

Comparative Study to Assess the Knowledge of Higher Secondary School Students Regarding Career Counselling in Selected Rural and Urban Schools of Kashmir

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Abstract

Background: Career counseling assists individuals in choosing appropriate educational and occupational choices and making career options based on future employment demands and requirements. Career counseling comprises a wide variety of professional activities that assist people in overcoming career-related obstacles. **Aim:** The primary objective of the study was to evaluate the understanding of career counseling among students in chosen rural and urban high schools in Kashmir.

Method: This study employed a quantitative methodology using a descriptive research design. The sample of 100, 50 from government higher secondary school Chadoora Budgam and 50 from Candid higher secondary school Srinagar were selected. The variable under investigation was knowledge. The research took place in both a government and a private school, encompassing both rural and urban regions of Kashmir. **Results:** The study revealed that 42(84%) of the study subjects from rural area were having adequate knowledge towards career counselling. The study also found that 37(74%) of the study subjects from urban area were having adequate knowledge towards career counselling. The (Mean \pm SD) for study subjects from rural areas was (8.92 \pm 1.89) while the (Mean \pm SD) for urban areas was (8.94 \pm 1.88). The *p*-values were not significant for knowledge and selected demographic variables in rural school viz age (*p*=0.50), gender (*p*=0.24), grade level (*p*=0.88), subjects studying (*p*=0.18), aim in life (*p*=0.77), reason for choosing a specific aim (*p*=0.13), and family per capita income (*p*=0.62). In urban areas significant association was observed with Gender (*p*=0.0001), subjects studying (*p*=0.001), Aim in Life (0.02), reason for choosing a specific aim (*p*=0.004).

Conclusion: The study came to the conclusion that upper secondary students had sufficient knowledge about career guidance and were aware of its value and necessity from an early age. To assist students in selecting occupations that align with their interests and aptitude, career advisers should be available at the upper school level. Even so, NEP 2020, which emphasizes the need of early exposure for students

to a variety of professional opportunities, has acknowledged the same. As a result, the policy makers predict, there would be a need for career counsellors to collaborate with schools to present pupils with various career alternatives and assist them in discovering their interests and abilities at a young age.

Keywords: Career counseling, students, rural and urban high schools, Kashmir, knowledge, NEP 2020, occupational choices, educational choices, employment

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INTRODUCTION

Career counselling could be used to describe the process by which students decide on their careers. Adolescence is a common period for career exploration, during which time people investigate possible career routes and relate them to their personal interests [1, 2].

The goal of career counselling is to find the best possible fit between a person's resources, needs, goals, and interests and what is available in terms of education, training, and social and occupational integration. Career counseling is a societal support that initiates a comprehensive, adaptable strategy throughout an individual's various life stages, including formal education, employment, social integration, community engagement, ongoing professional development, job transitions, family changes, requalification, retirement, etc. It addresses all significant facets of life and the roles assumed in education, profession, social and community activities, family, leisure, and more. Counsellors with the appropriate authorization can provide information, counselling, and guidance [3, 4].

The only way to match students with appropriate prospects based on their particular assets and help them explore and wisely use their potential in the competitive world of today is through career counselling in schools [5, 6].

In 2021, a research investigation titled "Assessment of the necessity for guidance and counseling services at the secondary level in southern Punjab, Pakistan" was carried out by Khurshid *et al.* [5]. Total of 310 students were selected for sample purposes out of which 149 were male students and 161 were females. As a result, it was found that guidance and counselling can promote an awareness of career selection, self-actualization and better satisfaction with studies. Meanwhile it is found that guidance and counselling is helpful to improve the educational activities, plan of students, and have direct influence on academic achievement [5].

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to observe the knowledge of students towards career counselling. There are lot of obstacles students face while choosing their career. By career guidance, the right knowledge builds the confidence of students which later on eventually helps in overcoming the obstacles; also, with the help of career counselling, students may have a better awareness of their interests, skills, and weaknesses as well as the variety of career alternatives available to them. While going through my research i came to know that not even single local research had been done on this topic and before starting my research i interacted with students. I observed how confused they are regarding their career choices and have no clue about the career counselling and that thing motivated me to go in depth of the selected topic.

