challenges posed by socio-economic constraints and cultural identity.

3. Objective of the Research

The main objective of this research is to explore models for delivering career counseling that are effective within the constraints of public sector schools.

4. Hypotheses

Students in public sector schools of the Ahmedabad district who receive career counseling through a [insert specific model, e.g., group workshops, individualized assessments] are demonstrated a greater increase in career decision-making self-efficacy compared to students who do not receive career counseling.

5. Methodology

Data collection occurred through a self-administered questionnaire specifically designed for this study. The questionnaire consisted of three sections:

- Section A: Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (Pre-Counseling) - This section measured students' self-belief in their ability to make effective career decisions before receiving any counseling.
- Section B: Career Counseling Experience (For Intervention Group Only) - This section, exclusive to the intervention group, captured their experiences with the career counseling program.
- Section C: Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (Post-Counseling) - This section mirrored Section A but was administered after the intervention group received the program, aiming to assess any changes in self-efficacy related to career decision-making.

The questionnaire design considered existing literature on career counseling and the specific context of education in Ahmedabad. It aimed to gather comprehensive data encompassing students' existing knowledge of career counseling, their attitudes towards career choices and the accessibility and utilization of career-related learning resources within Gujarati medium schools as following:



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Sr.	School	Block	Sample
1	Kuwais High School	City	10
2	Abhijit Vidyavihar Memnagar	City	10
3	Maharaja Agrsen Vidhyalay	City	10
4	Adarsh Vidhyalay	City	10
5	Arpan Education Higher Secondary School	City	10
6	Sarvajanik Madhyamikshala	City	10
7	Chandramauli Vidhyalay	City	10
8	Himanshu Vidhyalay	City	10
9	Kameshwar Vidyamandir	City	10
10	Amrita Vidhiyalay	City	10

Additionally, thematic analysis of the intervention group's responses to conducted to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences with the program.

6. Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis based on the response received from 100 student are following:

- **Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (Pre-Counseling)**

This section measures your confidence in making career decisions before participating in any career counseling, the responses as following:



Particular	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am confident in my ability to identify my career interests.	52	31	11	4	2
I feel comfortable researching different career options.	41	54	3	2	
I believe I can effectively evaluate my skills and strengths in relation to potential careers.	37	51	8	2	2
I am confident in setting realistic career goals.	31	58	9	1	1
I feel prepared to develop a plan to achieve my career aspirations.	49	36	11	2	2

Based on the survey results, a majority of respondents expressed confidence in their ability to identify their career interests, with 52% strongly agreeing and 31% agreeing. Only 11% neither agreed nor disagreed, while a small fraction, 4%, disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed.

When it comes to feeling comfortable researching different career options, 41% strongly agreed and 54% agreed, totaling 95% in favor. A negligible percentage neither agreed nor disagreed (3%) and even fewer disagreed (2%).

Regarding the ability to evaluate their skills and strengths in relation to potential careers, 37% strongly agreed and 51% agreed, resulting in 88% of respondents feeling positive. 8% neither agreed nor disagreed and a combined 4% disagreed or strongly disagreed.



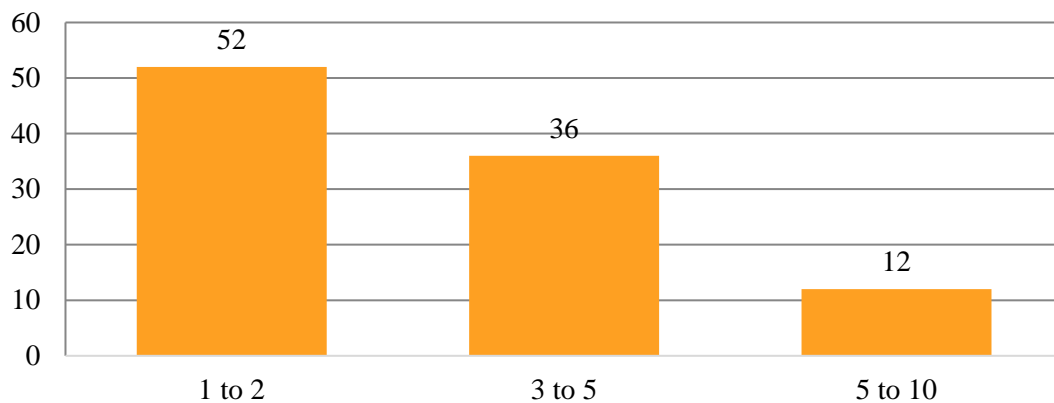
Confidence in setting realistic career goals was similarly high, with 31% strongly agreeing and 58% agreeing (89% total). Only 9% neither agreed nor disagreed, while 1% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed.

Finally, in terms of feeling prepared to develop a plan to achieve their career aspirations, 49% strongly agreed and 36% agreed, making up 85% of the respondents. 11% neither agreed nor disagreed, with 2% disagreeing and 2% strongly disagreeing.

