세계 진로의 달
(Global Careers Month)

Career Education and Training in the Aftermath of COVID-19: Challenges and Prospects

GLOBAL CAREERS MONTH

WORK LEARNING
JOBS TRANSITIONS
EMPLOYMENT

NYPi National Youth Policy Institute

CONTENTS

Country Report: Korea

Career Education in Korea

Lee Ji-Yeon(Senior Research Fellow, KRIVET*),

Jeong Jieun(Junior Research Fellow, KRIVET)

Abstract

This paper was developed the purpose of presenting Korean case in the Global Career Month as the one of the Asian countries in the aftermath of COVID 19. For this purpose, chapter 1 introduced career education history in general to help understand the characteristics of career education in Korea. Chapter 2 presents challenges and solutions at the national policy level for responding to COVID 19. In other words, it was proposed to further promote public policies in career development by identifying the establishment of a strong NCGSN(National Career Guidance Safe Net) system and narrowing the gap between school-aged and non-school aged people in the career development system. In addition, BLCEP was introduced as one of the most influential practices in the aftermath of COVID 19 in Korea. Its content framework and pilot tested results are described. Chapter 3 explains career guidance practitioners, especially at the school level. To this end, a main duty and professional development process for specialized career teachers assigned since 2011, has been introduced. Also policy suggestions for career teachers professional development were introduced. Finally, this paper strongly urged that a systemic and strong career development system called NCGSN be the best option in the Pandemic era on education, training, employment and even welfare for supporting self-directed career development. This paper also stresses that collaboration and cooperation between ministries, public and private sectors will be pre required. In addition strategic policy leadership strongly needed in this Pandemic era than any before was point out.

1. Introduction

Career education in Korea has grown through various policy changes over the course of 40 years from the early 1980s to the present. In 2011, an organization dedicated to career education was newly established in the Ministry of Education, and policies related to career education at the national level were established, linked to projects, and an infrastructure for supporting school career education was established. Typical examples include the placement of career teachers, the establishment of school career education goals and achievement standards, the introduction of a free semester system, the opening of career and vocational subjects, the enactment of the Career Education Act, and the expansion of career experience centers.

Above all, the legal basis for the system to support career education through the Career Education Act was established. In 2017, the National Career Education Center was opened, a support system was established to support schools such as regional career education centers and local career experience support centers, and various efforts are being made to promote participation in the local community.

The National Career Education Center is operated by KRIVET, a national policy research institute under the national prime minister. KRIVET was established in 1997 and has performed research and development functions related to national career guidance. KRIVET opened the Career Net in 1999 by the National Career Information Network to provide career information and career counseling services, and accumulates educational materials such as career psychology tests and career programs. One of the main tasks of the National Career Education Center is a survey on the status of career education. In order to establish career education policies, the current status of operation of career education-related manpower and facilities, and career education programs is investigated. It is held every year, including elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and universities

Recently, career education in Korea has shown a strengthening of career education in the process of revising the national-level curriculum. As one of the highlights of the revised curriculum, a "customized curriculum that supports learners' lives and growth" was suggested. Specifically, first, it supports learners to take the lead in designing the curriculum on what and how to learn based on their career and aptitude with a sense of purpose. Second, it implements a curriculum tailored to the individual growth of all students, including the high school credit system. Third, it operates a career-linked curriculum to maintain flexibility so that it can move between various career paths and jobs in the future and to design life and career paths on its own. Fourth, the vocational high school curriculum that reflects job changes in new industrial fields are improved (The Ministry of Education, 2021b). In addition, the National Education Committee was launched in relation to educational governance, and environmental changes such as the transitions of central authority are taking place. Community-centered career education governance is established, and close connection and cooperation of the national and regional career education support systems are required.

2. Career-related education and training in the aftermath of COVID-19 in Korea

1) Challenges and its solution

There are significant challenges in social and educational perspectives in the aftermath of COVID-19 in Korea. Finally these challenges cause the need for NCGSN(National Career Guidance Safe Net) for now and future.

- ✓ Focusing on Expanded of public jobs and injection of public funds: Overlooking the Importance of Career Development Support.
- ✓ Segmentation of institutional devices to support career development system: A widening gap in career development support systems for school-aged and non-school-aged people

✓ Increasing the demand for career development support devices as an essential element rather than an option at the core of public policy

✓ Employment Collapse and Hope Cliffs due to cumulative youth unemployment, and Loss of Career Development Will of Job Seekers : Need for institutional arrangements to restore

✓ The loss of career goals and unreasonable career decision-making of students due to the learning gap created by non-face-to-face school classes: Emphasis on national responsibility to solve this problem

Thus, two significant suggestions to promote career development support on policy and practice, which is called NCGSN, were highlighted. First was the suggestion of national policy, called establish the National Career Guidance Safety Net(NCGSN). The NCGSN was defined as a minimum safe and robust institutional device that allows anyone to receive support from the state for career concerns and services incurred in the course of career development, such as education, training, employment, job adaptation, job change, and retirement preparation. NCGSN was suggested to cope with the need for innovation and strategies to promote a mutually beneficial and close connection of the career development support system at the center of education (training) and employment, which is the core of the national public policy.
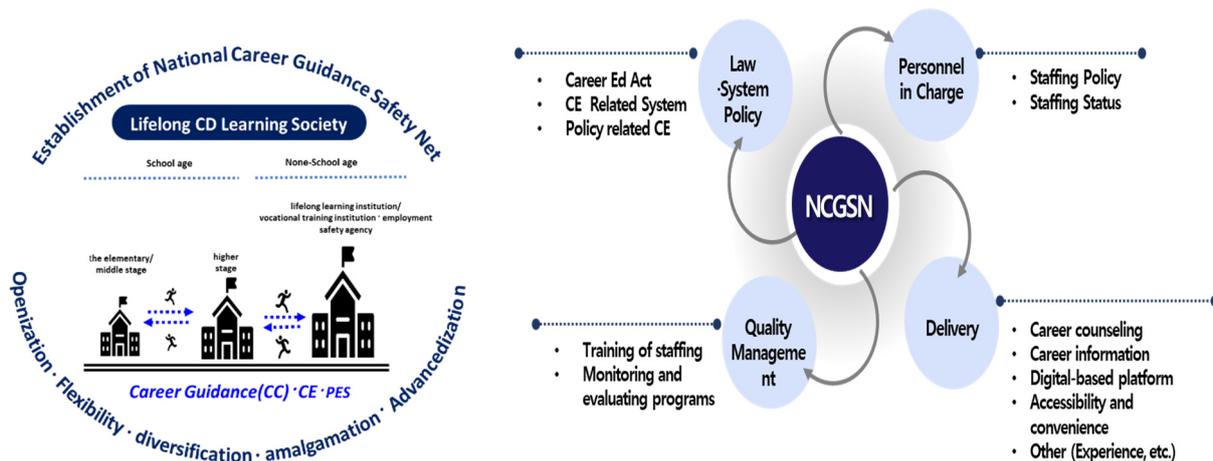
Source: Ji-Yeon Lee et al.(2022). Establish the National Career Guidance Safety Net(NCGSN). KRIVET· National Research Council for Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences Publishing.

[Figure 1] NCGSN Model and 4 areas on NCGSN

For establishing the NCGSN, 4 areas, law and policy, personnel in charge, delivery, and quality management, must consider to be strongly and safely provided to institutional device as shown figure 1. In addition, emphasis on career development support services should be change in the perspective of 21st career future model as shown figure 2..

✓ From personal characteristics and job matching to acquiring career resilience that have the chance

✓ From transition and adaptation to balance and continuous linkage learning-working-leisure

✓ From career decision making to career management skills

✓ From exploring career information and opportunities to creating career information and opportunities
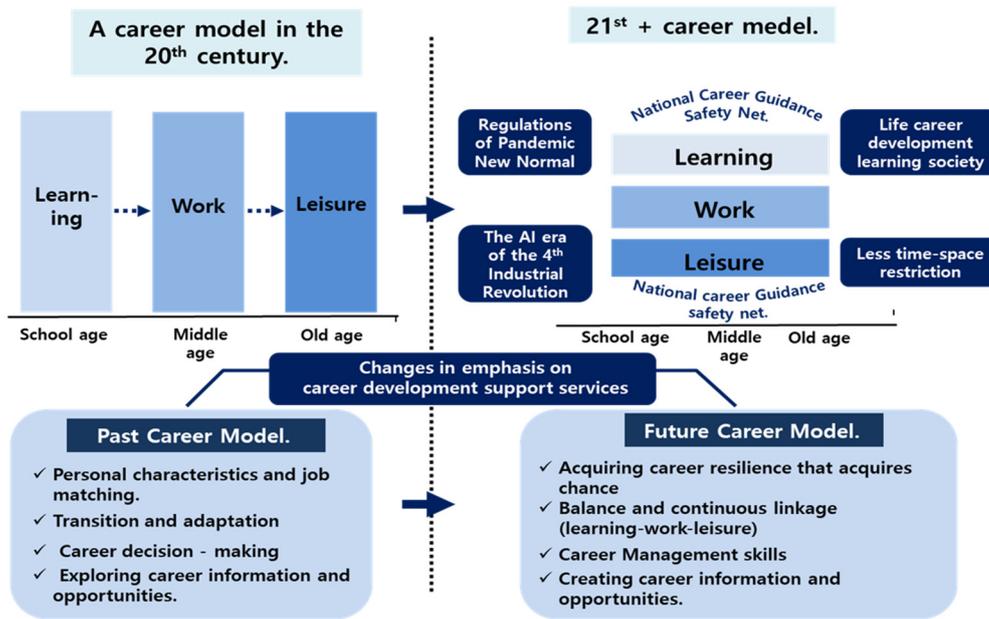
Source: Ji-Yeon Lee et al.(2022). Establish the National Career Guidance Safety Net(NCGSN). KRIVET· National Research Council for Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences Publishing.

