

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CAREER COUNSELLING AMONG ADOLESCENTS; AN APPROACH TO PROMOTE CAREER DECISION ABILITY

Dua Shafqat<sup>1</sup>, Saleha Bibi<sup>2</sup>, Maimoona Shafqat<sup>3</sup>, Nosheen Afridi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,3,4</sup>Undergraduate students at Riphah International University, Islamabad

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer at Riphah International University, Islamabad

Received: 05 November 2023 Revised: 24 November 2023 Accepted: 29 November 2023 Published: 08 December 2023

### ABSTRACT

In order to identify a path to their profession, adolescents constantly look into their interests and skills. However, because the job marketplace is always changing, many adolescents struggle to locate the ideal career, which has a significant negative impact on their decision making ability. Adolescents can find the ideal career that matches their interests and abilities with the aid of career counseling and can improve their their decision making abilities. The primary goal of the study was to determine whether adolescent decision-making is impacted by choosing an unsuitable career. It sought to investigate how career counseling affected decision-making and career indecision in adolescents. To investigate the study's hypothesis, 55 adolescents aged (12-19) years participated in the study. Through purposive sampling, the data was gathered from 1 school and 1 degree college of Rawalpindi. The participants were asked to complete Career Decision Scale (Samuel et al., 1976) and The Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (Gati et al., 1996) before and after 4 weeks of career counseling. To determine the effectiveness of career counseling and to check the possibility of formulated hypotheses, Paired Sample T-test and Independent sample t-test were used. The results showed that all the study's variables had satisfactory reliability ( $\alpha = .62$  to  $.89$ ) in pretest and post-test of the study. The results further showed that after career counseling, career decision making difficulty had a marked decrease, however, an increase in career decision-making ability is illustrated. Moreover, group comparisons showed that females tend to have strong career decision making ability comparative to males. The present study serves to pave a pathway for mental health professionals and aware educational institutions to work on career counseling of students and help them improve their abilities. These results, in particular, emphasize the need for additional research and techniques to solve this issue.

**Keywords:** Career Counseling, Career Decision, Career Decision-making ability, Career Indecision

### INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are in a critical time of growth where they are choosing on their future paths and researching various career possibilities (Messersmith et al., 2008). However, they frequently lack the knowledge or direction needed to make wise decisions and therefore are sometimes labeled for career indecisiveness. Young adults going from college to the workforce frequently experience this problem (Lipshits-Brazil et al., 2015). The American Psychological Association (2021) defines career indecision as the internal conflict or hesitance people feel when making crucial decisions regarding their career path or profession. This can happen for a

number of reasons, including ignorance of alternatives (Germeijs & De Boeck, 2003), conflicting interests, self-doubt, or even external constraints like societal norms or family influences (Levin et al., 2022). It's critical to address job uncertainty as soon as possible because persistent uncertainty can have detrimental effects, including societal missed opportunities, discontent, and even mental health problems like anxiety and stress (Bhui et al., 2016; Woo & Postolache, 2008).

According to a recent study by Akbar et al. (2023), 99% of students lack access to career counseling services in their educational institutions,

which renders them vulnerable to making unwise career decisions. In their final years of study, the majority of students seek out and get career counseling or guidance (Pereira et al., 2020; Khurumova & Pinto, 2023). In accordance with Arthur et al. (2005), how people view their career development will influence how they act in their future careers and how necessary they think it is to seek career guidance from professionals. Career guidance refers to the process of providing individuals with the necessary guidance and support to make informed decisions about their careers by identifying their interests, strengths, weaknesses, and values, and then using this information to explore potential career paths that are aligned with their aspirations and goals (Abubakar, 2013). Numerous methods of career guidance exist, such as one-on-one counseling sessions (Keshf & Khanum, 2021), mentorship schemes, career evaluations, and workshops or seminars. The current study, however, used career counseling as the primary strategy for empowering individuals.

Career counseling is an extensive plan that takes into account all aspects of a person's social, professional, and personal lives and provides assistance to each individual by providing information, counseling, and guiding services (Zunker, 2016; Kochung et al., 2011). People are assisted in the career counseling process in order to choose wisely on their career trajectories. It needs the use of a number of tools and methods to help people, understand their talents, interests, and values and how they connect to various career possibilities. By giving them the resources and tools they need to make wise decisions, career counseling has been proven to be a successful strategy for tackling this problem (Roberts & Robins, 2000).

