

## An Assessment of Career Guidance Services at Secondary School Level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Muhammad Usman<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Rahim Khan<sup>2</sup>, Prof. Dr. Wasal Khan<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Khan<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

*Secondary schooling is the terminal stage in which a student can be put on a career trajectory and prepare them for the world of work. This quantitative study aimed to assess career guidance services and activities at the secondary school level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. Data was gathered on the Career Guidance Teacher Questionnaire (CGTQ) from 99 secondary school teachers. The questionnaire's validity and reliability were ensured through pilot testing. The data were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of the study show that the secondary school level is considered the most important stage for students' career development. Career guidance activities in schools assist students in clarifying career confusion and saving time, money, and energy of the students. Co-curricular activities in school, study tours, and part-time vocational engagement of students are good sources of inspiration for career choices. The findings of the study revealed that limited resources in terms of materials, seminars, workshops, and lack of teachers' training in the field of career guidance were the problems at the secondary school level. This study recommends that the governing bodies, fill the missing gap in career counselling of secondary school students and shape their future policies. Digital career guidance platforms should be provided to students who can access remotely for self-assessment and career information. Teacher capacity building ought to be enhanced to cope with the problem and update career counseling skills to meet the emerging trends in the field of career guidance.*

**Keywords:** Career, Guidance, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Secondary School level.

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<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. Scholar Qurtuba University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. E-mail: [usmanmr79@gmail.com](mailto:usmanmr79@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor Qurtuba University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. E-mail: [dr.rahim43@gmail.com](mailto:dr.rahim43@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Professor Department of Education Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Email: [wasal.edu@suit.edu.pk](mailto:wasal.edu@suit.edu.pk)

<sup>4</sup> PhD Education, Principal GHS Dab Kor District Mohmand  
Email: [ilyasdaudzai2013@gmail.com](mailto:ilyasdaudzai2013@gmail.com)

## **Introduction**

Education researchers often focus on current practices or innovations, although they hope to contribute to a 'better' education in the future. (Hrastinski & Jandrić 2023). Education fiction is a way to connect the past, and present and describes a potential future encourages the reader to reflect on whether such a future is desirable or not to take action in the present. (Stefan Hrastinski 2023). A systematic need assessment process identifies the disparities between the current state and future desired objectives.

Career guidance involves matching an individual's personality with suitable work environments by assessing their traits and vocational interests. These measured traits and vocational interests are then utilized to select a meaningful and appropriate career path, which is considered the most helpful and is the oldest assumption in career psychology and research (Svennungsen, 2011).

According to UNESCO (2000), career orientation is assisting individuals in discovering and properly utilizing their abilities, skills, and interests in line with their aspirations and values. (Crişan, 2015). Career guidance services and activities help individuals manage their careers, regardless of their age and point in education, training, and employment decision-making. Career guidance is an integral part of individuals in schools, colleges, universities, training centers, and the institutions of voluntary communities as well as in the private sector. Career guidance services and activities could be offered in groups or on an individual basis and may be through physical attendance or distance including web-based online services and helplines (Bimrose, 2011). Teachers and counselors play a key role in supporting young individuals in the efforts they make, for navigating the complex world. Guidance on career helps individuals in the identification of their strengths, weaknesses, family expectations, national and global requirements for sorting out the personal relevance available to them between education and career options (Mahir, 2018).

Almost all education of formal and informal curricula, pay attention to assess students' performance and evaluating their educational designs and the environments in which learning occurs. This is important not only for designing and orchestrating meaningful learning activities but also provide the basis for streamlining, standardization and efficiency in the practices of students and teachers (Tim Fawns 2018).

## **Statement of the Problem**

The present study investigated to assess career guidance services at the Secondary School level for an organized lifelong career of students.

## **Objectives of the Study**

- i. To find out the opinions of school teachers about career guidance services at the secondary school level.

- ii. To classify the problems faced by school teachers regarding career guidance services at the secondary school level.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Super suggests that choosing an occupation is an embodiment of one's self-concept, while Savickas (1997) views career choice as an expression of deep-seated life themes. Additionally, Holland proposes that individuals who find alignment between their personality type and work tasks/environment are likely to experience satisfaction and productivity in their careers. While these ideals may not be attainable for everyone due to factors such as lack of knowledge or mismatches in job distribution within their environment.

