Career Counselling: Medical And Healthcare Students Perspective in Deciding their Career Preferences

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Abstract: *Counselling of medical and healthcare students on career development is quite a new niche and it is an extensive approach for the preparation of healthcare students for personal, professional and social accomplishment. The paradigmatic shift in counselling research has occurred globally. Most career development researchers across the world have distinguished decisive transformations in their approaches. In current study investigators intention was to identify the concept, rationale and ladder of career counselling sessions needed for medical and health sciences students. In this connection career guidance systems at institutional levels were examined using structured interview format and questionnaire application. A sample of 400 students was selected from various institutes offering medical and related education. 5 point Likert scale was used to evaluate the recommendation for career counselling, problem solving and professional choices. Respondents belief and perception towards career counseling is also important and majority students were in favor of such session i.e., 245 (61.2%) and 261 (65.2%) of total cohort. For other professional choices, career advisors are the most significant source for sorting the career- related issues, despite this fact, most students' rely on their family members for career guidance, particularly those whose parents were highly qualified or those who had little ambition for education. Such studies strongly recommend to develop an efficient and organized model for mentoring career themes and build up a structured map for career coaching.*

Introduction

The terms "guidance and counseling" have been coined globally in different ways (Shaterloo & Mohammadyari, 2011). According to Ivan Prvolesky "career guidance is defined as training and motivating folks and students to plan their education, training and work; to take accountability for their own educational and occupational opportunities, giving help to students for additional education, flexible professional development, career management, as well as professional promotion" (Arumugam & Nagalingam, 2015). Counselling involves

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the common activities that are carried out for educational and professional development, but these are included in a much wider range of action that has direct associated with developments in economic, social, and labor market changes, which the phrase 'personal and professional achievement' signifies. In addition, career counseling affect career decision making process based on theories of traditional counseling however, due to the availability in various choices of subjects and professions, it has become very necessary to choose the carrier that best suit a person (Brown, 2002).

The present practices of career guidance are dealing with the need of both students and professionals in the developed countries i.e. Canada, Australia, United States and United Kingdom (Bilal & Malik, 2014). In the career counseling process, all affairs relating to the individual needs (including work, family and personal preoccupations), are considered as an essential part of career decision making and planning (Figure 1). It includes also activities related to the scantiness of employment, stress reduction, mental health issues, that improve work skills, flexibility, interpersonal relations, adaptability, and other development programs leading to self-agent (Mihaela & Cristina, 2014; Domene, Shapka, & Keating, 2006).

Career exploration can be traumatic at times,while, in some cases, it is found this stress is helpful to a certain level which stimulates students to look for help and this eventually diminishes the chance of a less optimal decision. Career counselors and career guidance workshops also have its impact on career decision (Yaqoob, Arif, Samad, & Iqbal, 2017).

In Pakistan very few institutes are offering career guidance services and their role is much broader than career guidance include educational and personal guidance also. This study was plan with objective to determine the level of counselling in medical and health sciences institutes available and determine the student perspectives towards counselling and advisory services at different level of their professional ladder. Moreover impact of such systems is also elucidated in present investigation.

Methodology

Study Description

In present investigation, a cross sectional descriptive approach was used to investigate students perspective regarding impact of career counselling sessions for medical and healthcare students, its perspective in deciding their career preferences and moreover students knowledge, belief and rationalization of current practice. Study participants classify with the characteristics including personal attributes, physical attributes, social attributes as shown in figure 1.

For this purpose students from various institutions (N=3) were approached. Informed consent of participants were obtained and they were also briefed about the significance and application of study. Sampling procedure based on probability convenience sample. Study was conducted between February 2018 to April 2018.

Sample Size Calculation and Criteria of Inclusion

During the study 400 students of 3 institutes of medical and health sciences origion were recruited for this study.

All those candidates that are enrolled in medical and health sciences institutes including MBBS, Pharm.D, DPT, Nursing, Dentistry and biomedical sciences, submitted Informed consent and studying in higher professional year (3 and above) were included for this study. While students of any other fields and starting years of study (1st - 2nd Prof.) were excluded with no current year enrollment.

Study Variables

Significance and acquaintance of career advisory services, motive of specific field preference, related knowledge and experience, availability, accessibility and attitude toward career guides, basic leadership capacity, future perspective, and career satisfaction level were majorly investigated from participants. Their respective demographic information including gender, age, ethnicity and occupation of guardian and parents were also documented.

