



CAREER GUIDANCE AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS OF GAYAJEE DISTRICT

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Abstract

The present study examines the relationship between career guidance and skill development among senior secondary (+2) students of Gayajee district in Bihar. Career guidance plays a crucial role in helping students make informed academic and vocational decisions, while skill development programs enhance employability competencies such as communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted, with a random sample of 400 students—200 enrolled in skill development programs and 200 regular senior secondary students from schools affiliated with the Bihar School Examination Board. Data were collected using standardized questionnaires measuring career guidance awareness and skill development levels. Statistical analyses, including mean, standard deviation, Pearson's correlation, and independent samples t-test, were applied. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between career guidance and skill development. Students participating in structured career counseling and skill programs demonstrated higher levels of self-confidence, communication skills, and career readiness compared to non-participants. The study emphasizes the need for integrating systematic career guidance services within secondary education to promote holistic student development and suggests policy measures to strengthen school counselling infrastructure and vocational training opportunities.

Keywords-Career Guidance, Skill Development, Senior Secondary Students, Employability Skills, Career Readiness, Bihar.

Education at the senior secondary level plays a decisive role in shaping students' future academic and professional trajectories. At the senior secondary stage, students are required to make critical decisions regarding subject specialization, higher education pathways, and career aspirations. In this context, career guidance emerges as an essential support mechanism that assists students in understanding their interests, aptitudes, and available opportunities. Effective career counselling not only clarifies occupational goals but also enhances self-confidence and decision-making abilities.

Parallel to career guidance, skill development has gained prominence in recent years due to increasing demands of the labor market. Rapid technological advancement and globalization have shifted the focus of education from theoretical knowledge to competency-based learning. Bandura (1997) Askill development programs aim to equip students with both technical skills and soft skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and adaptability. These competencies are vital for employability and lifelong learning.¹

Kumar (2011) studied the impact of structured career guidance interventions on high school students' career decision-making abilities. It was found that students who participated in regular counseling sessions demonstrated significantly higher clarity about their career goals and subject selection compared to peers who did not receive guidance. The study highlighted that consistent career support enhanced students' self-awareness and reduced career anxiety.²



Swain, Patnaik & Giridharan (2023) reviewed literature on career guidance programs and the role of counselors in career development. They found that career guidance aids individuals in navigating career transitions and improves awareness of career pathways. The review emphasized that effective counsellor support increases career adaptability and decision-making competencies among students.³

Kim & Lee (2023) investigated the effects of career education programs on high school students' career development competencies. The study concluded that structured career education enhances competencies such as career planning, self-knowledge, and adaptability, which are essential for employment readiness in a rapidly changing job market.⁴

Serios (2022) conducted a systematic literature review using Maslow's theory to analyze career counselling service effectiveness. The study found that guidance services which address students' motivational needs can substantially improve focus on career goals and individual potential development.⁵

Studies on project- based learning (2024) reported that programs integrating career- related project tasks significantly improved students' problem- solving skills, teamwork, and career adaptability. These competencies were strongly linked to higher employability outcomes and readiness for future careers.⁶

In districts like Gayajee, educational institutions affiliated with the Bihar School Examination Board have introduced vocational and skill-based courses at the senior secondary level. However, the effectiveness of these programs largely depends on proper career guidance support. Without systematic counselling, students may remain unaware of how to align their skills with career opportunities.

The Role of Career Counselling in the Psychological Development of High-School Students Career counselling plays a crucial role in shaping the psychological growth of high-school students. By providing guidance and support, it helps students make thoughtful choices about their educational and career paths while fostering personal development. The following are some ways career counselling contributes to students' psychological well-being and growth:

1. Promotes Self-Understanding: Through career counselling, students are encouraged to reflect on their interests, personal values, talents, and areas for improvement. This process helps them gain insight into their abilities and aspirations, fostering greater self-confidence and a positive self-image.
2. Alleviates Stress and Uncertainty: The pressure of making future career decisions can cause anxiety for many students. Career counselling offers a structured and supportive environment where students can address their concerns, gain clarity, and feel more assured about the choices they make.
3. Supports Informed Decision-Making: Career counselors provide students with information about various academic and professional pathways. Equipped with knowledge of career options, potential opportunities, and educational requirements, students are better able to make logical and informed decisions about their futures.
4. Enhances Academic Engagement: When students understand how their current studies relate to their long-term goals, they are more motivated to participate actively in learning. Awareness of the connection between education and career prospects can increase focus, effort, and academic performance.