JoAnn Harris-Bowlsbey (2014) observed that the rationale behind providing career guidance services rests on two fundamental principles. Firstly, individuals seek satisfying work, aiming to fulfil their self-concepts through their chosen occupations. Secondly, nations require a sufficient number of skilled individuals to fill job vacancies and contribute to the country's economic growth. American theorists like Donald Super and Mark Savickas emphasize the importance of individual choice and satisfaction in career decision-making.

Katsarov (2022) stated that the involvement of the European Union in shaping policy related to career guidance is examined through distinct periods. Level one provides political direction while Level two comprises an agreed program of activities aimed at implementing Level one decisions, with financial support. Level 3 involves activities at the practitioner, researcher, and manager levels. In the initial phases, interventions primarily consisted of pilot projects, exchanges, placements, study visits, and surveys focusing particularly on young individuals. Wong (2022) elevated the importance of career guidance in Hong Kong, where secondary schools primarily prioritize academic achievement over supporting students' personal development. In contrast, England has been actively pursuing reforms to enhance career services in secondary schools. A positive step in England has been the inclusion of a clause in the Technical and Further Education Act, mandating closer collaboration between schools and providers of technical and vocational courses. This measure aims to expand students' options upon reaching the school-leaving age.

Wong and Yuen (2019) studied the history of career guidance and counseling in secondary schools in Hong Kong spans over 60 years and can be divided into four key stages. The first career services in secondary schools began in the early 1950s to late 1970s. From 1970 to 1990, there was a transition from a vocation-oriented approach to a developmental approach in career counseling. In the 1990s to 2000, there was increased recognition of the importance of career guidance and counseling in a comprehensive school program, with greater involvement of all teachers. From the early 2000s to 2018, there was continual growth in career

guidance and counselling practices within schools based on contemporary theories of career development and best practices research.

Sampson (2021) emphasized the importance of career guidance services in developing countries like Kenya. The study was carried out in secondary schools in three Kenyan counties. The research included students, teacher counsellors, and head teachers as the accessible population. A total of 32 secondary schools were selected using simple proportionate random sampling across the three counties. The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between the perceptions of students and teacher counsellors regarding the effectiveness of guidance services. It also highlighted the influential roles played by teacher counsellors and head teachers in shaping students' career choices. Based on these findings, the study recommends that all secondary school students should have equal opportunities to access effective career guidance services.

Uzair Y. et al. (2017) emphasized the significance of career advisors in addressing career-related issues in Pakistan. A total of 500 students participated in the study after providing informed consent, and they completed a structured questionnaire. The study concluded that most high school students have appropriate knowledge and a positive attitude, but lack proper practices. Students consider career counselling to be highly important and are interested in receiving appropriate guidance. The influence of parents on their choices was significant. It was clear from the study that very few schools provide career counselling sessions, and there is no concept of career counsellors present in any school in Pakistan.

Ali, A., and Ullah, A. (2021) conducted a study on the role of secondary school teachers in providing career guidance to students. The study emphasized that teachers play a crucial role in guiding students' careers by assisting them in subject selection and providing career knowledge. The research involved 346 high school students from the Swat district, selected through simple random sampling for data collection. The study found that teachers have a significant impact on students' career guidance by serving as role models, identifying their aspirations and abilities, assisting in integrating aspirations and potentials, helping with subject selection, providing career guidance, identifying potential careers, and offering career information and requirements. Additionally, the study recommended the development of teachers' capacity to provide career guidance at the secondary level and suggested the inclusion of career guidance subjects at this level.

Zafar (2019) assessed students' understanding and attitudes towards career counseling in Pakistan. The study revealed that career counselors from various fields assist students at the high school level in making well-informed career decisions. In late adolescence and early adulthood ages, career planning becomes

a significant role in choosing a career for their life because high school students, in this stage of their lives, look for career information and awareness of their vocational interests.

Dani (2019) revealed that secondary school is the first step in choosing a career path in a student's life. This decision-making requires in-depth research and an understanding of various available options. At this age of adolescence, students lack maturity, so constant support, interaction, and guidance are required for them to make sound career decisions. It is highly necessary to provide the students with an accepting and open atmosphere so that it becomes easy for them to know and understand various fields before coming to any conclusion. The students need to acknowledge their abilities and interests while making the decisions.