In 2017, a cross-sectional study was undertaken by Yaqoob *et al.*, focusing on the knowledge of career counseling among high school students in Pakistan [1]. 500 students were selected and structured questionnaire was developed and adapted from previous studies. A significance level of 0.05 was utilized for statistical significance. From a total of 500 participants, 54% were identified as females. The majority of students fell within the age range of 17–19 years. Most of the students took Science as a major subject. A predominant number of individuals made their career choices driven by personal interests. Approximately 54.8% of students possessed awareness regarding career counseling. Upon employing chi-square tests, a statistically significant association was identified between knowledge and the availability of a career counselor, as well as attendance at career counseling seminars. Many of the students found counselling to be very important and they believed that there is a need for counsellor in every school [1].

In 2019, Mubashir conducted a cross-sectional study on 'Career Guidance in Career Planning among Secondary School Students' in Karachi, Pakistan, with a total of 489 participants. The participants had an average age of 17.13 ± 1.29 years. A significant proportion of males (46 and 27%) sought assistance for education-related and career counseling, respectively. The study also recommended raising

awareness about career guidance through workshops, seminars, and media to promote career guidance among students [6].

OBJECTIVES

- To evaluate the understanding of career counseling among students in rural regions of Kashmir at the higher secondary school level. To assess the knowledge of higher secondary school students regarding career counselling in urban areas of Kashmir.
- To compare the knowledge of higher secondary school students regarding career counselling in rural and urban areas of Kashmir [7].
- To examine the relationship between the knowledge of career counseling among higher secondary school students in rural areas of Kashmir and specific demographic variables.
- To evaluate the correlation between the knowledge of career counseling among higher secondary school students in urban areas of Kashmir and specific demographic variables [8].

METHODOLOGY

While going through the present study, a quantitative approach was adopted to assess the knowledge of higher secondary school students regarding career counselling in selected rural and urban schools of Kashmir. The study unfolded into descriptive research design to be used for achieving the objectives of the study. The population for the current study consists of higher secondary school students studying Science, Maths, Arts, Commerce at govt higher secondary school of Kashmir, from them the total number of study subjects were 100. Half of the participants were selected from rural areas, while the remaining half were chosen from urban areas, using a simple random sampling method for subject selection. In the present study, knowledge is the research variable. The demographic variables selected and to be correlated here in our study were age, gender, grade level, subjects studying, residence, aim in life, reason for choosing selected aim, and family per capita income. The present study was conducted at govt higher secondary school Chadoora, school in rural area of Kashmir and Candid Higher Secondary School, Nowgam, Srinagar, school in urban area of Kashmir [9, 10].

RESULTS

The current investigation underwent analysis employing both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The data was analyzed and the information obtained is presented in following tables:

The information in Table 1 indicates that 42(84%) of the participants were having adequate knowledge, while 8(16%) were having inadequate knowledge. This emphasizes a predominant presence of adequate knowledge among the study subjects, with a minority falling into the category of inadequate knowledge.

The information in Table 2 indicates that 37(74%) of that study subjects were having adequate knowledge, while 13(26%) were having inadequate knowledge. This emphasizes a predominant presence of adequate knowledge among the study subjects, with a minority falling into the category of inadequate knowledge.

The data presented in Table 3 depicted that about equal number 42(84%) and 37(74%) had Adequate knowledge towards career counselling in rural and urban areas respectively.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of study subjects from rural area according to their knowledge level.

Knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
Adequate knowledge	42	84%

Inadequate knowledge	8	16%
	50	100%

Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of study subjects from urban area according to their knowledge level.

Knowledge	Frequence	Percentage
Adequate knowledge	37	74%
Inadequate knowledge	13	26%
	50	100%

Table 3. Comparison of knowledge of study subjects regarding career counselling from rural and urban areas (N=100).

