

**Importance of Career Decisions Among Higher Secondary School Students in District Dir Lower****Mubarak Shah¹, Prof. Dr. Iffat Ara Hussain²**¹ PhD Scholar, Qurtuba University of Information Science & Technology Peshawar.² Professor, Qurtuba University of Information Science & Technology Peshawar.DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v4i1.1675>**Abstract**

This study aimed at exploring the importance of career decisions at the higher secondary school level in District Dir Lower. For conducting this research qualitative approach was adopted. The population of this study was all the teachers of higher secondary school of district Dir Lower from which sample of 10-teachers was selected through purposive sampling technique. Thematic analysis was carried performed for the analysis of data. The findings of data highlighted that career decisions at this transitional phase of education is a highly significant and life-determining process that shape the pathways of academic and professional success. The findings also highlighted that career decisions at this stage of education guarantees career success, and future socio-economic stability. The findings has also indicated that the informed and aligned decision-making at higher secondary school level is useful in the efficient utilization of human capital and other resources for better academic outcomes and potential employment prospects. So from the above findings it is concluded that career decisions at higher secondary school level are highly important for promoting academics excellence and future professional stability and employment opportunities.

Key Words: Career Choices, Career Decisions, Higher Secondary**Introduction**

Education is the main pillar on which the system of working, technical skills, knowledge creation and innovation of industries are based (Elbek, 2022). The changing trends and demand of job market is the leading cause of dynamic trends in education that has far reaching effects on the lives of educators, administrators, students and parents (Mirgorodskaya et al, 2023). It equips individuals with the foundational skills and critical thinking necessary to contribute effectively in the workforce. Through education, people gain specialized knowledge and technical expertise that drive industrial productivity and efficiency. Furthermore, educational institutions foster creativity and research, leading to continuous innovation and the development of new technologies. In essence, a strong educational system directly supports economic growth, industrial advancement, and societal progress (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2023).

Education is the foundation through which the destiny of new generation is decided along with social continuity of life (Burger et al, 2025). For deciding the future endeavors for the achievement of broader social, political and economic goals, the selection of appropriate and effective strategies for educational interventions are necessary (Nadeem et al, 2024). And for this purpose, crucial decision making with respect to skills, abilities, attitudes and aptitudes is needed for policymakers, educators, teachers, students and parents regarding the attainment of career as per the need of the broader future trends and anticipated advancement globally (Lee et al, 2022).

All the levels of education in general and higher secondary education in particular play key role in deciding

the future of a student. The higher secondary level of education is very vital on several grounds such as it is the base of higher education, preparation of students for their career, development of skills among students and enhancing personal and social growth among students (Khan ET AL, 2023). The selection of a proper career at this stage is an important issue for the students of secondary schools.

The option of either continuing education at college or university or joining the workforce is the critical turning point for the teen age of young people (Mahmood et al, 2015). By the time students reach higher secondary level of education they are pressed to consider the weighty decisions that have a huge impact on their career paths (Khalid & Khan, 2006).

The range of trends and issues that affects looking for careers to students and the style of choosing them characterize this period. In order to address the need of students who are in their formative stage, stakeholders become better equipped to help students identify what they want to do after a gap year, and to select careers that are a good fit for their skill sets as well as their future ambitions, thus making the switch of higher education or workplace easier. This study is aimed at finding the perceptions of teachers regarding the importance of career decisions of students at higher secondary school level in district Dir Lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Objectives

To find out the perception of teachers regarding the importance of carrier decisions among higher secondary school students.

Research Question

What are teachers' perceptions regarding the importance of carrier decisions making among higher secondary school students?

Methodology

A narrative research method was utilized to investigate the trends and issues faced by students in career decisions at higher secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The population for this study was all the subject specialists at the higher secondary school level in district Dir Lower. In Dir lower, there are 35 higher secondary schools under elementary and secondary education department having 1313 subject specialists' teachers. So the population for this study was 1313 subject specialists' teachers. For collection of data, a sample of 10-subject specialists was purposively selected. And the collected data is thematically analyzed for getting findings.

