

Awareness and Perceptions of Teachers Towards School-Based Career Guidance and Counselling Programs

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Abstract

Teachers are crucial to the success of school-based career guidance and counseling programs as they influence students' career aspirations and decision-making processes, thereby enhancing the scale, speed, and standardization of career guidance. This study investigates teachers' awareness and perceptions of these programs. Utilizing the PRISMA framework for systematic review, the study identifies relevant literature, synthesizes qualitative insights, and highlights key themes concerning the role of teachers in implementing effective career guidance. Findings indicate that while teachers are generally prepared to offer career guidance, many encounter significant challenges such as insufficient training, a lack of role clarity, resource constraints, and cultural influences tied to societal norms. This role ambiguity often leads to ineffective implementation of career guidance and counseling programs.

Keywords

Career Awareness, Career Guidance and Counselling Programs

Introduction

Career awareness is the foundational phase in choosing an appropriate career path. It is crucial at different stages of life, especially for students and college graduates, as it aids in making informed decisions about education, training, and skill development. Career awareness helps individuals align their interests and abilities with career options, fostering preparedness for their professional journeys. Research highlights that timely career guidance in schools equips students to make better decisions, ensuring their career choices are informed and reflective of their interests and aptitudes (Tamuli & Hazarika, 2024).

Students who drop out at secondary and higher-secondary levels often lack career planning knowledge and vocational skills. Consequently, they engage in unskilled labor to support their families. Career guidance programs can address this gap by helping individuals understand their interests and aptitudes, enabling them to select suitable careers and acquire relevant skills. This, in turn, prepares them for a skilled workforce and better livelihood opportunities (Career Guidance in Delhi Government Schools: An Evaluation Report, 2011).

Teachers have a significant responsibility in assisting students with career planning. By providing career guidance, they not only enhance students’ decision-making abilities but also contribute to their overall well-being. Financial independence, self-esteem, a sense of accomplishment, and the capacity to effect positive societal change are among the outcomes of meaningful career choices (Zaid et al., 2022).

NEP 2020 advocates for comprehensive reforms in teaching methodologies to enhance students' academic and vocational capabilities. In alignment with this vision, CBSE has implemented an online portal for career guidance and counseling, specifically targeting students in grades IX to XII. This initiative, in partnership with UNICEF and iDream Career Private Limited, provides students with resources for a seamless transition from school to higher education or employment (CBSE Press Release, 2021). Additionally, the Department of School Education and Literacy, in collaboration with UNICEF India and NCERT, has developed the 'Career Guidance Book.' This innovative resource includes 500 detailed 'Career Cards' that outline roles, responsibilities, qualifications, and opportunities for various careers. Designed to be interactive and user-friendly, these cards empower teachers and counselors to guide students effectively and help them make well-informed decisions (Department of School Education & Literacy, 2024).

Review of Literature

By fostering awareness and equipping students with the knowledge and skills for career planning, schools can empower the next generation to navigate their career journeys with confidence and purpose. This systematic review, guided by the PRISMA framework, evaluates existing research on the roles, challenges, and attitudes of teachers towards these programs. The study aims to bridge gaps in understanding how teachers contribute to the development of robust career counseling frameworks within schools.

Study Reference	Aim of the Study	Design/Methods	Main Findings
Nderitu et al. (2024)	This study explored the career teachers' perception influence on career decision-making self-efficacy among students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.	This study employed an ex post facto research design. The study utilized a t-test, simple regression, and ANOVA to establish a relationship between the study variables.	The findings of the study revealed that the perceptions of career teachers significantly impact students' self-efficacy in career decision-making.
Bello and Abdallah (2024)	This study aimed to explore the perceptions of teachers on their roles as career guidance and challenges and opportunities associated with guiding students towards career choices.	This study used qualitative methodology and ATLAS.ti 23 software to analyze the data.	The findings of the study showed that teachers reflected a sense of responsibility and commitment towards guiding students towards meaningful career options. However, limited resources, time constraints, and inadequate training create