Khan, (2012) concluded that in Pakistan in general and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular, guidance is crucial, especially in the field of education and no one can deny its importance as per National Educational Policies but is ignored. Hence, it is crucial to understand the concept of guidance, especially career guidance, from the perspectives of teachers. It is important to explore methods for its implementation and understand the various challenges faced by teachers.

### **Methodology**

The study aimed to assess the career guidance services and activities at the secondary school level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The research design employed in this study was a descriptive survey type. The population for the present study encompassed all secondary school teachers of districts Charsadda, Mardan and Peshawar. According to the Annual School Census 2020-21 of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, there are 331 boys' secondary schools in the Charsadda, Mardan and Peshawar districts. Similarly, 7,448 are teaching staff working in these boys' secondary schools. Through random sampling technique, 10 percent of schools were proportionally selected from these districts respectively. Hence a total of 33 secondary schools were determined as the sample size of schools (Creswell, 2011, Ali et al 2020). To determine the sample size of teachers three teachers were randomly selected from each sampled school and thus 99 secondary school teachers were the sample size of teachers of the study (Habib, 2008. & Farooq 2009).

### **Data Collection**

Career Guidance Teacher Questionnaire (CGTQ) was designed to collect data from secondary school teachers. The questionnaire has consisted of two parts. Part I, consisted of statements about existing career guidance services and activities at the secondary school level, while part II, covered problems regarding career guidance services at the secondary school level. The questionnaire consisted of ten closed-ended items, developed on a five-point Likert Scale to

find out the opinions of teachers, about the career guidance services and activities and their needs at secondary school level. The primary data collected from the respondents were analyzed, using SPSS- 23 version with mean ratings, standard deviation, and the chi-square test.

### Results and Discussion

(A) This section presents the results and discussion of the data collected from secondary school teachers about career guidance services and activities at the secondary school level. Table No. 1 provides a descriptive analysis of teachers' responses to the CGTQ, which helps them effectively assist their students in career guidance and planning. Table No.2 highlights the statistical analysis of teachers' responses to the CGTQ, to effectively assist their students in career guidance and planning.

In Table 1, it is revealed that 85.9% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they found career guidance to be beneficial. Table 2 further supported this statement, showing a mean value of 4.1212 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that career guidance services in schools play a significant role in helping students clarify their career-related confusions.

**Table No.1 Descriptive Analysis of Teacher's Responses**

S. N	Statements	SD	D	U D	A	SA
1	Career Guidance services in schools assist in clarifying student's career confusion about their choice of professions.	2.0 %	6.1 %	6.1 %	49.5 %	36.3 %
2	Career guidance services in school save time, money, and energy of the students.	7.1 %	7.1 %	23.1 %	45.4 %	17.1 %
3	Part-time vocational engagement of students helps in career choices.	3.0 %	11.1 %	8.1 %	53.6 %	24.2 %
4	Co-curricular activities are helpful in the career choices of the students.	2.0 %	11.1 %	8.1 %	59.6 %	19.2 %
5	Study tours are good sources of inspiration of career choices.	5.0 %	8.1 %	6.1 %	55.6 %	25.2 %
6	Career guidance books are available in the school library.	26.3 %	44.4 %	9.1 %	14.1 %	6.1 %
7	Regular assessment and follow up sessions are held in school to clarify student's career path.	31.3 %	41.4 %	6.1 %	18.2 %	3.0 %
8	Teacher can help in career choices of students.	4.0 %	8.1 %	8.1 %	50.5 %	29.3 %

				%	%
9	Training is provided to teachers for career guidance of students.	26.3%	44.4%	9.1%	14.1%
10	Parents' teacher meetings are held in school for this purpose.	43.4%	29.3%	5.1%	5.1%