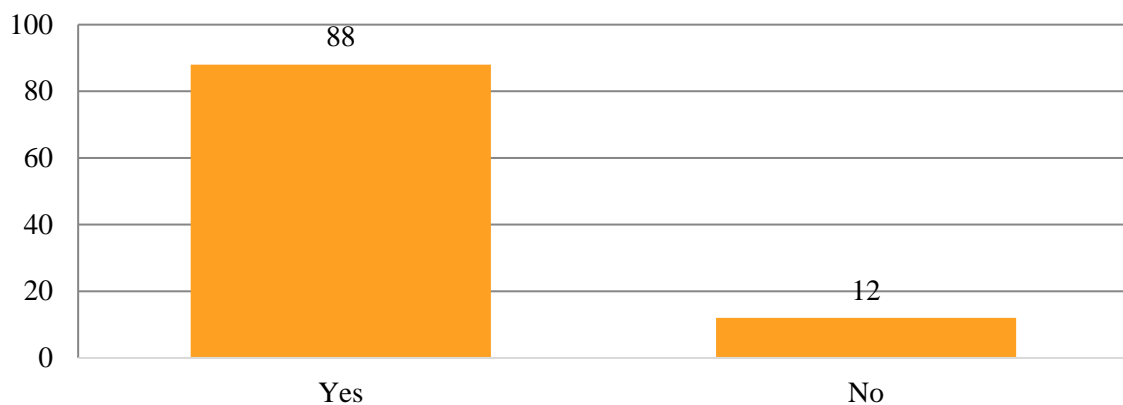
• Career Counseling Experience (For Intervention Group Only)

This section is only for students who participated in the career counseling program (e.g., group workshops, individualized assessments), the responses as following:

Counseling program you participated in



Satisfied with the career counseling program





Participated in career counseling program and the data collected from the participant's shows the following distribution:

Out of the total respondents, 52 individuals (52%) attended the counseling program 1 to 2 times, 36 individuals (36%) participated 3 to 5 times and 12 individuals (12%) attended 5 to 10 times.

Regarding satisfaction, 88 participants (88%) reported being satisfied with the career counseling program, while 12 participants (12%) were not satisfied.

• Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (Post-Counseling)

Particular	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am more confident in my ability to identify my career interests compared to before.	30	47	14	6	3
I feel more comfortable researching different career options compared to before.	28	58	3	2	9
I believe I can now more effectively evaluate my skills and strengths in relation to potential careers compared to before.	24	41	13	10	12
I am more confident in setting realistic career goals compared to before.	36	29	16	11	7
I feel more prepared to develop a plan to achieve my career aspirations compared to before.	39	25	16	11	9



The survey results show varying levels of confidence among participants in different aspects of career planning compared to before. When asked about their confidence in identifying career interests, 30% strongly agree and 47% agree, totaling 77% who feel more confident. Meanwhile, 14% neither agree nor disagree, 6% disagree and 3% strongly disagree.

Regarding comfort in researching different career options, 28% strongly agree and 58% agree, resulting in 86% feeling more comfortable. Only 3% neither agree nor disagree, while 2% disagree and 9% strongly disagree.

In terms of effectively evaluating their skills and strengths in relation to potential careers, 24% strongly agree and 41% agree, making up 65% who feel more effective. However, 13% neither agree nor disagree, 10% disagree and 12% strongly disagree.

Confidence in setting realistic career goals saw 36% strongly agree and 29% agree, summing up to 65%. Here, 16% neither agree nor disagree, 11% disagree and 7% strongly disagree.

Lastly, regarding feeling prepared to develop a plan to achieve career aspirations, 39% strongly agree and 25% agree, totaling 64%. 16% who neither agree nor disagree, while 11% disagree and 9% strongly disagree.

These results indicate that the majority of participants feel more confident and prepared in various aspects of career planning compared to before, though there is a notable minority who do not share this sentiment.

7. Conclusion

This study highlights the effectiveness of career counseling programs in empowering Grade 12 students in public sector schools to make informed career decisions. The program demonstrably improved students' confidence and preparedness across various aspects of career planning, including identifying interests, researching options, evaluating skills and setting goals. However, the findings also underscore the need for continuous improvement to ensure all students benefit maximally from the intervention. By incorporating targeted strategies to address the needs of all learners and focusing on developing concrete action plans, the program can ensure a more well-rounded and impactful experience for all participants.



The career counseling program has evidently played a pivotal role in enhancing the career decision-making self-efficacy of Grade-12 students at the studied school. This improvement underscores the importance of incorporating structured career guidance in the educational curriculum to better prepare students for their future career paths. By addressing the identified gaps and continuously refining the counseling approaches, schools can further empower students to make well-informed and confident career decisions.

8. Limitations and Future Research

The study may not generalize due to sample size and focus on public Grade 12 in Ahmedabad. This study acknowledges potential limitations like exploring external factors, counselor training and technology integration in career counseling.



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