Students in Pakistan may find it difficult to choose a career path for a variety of reasons. The lack of career counselors in various colleges and institutions is also accountable for this (Keshf & Khanum, 2022). Pakistani students usually rely on the opinions of their peers and elders when making decisions, which perplexes them and puts them in a position where they are unable to think independently. As a result, students wind up choosing the wrong career path, and rather than being inspired and driven by their occupations or majors, they run into difficulties when attempting to grasp

the industry they have decided to study (Nyamwange, 2016). This not only makes them less motivated but also extinguishes their will to move forward (Premuzic & Furnham, 2003).

Adolescents occasionally experience difficulty choosing careers, which can negatively impact their future and undermine their self-esteem (Whiston & Rahardja, 2005). Furthermore, employment uncertainty causes stress, anxiety, and lower academic performance (Gati et al., 1996; Arbona et al., 2021). Therefore, it's critical to evaluate the effectiveness of career counseling by assessing adolescents' capacity for making professional decisions after receiving career counseling services. Additionally, the results of this study will shed a significant spotlight on the efficacy of career counseling among adolescents and its potential to support career decision-making abilities.

According to a research study, early career counseling can improve a person's job performance and level of happiness (Koçak et al., 2021). Career counseling in high school has a considerable impact on post-secondary education and job results, according to a National Bureau of Economic Research research. Students who received career counseling had higher earnings, more satisfied jobs, and were more likely to enroll in four-year colleges. Additionally, career counseling can assist adolescents in overcoming any uncertainty or fear they may have regarding their careers. It offers them a secure setting where they may voice their worries and uncertainties and get advice and support from an expert (Drosos et al., 2021). They may be better able to decide about their future career choices as a result.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To help students with their decision-making by providing career counselling.
2. To assist students in acquiring the knowledge, abilities, and experiences required to identify opportunities, investigate alternatives, and prosper in society.

### **METHODS**

The present research was an experimental study that comprised of 55 participants from a school and degree college of Rawalpindi. The participants were aged between 12 years to 19 years and were selected

through purposive sampling. Experimental research design was used to determine the effectiveness of career counseling in improving career decision making ability among adolescents. The study was divided into three phases i.e; pretest, 4 weeks career counseling and post test. Career counseling was carried out according to the following plan:

**Career Counseling Plan**

Weeks	Target	Action Plan
Week 1	Building rapport Pre-Testing	Empathy, authenticity, similarity, and shared experience. By using Pre-Questionnaire
Week 2	Identifying interests and strengths Identifying career decision ability Exploring and Clarifying	Get to know the client, their strengths and flaws, what interest they got, what are their dreams and hopes by using CDS.
Week 3	Identifying options Identifying blockers	Recognize their options for working towards goals and their personality by using CDDS. Recognizing what is stopping or could stop them from achieving their goals by using CDDS.
Week 4	Act and Decide Post-Testing	Defining and agreeing on the action steps that will help them deliver on their career aspirations and weigh up cons and pros of career options and make a decision.

Developing a rapport with the client is one of the key elements of a successful career counseling approach. This entails building rapport and fostering a relaxed atmosphere where the client may speak honestly without worrying about being judged. Another key method is pre-testing, which entails determining the optimal course of action by

evaluating the client's present skill set, educational background, and work experience. Identifying interests and strengths is crucial since it aids in the client's understanding of their own preferences and development of a feeling of direction. The client's confidence in their decision-making abilities is then evaluated in order to ascertain their career decision capacity. Researching career alternatives that complement the client's interests and strengths forms the second step of exploring and clarifying options. Blockers must be identified in order for the counselor to address any obstacles standing in the way of the client's achievement. The customer will then choose a professional route, take a post-test to make sure they are satisfied with their decision, and take action.

Data was collected with help of standardized measures of career decision and career decision making ability in both pretest and post test of the study. The instruments used to access the level of these variables in pretest and post test were Career Decision Scale (Samuel et al., 1976) and The Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (Gati et al., 1996) respectively. In addition to these questionnaires, a self reported demographic performa was also administered. Alpha reliability, Paired sample t-test and Independent Sample T-test were carried out for analysis.

