



CHALLENGES OF CAREER COUNSELING IN SCHOOLS: A QUANTITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF COUNSELORS OPINIONS

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Abstract

To assist students in India in making educated decisions about their future, schools must offer career counseling. But there are a number of obstacles that make career guidance in schools less effective. The absence of seasoned and qualified career counselors is one of the main problems. In many schools in India, there isn't a specialized career counselor, therefore it's up to the already overworked teachers to handle this. Additionally, even if a career counselor exists in a school, they might not be qualified to offer accurate and current information on a range of career opportunities due to a lack of training or experience. Lack of resources for career counseling in schools is another difficulty. Due to their frequent financial constraints, schools in India may not have access to the most recent tools or technologies for careers. Additionally, effective career counseling may be hampered by Indian society and culture's expectations. Overall, overcoming these obstacles will call for a concerted effort from politicians, educators, and parents to give career counseling top priority and give students the resources and assistance they need.

Keywords: Career Counseling, Qualified Counselors, Lack of Resources, Societal Expectations, Financial constraints.

Introduction

The shortage of qualified and experienced career counselors is one of the main issues facing career counseling in Indian schools, according to Kaushal and Srivastava (2021). The job fell on the already overworked teachers because the majority of schools lacked designated career counselors. The professors frequently lacked the appropriate education or experience to impart correct and current knowledge about a range of career alternatives, which caused pupils to make ill-informed decisions about their careers. As a result, the abilities of the students and the

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requirements of the labor market were out of sync. Another significant obstacle was the limited resources that were available to schools for career counseling. Because of this, schools frequently lacked access to the most up-to-date employment tools and technologies. Because of this, it was challenging to give pupils thorough career counselling. The challenges were further compounded by India's social and cultural demands. Academic achievement and choosing traditional professions like law, medicine, or engineering are frequently strongly encouraged. The effect was that students felt under pressure to live up to these standards rather than pursuing their personal hobbies and interests.

Yoo (2016) noted changes in teachers' abilities to assess their own efficacy as well as the effect of professional development on their efficacy. It was observed that professional development can boost teachers' efficacy and enhance their capacity to assess changes in their own efficacy. Giving career counselors opportunities for professional development can assist them stay current on the most recent advancements and trends in the field of career counseling. As a result, they may be able to give students information that is more accurate and current, facilitating better career advising and decision-making. Career counselors can build successful techniques to aid students in discovering their passions and interests by improving their communication skills, which can be achieved through professional development. This can increase the efficiency of career guidance in schools and assist students in making

Employee retention, which is strongly tied to career counseling in schools, was found by Aruna and Anitha (2015) to be a significant concern in the hospitality sector. This emphasized the significance of offering staff retention enablers such training and development, career advancement, and work-life balance. In the context of career counseling in schools, giving students access to vocational training and development, professional progression possibilities, and a work-life balance viewpoint can help them make wise decisions about the future. Long-term job satisfaction and retention rates may increase as a result of giving them these possibilities. It will take a coordinated effort from politicians, educators, and parents to prioritize career counseling and give students the resources and assistance they need to overcome these obstacles. Students may make educated decisions about their future occupations with the support of career counselors who have the necessary knowledge and experience, have access to the most recent tools and resources, and are focused on their unique interests and passions.

Literature Review

According to Rashid and Yadav (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected higher education and research. Millions of students' scholastic and professional goals have been impacted by the pandemic, which has forced the closure of educational institutions and the postponement of exams. The change to online learning has brought forth additional difficulties, such as limited access to technology and the internet and little connection between students and teachers. The lack of opportunity for children to learn about various vocations and engage with experts in many sectors has also had an impact on career counseling in schools. Therefore, it is challenging for career counselors to offer complete career counseling to students given the additional constraints brought on by the epidemic. Joshi et al. (2021) looked at how the epidemic affected instructors in the Indian educational system. It was found that the abrupt switch to online instruction and testing caused serious difficulties for teachers, including a lack of training and familiarity with online teaching tools and the issue of keeping track of students' involvement and development. Due to the limited possibilities for students to connect with counselors and explore various vocations, these difficulties have also had an impact on the effectiveness of career counseling in schools. Additionally, it has been challenging for students to learn about new occupations and opportunities due to limited access to resources and the internet.

Jena (2020) emphasized the pandemic's broader effects on Indian schooling. Students' academic achievement as well as their mental health and general well-being have been damaged by the closing of schools and other educational institutions. To help students navigate the uncertainty and make wise decisions about their future jobs, it is now even more important to offer thorough career counseling. The epidemic has also brought attention to the value of digital proficiency and career preparation, which can assist students in preparing for the evolving labor market. However, the lack of resources and internet connectivity has made it difficult for schools to offer such training, which adds to the difficulties faced by career counselors in providing students with effective career counseling.

According to Pokhrel and Chhetri (2021), there has been a substantial impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on education. Teachers and students have had to become accustomed to new forms of instruction and evaluation as a result of school closures and the shift to online learning. A number of difficulties have arisen as a result of this, including limited access to technology and the internet, reduced interaction between teachers and pupils, and the problem of guaranteeing fair access to education. These difficulties have also affected career guidance in schools, as

there are few possibilities for kids to learn about various professions and network with experts in those industries.

A conceptual framework for integrated "STEM education" was put forth by Kelley and Knowles (2016), who also stressed the value of multidisciplinary educational approaches. In order to create a more thorough and interesting educational experience, this framework places an emphasis on integrating "science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)" with other subject areas, such as the arts and humanities. Due to the pandemic, students have had to learn in a variety of settings and academic areas, which has highlighted the significance of this approach. This framework can help career counseling in schools by giving students the chance to explore many jobs in multidisciplinary sectors and motivating them to develop a wide variety of skills and interests.