[Figure 2] Changes in emphasis on career development support services based on the shifting of career model of future.

Second suggestion to promote career development was to propose that the public policy must work to reduce the differentiation between school-aged & non school-aged people in NCGSN.
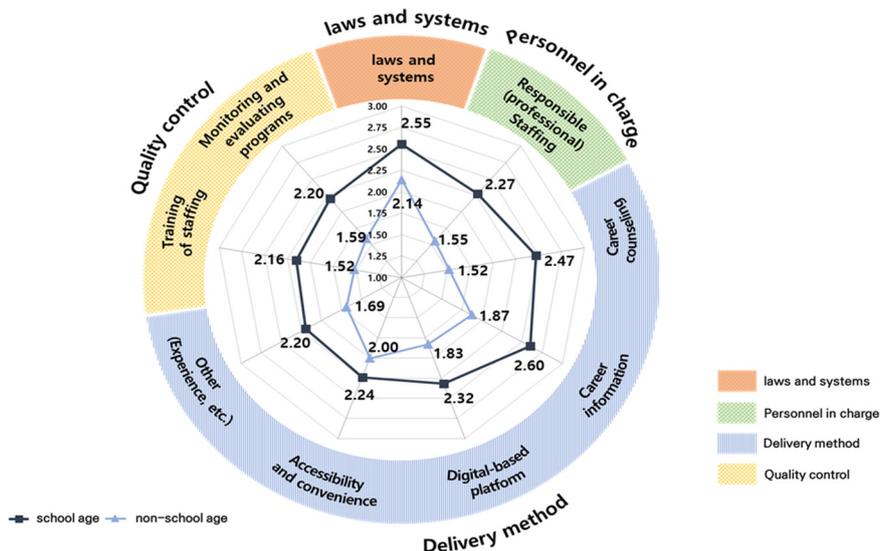
Source: Ji-yeon Lee et al.(2022). Establish the National Career Guidance Safety Net(NCGSN). KRIVET· National Research Council for Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences Publishing.

[Figure 3] NCGSN difference between school-aged and non-school aged

As shown figure 3, NCGSN for school aged and non-school aged has the big gap. In order to proper working system of NCGSN in Korea, it is necessary to reduce the gap of career development support system between two areas by more put the federal fund, effort and policy leadership.

Thus, in the aftermath of COVID-19 in Korea, NCGSN was suggested as the innovative national policy, which including 5 basic directions.

- ✓ NCGSN must support people's competence and quality life.
- ✓ NCGSN is the universal benefits of both national accountability and the people.
- ✓ NCGSN refers to the mandatory realization of a career development support system centered on education, training, employment and even welfare policies.
- ✓ Mutual cooperation and collaboration with stakeholders and the public-private sector are essential for NCGSN.
- ✓ Therefore, the NCGSN is a robust safety regime that covers all phases of everyone's life (school-age and non-school-age)

2) The practices and initiatives to promote career development support in the aftermath of COVID-19

One of the practice and initiatives to promote career development support in the aftermath of COVID-19 is Blended Learning Career Education Program (BLCEP) developed last 2021 by KRIVET. BLCEP is purposed to help students who were staying in the home due to the school closing for COVID in the school curriculum. One time it was designed for on-line class, which was basic level in understanding of theme by self-directed at home, and the other time it was for off-line class, which was advanced level in practicing and evaluating with classmates at school situation were designed. Total of 32 programs were developed based on the Career Education Purpose and Achievements Standard from elementary to high school leave.

Source: Ji-Yeon Lee et al(2021). Development of the Blended Career Education Program for Middle School. KRIVET-MOE

[Figure 4] BLCEP Contents Based on Career Education Purpose & Achievements

BLCEP was pilot tested and the outcome was positive as shown figure 5. In COVID situation both at home and school, students and teachers were satisfied and increased the level of in having motivation on their career and knowing competency on career development.

❏ Pilot Test (Total 32 PGMs)
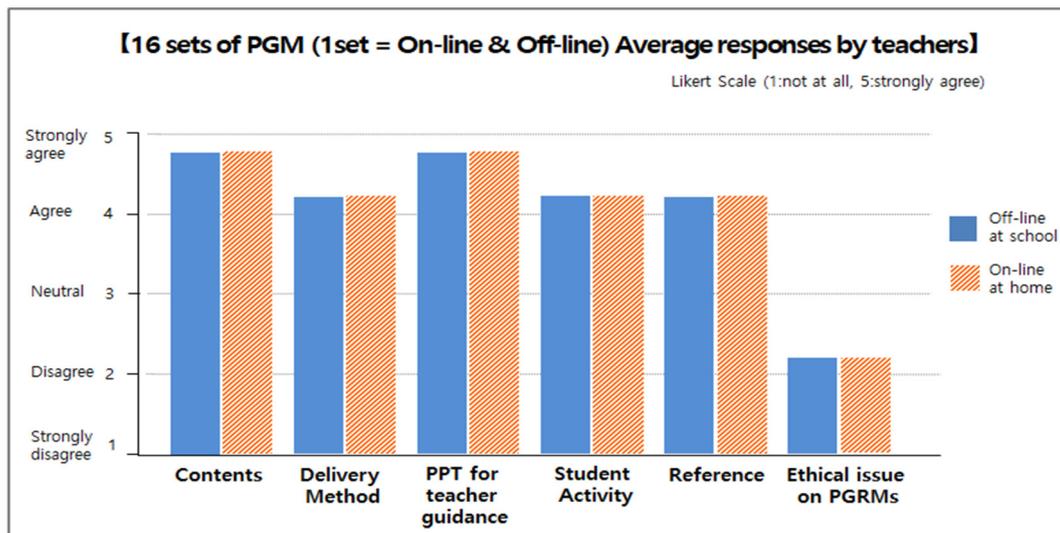
Source: Ji-Yeon Lee et al(2021). Development of the Blended Career Education Program for Middle School. KRIVET-MOE

[Figure 5] 16 sets (total 32) of PGM's Average responses by teachers

Finally, BLCEP was distributed through Career Net, the largest career development platform in Korea, and is evaluated as the best class material to play a role as a career education program in response to the COVID-19 situation.

3. The quality standards and the skills of career guidance practitioners

1) The specialized Career teachers

As the National curriculum was revised, career-related subjects were opened, and teachers in charge of the classes were needed, and as the university entrance examination system diversified, students' career design guidance began to be needed. Accordingly, professional manpower who can provide career guidance for each school began to be assigned for professional and systematic career guidance.

The Ministry of Education announced the policy to assign career teachers to school in October 2010, and began to be deployed to middle and high schools in 2011. Career teachers are in charge of "career and job" subjects, customized career guidance services, link and utilization of community resources, and support for preparation for entrance examinations, and manage school career education.

In 2015, the Career Education Act was enacted to provide a legal basis for more than one "career teacher" per school, and in 2016, career teachers were assigned to elementary schools to strengthen the system of school career educational personnel. It provided an opportunity for students and parents to receive systematic career education.

In 2018, the placement of career teachers was expanded to schools for the Handicapped, making conditions for all students to be provided with career education opportunities. As of April 2021, the placement rate of career teachers was 99.9% in elementary school, 88.2% in middle school, and 93.3% in high school(The Ministry of Education, 2022).

2) The duties of a career teacher

At the time of the first assignment of career teachers, 10 duties were presented. Since then, continuous revisions have been made, and in 2014, 15 duties were presented. Currently, as guidelines related to career teachers are transferred to the provincial office of education

In the case of Gyeonggi Province Office of Education, the various duties of career teachers are integrated into five and presented as follows. They are "planning and operating school career education," "support for the establishment and operation of school curriculum centered on career education," "career activity classes," "student career counseling," "strengthening career education capabilities," and "management of community, related institutions, and human resource information."