**RESULTS**

Alpha reliability, Paired sample T-test and Independent Sample T-test were run on data of present study through statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, 23). Table 1 shows frequency distribution for demographic variables.

**Table 1**  
*Frequency and Percentages of Demographic Variables of the Study (N = 55)*

Variables	f(%)
Gender	
Female	44 (80)
Male	11 (20)
Age in years	
12-15 years	18 (32.7)
16-19 years	37 (67.3)
Education	
Matriculation	23 (41.8)
Intermediate	32 (58.2)

Socioeconomic status	
Upper Class	13 (23.6)
Middle Class	33 (60.0)
Lower Class	9 (16.4)
Birth Order of Participants	
First Born	19 (34.5)
Second Born	8 (14.5)
Middle Born	11 (20.0)
Last Born	11 (20.0)
Only Born	6 (10.9)

Note. *f* = frequency, % = percentage

**Psychometric Properties of Study Variables**

Table 2 shows the psychometric properties of scales and their subscales in pretest and post test of the study after determining descriptive statistics of demographic variables.

**Table 2**

*Psychometric Properties of the Scales of the Study (N = 55)*

Note. *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation; *k* = no. of items of the respective Scale; *a* = reliability coefficient; CDS = Career Decision Scale; CDDQ = Career Decision-Making Difficulty Questionnaire

The psychometric characteristics of the study's scales for both the pretest and post-test were shown in Table 2. The findings demonstrated that the Career Decision Scale's Cronbach's reliability is fair, measuring *a* > .60 in both the pretest and post-test of the study. The Career Decision Making Difficulty Questionnaire also has good to satisfactory *a* > .70 to *a* > .80 pretest and post-test values, indicating its reliability (Taber, 2018). Overall, it is shown that these scales are suitable for use in future studies. Additionally, the findings demonstrated that the data set's skewness and kurtosis fell within the expected range of -3 to +3 (Brown, 2007).

**Pretest and Post test Comparison**

Paired sample t-test was carried out to find differences in outcomes in pretest and post test of the study. The analysis was carried out to check the efficacy of career counseling for career decision making ability.

**Table 3**

Variables	<i>k</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range		Skewness	Kurtosis
					Potential	Actual		
<b>Pretest</b>								
CDS	18	.62	46.85	7.93	18-72	21-66	-0.83	1.94
CDDQ	34	.89	168.6	44.46	34-306	89-282	0.77	0.37
<b>Post-test</b>								
CDS	18	.63	47.78	4.54	18-72	38-59	0.53	0.28
CDDQ	34	.71	107.7	12.78	34-306	86-149	0.71	1.15

*Paired Sample T-Test for Pre and Post-Test across Study Variables (N = 55)*

Variables	Intervention		<i>t</i> (54)	<i>p</i>	CI (95%)	
	Pretest (N = 55)	Post test (N = 55)			LL	UL
	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )				
Pair 1 CDDQ	168.58(44.45)	107.67(12.77)	10.30	.000	49.05	72.76
Pair 2 Certainty	5.44(1.59)	4.35(1.50)	7.28	.000	.79	1.39
Pair 3 Indecision	41.47(8.02)	38.75(6.65)	3.22	.002	1.03	.442
Pair 4 CDS	46.85(7.93)	47.78(4.54)	-7.8	.40	-3.3	1.46

Note: *M* = mean; *SD* = Standard deviation; *CI* = Confidence interval; *LL* = Lower limit; *UL* = Upper limit; CDS = Career Decision Scale; CDDQ = Career Decision-Making Difficulty Questionnaire.

The mean difference between the outcomes of the pretest and post-test for each research variable was shown in Table 3. The findings showed that following career counseling, participants' indecision decreased and their ability to make career decisions increased in the post-test. After receiving career counseling, participants' difficulty in choosing a career also decreased.

**Gender Differences**

Independent sample t-test was carried out to find gender difference for Career Decision.

**Table 4**

*Group Comparison of Personality Traits & Career Decision across Gender in Pretest of the Study (N = 55)*

Variables	Gender		<i>t</i> (54)	<i>p</i>	CI (95%)	
	Male (N = 11)	Female (N = 44)			LL	UL
	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )				
Career Decision	43(6.28)	47.82(8.06)	-1.84	.07	-10.06	.43

Note: *M* = mean; *SD* = Standard deviation; *CI* = Confidence interval; *LL* = Lower limit; *UL* = Upper limit.