Knowledge level	Students from rural areas		Students from urban areas	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Adequate knowledge	42	84%	37	74%
Inadequate knowledge	8	16%	13	26%
Total	50	100%	50	100%

H01: There is no significant association between knowledge of higher secondary school students regarding career counselling in selected rural schools of Jammu and Kashmir with selected demographic variables (age, gender, grade level, subjects studying, residence, aim in life, reason for choosing selected aim, family per capita income)) at 0.05 level of significance.

H02: There is no significant association between knowledge of higher secondary school students regarding career counselling in selected urban schools of Jammu and Kashmir with selected demographic variables (age, gender, grade level, subjects studying, residence, aim in life, reason for choosing selected aim, family per capita income) at 0.05 level of significance.

The data presented in Table 4 indicates that, based on the provided p-values, there is no significant association between the knowledge of higher school students regarding career counseling in selected rural schools of Jammu and Kashmir and the selected demographic variables. Specifically, the p-values for gender ($p=0.50$), subjects studying ($p=0.24$), grade level ($p=0.88$), aim in life ($p=0.18$), reason for choosing a specific aim ($p=0.77$), and family per capita income. The values ($p=0.62$) exceed the commonly employed significance threshold of 0.05.

Therefore, in light of these p-values, we fail to reject the null hypothesis for all demographic variables, suggesting that there is no significant association between the knowledge of higher school students regarding career counseling and their gender, subjects studying, grade level, aim in life, reason for choosing a specific aim, or family per capita income in the selected rural schools of Jammu and Kashmir.

The data presented in Table 5 suggests that, based on the provided p-values, there is a mixed pattern regarding the association between the knowledge of higher school students regarding career counseling in selected urban schools of Jammu and Kashmir and the selected demographic variables. The p-values for age ($p=0.11$), gender ($p=0.0001$), grade level ($p=0.88$), subjects studying ($p=0.001$), aim in life ($p=0.02$), reason for choosing a specific aim ($p=0.004$), and family per capita income ($p=0.06$) were all examined.

The p-values for age, grade level, and family per capita income are greater than the standard significance level of 0.05. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis for these variables, suggesting no significant association between students' knowledge of career counseling and their age, grade level, or family per capita income in the context of selected urban schools in Jammu and Kashmir.

In contrast, the low p-values for gender, subjects studying, aim in life, and reason for choosing a specific aim (all below 0.05) result in rejecting the null hypothesis concerning these variables. This indicates a significant association between the knowledge of higher school students regarding career counseling and their gender, subjects studying, aim in life, and reason for choosing a specific aim in the selected urban schools of Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 4. Association of Knowledge of students from rural area towards career counselling with selected demographic variables (N=50).

Demographic Variable		Knowledge of students towards counselling		χ^2 cal	χ^2 tab	df	p value
		<i>Inadequate Knowledgeable</i>	<i>Adequate Knowledgeable</i>				
Age (years)	15	0	0	1.35	5.99	2	0.50
	16	0	6				
	17	5	21				
	18	3	15				
Gender	Male	6	19	1.33	3.84	1	0.24
	Female	2	23				
Grade Level	11 th	3	20	0.01	3.84	1	0.88
	12 th	5	22				
Subjects studying	Arts	3	19	4.87	7.81	3	0.18
	Science	1	16				
	Commerce	2	3				
	Maths	2	4				
Aim in Life	Doctor	1	11	3.2	12.5	6	0.77
	Engineer	0	4				
	Lawyer	2	9				
	Teacher	1	4				
	Nursing Officer	0	0				
	Technical Officer	0	2				
	Administrative officer	1	5				
	Other	3	7				
Reason for Choosing Specific Aim	Interest	3	27	7.01	9.48	4	0.13
	Peer Pressure	0	2				
	Parental Pressure	0	1				
	Relative pressure	0	0				
	Social Attitude	5	8				
	Random	0	4				
Family Per Capita Income	Upper class	0	8	2.5	9.48	4	0.62
	Upper middle class	2	5				

	Middle class	4	21				
	Lower middle class	1	3				
	Lower	1	5				

Table 5. Association of Knowledge of students from urban area towards career counselling with selected demographic variables (N=50).

