

Vocational Career Guidance and Counselling in Schools

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Abstract

This article provides an overview of the importance of vocational career guidance and counselling in schools. It discusses the need for early career planning and exploration, as well as the role of school counsellors in helping students identify their strengths, interests, and career goals. The article highlights various vocational assessment tools and resources that can be used to support career exploration, and emphasizes the importance of providing students with exposure to different career options through job shadowing, internships, and other experiential learning opportunities. Additionally, the article emphasizes the importance of building partnerships between schools, employers, and other community stakeholders to ensure that students receive comprehensive vocational guidance and support. Overall, this article underscores the critical role that vocational career guidance and counselling play in helping students make informed decisions about their futures and achieve their career aspirations.

National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)

The National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) organizes qualifications according to the series of levels of knowledge, skills & aptitude (NSQF Haryana 2023). These levels are defined in terms of learning outcomes which the learner must possess regardless whether they were acquired through formal or informal learning. In other word, NSQF is quality assurance of training. The qualification framework is beneficial to schools as it gives opportunity to students to build & enhance their hard skills with their regular studies & it helps them to grow in their career. The main objective of NSQF is to accommodate the diversity of the Indian education & training system. So NSQF is the foundation for students' career and progression.

National Education Policy 2020 and Samagra Shiksha

Education is considered to be the most powerful tool for creating social, economic and political transformations, and is crucial for developing a fair and just society. The NEP 2020 emphasizes a holistic approach to learner development, promoting hands-on learning experiences that encourage critical thinking, creativity, and curiosity among students. This approach recognizes the unique potential of each individual learner. The Samagra Shiksha initiative aims to provide quality education that is inclusive and equitable, from pre-school to senior secondary levels, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goal for Education. Schools play a pivotal role in imparting systematic education to learners, helping them acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to achieve their educational goals. Vocational education is an essential aspect of this process, introducing students to practical courses that can help them develop the skills and mindset required to become skilled workers or entrepreneurs.

All of these initiatives emphasize the critical role of vocational career guidance and counselling in schools.

Understanding Vocational Career Guidance and Counselling

Vocational career guidance and counselling refers to the process of helping individuals identify and pursue suitable career paths. This type of guidance and counselling can be provided to individuals at any point in their lives, from students just starting out to adults seeking a career change. The purpose of vocational career guidance and counselling is to provide individuals with the necessary tools and resources to make informed decisions about their careers (Sofyan, H., Mutohhari, F., & Nurtanto, M. 2022). This can include assessments to identify an individual's strengths and interests, exploration of different career options, and assistance with job search and application processes. Vocational career guidance and counselling is important because it can help individuals Vocational career guidance and counselling is important because it can help individuals make decisions that align with their personal goals, abilities, and interests. This can lead to increased job satisfaction, improved performance in the workplace, and overall career success. Vocational career guidance and counselling is a valuable resource for individuals seeking direction and support in their career journeys. By providing individuals with the necessary information and resources, vocational career guidance and counselling can help individuals make informed decisions and pursue fulfilling careers.

Importance of Vocational Career Guidance and Counselling in Schools

Vocational career guidance and counselling in schools are crucial in helping students make informed decisions about their future careers. It plays a vital role in shaping their lives and the choices they make in terms of their careers. In today's world, the need for skilled labour is more important than ever. Vocational career guidance and counselling equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to take advantage of the numerous opportunities in the labour market. Schools have a responsibility to provide vocational career guidance and counselling services to help students navigate the complex career landscape (Magee, M., Kuijpers, M., & Runhaar, P. 2022). Such guidance and counselling services can help students make career choices based on their interests, aptitudes, and future prospects. It provides students with information about the various career paths available to them, the qualifications and training required for those careers, and the job opportunities available.

Vocational career guidance and counselling in schools also help students to develop essential skills such as decision-making, critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-awareness. It equips them with the tools they need to succeed in the workplace, and this contributes to the overall economic growth of the country. Vocational career guidance and counselling in schools are essential in helping students make informed decisions about their future careers. It is a valuable investment that will pay off in the long run as it prepares students for the job market, and equips them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in life.

Types of Vocational Assessments for Career Guidance

Vocational assessments are designed to help individuals make informed decisions about their career path. They typically involve a series of tests, interviews, and other assessments that are used to evaluate a person's interests, skills, and abilities (Van Hai, D., et al 2022).

Here are some of the most common types of vocational assessments:

Interest Inventories: These assessments evaluate a person's interests and preferences for certain types of work. They may include questions about job tasks, work environments, and job characteristics. **Skills Assessments:** These assessments evaluate a person's current skills and abilities, such as computer proficiency, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities.

Aptitude Tests: These assessments evaluate a person's ability to learn or perform specific tasks, such as mechanical aptitude or spatial reasoning.