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Bersan et al. (2024)	This study emphasized the importance of trained teachers as career-guidance counselors, addressed their impact on the career choice of high-school students, and assessed the teachers' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of career guidance and counseling training programs.	This study used mixed methodology combining quantitative data from a questionnaire and qualitative data obtained through open-ended questions. Chi-square was used to analyze the data.	challenges in fulfilling their role. The findings of the study revealed that knowledge and skills, modern delivery methods, psycho-pedagogical skills, and transversal skills such as cultural understanding, embracing diversity, fostering tolerance, and enhancing collaborative learning and teamwork abilities can enhance the effectiveness of these training programs and enrich teachers' abilities in diverse educational contexts.
Subhrajyoti (2023)	This study aimed to analyze the present status and factors affecting career decision-making of higher secondary students.	A systematic review of more than 50 qualitative evidence-based studies, including dissertations, theses, and published articles, was used to carry out this study.	This study determined that low literacy levels, lack of self-understanding, lack of career information, and lack of parental support, teacher support, and peer support are issues that affect secondary students' career decision-making.
Hussain et al. (2023)	This study examined the current state of career counseling services and students' and parents' perceptions of these services.	Qualitative research design and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data.	This study identified challenges such as limited availability of trained career counselors in schools, a lack of awareness among students and parents about the benefits of career counseling, and a greater focus on the academic curriculum rather than career guidance.
Fernandes (2023)	This study explored the extent to which counseling services are accessible to students in primary and secondary schools in Bengaluru.	Qualitative research design and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data.	This study identified challenges that hinder accessibility of counseling for children, such as insufficient resources, lack of

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Wong et al. (2020)	This study illustrated the roles of school teachers in students' career planning and decision-making and their support in students' career development.	Qualitative research design and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data.	awareness, cultural stigma, and ambiguous perceptions of counselors' roles within the school system. The findings of the study revealed that teachers' awareness of the different career opportunities and the knowledge and skills they require can help students in their career planning. Moreover, teachers who received training in career guidance and counseling are fully aware and provide better career advice.
David et al. (2020)		The study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test approach to evaluate changes in students' self-perceived career-related knowledge and skills. A mixed-methods approach was used, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative Data: Pre-test and post-test scores were compared using statistical methods such as paired t-tests or ANOVA to determine the program's impact. Qualitative Data: Thematic analysis was used to analyze the focus group discussions, identifying recurring themes and student perceptions.	
Thomas and Dey (2020)			

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	including academic, career, personal, and social counseling; identify the factors that influence their practice, such as institutional policies, societal attitudes, and resource availability; and understand the challenges and barriers counselors face in fulfilling their roles effectively.		face in the Indian context. Their responsibilities include career guidance, mental health support, crisis intervention, and addressing contemporary issues like bullying and peer pressure. However, challenges such as cultural stigma, resource limitations, role ambiguity, policy gaps, insufficient integration of counseling services into the educational system, and lack of support from school administrations significantly hinder the effectiveness of school counselors' roles in India.
Arfasa (2018)	This study examined the perception of teachers and students towards guidance and counseling services.	Qualitative research design and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data.	The findings of the study revealed that both students and teachers recognized the importance of guidance and counseling services to address students' academic, personal, and social needs. However, they expressed dissatisfaction with the current provision of guidance and counseling services and highlighted issues such as inadequate staffing, lack of qualified personnel, and insufficient resources. Many students and teachers lacked a clear understanding of the specific services offered and how to access them.
Marimuthu et al. (2018)	This study assessed the awareness and preparedness of students and educators regarding	The study employed a mixed-methods research design to combine quantitative	The lack of proper career guidance which provides students with an understanding of their