Demographic Variable		Knowledge of students towards counselling		χ^2 cal	χ^2 tab	df	p value
		<i>Inadequate Knowledgeable</i>	<i>Adequate Knowledgeable</i>				
Age (years)	15	4	2	5.96	7.81	3	0.11
	16	2	6				
	17	3	12				
	18	4	17				
Gender	Male	13	12	14.9	3.84	1	0.0001
	Female	0	25				
Grade Level	11 th	8	20	0.02	3.84	1	0.88
	12 th	5	17				
Subjects studying	Arts	0	13	14.9	7.81	3	0.001
	Science	8	9				
	Commerce	5	5				
	Maths	0	10				
Aim in Life	Doctor	3	7	15.0.2	12.59	6	0.02
	Engineer	0	12				
	Lawyer	2	4				
	Teacher	0	4				
	Nursing Officer	3	0				
	Technical Officer	0	0				
	Administrative officer	1	3				
Other	4	7					
Reason for Choosing Specific Aim	Interest	5	27	13.04	7.81	3	0.004
	Peer Pressure	0	0				
	Parental Pressure	1	6				
	Relative pressure	0	0				
	Social Attitude	2	3				
	Random	5	1				
Family Per Capita Income	Upper class	0	7	8.82	9.84	4	0.06
	Upper middle class	1	8				
	Middle class	10	14				
	Lower middle class	2	3				
	Lower	0	5				

DISCUSSION

While discussing the major finding of this research we came to the conclusion that 42(84%) of study subjects from rural areas had adequate knowledge towards career counselling while 8(16%) had an inadequate knowledge towards career counselling in rural areas. The Mean \pm SD of knowledge levels towards career counselling among study subjects from rural areas was (8.92 \pm 1.89). Moreover, we also found that 37(74%) of study subjects from urban areas had an adequate knowledge towards career counselling while just 13(26%) had an adequate knowledge towards career counselling in urban areas. The Mean \pm SD of knowledge levels towards career counselling among study subjects from rural areas was (8.94 \pm 1.88), mode 7.0, median 9.0. The research also found that the knowledge of career counseling among higher secondary school students in selected rural schools of Kashmir did not show any significant association with the chosen demographic variables. The p values for age (p=0.50), gender (p=0.24), grade level (p=0.88), subjects studying (p=0.18), aim in life (p=0.77), reason for choosing a specific aim (p=0.13), and family per capita income (p=0.62) were all considered. The analysis of data gathered disclosed that there was significant association between knowledge of higher secondary school students from urban area regarding career counselling with Gender (p= 0.0001), subjects studying (p=0.001), aim in life (p=0.002), Reason for Choosing Specific Aim (p=0.004) while as there was no significant association between knowledge of higher secondary school students from urban are regarding career counselling with Age (p=0.11), grade level (p=0.88), and family per capita income (p=0.06).

The findings of our study were contradicted by a cross sectional study conducted by Yaqoob *et al.* on "Career counselling and its knowledge among high school students in Pakistan [1]. The study was conducted on 500 students and structured questionnaire was developed and adapted from previous studies. A significance level of 0.05 was deemed statistically significant. Among the 500 respondents, 54% were identified as females, and the majority of students fell within the age range of 17–19 years. Most of the students took Science as a major subject. Most of these made this choice based on their personal interest. 54.8% of students had knowledge of career counselling [1].

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's authors advise conducting further research in this field with an increasing number of rural and urban schools. Furthermore, it is imperative that we endeavor to obtain findings from experimental research to bolster the necessity of career coaching within our context.

CONCLUSION

The study came to the conclusion that upper secondary school students had adequate knowledge towards career counselling, and that the professional service should be included in the curriculum. The career coaches and counsellors can help students because they can administer a variety of tests, such as ones measuring interest, aptitude, intelligence, and personality. This allows the students to be placed in the programs that best suit them, maximize their potential, and develop into future gems of the community.

Ethical Approval

The ethical clearances was provided by the academic body of IGNOU LSC 30039 for carrying out the study with protocol number MSCCFT/2023/001.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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