Personality Tests: These assessments evaluate a person's personality traits and characteristics, such as emotional stability, extroversion, and openness to experience.

Values Assessments: These assessments evaluate a person's values and priorities, such as the importance of job security, work-life balance, or personal growth.

By taking these assessments, individuals can gain a better understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and preferences. This information can then be used to make more informed decisions about their career path.

Career Exploration and Decision Making

Career exploration and decision making are critical aspects of one's professional life. Career exploration involves discovering and learning about various career options that align with one's interests, values, and skills (Fischer, A. 2022). It is a process of self-discovery, where an individual can explore their career options by researching different career fields, talking to professionals in the industry, and gaining hands-on experience through internships or volunteering. Decision making in career exploration involves carefully evaluating one's options and making a choice that is aligned with their long-term career goals. It requires considering factors such as personal interests, values, financial stability, job security, and growth opportunities. Making a sound decision requires careful analysis of the pros and cons of each option and prioritizing one's goals and values. It is essential to remember that career exploration and decision making are not one-time events but a continuous process. As individuals grow and develop, their interests, values, and goals may change, and they may need to revisit their career choices. Therefore, individuals must continuously evaluate their career choices to ensure that they are on the right path to achieving their long-term goals and personal fulfilment.

Identifying and Matching Student Interests with Careers

Identifying and matching student interests with careers is crucial in helping students choose a career that they will enjoy and be passionate about. Students should be encouraged to explore their interests and hobbies, as well as their strengths and weaknesses, to gain a better understanding of what they are good at and what they enjoy doing (Skovhus, R. B., & Thomsen, R. 2022). This can be done through career assessments, job shadowing, internships, and mentorship programs. Once a student's interests are identified, it is important to match them with careers that align with those interests. For example, if a student is interested in art and creativity, they may enjoy a career in graphic design, advertising, or fashion. If a student is interested in science and technology, they may enjoy a career in engineering, computer science, or healthcare. It is also important to consider the job outlook and earning potential for the careers that match a student's interests. It is important to ensure that the chosen career is financially viable and has potential for

growth and advancement. Identifying and matching student interests with careers can lead to a more fulfilling and successful career path. It is important for educators, parents, and mentors to guide students in this process and encourage them to explore their passions and interests.

Helping Students Set Career Goals

Setting career goals is an important aspect of student life, as it enables them to have a clear direction and purpose in their educational and professional journey (NSQF Haryana 2023). Here are some tips on how to help students set career goals:

Self-reflection: Encourage students to reflect on their strengths, weaknesses, interests, and values. This will help them identify what they are passionate about and what they want to achieve in their future career.

Research: Students should research different careers and industries to understand the opportunities and challenges they offer. They can use online resources and talk to professionals in their desired field.

SMART goals: Encourage students to set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals. This will help them create a roadmap to achieve their career goals.

Prioritization: Students should prioritize their goals based on their importance and feasibility. This will help them stay focused and motivated.

Review: Regularly reviewing their goals and progress will help students stay on track and make necessary adjustments.

Ultimately, helping students set career goals is about empowering them to take control of their future and become successful in their chosen field.

Job Search Strategies and Employment Readiness

Job search strategies involve the methods used by job seekers to secure employment. In today's job market, it is essential for job seekers to develop effective strategies to find and apply for suitable job opportunities (Anna Dorota Bilon-Piórko, Rie Thomsen. 2022). Some common job search strategies include networking, online job boards, recruitment agencies, and social media. Networking involves building relationships with people in your industry or field of interest, and can provide valuable leads and connections to potential employers. Online job boards offer a platform to search for job openings and submit resumes electronically. Recruitment agencies match job seekers with appropriate employers, and social media can be used to establish a professional online presence and connect with potential employers.

Employment readiness refers to the level of preparedness and qualifications of job seekers for the positions they seek. This can include education, work experience, technical skills, and soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and time management. To improve their employment readiness, job seekers may need to acquire additional education or training, gain work experience through internships or volunteer work, and develop their soft skills. Job seekers can also take steps to improve their resume and cover letter writing, as well as their interview skills. Ultimately, effective job search strategies and strong employment readiness are key to securing a satisfying and successful career.

Vocational Education and Training

Vocational education and training (VET) is a type of education that focuses on teaching practical skills and knowledge required for a specific job or trade. It is designed to equip individuals with the necessary technical and practical skills needed to succeed in the workforce (Sai Loo 2022). VET programs are offered at different levels, including secondary schools, vocational schools, community colleges, and trade schools. The benefits of vocational education and training include the development of practical skills, the ability to enter the workforce faster, and higher earning potential. VET programs can also be a great alternative to traditional academic education for those who prefer hands-on learning. In addition, VET programs often have strong links to the industry, which means students are taught by industry professionals and have access to relevant equipment and technologies. VET programs can include a wide range of courses, including apprenticeships, traineeships, and short courses. The courses can cover a variety of areas, including trades, hospitality, tourism, retail, and business. VET qualifications can lead to a range of careers, including carpentry, plumbing, electrician, hairdressing, and more. Vocational education and training is an important aspect of education that helps individuals to gain the necessary skills and knowledge required to succeed in their chosen career.

