Effect of Career Development Module (CDIM) on Students' Career Maturity and Decision Making in Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

Human development tasks must be geared toward achieving career planning for adolescents' future careers. Career planning is an important part that will determine the success of adolescents' future lives. This study examines the impact of a career development intervention module on high school students' career maturity and decision-making in Saudi Arabia. A quasi-experimental design involving pre-test and post-tests was adopted using forty respondents randomly selected from each of the two high schools assigned into experimental and control groups. Two sets of questionnaires were adopted and used for data collection. An independent t-test showed that a career development intervention module has a significant effect on Saudi high school students' career maturity and career decision-making. Thus, the career development intervention module significantly improved students' maturity in career choice and decision-making for future life. As a result, professional career training should be designed around this model to provide counselors with the skills needed to help high school students in Saudi Arabia make better career choices.

Contribution/Originality: This study is one of very few studies which have investigated the impact of career intervention modules developed particularly for enhancing maturity in career choice and decision-making among high school students in Saudi Arabia. The quasi-experimental design employed contributes to the external validity of the module, which increases the quality of the study findings.
1. Introduction

Career decision-making is among the crucial decisions in shaping a person's future life. The career choice positively influences students’ life journey process, which is characterised by many vital decisions that impact the core elements of their life (Omari & Woodcock, 2012). The indecisiveness of students regarding their career may result in less than optimum career achievement (Fouad et al., 2009). Thus, paying attention to career decisions is necessary in overcoming adolescent students’ challenges during high school years (Halawany et al., 2018). Similarly, an individual’s tendency towards a good career is of importance due to the evolving work practices worldwide and due to the rapid globalisation and technological advances. Therefore, adolescent students need to be assisted by ensuring their participation in career decision-making courses so as to improve their level of career maturity, which in turn increases their capability to make clear career decisions (Halasz & Kempton, 2000; Reese & Miller 2006; Şeker, 2020). The reason for focusing on adolescent students at high schools is that they are faced with difficulties in career choice, which is a big concern for adolescents (Vignoli, 2015). Additionally, Saudi Arabia, the location of the study, is regarded as a conservative society due to the social and cultural norms. For example, the low number of females compared to males in the civil service. This would have an impact on the career decisions of adolescent students in higher school.

However, with a great tendency in society for openness, this makes it necessary to educate the public on decision making and avoid stereotypes related to career choice. Hence, understanding their personal or cultural values can affect and interfere with their career decision-making. Therefore, they should make the best decisions and opt for the best option based on their personal interests since career expectations are gradually changing (Al Bahkali et al., 2021). Therefore, school as well as college students should be guided throughout their career decision-making so as to navigate throughout the increasing educational and employment settings (Ahmad, 2015).

Although research has been conducted on the effectiveness of interventions on career decision making, there is still a need to investigate the influence of career development modules among high school students in Saudi Arabia. The designed career development modules will inevitably raise the number of students intended for higher education. Nonetheless, Such a module should be made responsive to their dynamic career requirements, allowing them adaptability for any unpredictable changes (Reese & Miller, 2006; Citarella et al., 2020). Although research has been conducted on the effectiveness of interventions on career decision making, there is still a need to investigate the influence of career development modules among high school students in Saudi Arabia. The designed career development modules will inevitably raise the number of students intended for higher education. Nonetheless, such a module should be made responsive to their dynamic career requirements, allowing them adaptability for any unpredictable changes.

The investigation of the career maturity variable of the current study in the context of K.S.A. might provide new findings due to the cultural, social, and educational characteristics of this country beyond the context of past studies. Therefore, the study intends to achieve the following specific objectives:

i. To investigate the impact of a career development module on career maturity among Saudi high school students.
To assess the impact of the career development module on career decision-making among Saudi high school students.

Therefore, the current research proposes a career intervention course capable of improving the career maturity level and improving decision-making. Therefore, high school students should acquire some prerequisite basic knowledge and skills in order to opt for the right major upon entering university. The significance of proving the effect of career maturity and decision-making challenges was undeniable. Hence, the research is mainly focusing on investigating the correlation between career indecision with career maturity level and career intervention method by participating in career decision enhancement programmes, which could impact these constructs. Overall, the main contributions of the current study are as follows: (1) to develop a theory-based and culturally relevant career intervention to assist Saudi students in improving their career decision-making levels; (2) to better understand the importance and associations between educational career intervention and career decision-making and career maturity level, which were the two constructs evaluated; and (3) to develop recommendations for a career intervention plan and strategy formulated for Saudi Arabia high schools. Therefore, the current study would contribute towards the body of literature on theory-based career interventions and career development, especially among high school students in Saudi Arabia.