**Table No.2** *Statistical Analysis of Teacher's Responses*

S. No	Statements	Mean Value	Std. Deviation	Chi-square	p-value
1	Career Guidance services in schools assist in clarifying student's career confusion about their choice of professions.	4.12	0.917	91.5	0.00
2	Career guidance services in school save time, money, and energy for the students.	3.58	1.078	49.5	0.00
3	Part-time vocational engagement of students helps in career choices.	3.84	1.013	81.7	0.00
4	Co-curricular activities are helpful in the career choices of the students.	3.82	0.937	104.586	0.00
5	Study tours are good sources of inspiration of career choices.	3.87	1.042	91.6	0.00
6	Career guidance books are available in the school library.	2.29	1.180	48.7	0.00
7	Regular assessment and follow-up sessions are held in school to clarify student's career paths.	2.20	1.160	53.0	0.00
8	Teachers can help in the career choices of students.	3.92	1.032	77.0	0.00
9	Training is provided to teachers for career guidance of students.	2.25	1.145	81.8	0.00
10	Parents' teacher meetings are held in school for this purpose.	2.11	1.276	53.9	0.00

The survey results in Table No.1 show that 62.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement about the effectiveness of saving resources for career guidance at the secondary school level. The study reported a mean value of 3.5859, a chi-square value of 49.535, and a significant p-value of 0.000 in Table No.2.

In the survey, 77.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that part-time vocational engagements help students in making career decisions,

as shown in Table No.1. The study also revealed in Table No.2 a mean value of 3.8485 and a standard deviation of 1.01382, along with a chi-square value of 81.758 and a p-value of 0.000. These statistically significant results indicate that teachers believe that part-time vocational engagements significantly help students in their career decision-making processes.

The table No.1 above shows that 79.0% of teachers recognized the contribution of co-curricular activities in career choices. The mean statistic value is 3.8283, and the p-value is 0.000, in Table No.2, indicating that secondary school teachers emphasize the importance of students' holistic development through co-curricular activities. This reflects a consensus among teachers on the enriching impact of practical educational excursions.

Study tours as sources of inspiration for students in making career choices were acknowledged by 81.1% of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed in Table 1, with the statement. The results in Table 2 were accepted with a mean value of 3.8788, by a chi-square value of 91.657 and a p-value of 0.000."

The survey found that 67.7% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with the availability of career guidance books in school libraries as presented in Table 1. The mean value of 2.2929 and a chi-square value of 48.727 in Table 2 indicate a significant lack of access to career-related literature among teachers.

In Table No. 1, 72.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement that regular assessment and follow-up sessions are held in school to clarify students' career paths. The study reflected a mean value of 2.2020, accompanied by a chi-square value of 53.071 and a p-value of 0.000 in Table 2. These statistically significant results indicated that regular assessment and follow-up sessions regarding career guidance were not being held in schools.

According to the data in Table 1, 79.8% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that teachers can significantly influence students' career choices. The mean statistic of 3.9293 in Table 2 highlights the pivotal role of teachers in guiding students' career paths.

Regarding the training opportunities for teachers on career guidance for students, 76.7% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement as mentioned in Table 1. However, Table 2 provides statistical support for the statement with a mean value of 2.2525 and a p-value of 0.000.

The results from Table 1 show that 72.7% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement, that parent-teacher meetings are held to provide career guidance for students. Table 2, supports the statement with a mean statistic value is 2.1111, chi-square value of 53.980, and p-value of 0.000. These statistically significant findings indicate that parent-teacher meetings were not regularly held for career guidance.

## **B) Problems Faced by Secondary School Teachers**



In this section secondary school teachers, pointed out the problems they were facing in the provision of career guidance services and activities at the secondary school level. The descriptive details of teacher's responses are given in Table No.3, while the statistical analysis of the respondents is mentioned in Table No.4.

**Table No.3** *Descriptive Analysis of Teacher's Problems*

S. No	Problems Statements	SD	D	UD	A	SA
1	Time constraints for teachers to complete the syllabus	2.0 %	23. 2%	5.1 %	47. 5%	22. 2%
2	Limited resources in terms of materials, seminars and workshop	3.0 %	8.1 %	5.1 %	54. 5%	29. 3%
3	Lack of specific training for teachers about career guidance is a problem	3.0 %	10. 1%	6.1 %	50. 5%	30. 3%
4	Limited exposure of teachers regarding various career paths	6.1 %	18. 1%	14. 1%	46. 5%	15. 2%
5	Problems of dropout of students from school	13. 1%	12. 1%	11. 1%	48. 5%	15. 2%