Supporting Students with Special Needs in Vocational Career Guidance

When supporting students with special needs in vocational career guidance, it is important to consider their unique abilities, interests, and challenges (Anna Dorota Bilon-Piórko, Rie Thomsen. 2022). Firstly, the counsellor should use appropriate communication techniques and tools to facilitate interaction with the student. Secondly, it is important to identify the specific vocational strengths and limitations of the student to help them identify suitable careers. Thirdly, career counselling should be based on the student's individualized education plan (IEP), which outlines their academic and functional goals, as well as any accommodations or modifications necessary for their success. Moreover, it is crucial to involve the student's parents or guardians in the career planning process, as they can provide valuable insight into the student's abilities, needs, and preferences. The counsellor should also provide the student with hands-on experiences in their preferred career field, such as internships, job shadowing, or career fairs. Finally, the counsellor should continue to monitor and support the student's progress towards their career goals, providing ongoing guidance and encouragement as needed. Ultimately, providing effective career guidance to students with special needs requires patience, sensitivity, and an individualized approach.

Collaboration with Industry Partners and Employers

Collaboration with industry partners and employers is essential for the success of educational institutions and their students. Such collaboration offers several benefits, including enhancing the quality and relevance of education, providing hands-on training and practical experiences, and creating networking opportunities for students (Fischer, A. 2022). One of the primary benefits of partnering with industry partners is to ensure that the educational programs offered by institutions are aligned with the needs and expectations of the job market. Industry partners can provide valuable insights into the skills, knowledge, and experience required for their industry, and institutions can adapt their programs accordingly. This ensures that students are well-equipped to enter the workforce and are capable of meeting the demands of the industry. Industry partners can also provide practical experiences and hands-on training opportunities to students. This can be in the form of internships, co-op placements, or apprenticeships.

Such opportunities provide students with the chance to apply their learning in real-world settings and develop the skills required for their future careers. Finally, collaboration with industry partners and employers can help create networking opportunities for students. This can include mentorship programs, networking events, and job fairs. Such opportunities allow students to meet industry professionals, learn about career paths, and potentially secure employment opportunities. Collaboration with industry partners and employers is crucial for educational institutions to provide relevant and practical education to students, prepare them for their future careers, and create networking opportunities.

How to Write a Curriculum Vitae

Here are the general steps to write a Curriculum Vitae (NSQF Haryana 2023):

Start with a header: Include your full name, contact information, and professional profile or objective.

Summarize your qualifications: Provide a summary of your education, work experience, skills, and achievements.

Detail your work experience: List your employment history in reverse chronological order, including job title, company name, employment dates, and key responsibilities and achievements.

Highlight your education: List your degrees, certifications, and relevant coursework in reverse chronological order, including the institution name, location, and date of completion.

Include additional sections: You may want to include additional sections such as volunteer experience, publications, presentations, professional affiliations, or awards.

Tailor your CV to the job: Customize your CV for the specific job you are applying for, highlighting your relevant experience and skills.

Use a professional format: Use a clear and organized format, with bullet points and consistent spacing and font size.

Proofread and edit: Ensure that your CV is free of typos, grammatical errors, and formatting issues.

Remember, a CV is a document that presents your professional achievements and qualifications in a clear and concise way. Make sure that your CV is relevant to the job you are applying for and that it showcases your strengths and potential contributions to the organization.

Facing the Interview Board

Here are some general tips that could be helpful for anyone who is preparing for an interview (NSQF Haryana 2023):

Research the company: Before going for an interview, it is essential to research the company thoroughly. You can visit their website, read about their products and services, check out their social media accounts, and go through any news articles related to the company.

This research can help you to have a better understanding of the company's goals, culture, and values, which can help you tailor your answers to their specific needs.

Practice your answers: One of the most common reasons for getting nervous during an interview is the fear of not knowing how to answer certain questions. You can prepare for this by practicing your answers to commonly asked questions such as "Tell me about yourself," "What are your strengths/weaknesses," and "Why do you want to work for us." You can also try to anticipate any questions that might be specific to the company or the job position you are interviewing for.

Employability Skills: Prepare and practice on Employability Skills like Communication, ICT, Green, Entrepreneurial and Self-Management skills.

Mock Interview: Try to face and practice several Mock Interviews. A guide for this is available in : http://nsqfharyana.in/pdf/CSS_for_VHSE_Placement_Mock_interview_Haryana_2017.pdf

Dress appropriately: First impressions matter a lot in interviews. Dressing appropriately for the interview can help to show your professionalism and attention to detail. Make sure your clothes are clean, ironed, and fit properly. Avoid wearing anything too flashy or too casual.