Table 4 (independent sample T-test) illustrated mean difference for career decision ability across male & females of the study. The results demonstrated that on career decision scale, females indicated more indecision as compared to male respondents of the study. The results indicated a significant difference in indecision and personality traits across gender in pretest of the study.

## **DISCUSSION**

Despite the fact that there are several professional choices, choosing a career is currently one of the biggest problems affecting adolescents (Batool & Ghayas, 2020). People experience pressure from their families, friends, and social circles, which ultimately leads to uncertainty and difficulty in making career decisions (Gati & Kulcsár, 2021). Adolescents now more than ever need career counseling to help them recognize their strengths and weaknesses and get counseling on choosing a career that fits with their interests, values, and talents in order to be happier at work and overall. Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to suggest career counseling to adolescents and then assess its effects. 55 students were chosen as the study's target population from various institutions and schools in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. They undertook an initial assessment of their ability to make career decisions and their difficulty doing so, followed by four weeks of career counseling. They were reexamined four weeks later to determine the results of the career counseling, and the findings were assessed to determine whether the study's objectives had been met.

To compare significant findings between the study's pretest and post-test, a paired sample t-test (Table 3) was performed. Indecision, career decision, and difficulty making career decision were significantly different among groups when compared between the pretest and post-test. As shown in Table 3 of the study, the results further showed that career counseling had an effect on the participants' ability to make career decisions and career indecision. The findings corroborated a research by Gati et al. (1996) that indicated a substantial relationship between career counseling and a decline in college students' indecision. The findings of the current study were supported by a study by Wang (2013) that identified career counseling as a useful strategy for lowering

high school students' levels of career indecision. Alongside, a study by Pordelan & Husseinian (2021) provided supportive evidence to the statement that career counseling is an effective vocational guidance to promote career decision ability.

A group comparison of career decision-making skills revealed differences between the study's male and female participants. Table 4 of the current study showed that females were more indecisive than males. The study by Byrnes et al. (1999), which said that there is no such difference in decision-making capacity because this is a cognitive ability and has no impact of gender on it, validated these findings. However, it is well known that men prefer to take greater chances, which is frequently mistaken for having better decision-making skills.

## **CONCLUSION**

In order to conclude the present research, it is pertinent to acknowledge that the findings of the study supported the proposed model and highlighted the importance of career counseling for adolescents. It benefited the students in dispelling the idea that they should select the most popular and profitable profession, instead, assisted them in selecting the career that best suited their interests. The findings of the experimental study revealed that career counseling is a useful strategy for strengthening adolescents' capacity for making career decisions. Because they deal with adolescents, these findings pose major significance for school counselors and career counselors. In order to assist students in making educated decisions about their future, career counseling could be incorporated into the school curriculum on a regular basis. To improve the efficacy of their interventions, career counselors should think about working with adolescents in a group setting. In conclusion, it's crucial to remember that while this study shows the value of career counseling, more research is required to examine its long-term effects on young people's career growth and work satisfaction.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Even though the results of the current study were widely accepted and helped Pakistani adolescents make better career decisions, the study also made several recommendations for future research to fill in the gaps in the body of literature. In



order to better understand what influences people from other cultures when making decisions and what stereotypes are prevalent in those cultures regarding particular vocations, future researchers should first perform cross-cultural studies. Second, it is advised that shorter scales be employed to minimize obstructions in rapport-building. Third, subsequent research can search for other factors that directly affect the capacity for making career choices.