Looking at the importance of career teachers recognized by career teachers, elementary schools conduct and utilize student career psychology tests, middle schools operate career classes, and high schools provide career and school counseling (Kim et al., 2021). In addition, looking at the level of performance by task, elementary and middle schools had the same priority in recognition of importance and execution, and high schools had higher career classes, career psychological tests, and utilization than high-value counseling.

[Table 1] The level of performance of career teachers (Units: 5 Point Like Scale)

Category	Performance level by task				
	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Vocational High School	Special Purpose High School
Planning and organizing career education in schools	3.85 (0.92)	**4.40 (0.77)**	4.27 (0.74)	3.88 (0.96)	3.80 (1.04)
Counseling for students related to career and school	3.50 (0.97)	4.30 (0.86)	**4.41 (0.73)**	**4.19 (0.87)**	3.83 (1.14)
Providing and utilizing career information	3.75 (0.86)	-	-	-	-
Providing and utilizing admission information	-	4.22 (0.81)	**4.38 (0.68)**	3.83 (0.98)	3.82 (1.14)
Providing and utilizing job information	-	4.10 (0.88)	3.99 (0.79)	4.11 (0.88)	3.27 (1.15)
Career class management	**3.97 (0.90)**	**4.59 (0.70)**	**4.56 (0.62)**	**4.30 (0.88)**	**3.91 (1.14)**
Support student career portfolio management	2.75 (1.05)	3.71 (0.98)	3.69 (0.97)	3.62 (1.10)	3.45 (1.01)
Student career psychological examination and utilization	**4.16 (0.98)**	**4.40 (0.74)**	4.34 (0.76)	**4.13 (0.83)**	**3.95 (0.97)**
Support for entrance examination and entrance examination	-	3.94 (0.88)	4.33 (0.75)	3.67 (1.04)	**3.85 (1.18)**
Operation and support of employment programs	-	2.62 (1.08)	2.73 (0.98)	3.75 (1.08)	2.23 (1.00)
Design and operation of career experience programs	**3.89 (0.96)**	**4.44 (0.76)**	4.07 (0.88)	3.90 (0.94)	3.68 (0.97)
Design and operation of education programs for entrepreneurship	2.58 (1.10)	3.40 (1.10)	3.10 (1.04)	3.13 (1.09)	2.67 (1.03)
Education and counseling for parents	3.08 (0.95)	3.72 (0.92)	3.77 (0.95)	3.46 (1.03)	3.45 (1.05)
Community Networking	2.98 (1.08)	3.59 (1.05)	3.03 (0.95)	3.13 (1.13)	2.74 (0.81)

Source: Kim et al. (2021). A Survey on the Status of Career Education in Elementary and Secondary Schools

3) Professional Development of Career Teachers

Unlike general teachers who are trained at regular colleges and education universities, career teachers show special characteristics by acquiring minor through education graduate schools and sub-major training conducted by incumbent teachers. According to a study that explored the professional

development process of career teachers in Korea, it can be divided into five stages: search stage, preparation stage, adaptation stage, achievement stage, and contribution stage (Kwak et al., 2021). Starting with the search stage that determines the transition to a transition teacher, it completes training to acquire a minor and enters the practical preparation stage. After that, he/she is appointed to the school as a career teacher and goes through the adaptation stage of building his/her career, and then builds his/her own identity as a career teacher, shares his/her experiences and know-how, and contributes to the development of career education.

In the process of adapting to a career teacher, they have a different experience from the teacher in charge of the existing subject, and specifically, they would plan educational activities at the school level beyond the class level. In school-level activities, cooperation with school organizers is very important. In fact, school career education consists of various forms such as classes, counseling, hands-on learning, and clubs. In general, unlike the subject teacher in charge of the class, various roles are required. In the adaptation process, career teachers experience a change from teacher-centered education to student-centered education. Career teachers expanded their experience as teachers through students' feedback, textbook writing, lectures, and participation in career education projects, and later appeared as a virtuous cycle of sharing and spreading them and contributing to career education policies.
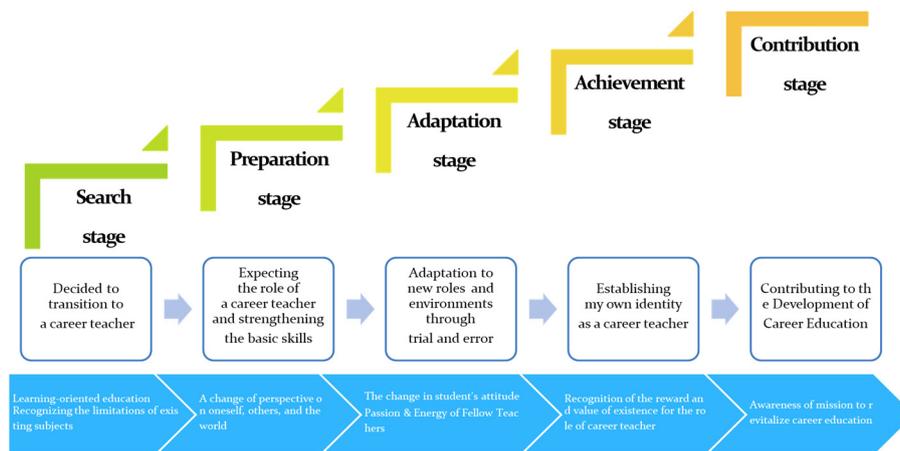
Source: Kwak M. S., Cho Y. A. (2021). A Study on the Professional Development Stage and Development Mechanism of Career Teachers. Teacher Education Research, 60(3), 495-512.

[Figure 6] the professional development process of career teachers

4) Teacher policy direction to prepare for the high school credit system

In order to promote the high school credit system, changes are also appearing in the training and placement of teachers and the enhancement of expertise. The Ministry of Education announced a comprehensive plan for the 2021 high school credit system and suggested a plan to support teachers to settle the credit system (The Ministry of Education, 2021a).

First, the teacher training and qualification system centered on a single display subject is flexible. Multiple majors of pre-service teachers are activated, and hiring is preferential for multiple majors. Special courses for teacher training will be implemented to support the acquisition of short-term teacher qualifications such as new industries, and the law will be revised so that experts can take charge of the curriculum even if they do not have teacher qualifications. In order to improve the professionalism of teachers, the government announced plans to increase expertise more flexibly by operating courses such as double majors and minor majors, adjusting credits for minor acquisition from 38 credits to 30 credits, and on-offline methods and accumulated training credits.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the introduction of the career teacher system in Korea. It can be confirmed that the deployment of professional manpower contributed to the professionalism and systematicity of school career guidance. Nevertheless, in order to develop the school's career guidance system, discussions on the career teacher system should be conducted more actively.

First, the discourse on the career education operating system that can respond to social issues and the education system, such as changes in students' values, changes in the college entrance system, and changes in the school operating system due to a sharp drop in the fertility rate, should be expanded.

Second, as the job world changes rapidly, it is necessary to continuously monitor changes in the job world and the labor market and establish a system that can be linked to school education.

Third, in order to achieve individualized education, which is the essence of career education, not only cooperation between teachers, but also a culture that can actually implement it must be established by establishing an operating system at the school and local levels.

Fourth, a more public-reliable training system is needed to train professionals who can support career teachers. Currently, education al activities are subsidized through the help of parents, such as volunteer activities. However, it is necessary to systematically train professional personnel other than teachers to establish a system that can enhance students' career guidance.

Fifth, it is necessary to prepare career development paths for career teachers so that career teachers can establish identity and develop expertise, and to create a learning community where teachers' experiences and cases can be shared and virtuous circulation can be achieved.

5) Tasks for developing the professionalism of career teachers

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the introduction of the career teacher system in Korea. It can be confirmed that the deployment of professional manpower contributed to the professionalism and systematicity of school career guidance. Nevertheless, in order to develop the school's career guidance system, discussions on the career teacher system should be conducted more actively.

First, the discourse on the career education operating system that can respond to social issues and the education system, such as changes in students' values, changes in the college entrance system, and changes in the school operating system due to a sharp drop in the fertility rate, should be expanded.

Second, as the job world changes rapidly, it is necessary to continuously monitor changes in the job world and the labor market and establish a system that can be linked to school education.

Third, in order to achieve individualized education, which is the essence of career education, not only cooperation between teachers, but also a culture that can actually implement it must be established by establishing an operating system at the school and local levels.

Fourth, a more public-reliable training system is needed to train professionals who can support career teachers. Currently, educational activities are subsidized through the help of parents, such as volunteer activities. However, it is necessary to systematically train professional personnel other than teachers to establish a system that can enhance students' career guidance.

Fifth, it is necessary to prepare career development paths for career teachers so that career teachers can establish identity and develop expertise, and to create a learning community where teachers' experiences and cases can be shared and virtuous circulation can be achieved.