Be confident: Confidence is essential during an interview. Make eye contact, speak clearly, and be enthusiastic about the opportunity to work for the company. However, it's essential to avoid coming across as overconfident or arrogant.

Ask questions: Interviews are not just about answering questions. It's also an opportunity for you to learn more about the company and the job position you are interviewing for. Prepare a few questions to ask the interviewer at the end of the interview. This shows your interest in the company and helps you to better understand the role you are applying for.

Be punctual: Arriving late for an interview can make a terrible impression on the interviewer. Plan to arrive at least 15-20 minutes early to allow for any unexpected delays. If you are running late for any reason, make sure to call the company to let them know.

Student Support Services

Student Support Services include Career Information and Guidance, Vertical Mobility, Organization of Career Melas, Apprenticeship Training, awareness, selection of job role, Guest lectures, Field/Industry Visits, OJT, Internship, Apprenticeship, career talk, Job Fair, Placement, etc (NSQF Haryana 2023). These are crucial activities for the student to get good jobs. The teacher has to organise all these activities with proper networking. The student's exposure and experience will increase multi-fold through these activities. PSSCIVE has developed Student Vocational Interest Inventory for class 8 students to identify his/her interest to choose vocational subject in class IX. Similarly, Skill Based Aptitude Test is being a developed for class X students to opt matching vocational subject in class XI.

Conclusion

Vocational career guidance and counselling are crucial components of education in schools. The guidance and counselling services are necessary to assist students in making informed career choices and in achieving their goals in life. It helps to align students' academic aspirations with their career interests, enabling them to have a better understanding of the

job market and requirements. The role of a career guidance and counselling professional is to provide the necessary support to students to make informed choices about their future. It also helps students to identify and develop their skills and strengths that will be essential to succeed in their careers. In this way, vocational career guidance and counselling contribute significantly to preparing students for the ever-changing world of work. Schools should, therefore, prioritize the development of vocational career guidance and counselling programs, making it a core element of their education system.

Comparison of Career Guidance System across Countries

Career guidance systems vary across countries due to differences in cultural values, educational systems, and labour market structures. Here is a comparison of the career guidance systems in Germany, South Korea, the United States, Singapore, Japan, and India:

Germany: Germany's career guidance system is based on vocational education and training. The system is designed to help young people make informed decisions about their career paths. The government provides vocational guidance services through the Federal Employment Agency. In addition, schools provide career counselling to students.

South Korea: In South Korea, the career guidance system is highly centralized and focuses on academic achievement. The government provides career guidance services through the Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS). KEIS offers online and offline career guidance services to students and job seekers.

United States: The United States has a decentralized career guidance system, with services provided at the state and local levels. The government provides career guidance services through the Department of Labour and the Department of Education. In addition, schools and community organizations provide career counselling to students and job seekers.

Singapore: Singapore's career guidance system is highly centralized and focuses on skills development. The government provides career guidance services through the SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG). SSG offers training and career guidance services to individuals, including career counselling, job matching, and training grants.

Japan: Japan's career guidance system is focussed on vocational education and training. The government provides career guidance services through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). In addition, schools provide career counselling to students.

India: India's career guidance system is less centralized and primarily provided through the private sector. The government provides career guidance services through the National Career Service portal. However, the portal has limited reach and awareness among the population. In addition, schools and colleges provide career counselling to students.

Australia has a well-established career guidance system that is primarily delivered through the education system and career development associations. Career guidance services in Australia are provided by qualified career practitioners who use a range of tools and techniques to help individuals explore their career interests, skills, values, and aspirations. The Australian government provides funding to support career guidance services and initiatives, such as the National Career Development Strategy and the Australian Blueprint for Career Development. Australia has a strong focus on vocational education and training (VET) and apprenticeships, with career guidance services available to assist individuals in

making informed decisions about their education and career pathways. Overall, the Australian career guidance system aims to promote lifelong learning and career development by empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their careers.

China: China's career guidance system is relatively new and still evolving, with a focus on promoting education and training to support economic development. Career guidance services in China are provided through the education system, as well as through public and private organizations. The Chinese government has recently launched initiatives to promote career guidance, such as the "Career Planning for All" campaign and the establishment of career guidance centres in universities and vocational schools. China has a strong focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education and career development, with career guidance services available to support individuals in these fields. Overall, the Chinese career guidance system aims to promote economic development by providing individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to contribute to the country's workforce.

In summary, while career guidance systems vary across countries, there are some commonalities. Most countries have some form of government-provided career guidance services, and schools play a key role in providing career counselling to students. However, the degree of centralization and the focus on vocational education and training vary significantly across countries.

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