Protocol of Data Collection

Group of 400 students was enrolled and a structured questionnaire was used as study instrument. Questionnaire validity was assessed by a prior pilot trial. Participant was assured of confidentiality and ethical perspective was maintained throughout the study. Questionnaires IDs were generated and no disclosure of personal identity was strictly followed. Procedure of data collection was monitored by trained investigators involved in the study.

Data Analysis Protocol

For data entrance and analysis SPSS was used (version 20). Calculation of frequency and percentages with mean and standard deviation were carried out. Chi square analyses was conducted to determine association between knowledge of career counseling and various variables (gender, age Significance and acquaintance of career advisory services, motive of specific field preference, related knowledge and experience, availability, accessibility and attitude toward career guides, basic leadership capacity, future perspective etc). Values of $P<0.05$ were considered statistically significant.

The study comprised 3 institutions with 400 study individuals. Female ratio was high (75.2%) as compare to male (24.7%). Descriptive statistics were applied on age, education, enrolled program, professional years and career counselling session. Each were represented in number percentages as shown in table 1.

Results

Table 1
Socio-demographics factors of study participants

Variables	N(%) 400
Gender	
Male	99(24.7)
Female	301(75.25)
Age (Years)	
18-20	151(37.75)
21-22	221(55.25)
23 above	28(7)
Previous Education	
Intermediate	291(72.7)
A level	109(27.2)
Degree program	
MBBS	81(20.2)
Pharm-D	132(33)
B.D.S	53(13.2)
DPT	48(12)
BSN	32(8)
Biomedical sciences	54(13.5)
Current Professional Year	
3rd Year	189(47.2)
4th Year	163(40.7)
5Th Year	48(12.0)
Attended in Career Counseling session	
Yes	105(26.2)
No	295(73.7)

Table 2
Status of career counseling sessions in last 6 months

Variables	N(%)
(Number of session)	
None	138(34.5)
1	96(24)
2	81(20.2)
3	52(13)
More than 3	33(8.25)
Recommendation for career counseling session (5 point Likert scale)	
Never	9(2.25)
Rarely	90(22.5)
Every once in a week	49(12.2)
Sometimes	31(7.75)
Almost always	221(55.2)
Career counselling sessions are informative and problem solving (5 points Likert scale)	
Strongly disagree	11(2.75)
Disagree	40 (10)
Neutral	51(12.7)
Agree	78 (19.5)
Strongly agree	261(65.2)
I believe that career counseling is also important for other professional choices	
Strongly disagree	15(3.75)
Disagree	32(8)
Neutral	37(9.25)
Agree	71(17.7)
Strongly agree	245(61.2)

Career counselling sessions considered to be effective tool for improving knowledge, beliefs and practice. 5 point Likert scale were used to evaluate the recommendation for career counselling, problem solving and professional choices as shown in table 2. 5 points of Likert were classifying from 1 to 5. 1 considered to be never or strongly disagree and 5 considered to be almost always or strongly agree as shown in table 2.

Chi-square were used to determine the impact of career counselling queries, future plans, encouragement, career choices, beliefs and activities as shown in table 3.

Table 3
Impact of career counselling session

Variables	Yes N(%)	No N(%)
All queries and concerns have been addressed during career counselling session/s.	298(74.5)	102(25.5)
My All future career plans because of career counselling sessions	271(67.7)	129(32.2)
I feel encouraged to provide career counselling to others	221(55.2)	179(44.7)
Career counselling sessions impact on my career choices/change in choice	267(66.7)	133(33.2)
I believe career counselling activities may also be facilitated by		
Teachers	198(49.5)	202(50.5)
Professionals in respective fields	281(70.2)	119(29.7)
Relatives	67(16.7)	333(83.25)
Career counselors	295(73.7)	105(26.2)
Others	81(20.2)	319(79.7)
I attend career counseling session in		
Small groups (in between 15)	99(24.7)	301(75.2)
In large cohort (with whole class)	287(71.7)	113(28.2)
Individually	31(7.7)	369(92.2)
Others (Webinar/Video conference)	67(16.7)	333(83.2)
During career counseling I prefer to know about		
Fields of working	57(14.2)	343(85.7)
Opportunities	197(49.2)	203(50.7)
Fringe benefits (salary/housing/transport etc)	285(71.2)	115(28.7)
Grades/designations	248(62)	152(38)
Others	71(17.7)	329(82.2)