This research was conducted on the application of theory-based career intervention on students in observing their career maturity, and career decision-making as the first encountered during secondary education. However, several limitations existed, such as the determination of the study population and sample, as well as timing as a common restriction when dealing with questionnaire issues. Due to the limited amount of work done in the career development-related field in terms of Saudi Arabia's population, the effect and depth of this particular study could not be compared, thus rendering generalisation a difficult task.

2. Method

This study adopted a quasi-experimental design involving two groups. The participants were assigned to experimental and control groups. Only the respondents in the experimental group were exposed to the career development intervention module. This design is a quantitative approach used to collect data through a survey, which makes it suitable for this study due to its ability to answer the stated objectives and feasibility in terms of time and resources invested in the research, and it also helps to generalize the findings (Creswell, 2009). The sample of the study comprises of forty high school students from the Madina Province Centre, Saudi Arabia in the 2020/2021 academic year. Two high schools were randomly selected for the study. The respondents were selected using simple random sampling to give the students in the selected schools an equal chance to participate, though the participation is voluntary (Creswell, 2014). In addition, 11th and 12th grade students that were between 17 and 19 years of age were selected due to their developmental age, characterized by self-assessment, role try-out, and occupational extension in school, leisure activities, and part-time work.

Two questionnaires were adopted and used as instruments for data collection before (pre-test) and after the intervention (post-test) as follows: The Career Maturity Inventory, comprising of 24 items, was adopted by Savickas and Porfeli (2011) to measure career maturity. The subscale scores are a reflection of the career adaptability dimensions of
concern, curiosity, confidence, and consultation in forming occupational choices. The response type of the items is "agree" or "disagree", and they are composed of 4 sets of 6 items. The coefficient alphas for the resulting four scales were provided: concern =.62, control =.69, curiosity =.74, and confidence =.78. The Career Decision Making Scale–Short Form (CDSM-SF) consists of 25 items and was adopted by Betz et al. (1996) to measure career decision making. The CDSM-SF items reflect the learner’s confidence in being able to accomplish the described task based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from one (no confidence at all) to five (complete confidence). The instruments were validated by three experts in the field of career development.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The impact of career development module on career maturity among high school students

Means, standard deviations, and the t-test were used to analyze the post-survey career maturity scores of students in the experimental and control groups, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: T-test Analysis of Caree Maturity Post-Survey Mean Scores of Students in Experimental and Control Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>31.3750</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.27688</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>40.5250</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.48352</td>
<td>10.081</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Difference is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 The control group showed a post-survey mean score of 31.37, while the mean value of 40.52 was recorded in the experimental group. This shows that the mean value in the experimental group is greater than the mean value in the control group. The difference between the mean values between the experimental and control groups indicates that the career maturity of Saudi high school students improved after the implementation of the career maturity training. Also, the table shows that there is a statistically significant difference in career maturity between the students in the experimental and control groups (t-value = 10.081, p-value = 0.000 0.05). Consequently, it is concluded that the career maturity components of the career development intervention module have a positive effect on the career maturity of Saudi high school students. This first objective aimed to investigate the effect of the career development intervention on the career maturity of high school students in Saudi Arabia.

The findings of this objective show that the career development intervention module has a significant effect on the career maturity of Saudi high school students due to the implementation of the career maturity training. Teenagers require career maturity to be capable of choosing and preparing themselves for a successful job. According to Lau et al. (2021), professional maturity refers to teenagers’ competence and preparedness to complete organised activities incorporated within every stage of career development. High school learners are in the discovery stage, and the objective of teenage career development at around this point is to build a meaningful self-understanding of career, learn further about broader alternatives, and begin considering university programs (Chun & Kim, 2021). High school students who have decided to continue their education or enter the workforce should possess career maturity. For high school students, the issue of career maturity can lead to blunders in job decisions. In fact, several high school teens choose a major in teaching regardless of evaluating their abilities,
talents, interests, or personalities. They are more inclined to embrace the options of their parents and friends, whether based on job attractiveness or recognition of jobs recommended by their families.