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Singh (2018)	career planning and identified effective strategies for early career guidance and planning to improve students' career readiness.	qualitative insights. Descriptive statistics (e.g., percentages, mean scores) were used to summarize survey responses. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data.	strengths and encourages them in the right career is the major drawback of the School Education System in India. Therefore, this study realized the importance of the early introduction of career guidance programs in schools and introduced career planning in schools.
	This study identified the key obstacles faced by Indian students in their career development and examined how socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional factors influence students' career decisions and progress.	Descriptive research design was used. Descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, percentages) were used to summarize survey responses. Inferential statistics (e.g., chi-square tests) were applied to identify significant relationships between demographic variables and perceived obstacles. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data.	The findings of the study indicated that Indian schools lack structured career development and guidance programs. Therefore, for the effective implementation of skill development programs, schools should act as a pathway to employment and attract more students towards career development and guidance programs.
Nakwenda (2017)	The study aimed to explore head teachers' perceptions of the roles played by guidance teachers in government secondary schools and identified the challenges and limitations guidance teachers face in fulfilling their roles.	Qualitative research design and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data.	This study explored that Head teachers acknowledged the importance of guidance teachers in addressing students' academic, social, and emotional needs and recognized the role of guidance teachers in providing career counseling, personal counseling, and disciplinary counseling. However, inadequate training, insufficient resources, and heavy workloads are the challenges that hinder the effectiveness of guidance teachers.

Study Reference	Aim of the Study	Design/Methods	Main Findings
Supreeth and Aravind (2016)	This study evaluated the implementation of a school-based career guidance method designed to help students make informed career decisions and examined the effectiveness of the method in enhancing students' awareness of career options and decision-making skills.	The study employed a case study research design, focusing on a single school as a representative example to provide depth insights into the career guidance method. The design was descriptive and evaluative, aimed at analyzing both the process and outcomes of the career guidance program. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data.	This study presented one method of career counseling and its implementation in a school setting and highlighted the need to convert career development theories into practical applications so that career guidance can be implemented to help people in the development of their career.
Lundry (2015)	This study explored the perceived benefits of Career Development Events (CDEs) as viewed by school-based agricultural education teachers, identified how CDEs contribute to the personal and professional development of students in agricultural education, and examined the teachers' perspectives on how CDEs affect students' career readiness, skill development, and engagement in agricultural careers.	The study utilized a descriptive research design. Descriptive statistics (e.g., means, frequencies) were used to analyze the survey data. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data.	The findings of the study revealed that teachers perceived career development events supported the mission of career and technical education by facilitating students' acquisition of essential and valuable career and life skills advantageous for employment in the agriculture sector.
Emily (2015)	The study aimed to identify the school-based factors that either facilitate or hinder the implementation of guidance and counseling programs.	The study utilized a descriptive research design. Quantitative Data: Descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, percentages) were used to analyze the survey responses. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data.	This study identified factors which influence the implementation of guidance and counseling programs include time allocation, school workload for teacher counselor, gender of teacher's counselor, and head teacher's choice of a teacher counselor. To deal with these factors, there is a need to realize the importance of counseling

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Bakshi and Joshi (2014)	This study examined how Positive Youth Development (PYD) can be integrated into youth career development practices and explored the potential benefits of using PYD as a framework for improving career guidance programs.	The study employed a conceptual and exploratory research design, which involved reviewing existing literature and theoretical frameworks related to PYD and career development.	programs through seminars and trainings. This study provided a compelling framework for understanding the synergistic relationship between positive youth development (PYD) and career development and emphasized the importance of fostering positive relationships, promoting social competence, encouraging responsibility, and developing character strengths for successful career development. Moreover, these qualities help youth to make informed career choices, set realistic goals, and persevere in the face of challenges.
Joy et al. (2011)	This study investigated preservice teachers' perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of school counselors and assessed how preservice teachers view the impact of school counselors on student development, both academically and emotionally.	The study employed a descriptive research design. Descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, percentages, mean scores) were used to summarize the survey responses.	The findings of the study revealed that preservice teachers have a positive perception of the roles of the school counselors and exhibit a moderate level of knowledge concerning school counselor responsibilities.
Mittendroff et al. (2011)	This study investigated the students' perceptions of the career conversations they have with their teachers and explored how these career conversations influence students' career awareness, aspirations, and decision-making.	Qualitative research design and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data.	This study noted that the quality of career conversations between students and teachers can significantly impact students' career development and these interactions can help students to explore their interests, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make informed

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			decisions about their future.

Overall, the review of literature provides valuable insights into the pivotal role of teachers, the challenges faced, and the benefits of implementing effective career guidance programs in schools. It underscores the need for adequate training, resource allocation, and systemic collaboration to maximize the programs' impact.