Data Analysis

The collected data from subject specialist regarding the importance of career decision making among students of higher secondary school level in District Dir Lower through semi-structured interviews was analyzed thematically for obtaining results. The collected data has revealed that the perception of teachers regarding the importance of career decisions at this transitional phase of academics bear great significance. As some of respondents have highlighted the significance of career's decisions at this stage of academic because of the dependence of future success, fulfillment of personal aspiration of students, social contributions and financial security. (T-2, T-4, T-7)

A set of three responding teachers highlighted that the current trends of career decisions among students of higher secondary school level is highly misaligned with regional and global market job demands that is similar to the wastage of talent, scarce financial resources and time of students as well as of the nation. (T-1, T-3, T-10)

Another responding subject specialist has also highlighted the importance of career decisions in these words: "The flawed system of external and societal pressure from parents regarding the choice of career for students

at higher secondary school is killing the talent, passion and career aspirations of students. This recent trend of selecting conventional and traditional careers such as medical science, engineering, civil services through CSS and PMS are totally misleading students" (T-8)

Another responding teacher has revealed that career decision at higher secondary school level is the decision of efficient utilization of time that lead to the success of students at the ultimate end. As he remarked:

"The choice of group such as pre-medical, pre-engineering, social science and arts at higher secondary school level is giving students the options of utilizing time efficiently in the specific direction and field so that students may be giving right direction and guidance for getting ultimate success in the form of good employment opportunities. Any miscalculation, over-estimation and wrong career pathways are the cause of wastage of time, talent and resources." (T-5)

Another responding teacher has highlighted the cause of failure as the wrong career pathways at higher secondary school level in these words:

"The wrong selection of career at higher secondary school level is the main cause of failure in academics in short term while unemployment in the long term that signifies the career decisions at this stage of education for students." (T-9)

Another responding teacher has highlighted the significance of informed, independent, aligned decisions of students with personal aspirations and regional and global career trends in their terms of future career success. As he remarked:

"The informed, independent and aligned decision of career with respect to students' personal aspiration, interest, passion and talent as well as with respect to regional and global job market trends is of great importance rather than following traditional career decisions based on parental involvement, societal pressure and traditional fields." (T-6)

The above data analysis revealed that the career decisions at higher secondary school level are highly significant for students. The data analysis revealed that right decisions at this stage of education help students to pursue success in the form of excellence in academics in short run and getting employment in the long run. The interviewed teachers also perceived that career decision-making at higher secondary school level as extremely significant and vital life-determine process rather than a routine decision. Data analysis has also revealed that any miscalculation and over-estimation lead to the wastage of resources, talent and precious time of students and overall nation.

Discussion

This research is aimed at highlighting the importance of career decisions at higher secondary school level in in District Dir Lower. In this regards, the collected data through semi-structured interviews from subject specialists is thematically analyzed. The findings reflected that career decisions are not only critical but are also worked as life-shaping process that greatly shape the academic success and employment of students along with the fulfillment of personal aspirations and passions. These findings are similar to the findings of Maiese et al, (2023) that highlighted the long term future success of students is dependent on career choice at higher secondary school level. The thematic analysis has also highlighted that right decision-making regarding career of students at higher secondary school level lead students' great academic achievement, financial stability and social contribution whereas poor decisions may lead to academic failure, unemployment, and wastage of time and resources. These findings are similar to findings of Subhrajyoti (2023) that highlighted the pivotal role of career choices in long-term of educational and occupational outcomes. The findings of this study has also highlighted the non-alignment of career choices and regional and global trends that may cause underemployment in future and wastage of human capital which is a highlighted issue of career guidance research (Watts, 2009). Overall, the findings highlighted that career decision-making at the higher secondary level which is the transitional phase of education is a critical aspect of students' future academic achievement, career satisfaction, and socio-economic development.

Conclusion

This study aimed at exploring the importance of career decisions at the higher secondary school level in District Dir Lower. For conducting this research qualitative approach was adopted and data was collected from 10-subject specialist of Higher secondary schools of district Dir Lower through semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was carried performed for the analysis of data. The findings of data highlighted that career decisions at this transitional phase of education is a highly significant and life-determining process that shape the pathways of academic and professional success. The findings also highlighted that career decisions at this stage of education guarantees career success, and future socio-economic stability. The findings has also indicated that the informed and aligned decision-making at higher secondary school level is useful in the efficient utilization of human capital and other resources for better academic outcomes and potential employment prospects. So from the above findings it is concluded that career decisions at higher secondary school level are highly important for promoting academics excellence and future professional stability and employment opportunities.

Recommendations

From the findings of this research,

- It may be recommended that for taking informed and aligned career decision, career counseling and guidance may be launched as a compulsory subject at highr secodnary school level.
- It may also be recommended that teachers may be given proper training on career guidance and counseling for better preparation of students at higher secodnary school level.

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