Daniel (2020) emphasized the pandemic's wider effects on education, particularly the difficulties experienced by underprivileged populations and the requirement for creative measures to maintain access to education. The pandemic has also brought attention to the value of digital literacy and the necessity of equipping children with the tools and resources they need to flourish in a world that is becoming more and more digital. Students can benefit greatly from career counseling in schools by getting the tools they need to build these abilities and explore a variety of jobs in the digital era.

Palvia et al. (2018) gave an in-depth look of the global status, issues, developments, and consequences of online learning. Assuring the quality of online courses and evaluations, devising appropriate pedagogical methodologies, tackling the digital divide and lack of access to technology, and guaranteeing enough support for online learners are some of the difficulties stated in that that may also apply to India. Similar difficulties may arise when trying to ensure that students have access to online resources for career counseling and that the advice they receive is of high quality and takes into consideration the constraints of the online format. Educators in India and throughout the world faced a number of difficulties as a result of the abrupt switch to online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 shutdown. Insufficient infrastructure, a lack of prior experience with online teaching, and issues evaluating student learning in an online setting are just a few of the difficulties that higher education institutions in India experienced at this time, according to Mishra et al. (2020). These difficulties might also apply to career counseling in educational institutions, where career counselors may need to adjust to new technologies and create new methods for supporting students. Additionally, it

may be particularly difficult to guarantee that students in some regions of India have access to technology and dependable internet connections.

A crucial component of the educational system is career counseling, which helps students decide on their future professional routes in an informed manner. In the area of career counseling, the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) into India's educational system has created both opportunities and difficulties. The potential applications of AI in career counseling, including individualized coaching, career evaluations, and job suggestions, were emphasized by Alam (2020). The difficulty in creating an AI system that can take into consideration the diversity of Indian culture and the many career routes chosen by students is also acknowledged. The digital divide in India is one of the main obstacles to AI integration in career counseling. Significant economic and social differences exist in the nation, and many kids lack access to digital devices. As a result, substantial funding would need to be allocated to infrastructure, resources, and educator training in order to launch AI-based career counselling programmes. Using AI in career counselling also has ethical and legal ramifications, which can be problematic, especially when it comes to prejudice, transparency, and data privacy. The use of AI to career counselling has the potential to transform the industry and offer students individualised support and guidance despite the difficulties. The Indian educational system faces specific issues and settings, therefore integrating AI must be done carefully and with thought.

Objectives of the study:

- To measure the various challenges of career counseling in schools
- To ascertain the significance of the various challenges of career counseling in schools

Research Methodology:

This research is based on collecting data from 215 people to review the challenges of career counseling in schools. The study used an empirical approach to analyze the data, which involved using frequency distribution to examine the patterns and trends in the responses.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 1 Career counseling in schools faces resource challenges, including a shortage of qualified counselors and insufficient funding for comprehensive programs

Particulars	Agree	Disagree	Can't Say	Total
Respondents	175	21	19	215
Percentage	81.40	9.77	8.84	100

Table 1 presents that with the statement career counseling in schools faces resource challenges, including a shortage of qualified counselors and insufficient funding for comprehensive programs., it is discovered that 81.40% of the respondents expressed their agreement with this statement.

Table 2 Teachers and counselors may struggle to find adequate time to provide comprehensive career guidance to students

Particulars	Agree	Disagree	Can't Say	Total
Respondents	171	23	21	215
Percentage	79.53	10.70	9.77	100

Table 2 presents that the statement teachers and counselors may struggle to find adequate time to provide comprehensive career guidance to students, it is discovered that 79.53% of the respondents expressed their agreement with this statement.

Table 3 Some teachers and counselors may have limited knowledge and training in career counseling

Particulars	Agree	Disagree	Can't Say	Total
Respondents	167	25	23	215
Percentage	77.67	11.63	10.70	100

Table 3 presents that with the statement some teachers and counselors may have limited knowledge and training in career counseling, it is discovered that 77.67% of the respondents expressed their agreement with this statement.

Table 4 Some parents may lack awareness of the importance of career planning or may have different aspirations for their children

Particulars	Agree	Disagree	Can't Say	Total
Respondents	163	25	27	215
Percentage	75.81	11.63	12.56	100

Table 4 presents that with the statement some parents may lack awareness of the importance of career planning or may have different aspirations for their children, it is discovered that 75.81% of the respondents expressed their agreement with this statement.

Conclusion

In India, schools must offer pupils career counseling as a vital service. The difficulties in offering this service, however, are unique. In this essay, we'll talk about some of the difficulties career counseling in Indian schools faces and why it's critical to get past them. Lack of qualified specialists is one of the major issues facing career counseling in Indian schools. Psychology, education, and career development are just a few of the fields that demand competence while providing career counseling. However, a lot of schools either don't have career counselors who are dedicated to this position or have career counselors with little training and expertise. Parents and pupils may receive insufficient guidance as a result of this. Career counseling may be impacted by socioeconomic variables as well. Because they do not have the same resources or chances as their peers, students from lower-income homes may find it challenging to explore several career options. Similar to how marginalized students may encounter prejudice and obstacles when pursuing particular occupations. Despite these difficulties, career guidance is essential in Indian schools. By providing them with the resources they require for success, it can assist students in making wise decisions regarding their future. Schools can give students the direction and assistance they require to accomplish their goals by overcoming these difficulties. In conclusion, there are many obstacles to career counseling in schools in India, including a shortage of qualified specialists, restricted information availability, and socioeconomic considerations. However, it is crucial to overcome these obstacles in order to give pupils the direction and assistance they require for success. Schools may support their students' decision-making about their future and set them up for career success by investing in career counseling services.

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