Need for the Study

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 underscores the significance of integrating career guidance and counseling into the school curriculum to empower students to make informed choices about their academic and professional futures. Teachers play a crucial role in influencing students' future orientation, career exploration, and decision-making. Their awareness and perceptions shape the quality and effectiveness of guidance programs, either positively or negatively. Research has shown that teacher support enhances students' career aspirations, self-efficacy, adaptability, and readiness to navigate career-related challenges while reducing barriers and attachment anxiety (Wong et al., 2020). Despite this critical role, a lack of awareness and limited understanding of career guidance and counseling services among teachers remain significant challenges to effective implementation.

This study aims to assess the level of awareness and perceptions of teachers regarding career guidance and counseling programs in schools. It seeks to explore how these factors influence the success of such programs and students' career decisions. Furthermore, it investigates the challenges faced by teachers in implementing career guidance initiatives. By addressing these gaps, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse on strengthening career guidance in Indian schools, with the ultimate goal of empowering students to make well-informed and meaningful career choices.

Research Questions

1. How do teacher awareness and perceptions influence the effectiveness of school-based career guidance programs?
2. How do teachers perceive the importance of these programs in shaping students' career opportunities?

Objectives

1. To study the level of teacher awareness regarding school-based career guidance programs.
2. To study the impact of teachers' perceptions on career guidance programs.
3. To study the benefits of School-Based Career Guidance Programs.
4. To study the challenges faced by teachers in implementing career guidance programs.

Methodology

A comprehensive search was conducted using databases such as ERIC, PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The search targeted studies published between 2010 and 2024 and employed keywords including "teachers' awareness," "career guidance," "school counseling programs," and "education policy." The goal was to identify relevant literature that provides insights into teachers' awareness and perceptions of school-based career guidance and counseling initiatives.

Screening

Initial searches identified 150 articles. After removing duplicates, 120 studies remained. Titles and abstracts were screened to exclude articles unrelated to the research scope, resulting in 60 studies for full-text review. Following a detailed assessment, 22 studies that met the inclusion criteria were selected for the review.

Eligibility

The eligibility of studies was determined based on their focus on career guidance practices, teacher perceptions, and systemic challenges in different educational contexts. Studies that discussed interventions, training programs, and outcomes related to career counseling and guidance were prioritized. Non-peer-reviewed articles and studies with insufficient data on outcomes were excluded.

Inclusion Criteria

Studies included in the review met the following criteria:

- Focus on teachers' awareness and perceptions of career guidance programs.
- Examination of school-based programs in primary and secondary education settings.
- Publications in English and featured in peer-reviewed journals.

Exclusion Criteria

Studies were excluded if they:

- Did not relate to school-based programs.
- Focused solely on students or parents without addressing teacher perspectives.
- Lacked full-text access or primary data essential for analysis.

Included

- Studies Included in Qualitative Synthesis: 19

PRISMA flow diagram of systematic article search and selection

Identification of studies via databases and registers

Records identified from database searching (ERIC, PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar) (n=150)

Records removed before screening:

Duplicate records removed (n=30)

Identification

Records excluded

(n=38)

Reasons for Exclusion

- Did not relate to school-based programs
- Did not include teacher perspective
- Lack full-text access or primary data

Records screened

(titles and abstracts=60)

Screening

Studies included in review

(n=22)

3 records excluded

Reasons

- Non-peer reviewed article
- Insufficient data

Reports of included studies

(n=19)

- Focus on teachers' awareness and perceptions of career guidance programs.
- Examination of school-based programs in primary and secondary education settings.
- Publications in English and featured in peer-reviewed journals.

Themes Identified

a. **Awareness Levels:** Many teachers exhibit limited awareness of structured career guidance programs, with gaps in understanding their roles and objectives.

b. **Institutional Support:** The availability of institutional frameworks and resources significantly affects teachers' engagement with career counseling initiatives.

c. **Training Needs:** Teachers frequently report a lack of training in career counseling methodologies, which hinders their ability to guide students effectively.

d. **Perceptions of Effectiveness:** While teachers recognize the potential benefits of career guidance, many express skepticism regarding its implementation due to insufficient resources and administrative support.