5. Encourages Goal Orientation: Career counselling guides students in setting both short-term and long-term objectives. Establishing achievable goals provides direction and purpose, fostering a proactive attitude toward personal and career development.
6. Builds Resilience and Adaptability: Exploring career options and facing challenges during the decision-making process helps students develop resilience. Counselling provides strategies for coping with setbacks and learning from experiences, enabling students to overcome obstacles and persist in pursuit of their goals.

The relationship between career guidance and skill development is therefore critical. Career counselling can motivate students to participate in skill programs, while skill acquisition enhances confidence in career decision-making. Despite the introduction of various skill initiatives in Bihar, empirical research examining this relationship at the district level remains limited.

This study attempts to explore the correlation between career guidance and skill development among senior secondary students in Gayajee district. By comparing students enrolled in skill development programs with regular senior secondary students, the study aims to provide insights into how structured guidance influences skill acquisition and psychological growth. The findings may help policymakers and educators strengthen integration between counselling services and vocational education.

Statement of the Problem: “To examine the relationship between career guidance and skill development among senior secondary students of Gayajee district.”

These studies collectively suggest that both career guidance and skill development initiatives positively influence students’ self- efficacy, decision- making, and readiness for academic as well as vocational trajectories. While direct empirical studies at the senior secondary level in Bihar remain few, international research consistently demonstrates the value of integrated guidance and skill programs for youth career development.

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant Mean difference between career guidance and skill development.

H02: There is no significant difference between skill and non-skill students in career readiness.

Methodology

Sample: A random-cum-purposefully sample 400 students (200 skills + 200 regular senior secondary) Has been taken from different ITI’s college from Gayajee district in Bihar.

Tests and Tools- To collect and analyze data for examining the relationship between career guidance and skill development among senior secondary students, the following standardized tools were used: Career Guidance Scale- To assess students’ awareness, utilization, and perception of career guidance services in their schools. The scale consists of items measuring knowledge about career options, decision-making confidence, counseling availability, and guidance effectiveness.

The reliability & validity been established through pilot testing and previous research; Cronbach’s alpha > 0.80 indicating high internal consistency. Measured how well students were guided regarding academic and vocational pathways and how this affected their career decision-making confidence. Career counseling is a systematic process aimed at helping individuals explore, plan, and make informed choices about their career paths. It involves assessing personal interests, aptitudes, values, and strengths and linking them to suitable career opportunities.



Career counsellors assist individuals at multiple stages, including high-school students, college students, working professionals, and those considering a career transition. By fostering self-awareness, enhancing decision-making skills, and providing guidance, career counselling contributes to both personal growth and professional preparedness.

Skill Development Questionnaire- To evaluate students' acquisition of employability-related skills such as communication, leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability. The questionnaire contains items covering both soft skills and practical skill competencies gained through formal or informal skill development programs. The questionnaire was consisted Yes/No and multiple-choice questions for specific competencies. The reliability & validity been previously validated in educational research; Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.78$. And to be compared skill levels between students enrolled in skill development programs and regular senior secondary students.

Statistical Tools for Analysis- Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) to describe central tendencies and variability of career guidance awareness and skill development scores to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between career guidance and skill development.

Independent Samples t-test: To compare differences in career readiness and skill levels between students participating in skill programs and those who are not.