Paired t-test were applied on before and after data on career options including awareness, preferences and field encouragement as shown in table 4. Table 5 compared the median score between knowledge, beliefs and practice both before and after intervention as shown in table below. All parameters shown significant relationship ($p < 0.001$)

Table 4
Career options through career counselling sessions

Variables	Before N(%)	After N(%)	p-value
I am now aware of career options through career counselling sessions	227(56.5)	304(75.2)	<0.05
I decided my career preference due to counselling session	302(75.2)	373(93)	<0.05
I feel encouraged about my field	350(87.7)	373(93)	<0.05

Table 5

Median score of knowledge, beliefs and practice before and after career counselling session

Characteristics	Median Score	P value
Knowledge		
Before session	24	<0.001
After session	29	
Beliefs		
Before session	64	<0.002
After session	72	
Practice		
Before session	62	<0.001
After session	78	

Discussion

The paradigm shift in career counselling studies entails primarily recognition and adaptation of new theoretical approaches and qualitative research methods and, in counselling practice, abandoning the directive counselling model and developing narrative tools to be applied in work with the counselee. In recent theoretical approaches to career counselling, current transformation importantly heralded the spread of the constructivist framework, means the perspective to assume that we construct and perpetuate our social realities. Therefore, this study provides an idea regarding the student attitude towards carrier counselling session. Identifying an association between the inputs and outcomes of career counselling is not always straightforward (Hooley, 2014). Inputs, processes and outcomes are contextually sited and, as a result, what may work well in one context may not generate the same results in another context. This needs to be considered when investigating research studies drawn from different parts across the globe with different customer groups working in different social and economic circumstances. However, there is a wide range of literature that suggests that career counselling can have an optimistic influence on the progression of individuals to learning and work (McIIveen, Morgan, & Birmose, 2012). Such literature illustrates that individuals who have participated in a career counselling intervention are more likely to develop positive learning and work outcomes. In present investigation participants of different institutes of Karachi, Pakistan were incorporated in study. A cohort of 400 respondent was selected and their previous educational background like intermediate and A levels were also noted to determine students perception towards counselling. It has been observed that students from A levels were more awared with advisory service and counselling need as compare to intermediate. This might be due to system variation and student involvement at such levels (Table 1). An exploration of the attitude of students towards counselling and guidance services has derived impulsion from the supposition that students are the major recipients of counselling and guidance services in the secondary school setting (Eyo, Joshua, & Esuong, 2010).

Career counselling sections measured to be important contrivance for humanizing knowledge, practice and beliefs. In this study a Likert scale was applied to weigh up the suggestion for career counselling, predicament resolutions and specialized needs as depicted in table 2. Study respondents are strongly agreed (261, 65.2%) that such session are significant in mentoring and problem solving as career guide and during studies such session

can also be effectively used to address study based issues as well (Table 2). Moreover 61.2% study respondents considered counselling session crucial in optimizing the career preferences based on personality type. While 221(55.2%) respondent recommended that a regular session must be planned at each academic year to facilitate and guide students. Despondently majority respondents showed lack of counseling session and offices at university level, which seems to be considered on urgent basis to cater student personal needs. The career counselling field is in a debut stage in the technical university system and tries to consolidate its decree through diversified actions of marketing and giving correct knowledge to students about the rationale and significance of this type of counselling.

Larger proportion of participants in this study has shown highest level of satisfaction and impact towards conselling activities in timely resolution of different students queries and perceptions. 73.7% respondents recommend that skilled counselor may play significant role followed by professionals of field (70.2%), and then teachers (49.55) are important contributors during such sessions (Table 3). Paired t-test was used for career options including awareness, preferences and field encouragement, which shows significant association among these parameters (Table 4). Median score of knowledge, beliefs and practice before and after career counselling session were found significant with p values in order of <0.00, <0.002 and <0.001 respectively. In this sense, identifying the career counselling/guidance needs of students represents an essential aspect, because it enlighten the creation of counseling programs in accordance with the observed needs, which will increase the popularity and utility of counselling services among students (Chircu, 2014).

Conclusion

In Pakistan, career practical knowledge is innovative idea. Only limited educational institutions offer guidance services to students that too at university levels. People of Pakistan are aware of the importance of higher education. Indeed, universities in Pakistan are not enough to provide the increasing population demands and many of young population incapable to accomplish their goals. Students are also not capable to choose their own field of study because of unawareness regarding their own personality traits and unseen talents. Such studies highlight the significance as need of time to construct and plan such conselling activities at institutional level to address various students problems, related issues and optimal career selection process.

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