4. Conclusion

This paper has looked at policies and practice cases proposed by Korea in the aftermath of COVID-19 so far, and also has looked at the development of competencies for career development practitioners especially at the school level. Through these overall reviews, a strong national support policy is needed to help individuals develop their own career development competency no matter what situation they face, and it will be important for policymakers to sympathize with the need of NCGSN. In particular, it must be more emphasized that supporting the cultivation of an individual's career development competency in the areas of education, training, employment, and even welfare should be the core of public policy through the event of GCM. To this end, collaboration and cooperation between ministries, public and private sectors will be pre required. In addition strategic policy leadership is strongly needed in this Pandemic era than any before.

References

Kim M.K., Kwon H. Y., Kim N. R., Park, N. S., Bang, H. J. & Ahn, Y. J. (2021). A Survey on the Status of Career Education in Elementary and Secondary Schools. *Ministry of Education & KRIVET.*

Kwak M. S., Cho Y. A. (2021). A Study on the Professional Development Stage and Development Mechanism of Career Teachers. *Teacher Education Research, 60*(3), 495-512.

Ji-Yeon Lee et al.(2022). Establish the National Career Guidance Safety Net(NCGSN).

KRIVET · ○National Research Council for Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences Publishing.

Ji-Yeon Lee et al(2021). Development of the Blended Career Education Program for Middle School KRIVET-MOE

The Ministry of Education. (2021a). A Comprehensive Plan for the High School Credit System. (2021. 2. 16.)

The Ministry of Education. (2021b). Major points of the the general guideline draft for the 2022 revised curriculum. (2021. 11. 24.)

The Ministry of Education. (2022). 2022 Career Education Policy and Statistics Collection

Country Report: Japan

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Employment and Career Development in Japan

Teruyuki FIJITA, University of Tsukuba

Abstract

The outbreak of COVID-19 paralyzed economic activity in every country on the globe, causing significant disruptions in the labor market. Of course, Japan is no exception. In April 2020, the government declared a state of emergency covering the entire country, requiring people to refrain from leaving their homes and mandating to close restaurants and other service industries. These measures taken to halt most economic activities had a major impact on the economy, employment, and people's lives. For example, the GDP growth rate fell sharply, and the number of women engaged in part-time work dropped abruptly in most occupations. In response to this situation, the government took measures on an unprecedented scale to keep workers employed. For example, the "employment adjustment subsidy," which subsidizes a portion of the absence allowance paid by employers to workers, was greatly expanded to include workers who work less than 20 hours a week.

The COVID-19 crisis has struck young people harder in the labor market in most countries. However, the situation in Japan was very different from other countries. In the case of Japan, on the other hand, there was little change in the figures and the rate remained the lowest among OECD countries. In the employment situation of new high school graduates, the employment rate of job applicants showed no change before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, and no substantial change was observed in the employment situation of university graduates as well. COVID-19 did not have a significant impact on the transition of young people from school to work. Behind this are the unique features of the Japanese-style lifetime employment system.

Probably the most notable trend in Japan is the "digital transformation" of school education, which has progressed rapidly in the wake of COVID-19. Japan is known as a leading industrial nation in the digital world, but school education was in a totally different sphere: the demand from teachers for the "EdTech" was very weak, and the budget for the necessary infrastructure, ICT equipment, and software was not secured adequately.

However, during the school closure period due to COVID-19, faced with a situation where interactive distance education was almost impossible to implement, the government developed a top-down school digitalization policy. Currently, almost every student at the compulsory education level has a tablet device provided at no cost. Concerning career guidance and counseling in these situations, the digitization of the "Career Passport," a career portfolio introduced simultaneously in elementary, junior high, and senior high schools nationwide in 2020 to be used continuously for 12 years, will be an important issue in the future. The "Career Passport" has been introduced for the students to look back at their own learning processes and career development periodically to make self-assessments, nurture their ability to learn independently, and lead themselves to self-realization. While enrolled in elementary school, a child's handwriting transforms as they grow, and the expression and content of their written texts also change significantly. Such a growth trajectory can be most clearly observed through direct recording on paper. However, digitizing them has the advantage of portability and ease of searching and viewing records. There are many issues to be discussed, such as when to make the change from paper to digital and how to utilize records from grades 1 through 12.

1. Introduction

The outbreak of COVID-19 paralyzed economic activity in every country on the globe, causing significant disruptions in the labor market. Of course, Japan is no exception. In April 2020, the government declared a state of emergency covering the entire country, requiring people to refrain from leaving their homes and mandating to close restaurants and other service industries. These measures taken to halt most economic activities had a major impact on the economy, employment, and people's lives. For example, the GDP growth rate for the April-June period of 2020 fell sharply to -8.1% from the previous quarter (-28.6% annual basis). Both male and female part-time workers were significantly affected, especially the number of women engaged in part-time work dropped abruptly in most occupations. There was also a serious decline in income for "freelancers," people who do not belong to a company or other organization, taking on work on their own. (MHLW, 2021)

Figure1. The GDP Growth Rate from the First Quarter of 2017 (2017-Q1) to 2021-Q1
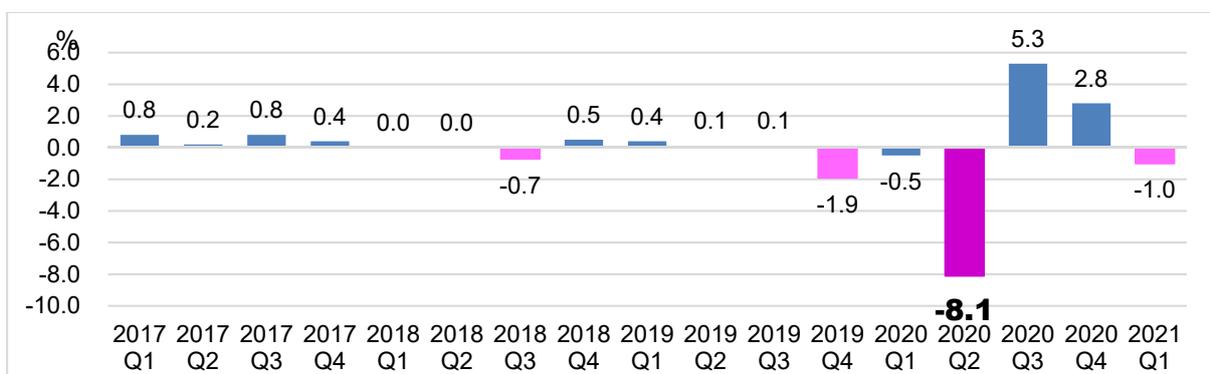
Source: Cabinet Office, Government of Japan. (2021). National Economic Counting, Preliminary quarterly GDP report for January-March 2021

In response to this situation, the government took measures on an unprecedented scale to keep workers employed. For example, the "employment adjustment subsidy," which subsidizes a portion of the absence allowance paid by employers to workers, was greatly expanded to include workers who work less than 20 hours a week. The number of subsidies paid was also unprecedentedly large, with a cumulative total of approximately 3 million decisions made between March 2020 and March 2021, and a cumulative total of 3.2 trillion yen: about 28.8 billion US dollars at the exchange rate of 1 US dollar = 111 yen as of March 31, 2021 (MHLW, 2021).

Given these challenging economic and employment conditions in Japan brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, then, how has the school-to-work transition for young people been affected by these disruptions?

2. The School-to-Work Transition During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis has struck young people harder in the labor market in most countries. For example, comparing the fourth quarter of 2019 with the fourth quarter of 2020, unemployment rates of 15-29 year-olds have increased in nearly all OECD countries. Young workers are at greater risk of severe unemployment because they often work in the industries and sectors most affected by the crisis, and a higher proportion of them work on temporary contracts. In addition, young people tend to lack the expertise and skills required by their respective firms and are therefore often the first to be displaced. Moreover, unemployed young people face fierce competition with job-seekers with more work experience in a context of drastically reduced job openings, making their integration into the labor market much more difficult. (OECD, 2021).

Figure 2. Unemployment Rates of 15‑29 Year‑Olds in OECD Countries: As a percentage of the youth labor force, 2019‑Q4 and 2020‑Q4 (or latest quarter available)
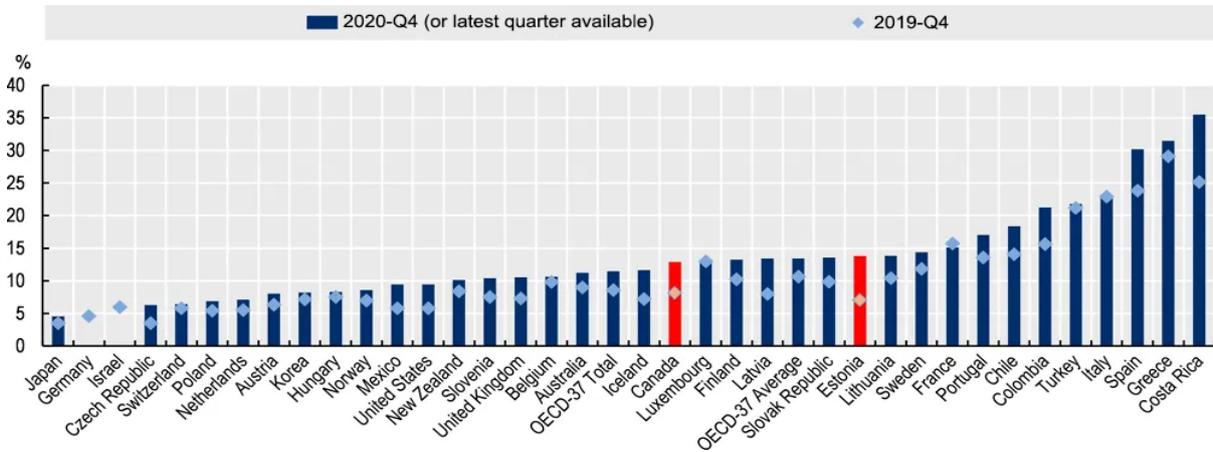
Note: OECD‑37 Average is the unweighted average of 37 OECD countries (excluding Israel). OECD‑37 Total is the weighted average of 37 OECD countries (excluding Israel). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Source: European and National Labour Force Surveys.