Lailatunnikma and Nastiti (2021) highlighted the significance of career maturity for a lifetime, including such things as gaining competency, setting career objectives, and accomplishing careers, which are connected to students’ self-attitude, meticulous planning, dedication, motivation, and self-efficacy. Teenagers must have begun accumulating information concerning themselves as well as the working world throughout high school in a discovery process also with the goal of crystallising and making good career choices. High school students, particularly in the last classes, ought to be capable of focusing on their ideals and developing career goals based on their preferences and abilities. According to Kurniawan et al. (2020), Career maturity includes characteristics or aspects that impact it, such as career planning, career exploration, knowledge of career choice making, understanding the world of work, knowledge about desired work groups, and career realization. Therefore, based on the findings of this research and past literature, career maturity is essential for high school students. Also, career maturity development interventions proved to be effective in enhancing career maturity among high school students in Saudi Arabia. Such training interventions enhance high school students’ career maturity so that they can be more aware of their future career and they will follow education at university to prepare themselves for their future career.

3.2. The impact of career development module on career decision making among high school students

The means, standard deviations, and t-test were used to analyse the career decision-making post survey scores of the students in experimental and control groups as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: T-test Analysis of Career Decision-Making Post-Survey Mean Scores of Students in Experimental and Control Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>91.200</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.92680</td>
<td>3.505</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>97.800</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.22430</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Difference is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 The post-survey of career decision-making in the experimental group shows a mean value of 97.80, while the mean value of the post-survey of 91.20 is recorded in the control group. This shows that the mean value of the post-survey of career decision-making of students in the experimental group is greater than the mean value of the post-survey of career decision-making of students in the control group. The difference between the mean values between the experimental and control groups shows that the career decision-making of Saudi high school students is improved after the implementation of the decision-making components of the career development intervention module. Table 2 also shows that there is a statistically significant difference in career decisions between the students in the experimental group and those in the control group (t-value = 3.505, p-value = 0.001 < 0.003), which is statistically significant at 0.05. Consequently, it is concluded that the career decision-making components of the career development
intervention module have a positive effect on the career decision-making of Saudi high school students.

This objective aimed to investigate the effect of the career development intervention on career decision-making among high school students in Saudi Arabia. The findings showed that there were significant differences between the overall post-survey mean scores for experimental and control groups, which made it clear that the career development intervention module enhanced career decision-making among high school students in Saudi Arabia. Individuals’ competence in career selection is required to concentrate them on the decision of either completing their studies to a higher degree or being able to live in a free society that requires support from a career. As a result, it is predicted that students will be able to choose their career path. Students require a clear decision that is matched with their ability when making career decisions.

These findings are consistent with prior research findings Ulas-Kilic et al. (2020). It is argued that the self-instruction strategy improves an individual’s discretion. In addition, Mahmud et al. (2022) showed that cognitive behaviour training through counselling with self-instruction technique is effective for improving decisions regarding career choice. Furthermore, El-Hassan and Ghalayini (2020) It is highlighted that students’ participation in group counseling using a cognitive restructuring strategy improves their decisions regarding career choice. They could also persuade themselves to do the tasks assigned to them and gain confidence in their talents, which prepares them for future careers. Additionally, using the cognitive restructuring strategy assists students in identifying erroneous beliefs. This strategy can help people create more positive thoughts and increase their career decision-making. The study is quite effective at increasing career decision making (Salim & Utami, 2020).

Furthermore, group counselling using cognitive training tries to transform one's ideas and assertions regarding the individual's self by changing their personal beliefs and cognitions (Rismawan & Gading, 2021). This will be a learning experience for students in analysing their thinking and behaviour. Hence, students could better learn to question self-defeating thoughts that can negatively affect improvements in career decision making. Hence, the findings of this research support the notion that career development intervention modules enhance high school students’ career decision-making because students will be able to better understand their desires and overcome their weaknesses in career decision-making. The career development intervention module cognitively improves high school students’ understanding of their thoughts and makes them more confident in following their career path after completing high school studies.

4. Conclusion

The study aimed to investigate the effect of the career intervention module on career development among high school students in Saudi Arabia. This was achieved through two objectives. The objective was to look into the impact of the career development intervention module on Saudi high school students’ maturity and decision-making in career choice, and the results revealed a substantial difference between the post-surveys of the experimental and control groups, indicating that the intervention has a positive impact on the participants’ career maturity and decision-making.

Thus, based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations are made: Seminars, conferences, and workshops should be organized to train more guidance and
counseling personnel on the knowledge and skills of effective implementation of career development interventions and programmes in Saudi Arabian high schools. Furthermore, teacher training colleges and faculties of education in Saudi Arabian universities should incorporate career development intervention modules in their curriculum so that prospective teachers will acquire basic skills for design and implementation of such interventions.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this study.

References