Regional Differences

Studies highlighted disparities in program implementation and teacher awareness between urban and rural settings. Teachers in urban schools demonstrated higher awareness and better access to resources compared to their rural counterparts.

Policy Implications

Alignment with education policies, such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India, was a recurring theme, emphasizing the integration of career guidance into holistic education frameworks.

The Included Studies

Impact of Teacher Perceptions on Career Guidance

- **Teacher's Role in Career Decision-Making:** Nderitu et al. (2024) found that teachers' perceptions significantly influenced students' self-efficacy in career decision-making. Teachers' awareness, attitudes, and dedication were critical in shaping effective career guidance practices.
- **Training for Teachers:** Bersan et al. (2024) highlighted that specialized training programs equipped teachers with psycho-pedagogical and transversal skills, enhancing their ability to provide impactful career counseling.

Challenges in Implementing Career Guidance Programs

- **Resource Constraints:** Bello and Abdallah (2024) and Arfasa (2018) identified limited resources, time constraints, and inadequate infrastructure as barriers to effective implementation.
- **Cultural Stigma and Role Ambiguity:** Thomas and Dey (2020) and Fernandes (2023) pointed out cultural biases against counseling and unclear roles of school counselors as significant challenges.
- **Inadequate Training:** Emily (2015) and Nakwenda (2017) emphasized the lack of teacher training as a critical factor undermining the effectiveness of career counseling programs.

Benefits of School-Based Career Guidance Programs

- **Empowering Students:** Studies such as David et al. (2020) and Singh (2018) revealed that career guidance programs helped students explore options, align their interests, and make informed decisions.

- **Addressing Dropout Rates:** Career counseling reduced dropout rates by enabling students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to plan their futures and develop relevant skills (Career Guidance in Delhi Government Schools, 2011).
- **Promoting Holistic Development:** Programs not only supported career planning but also fostered self-awareness, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities (Supreeth & Aravind, 2016).

Systemic and Contextual Insights

- **Global Perspectives:** Wong et al. (2020) and Lundry (2015) emphasized the need for global approaches to integrate career guidance into school curricula. Training teachers to act as career counselors was found to be critical for success.
- **Cultural Contexts:** Studies by Hussain et al. (2023) and Thomas and Dey (2020) demonstrated the importance of adapting career guidance practices to local cultural contexts to overcome stigma and resistance.

Discussion of Findings

The review identified key themes and gaps in the literature:

1. **Teacher Training and Resources:** Specialized training and sufficient resources are necessary to enhance the effectiveness of career counseling programs.
2. **Role of Teachers and Counselors:** Teachers' perceptions and awareness significantly shape students' career decision-making. However, role ambiguity and cultural biases hinder their impact.
3. **Systemic Challenges:** Constraints such as limited infrastructure, inadequate staffing, and lack of integration within the curriculum impede the implementation of career guidance programs.
4. **Benefits to Students:** Empowering students through career counseling promotes informed decision-making, reduces dropout rates, and fosters holistic development.

Conclusion

The awareness and perceptions of teachers toward school-based career guidance and counseling programs play a pivotal role in determining students' career decision-making. Teachers contribute significantly by counseling students and fostering their self-confidence in career decisions. However, a lack of adequate training and role clarity among teachers results in the ineffective implementation of career guidance and counseling programs. Therefore, defining teachers' roles in career guidance can reduce role ambiguity and foster collaboration with counselors, ensuring that both teachers and counselors contribute effectively to students' career planning. Limited funding, high student-teacher ratios, societal expectations, resource constraints, and cultural factors further exacerbate challenges in career guidance implementation and restrict teachers' ability to provide essential guidance. Training programs that equip teachers with essential skills in career guidance and counseling, clear role definitions, and systemic support are essential for the success of career guidance programs. Collaborative efforts among teachers, counselors, and stakeholders, coupled with culturally relevant and inclusive practices, are essential for creating robust career guidance frameworks that align with NEP 2020's vision. By addressing cultural and resource-related challenges and fostering collaborative frameworks, schools can create inclusive and effective career guidance programs.

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