However, the situation in Japan was very different from other countries. There was little change in the figures and the rate remained the lowest among OECD countries. In the employment situation of new high school graduates for instance, the employment rate of job applicants showed no change before and after the COVID-19 pandemic (MEXT, 2022), and no substantial change was observed in the employment situation of university graduates as well (MHLW, 2022).

As the Bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in September 2008 shattered global credibility in the U.S. economy, the U.S. dollar was sold off, and the Japanese yen experienced a sharp upturn, which severely damaged the country's export industry. Consequently, the Japanese stock market crashed, sales of industrial products and automobiles plummeted, and many companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, went bankrupt due to difficulties in financing their operations. The employment of new graduates was also severely affected by this.

Figure 3. Employment Rates of New High School Graduates and of New University Graduates: 2005-2022
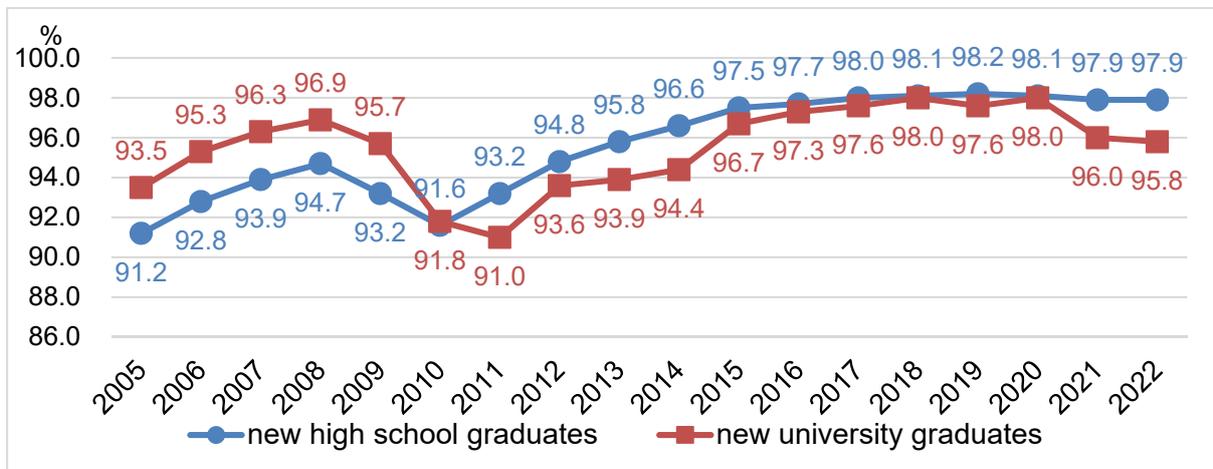
Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2022). Employment Status of New High School Graduates in March 2022 (as of March 31, 2022), and Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. (2022). Employment Status of University Graduates in March 2022 (as of April 1)

In contrast, COVID-19 did not have a significant impact on the transition of young people from school to work in Japan. The reasons for this are difficult to pinpoint. For example, the collapse of Lehman Brothers occurred against a backdrop of booming economic activity, with excessive capital investment as well as personal and corporate indebtedness, and had a direct and devastating impact on the economic activity itself. However, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred during a period of low growth in the Japanese economy, making a major recession itself unlikely. Another factor is the chronic shortage of workers that has persisted since around 2000 due to the decline in Japan's total population, in particular, the decreasing share of the working-age population caused by a drop in the birth rate. In addition, the government's scheme of financial assistance, such as employment adjustment subsidies focused on small and medium-sized enterprises as the core target, was another factor that helped maintain the level of stability in employment of youth.

Even in this context, it is not appropriate to underestimate the influence of the unique features of the Japanese-style lifetime employment system, such as recruiting new graduates in batches and providing them with specialized skill training opportunities through on-the-job settings after employment. Many Japanese companies, especially large ones, took measures to increase labor productivity and flexibility in responding to changing demand by hiring unskilled workers without any professional experiences at low wages, providing long-term in-house skills training, and periodic job reassignments and relocations. At the same time, they established a system to raise wages in line with changes in workers' lifestyles, i.e., to increase the range of wage rises for those in the age group most likely to experience life events such as marriage and child raising. The basic principle of this system was to hire all new graduates at once and to increase and maintain the sense of belonging and loyalty of employees to the company. Restricting the employment of young people due to the presumably short-term crisis of a pandemic of a viral disease could result in a long-term shortage of human resources within a firm. Many companies have avoided this risk.

Of course, many career-related programs are in operation throughout the country for the socially disadvantaged youth including early school leavers, young job hoppers, and those labeled as NEET at various service providers such as "Job Cafes" and "Regional Youth Support Stations." Job Cafes operated by prefectural authorities are the centers that provide one-stop employment-related services for young people. They offer aptitude assessment, counseling, seminars and other services in accordance with local circumstances. Regional Youth Support Stations serve as bases for employment support of NEETs and other young people struggling in the school-to-work transitions. Among other services, they provide expert advice and workplace experience designed to build vocational independence, and support for workplace norms and upgrading after taking up employment. Moreover, various free-of-charge counseling and consultations are available via phones, emails and SNS services. It is also noteworthy that the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare administers "Youth Yell Certification System" that recognizes small- and medium-sized companies active in recruiting and training of youth. The "Youth Yell" certified companies can receive priority matching support by public employment security offices. These companies can also apply for loans with low interest from the Japan Policy Finance Corporation. However, these were already in practice before the COVID-19 pandemic and were not newly introduced in the aftermath.

3. "Digital Transformation" of School Education

Probably the most notable trend in Japan is the "digital transformation" of school education, which has progressed rapidly in the wake of COVID-19.

Japan is known as a leading industrial nation in the digital world, but school education was in a totally different sphere: the demand from teachers for the "EdTech" was very weak, and the budget for the necessary infrastructure, ICT equipment, and software was not secured adequately. Among the so-called developed countries, Japan was the slowest in the integration of digital devices in instruction.

Japan ranks at the bottom in the following items among the participating countries and regions in PISA 2018 (Fernando & Schleicher, 2020).

Percentage of students in schools whose principal agreed or strongly agreed that:

- ✓ Teachers have the necessary technical and pedagogical skills to integrate digital devices in instruction
- ✓ Teachers have sufficient time to prepare lessons integrating digital devices
- ✓ Effective professional resources for teachers to learn how to use digital devices are available

Indeed, Japanese schools had been left behind by the wave of digitalization. For instance, as of March 2019, only one computer per 5.4 students was installed for classroom teaching and learning in elementary and secondary schools in Japan (MEXT, 2019).

However, during the school closure period due to COVID-19, faced with a situation where interactive distance education was almost impossible, the government developed a top-down school digitalization policy. The core of the strategy was the "GIGA School Program" to realize equitable and individually optimized learning by providing one computer device for each student and high-speed internet for every school. GIGA is an acronym for "Global and Innovative Gateway for All." This initiative has brought about significant transformations. Currently, almost every student at the compulsory education level has a tablet device provided at no cost. Finding ways to make effective use of these devices in the classroom and providing teacher training for this purpose are among the key tasks.

Concerning career guidance and counseling, the digitization of the "Career Passport," a career portfolio introduced simultaneously in elementary, junior high, and senior high schools nationwide in 2020 to be used continuously for 12 years from Grade 1, will be an important issue in the digitalized school environment. It certainly is not difficult to find countries and regions in which many secondary school students use career portfolio that includes their academic records, vocational qualifications, and career narratives. In the global aspect, it is so unique for elementary school students to start using career portfolios from Grade 1.

The "Career Passport" was not designed as a document to be submitted when students go on to further education or find a job. The portfolio was introduced for the students to look back at their own learning processes and career development periodically to make self-assessments, nurture their ability to learn independently, and lead themselves to self-realization.