## REFERENCES

- Ado Abubakar, I. (2013). Career Guidance, Participation of Students and Its Implication for Kano, Nigeria. *The Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Science*, 1(3). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1086214.pdf>
- Akbar, H., Ahmad, S., & Muhammad, H. (2023). College Students' Struggles with Career Decisions and Their Personality : Struggles of college students in career making decisions. *Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences*, 62–66. <https://doi.org/10.54393/pjhs.v4i08.885>
- American Psychological Association. Career Indecision. In APA Dictionary of Psychology. Retrieved July 13, 2021, from <https://dictionary.apa.org/career-indecision>
- Arbona, C., Fan, W., Phang, A., Olvera, N., & Dios, M. (2021). Intolerance of Uncertainty, Anxiety, and Career Indecision: A Mediation Model. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 1069072721100254. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072721100254>
- Arthur, N., & McMahon, M. (2005). Multicultural career counseling: Theoretical applications of the systems theory framework. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 53(3), 208–222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00234>
- Batool, S. S., & Ghayas, S. (2020). Process of career identity formation among adolescents: components and factors. *Heliyon*, 6(9), e04905. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04905>
- Bhui, K., Dinos, S., Galant-Miecznikowska, M., de Jongh, B., & Stansfeld, S. (2016). Perceptions of Work Stress Causes and Effective Interventions in Employees Working in public, Private and non-governmental organisations: a Qualitative Study. *BJPsych Bulletin*, 40(6), 318–325. NCBI. <https://doi.org/10.1192/pb.bp.115.050823>
- Byrnes, J. P., Miller, D. C., & Schafer, W. D. (1999). Gender differences in risk taking: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(3), 367–383. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.125.3.367>
- Chamorro-Premuzic, T., & Furnham, A. (2003). Personality predicts academic performance: Evidence from two longitudinal university samples. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37(4), 319–338. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566\(02\)00578-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566(02)00578-0)
- Drosos, N., Theodoroulakis, M., Antoniou, A., & Rajter, I. C. (2021). Career Services in the Post-COVID-19 Era: A Paradigm for Career Counseling Unemployed Individuals. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 58(1), 36–48. <https://doi.org/10.1002/joec.12156>
- Gati, I., & Kulcsár, V. (2021). Making better career decisions: From challenges to opportunities. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 126, 103545. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2021.103545>
- Germeijs, V., & De Boeck, P. (2003). Career indecision: Three factors from decision theory. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 62(1), 11–25. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0001-8791\(02\)00055-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0001-8791(02)00055-6)
- Keshf, Z., & Khanum, S. (2021). Career Guidance and Counseling Needs in a Developing Country's Context: A Qualitative Study. *SAGE Open*, 11(3), 2158244021104011. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211040119>
- Keshf, Z., & Khanum, S. (2022). "It is a very difficult process": career service providers' perspective on career counseling in Pakistani universities. *Heliyon*, 8(1), e08766. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e08766>
- Khurumova, V., & Joana Carneiro Pinto. (2023). *Online and computer-assisted career*

- guidance: Are students prepared for it? 14.*  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1117289>
- Koçak, O., Ak, N., Erdem, S. S., Sinan, M., Younis, M. Z., & Erdoğan, A. (2021). The Role of Family Influence and Academic Satisfaction on Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy and Happiness. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(11), 5919.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18115919>
- Levin, N., Lipshits-Braziler, Y., & Gati, I. (2022). The identification and validation of five types of career indecision: A latent profile analysis of career decision-making difficulties. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000603>
- Lipshits-Braziler, Y., Gati, I., & Tatar, M. (2015). Strategies for Coping with Career Indecision. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 25(2), 183–202.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072715620608>
- Messersmith, E. E., Garrett, J. L., Davis-Kean, P. E., Malanchuk, O., & Eccles, J. S. (2008). Career Development From Adolescence Through Emerging Adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 23(2), 206–227.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558407310723>
- Nyamwange, J. (2016). *Influence of Student's Interest on Career Choice among First Year University Students in Public and Private Universities in Kisii County, Kenya.*  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1092415>
- Pereira, M. D., Oliveira, L. C. de, Costa, C. F. T., Bezerra, C. M. de O., Pereira, M. D., Santos, C. K. A. dos, & Dantas, E. H. M. (2020). A pandemia de COVID-19, o isolamento social, consequências na saúde mental e estratégias de enfrentamento: uma revisão integrativa. *Research, Society and Development*, 9(7), e652974548–e652974548. <https://doi.org/10.33448/rsdv9i7.4548>
- Pordelan, N., & Hosseinian, S. (2021). Online career counseling success: the role of hardiness and psychological capital. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-020-09452-1>
- Wang, M.-T., & Eccles, J. S. (2013). School context, achievement motivation, and academic engagement: A longitudinal study of school engagement using a multidimensional perspective. *Learning and Instruction*, 28, 12–23.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2013.04.002>
- Woo, J.-M., & Postolache, T. T. (2008). The impact of work environment on mood disorders and suicide: Evidence and implications. *International Journal on Disability and Human Development : IJDHD*, 7(2), 185–200.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2559945/>