These tools enabled a quantitative assessment of how career guidance influences skill acquisition and overall preparedness among senior secondary students, providing empirical evidence to support policy recommendations for integrating counselling and skill development initiatives in secondary education. **Primary Data:** Questionnaires administered to 400 randomly selected students from Gayajee district. And the secondary data have been taken from books, journals, policy reports, educational documents etc.

Results

In order to test the hypothesis that the skill and non-skill student's competency levels between students enrolled in skill development programs and regular senior secondary students who did not participate in such programs would differ significantly on career readiness. The groups were compared and Means scores was computed on (table-1) below:

Table-1: Significant of means differences between urban and rural students on Skill Development Programs on Self-Confidence and Personality Development

Student's Groups	N	Mean	SD	T	Significant Level
Skill	200	72.45	8.12	8.21	$p < .01$
Non-skill	200	65.30	7.95		

Table-1 indicates that the independent samples t-test was conducted to compare career readiness and skill competency levels between (skill and not-skill) students enrolled in skill development programs and regular senior secondary students who did not participate in such programs. Students in skill programs had a higher mean score ($M = 72.45$, $SD = 8.12$) compared to regular students ($M = 65.30$, $SD = 7.95$), indicating that, on average, skill program students demonstrated greater career readiness and competency. The calculated t-value was 8.21 with 398 degrees of freedom, and the p-value was .01. Since the p-value is below the conventional significance threshold (0.01), the difference between



the two groups is statistically significant. From this result implies that participation in skill development programs combined with career guidance has a meaningful positive effect on students' readiness for future academic and professional pursuits. Students exposed to these programs are better equipped with employability skills such as communication, leadership, problem-solving, and confidence in making career decisions.

The findings suggest that integrating structured career guidance and skill development initiatives in schools can significantly enhance students' personal and professional competencies, preparing them more effectively for higher education and the labor market.

Conclusion- The present study highlights the significant relationship between career guidance and skill development among senior secondary students of Gayajee district. Findings indicate that students who participate in structured career counselling and skill development programs demonstrate higher levels of self-confidence, communication skills, and career readiness compared to their peers who do not participate in such programs.

Career guidance not only helps students make informed academic and vocational choices but also motivates them to engage actively in skill-enhancement initiatives. Skill development, in turn, strengthens employability competencies such as problem-solving, leadership, and adaptability, creating a positive feedback loop that reinforces career preparedness.

The study underscores the importance of integrating systematic career counselling services within secondary education, particularly in districts like Gayajee where vocational and skill-based programs are emerging. Strengthening school counselling infrastructure, providing career orientation sessions, and expanding vocational training opportunities can significantly contribute to holistic student development.

Overall, the findings support the notion that career guidance and skill development are mutually reinforcing processes. Policymakers and educators must focus on creating an ecosystem where both components are effectively implemented to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to navigate their future academic and professional pathways successfully.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are proposed to enhance career guidance and skill development among senior secondary students in Gayajee district:

1. (Establish Career Counselling Cells: Schools should set up dedicated career counselling centres to provide regular guidance on academic choices, vocational training, and future career paths.
2. Mandatory Career Orientation Programs: Organize career guidance sessions at the senior secondary level to make students aware of various career options, skill requirements, and opportunities for higher education and employment.
3. Expansion of Skill Development Programs: Encourage more students to participate in skill development initiatives such as communication workshops, leadership training, and problem-solving exercises to improve employability competencies.
4. Training for Career Counsellor's: Equip school counsellor's with updated knowledge and techniques on career guidance, psychological counselling, and skill development strategies.
5. Integration of Career Guidance with Curriculum: Incorporate career planning and skill-based activities into the regular curriculum to ensure continuous engagement and development of students' competencies.



6. Enhance Access in Rural Schools: Provide resources such as vocational labs, online guidance tools, and skill workshops in rural schools to reduce disparities in career and skill development opportunities.
7. Parental Involvement: Encourage parents to participate in career awareness programs to guide students effectively at home, reinforcing school counselling efforts.
8. Monitoring and Evaluation: Conduct periodic assessments of career guidance and skill development programs to evaluate effectiveness and make necessary improvements.

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