While enrolled in elementary school, a child's handwriting transforms as they grow, and the expression and content of their written texts also change significantly. Such a growth trajectory can be most clearly observed through direct recording on paper. However, digitizing them has the advantage of portability and ease of searching and viewing records. There are many issues to be discussed, such as when to make the change from paper to digital and how to utilize records from Grades 1 through 12 while preventing personal information from being leaked or tampered with by others.

Figure 4. Examples of the Transformation of Handwriting as Students Grow: Worksheets in the "Career Passport" that one student completed in Grade 1 (left) and in Grade 5 (right).
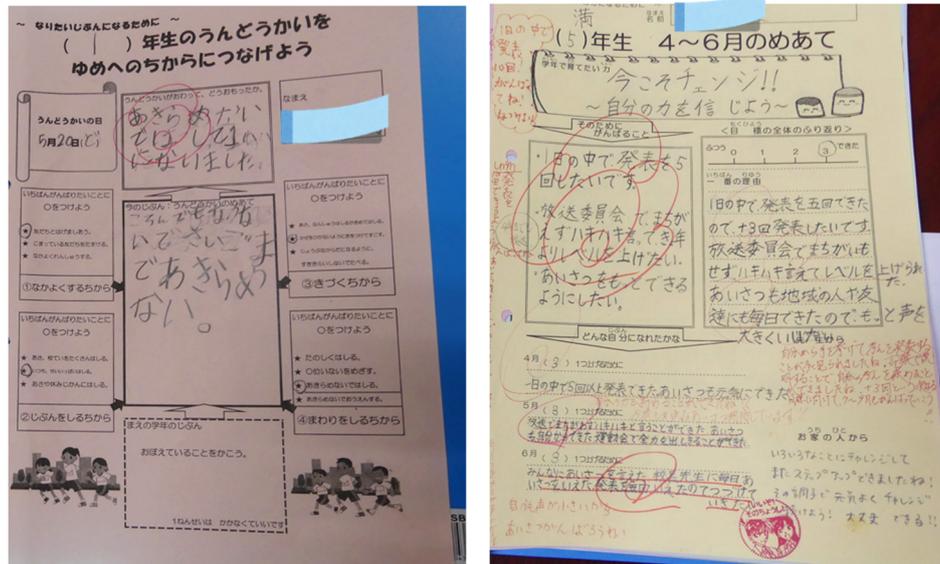
Courtesy of Tanagura Elementary School, Fukushima Prefecture

4. Concluding Remarks

The "Digital Transformation" of Japan's schools has literally progressed rapidly. For example, for public elementary and lower secondary schools nationwide, among 1,812 local boards of education 1,748 (96.5% of the total) have completed the purchase of "one computer device for each student" by March 2021, the end of the 2020 school year (MEXT, 2021). This confirms a dramatic evolution of the situation two years prior when 5.4 students shared one computer. This digitalization has already significantly changed classroom instructional practices, and most of the students have welcomed the changes favorably. It should also be noted that opportunities for teacher training in the use of new digital tools are also increasing.

However, there are many challenges. For example, the cost of allocating ICT technicians to schools is subsidized by the national government, but in the case of public schools, up to one-half of the required cost is provided. The remaining half is to be covered by the local government. The financial disparity among regions has resulted in differences in the placement of ICT technicians.

In career education, and career guidance and counseling, challenges abound. On one hand, for example, the planning and implementation of work experience programs should be reexamined in line with the spread of telework, opportunities to interview alumni working overseas and in other remote areas using videoconferencing systems should be expanded, and information regarding the new jobs that will be created by the fourth industrial revolution, such as the providing of services in the metaverse should properly be accessible to all students. At the same time, on the other hand, the importance of meeting people in person and gaining hands-on experience should also be reevaluated and duly recognized.

Furthermore, students must learn to recognize the social reality that as digitalization progresses, economic disparities among families, regions, and countries will result in a digital divide. We need to provide ample opportunities for students to use their critical thinking skills to analyze the current situation and consider what needs to be done to eliminate these disparities to build a fairer society.

References

MEXT, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2019). Results of the 2018 survey on the actual status of digitization in school education

MEXT. (2021). Progress in ICT environment for the realization of the GIGA School Program, May, 2021

MEXT. (2022). Employment Status of New High School Graduates in March 2022 (as of March 31, 2022)

MHLW, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. (2021). *Annual Health, Labour and*

Welfare Report: COVID-19 pandemic and social security system. Tokyo. Nikkei Printing Inc.

MHLW. (2022). Employment Status of University Graduates in March 2022 (as of April 1)

OECD. (2021). OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19): What have countries done to support young people in the COVID-19 crisis?, https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/what-have-countries-done-to-support-young-people-in-the-covid-19-crisis-ac9f056c/

Reimers, F. M., & Schleicher, A. (2020). A framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020, Paris, OECD

Ⅲ

Country Report: Taiwan

Vocational Guidance Post pandemic: Our efforts in Taiwan

Hsiu-Lan Shelley Tien, Ananda Ke Fan Lim, Yi-Hsuan Yin

Abstract

COVID-19 has been ravaging the world and affected the lives of all human beings. Taiwan has tried its best in combating the spreading and the influences. However, there were still people suffering from losing their jobs, decrease in income, and changing in forms of work and lifestyle. In response to the impact of COVID-19, the president of Taiwan had implemented the COVID-19 Special Act in February 2022. Art. 9 of the COVID-19 Special Act stipulates the government with a broad mandate to provide subsidies, compensations and revitalization funds for industries in need. In addition, the Ministry of Labor expanded existing measures and added more new labor market measures. Subsidies for training program and salary were provided for those who suffers from less working hours, unemployment, and also for corporates facing loss of revenue. To further understand difficulties young people encountered, we created a short, open-ended questionnaire survey to assess the difficulties people perceived and how they cope with the difficulties and 379 people responded. The results of a content analysis indicated three categories of difficulties people perceived and four types of coping strategies. This newly developed work and life style patterns indicated how people sought to cope with COVID-19. More details are discussed regarding how coping strategies were created. The government's policies were also discussed.

1. Introduction

Since the onset of the COVD-19 at the end of 2019, the Taiwan government has devoted considerable efforts to keep people safe. People, in a conservative society under collectivism, followed the strict precautions for pandemic prevention. However, the confirmed infected cases increased dramatically in mid-May 2021, which is almost a year after when other countries experienced the initial surge. The whole country was promoted to alert level III, which is the next to the highest warning level in times of crises. The schools, from kindergarten to university, shut down and many commercial activities stopped for two months. The world of work shifted considerably during the past two years.

To realize the young adults' difficulties in career coping, we conducted a short survey from October 2021 to November 2021. The participants were 379 adults age ranged from 18 to 58 ($M = 22.21$, $SD = 6.31$), 123 men and 256 women. Of the participants, 84.66% were college students ($n = 321$), 1.32% were graduate students ($n = 5$), and 13.46% reported that they were currently working ($n = 51$). The remaining 2 people graduated and were seeking a job when the survey was conducted.

The purpose of the survey was to understand Taiwanese young people's experiences during the pandemic. The survey included the following two open-ended questions: (1) What career difficulties did you encounter in the past year under the influence of COVID-19 pandemic? (2) What kind of changes did you perceive and foresee regarding the transition from school to work? A brief result will be report and discussed.

2. Difficulties Encountered during the Covid-19 pandemic

College students encountered a lot of difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic. The students who graduated struggled to find a job; moreover, job opportunities were so limited that many of the participants indicated that they had no other option but to stay at home. The period as a "nibbler", which

refers to graduates who depend on parents because they cannot locate a job, was prolonged in Taiwan. Since many employers stopped hiring new staff members, job opportunities for new graduates diminished considerably. Some of the companies were reorganized and downsized, and the newly hired employees were laid off because of COVID-19, leaving college graduates frustrated in their search for a job.

1) Life difficulties encountered

One of the most common challenges was that people were afraid of dying (n = 86) from COVID-19. It was hard for young adults to believe that a healthy person could die in a few days after a diagnosis of COVID-related pneumonia. Some of the students (n = 6) were planning to travel or begin an exchange learning program but were forced to abandon the plans. Those who were in an exchange program abroad in different countries also decided to fly back home, because it provided them and their families a sense of safety and health. Family love and cohesion emerged naturally during this period.

During the pandemic, students and workers needed to stay at home or stay in the city where they attended school or worked. Some students wanted to go home, but could not risk the trip. They feared that they might bring the coronavirus home and cause a family member to be sick, especially elderly parents. Participants also reported feeling uncomfortable and inconvenienced with the restrictions in attending social activities. A response to this sense of constriction was to create a new life mode wherein students sought to enrich their lives, mainly through virtual interactions.