**Table No.4:** *Statistical Analysis of Teachers Problems*

S. No	Problems Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Chi-square	p-value
1	Time constraints for teachers to complete the syllabus	3.6465	1.1277	65.192	0.000
2	Limited resources in term of materials, seminars, and workshop	3.9899	0.9741	95.697	0.000
3	Lack of specific training for teachers about career guidance is a problem	3.9495	1.02394	80.040	0.000
4	Limited exposure of teachers regarding various career paths	3.4646	1.13671	47.313	0.000
5	Problems of dropout of students from school	3.4040	1.26103	50.646	0.000

In Table 3, it is evident that a significant percentage of respondents, 69.7%, agreed that secondary school teachers encounter time constraints when completing the syllabus. The mean value of 3.6465, the chi-square value of 65.192, and a P-value of 0.000 in Table 4 indicate that the results are statistically significant. A significant number of respondents 83.8% agreed and strongly agreed that limited resources as illustrated in Table 3. The secondary school teacher responded with a mean statistic value of 3.9899, chi-square value of 95.697, and p-value of 0.000 as presented in Table 4, with statistically significant results that limited resources in terms of materials, seminars, and workshops pose a challenge for teachers in the provision of career guidance activities. The survey

results in Table 3 show that 80.8% of respondents agreed with the statement that the a lack of specific training for teachers about career guidance for students. The mean value of 3.9495, chi-square value of 80.040, and p-value of 0.000 in Table 4 show that the absence of specific teacher training in career guidance is a statistically significant issue in schools. In Table 3, among the respondents, 61.7% agreed and strongly agreed that teachers have limited exposure to various career paths. The mean value of 3.4646, standard deviation of 1.13671, chi-square value of 47.313, and p-value of 0.000 reflected in Table 4 support the statement that limited experience in career paths was a significant challenge for teachers. In Table 3, results show that 63.7% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement that student dropout posed a serious challenge to career guidance. Table 4, with a mean value of 3.4040, a standard deviation of 1.26103, a chi-square value of 50.646, and a p-value of 0.000 support the results and statement that student retention in schools, highlighting a significant concern among educators and stakeholders on the problem of dropout of students.

### **Findings of the Study**

- i. Career guidance services at the secondary school level alleviate uncertainty among students regarding their career choices, highlighting a consensus among teachers on the importance of clarity in career decision-making processes.
- ii. At the secondary school level, career guidance services help students save time, money, and energy.
- iii. Part-time vocational engagements assist the students in career decision-making process as practical vocational experiences guide students towards suitable career paths, reflecting a consensus among teachers on the significance of hands-on learning opportunities.
- iv. Co-curricular activities at secondary school level are beneficial for career choices of students, shaping their holistic development and career aspirations.
- v. Regular assessment and follow-up sessions about career guidance are not being held in schools. These findings indicate a significant gap in access to career-related literature among teachers and a deficiency in structured follow-up mechanisms for career guidance assessment.
- vi. Findings of the study revealed that there is a lack of specific training for teachers about career guidance at the secondary school level, and identified gaps in teacher preparation for targeted professional development and training programs.

- vii. School teachers responded that parent-teacher meetings are not regularly held about the career guidance of students.
- viii. School teachers face time constraints to complete syllabi and there is limited time for them to take additional responsibility for providing career guidance activities.
- ix. Lack of career guidance materials, seminars, and workshops is a problem at the secondary school level in the provision of career guidance for students.
- x. The findings revealed a strong consensus among the respondent teachers about the difficulties they face in providing comprehensive career guidance due to their limited knowledge of various career options.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) Advocacy and the importance of career guidance should be highlighted to the regulatory bodies at the Secretariat and Directorate level for the development and implementation of policies at the provincial level.
- 2) The study recommends that awareness campaigns should be conducted at the secondary school level to inform students, teachers, and parents about the benefits of career guidance services.
- 3) Computer labs should be used as digital career guidance platforms that students can access remotely for self-assessment and career information.
- 4) Teachers should be trained for professional development programs of career guidance to update them with the latest trends and techniques and then incorporate career guidance into their teaching as additional support for students.

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