2) Learning obstacles

For the 321 college students, 24 of them did not want to graduate (7.5%). Nine students indicated that they did not like the virtual learning mode and felt unable to adapt to online learning. At least 3 students indicated that they wanted to apply for an internship but the chances of locating an internship were slim. It was clear that participants perceived that learning opportunities shrank because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3) Job seeking barriers

As far as the difficulties in job seeking, 95 out of 321students indicated that it was very hard for them to find a job (29.60%). Some indicated that their income decreased because they were forced to cut back on their work hours or were laid off (n = 16). For example, many students worked as one-on-one English and Math tutors and were forced to quit their jobs. It was hard for these participants to find another new part-time job (n = 5). Since the availability of job opportunities decreased, the competition for jobs increased significantly. Participants indicated that this caused them to reconsider what their ideal job entailed. They believed that it was necessary to enrich themselves and to expand their professional knowledge, but they did not know how to take the next step.

3. Coping Strategies

The data indicated the following four categories of coping strategies to overcome the academic and work barriers caused by COVID-19: Self-preparation; Future imagination; Family support; and Positive thinking.

1) Self-preparation

Participants reflected on how to prepare to cope with the difficulties caused by COVID-19. Responses suggested that participants were not sure how long the pandemic would last, so they shifted to setting long-term goals. About one third of the students in our study intended to apply for graduate school (n = 111, 34.58%). Some professors even encouraged them to pursue doctoral programs. In addition, some

students perceived that the time spent seeking a job was prolonged in comparison to the previous few years (n = 97, 30.22%). For those who were unable to find a job, they compromised and tried to find a temporary job or a part-time job (n = 24, 7.48%). In this context, gig work appeared to be a viable option. Working schedules became more flexible, and individuals possessed some degree of autonomy in deciding what they wanted to do although it might not be able to yield a sustainable life.

Nine participants chose to study and prepare for a government job examination. Three chose to be self-employed. Seven participants indicated that they chose jobs that were not related to what they studied at university. Two students chose to stay in college and registered as fifth-year seniors. Some of the students lamented that they were born at bad time. However, to cope with the hard time, they need to be well prepared to recongize any chances for future job opportunities.

2) Future imagination

Future imagination is a kind of entrepreneurship mindset (Rosen, 2016). People might imagine what happens in the future through the past experiences (Schacter et. al., 2007). However, the future won't directly replicate the past experiences. In our survey, three students indicated that passion and expectations were two important elements in preparing for this transition. On the other hand, three students indicated that they felt anxious and uncertain about the future. At my university, the Career Center and the Counseling Center provided activities to facilitate the students' positive thinking toward the future. The staff members utilized a variety of activities to support students via online activities after the two-month shut down in May and June of 2021. Job fairs and job interviews were conducted virtually, and these activities increased students' sense of hope for their future. As a faculty member at the university, I found that the students and staff are getting used to hybrid services.

3) Family support

It was mentioned in different studies and reports that COVID-19 evoked a lot of family conflicts, and even domestic abuse when members were forced to work at home (Bullinger et al., 2022; Fusar-Poli et al., 2021; Hwang et al., 2022; Labrum et al, 2022). In our survey, most participants were not married and the quarrels were mainly with parents and siblings. Since the time together at home increased, they were forced to communicate genuinely to relieve the strained relationship. There was no way to escape from the quarrel because they were staying at home and had much time to communicate genuinely. Some of the young adults who failed to find a job could only stay at home. These participants might be symbolized as "nibblers" and depend on parents for living, which was very frustrating them. However, if family members could reach consensus and accept the inevitable crisis, they would be able to build family resilience together. Family support is so important for young adults.

4) Positive thinking

Positive thinking is trying to see the best in other people and viewing the self in a positive light. People with positive thinking usually give themselves credit when good things happen (Seligman, 2006). Since it has been almost 2 years since the advent of the pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) went on its press conference every afternoon. From my personal observation, people are getting used to the exist of coronavirus. In my university, some of the students believed that they have to accept what has happened and try a new life mode to cope with the COVID-19. They need to live with COVID-19 peacefully. They wear masks, take courses online, exercise at home, meet people through video conference platforms, and create new ways to earn a living. Some of them work for food delivery services. Many of them muster the courage and advocate to serve as a teaching assistant to help professors handling telecourses. Generally speaking, we found that many students tried their best to overcome the inevitable crisis and to generate a variety of ways to survive under the influence of the pandemic.

4. What universities can do to facilitate the school-to-work transition

During the pandemic, the Ministry of Education invested money and telecommunication resources for universities to expand electronic and computer equipment. The Career Center and Counseling Center applied and obtained permission from the government to conduct telecommunication services through video-conferencing platforms. The ethical standards for telepsychological services were established very quickly. The university counseling services and community counseling centers reopened for services remotely after they passed the professional ethical review and obtained permission to do online services.

The transitions from university to job market have been so difficult since the start of the pandemic. The career center staff needs to find solutions. Some of the responses to this crisis include reaching out to enterprises, companies, and alumni to increase job opportunities for graduates. The government also provides funding for graduates, encouraging them to create their own businesses.

5. Policies developed in government

According to the research conducted by the Legislative Yuan (2021), the graduates delayed their employment under the impact of the epidemic. There were approximately 270,000 graduates in 2021, 87.3% of them were seeking for jobs, yet only 19.6% of them were employed. In other words, there were about 180,000 graduates in 2021 who had been seeking for jobs up to half a year. In addition, 39.6% of them have zero deposit (Legislative Yuan, 2021). Besides, the central and local government of Taiwan have implemented various measures to alleviate the impact of COVID-19 (Ministry of Digital Affairs, 2022a; Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2021). They were mainly distributed into four categories: Employment-related measures, Economic stimulus measures, Customs Measures, and Recovery Plan (KPMG, 2020).

More specifically, the Ministry of Labor created up to six programs for the youth aged 15-29 in order to strengthen their workplace capabilities and to reduce their economic pressure, these included the pre-employment training, first-employment training, on-the-job training, employment incentives, job-seeking allowances and so on (Ministry of Digital Affairs, 2022b). Secondly, the Economic stimulus measures comprised financial relief and rental concession/adjustment. Moreover, the exportation of mask products and fever thermometers were restricted, and the rate on the importation of mask and undenatured alcohol were temporarily adjusted (KPMG, 2020). Last but not least, the recovery plan consisted of the Triple Stimulus Voucher Program and the Quintuple Stimulus Voucher Program (KPMG, 2020; Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2021). These policies have helped people go through the economic crisis. Vocational guidance counselor also helped a lot in helping the students get career information, write resume, and practice job-seeking skills. The government even provide the youth with venture fund for starting his/her own business.

6. Conclusion

As a citizen in Taiwan, my view is that the government has indeed done its best to prevent the epidemic. People do not like, but have adjusted to, wearing masks. Now the mask is a necessary habit, not only for preventing COVID-19 but also for preventing polluted air from automobiles and motorcycles. We can expect that urgent needs for mental health services to increase as a result of the emotional strain from the pandemic. The services could be conducted physically or in a virtual way, as is the case for academic learning. Since the students were used to online learning, we need to pay attention to the students' needs and responsibility in reshaping the learning environment and the work/life pattern.

References

Bullinger, L. R., Marcus, S., Reuben, K., Whitaker, D., & Self-Brown, S. (2022). Evaluating child maltreatment and family violence risk during the covid-19 pandemic: Using a telehealth home visiting program as a conduit to families. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 43*(1), 143–158. https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.21968

Chang, W.-C. (2020, March 21). *Taiwan's fight against COVID-19: Constitutionalism, laws, and the global pandemic*. Verfassungsblog. https://doi.org/10.17176/20200321-122752-0

https://verfassungsblog.de/taiwans-fight-against-covid-19-constitutionalism-laws-and-the-global-pandemic/

Fusar-Poli, L., Surace, T., Meo, V., Patania, F., Avanzato, C., Pulvirenti, A., Aguglia, E., & Signorelli, M. S. (2021). Psychological well-being and family distress of Italian caregivers during the covid-19 outbreak. *Journal of Community Psychology, 50*(5), 2243–2259. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22772

Hwang, P., Ipekian, L., Jaiswal, N., Scott, G., Amirali, E. L., & Hechtman, L. (2022). Family functioning and mental wellbeing impairment during initial quarantining for the COVID-19 pandemic: A study of Canadian families. *Current Psychology, 41*(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02689-1

KPMG. (2020, November 18). *Taiwan government and institution measures in response to COVID-19*. https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/taiwan-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html

Labrum, T., Newhill, C., Simonsson, P., & Flores, A. T. (2022). Family conflict and violence by persons with serious mental illness: How clinicians can intervene during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. *Clinical Social Work Journal. 50*(1), 102–111. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-021-00826-8

Legislative Yuan. (2021, July 22). *Discussion on the delayed employment of graduates under the impact of the epidemic*. https://www.ly.gov.tw/Pages/Detail.aspx?nodeid=6590&pid=210145

Ministry of Digital Affairs. (2022a, September 28). *In response to the epidemic relief measures in 2022, the central and local government subsidy plans are summarized.* https://www.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=37&s=610106&sms=9100

Ministry of Digital Affairs. (2022b, November 14). *In order to assist youth employment, understand the 6 major programs and the application process at one time*. https://www.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=37&s=569433&sms=9100

Ministry of Health and Welfare. (2021). *Special Act for Prevention, Relief and Revitalization Measures for Severe Pneumonia with Novel Pathogens*. https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=L0050039

Rosen, A. (2016, February 4). *Why future orientation is the most important part of entreprenrurial thinking*. Entrepreneur. Retrived May 20, 2022, from https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/254921

Schacter, D. L., Addis, D. R., & Buckner, R. L. (2007). Remembering the past to imagine the future: The prospective brain. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 8*(9), 657–661. https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn2213

Seligman M. (2006). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and your life*. Vintage.

Country Report: Pakistan

Career Readiness Private Sector Projects in Pakistan (Part 1)

By: Raza Abbas- Vice President-Hope Institute, Global Career Practitioner

Abstract

As per various international research and reports, Pakistan population comprises of 60% youth in the country. It is an emerging country for career counseling institutional initiatives. We have developed the holistic report involving keen multi-stakeholders that are currently implementing career counseling initiatives on ground i.e., career counseling and career guidance students studying career counseling at the Masters level in Pakistan, career guidance educator teaching at a university, governmental national initiatives and private sector / global career initiatives via social entrepreneurship contributions.

The impact of COVID-19 impacted all countries in unique ways this report shares the initiatives that were taken by Pakistan during this unexpected pandemic.   The COVID-19 pandemic caused a major employment and education crisis: all service sectors being severely impacted, with the most underprivileged being disproportionately affected. In Pakistan alone, as estimated 20.71 million workers were rendered jobless (Mian, 2021). In the aftermath of COVID-19, significant challenges have arisen when it comes to career-related education and training.

The report is divided into a secondary review of information, followed by findings because of Focus Group Discussion-FDG with practicing career counselors and career guidance students from the National University of Sciences and Technology, perspective from career guidance educator from the National University of Sciences and Technology, best private career practices and global initiatives from a social entrepreneur is included that were implemented during the covid pandemic and post-pandemic.

Contributors:

Mr. Raza Abbas – Multi Awards Winning Global Career Practitioner-Vice President- Hope Institute

Dr. Gulnaz Zahid- Assistant Professor, NUST University

Students & Alumni of NUST – MS Career Counseling & Education Program

Ms. Zilli-e-Huma Umair-Student and School counseling, Practitioner

Ms. Shehrbano Shoaib- Student

Ms. Syeda Aqsa (Alumni & STEM intervention practitioner)

Ms. Rehana Parveen (Student)

Ms. Bushra Awan (Alumni and School Counselor, Practitioner)

Ms. Ruqiyah Shahid (Alumni and Online Counseling Practitioner)

The report is divided into a secondary review of information, followed by findings because of Focus Group Discussion-FDG with practicing career counselors and career guidance students. A perspective from career guidance educator from the National University of Sciences and Technology, global career practitioner perspective and best private practices are included.

1. Secondary Review

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a major employment and education crisis: all service sectors being severely impacted, with the most underprivileged being disproportionately affected. In Pakistan alone, as estimated 20.71 million workers were rendered jobless (Mian, 2021). In the aftermath of COVID-19, significant challenges have arisen when it comes to career-related education and training.

Even before COVID-19, career-related education was not widespread. Career guidance and counselling (CGC) is an emerging field in Pakistan with majority of CGC being offered in certain educational institutions and private career guidance practices by social entrepreneurs which, unfortunately, is not enough for the entire population (Keshf & Khanum, 2021).

Though COVID-19 has speeded up the digitalization process in Pakistan, it has done so without substantially advancing the necessary skillset to take advantage of this transition. During the last year, a sharp increase has been observed in adoption of work-from-home, freelancing and digital methods in businesses, public sector institutions, education, and many other areas. Even though the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has recently claimed that 87 percent of Pakistanis have access to the internet, not only is the quality of these services poor in many areas, but it is also substantially biased in terms of gender, geography and class. Furthermore, a vast majority of users have negligible digital skills beyond basic usage and social media applications.

The vocational training sector found it particularly difficult to adapt to COVID-19 given its overt reliance on in-person interaction across hundreds of different trades. Where traditional forms of education shifted to distance learning mode, skills/trades could not be taught online (Khan, 2021).

As a response to the various challenges faced in the aftermath of COVID-19, the government of Pakistan has come up with various initiatives to support the career development of youth, with highest priority accorded to their employment. A National Youth Development Framework (NYDF) was developed as part of the Prime Minister's *Kamyab Jawan* (Successful Youth) Program, on the basic principles of 3 E's namely Education, Employment and Engagement (Mian, 2021).

NYDF focuses on empowering youth socially, economically, and politically to ensure active youth engagement at grassroots level. The NYDF also ensures access to technical, vocational, and civic education that is aligned with the requirements of current economic needs through integration of technology. Moreover, in the process of framework formulation, important consideration has been given to achieving Pakistan's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets through systematic intergovernmental coordination.

To improve youth development and sustainability, a critical aspect of the NYDF is to contribute to pro-youth legislation that could pave way for public-private partnerships to maximize its outreach and implementation.

Recently, Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan has also partnered with the US government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to launch a $19 million, five-year program to improve Pakistan's higher education system and increase the employability of university graduates. A total of 15 public Pakistani universities will benefit from this program including five women's universities. Through best practices in teaching, research, governance and sustainability, this program will provide university students with research opportunities, soft-skills training and support services such as career counselling. Additionally, academic preparation will be aligned with labor market needs through industry collaborations, enabling young people to find jobs and launch their careers (US Embassy, 2022).

Moreover, the first ever Career Fest was organized in March 2022 for school and college students by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training at the Pak-China Centre, Islamabad. Many

professionals and experts in their fields were invited to deliver talks and inspire students. A special focus was placed on the career opportunities for young girls.

Furthermore, institutions like National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) have attempted to provide training using simulators at the 75 newly established smart labs across the country, creating their own learning management system (LMS), and conducting online assessments. Meanwhile, a range of skills such as digital finance, entrepreneurship, e-commerce and programming languages are being pushed through institutes all over Pakistan (Khan, 2021).

The foremost action should be to increase the digital/technological literacy of both career guidance practitioners and students. The pandemic has taught us that we need to be open to all learning modalities as face-to-face sessions might not be possible.

Moreover, access to IT infrastructure has to be more widespread so that students in far-flung areas can also benefit (Akram, 2020). It is appropriate to mention that the scope and operational style of every university in Pakistan are different therefore, developing a one-size-fits-all approach is not applicable.

It is important to understand that in times of difficulty "good" now is better than "perfect" later and temporary actions to address obstacles in guidance and learning process are much more effective than waiting for a policy response from the central leadership (Akram, 2020).

An important skill for career guidance practitioners post COVID-19 is to be aware of the skills/jobs that are in demand in this ever-changing economy and labor market. They should

be able to think outside of the traditional employment opportunities and guide students accordingly. The nature of jobs is changing from traditional workplaces, fixed hours and benefits to contractual work, consultancies, and project-based employment in a gig economy (Khan, 2021).

Last but not least, career guidance practitioners need to become lifelong learners and have a special focus on networking with support organizations, networking with employers and advocating for unemployed people and marginalized/disadvantaged populations who are threatened by social exclusion (Abidi, 2022).

2. Reflections of Career Counselors and Career Guidance Graduate Students

The challenges we were facing before COVID 19 and we are still facing include limited experts, resources, and career guidance framework for Pakistani context. The frameworks we have are from other countries being utilized by experts. The career education and counseling related activities are not evenly and widely established by the government which is the main reason for less work in this area. However, the career guidance students who are studying at the National University of Sciences and Technology also value the framework from the developed countries which help them to borrow good practices. In addition, the counselors have also reflected on the existence of frameworks in some of the private educational institutions and practices such as adaptation of frameworks from other countries, the research and evidence-based practice is limited to establish these practices in explicit manner.

The practicing career counselors believed that majority of young people are not clear about their desired careers and therefore they focus more on Grades. And therefore, careers education shall begin from the early years of education and integrated in school curriculum of grades 8-12.

A focus group discussion was conducted with the student career counselors. They reported that we have been struggling even before COVID 19 and there is a lack of awareness about career education and career learning activities unlike Australia and UK. During COVID 19, they have learned different career education activities through the online mode. They participated in an online conference by Asia Pacific Career Development Association, and now they have increased exposure of how other countries

are conducting career-related learning. The conference developed both insight and skill set such as creative and innovative in using career guidance techniques. The conference helped students to understand that career education is beyond providing information about career pathways.

Student career counselors have reported that they have learned about a lot of ICT-related activities. They worked more on LinkedIn, Zoom and Teams. Through LinkedIn they networked and utilized the opportunity to network with the international mentors. These activities directly and indirectly helped borrowing practices to from international mentors. For-example, the focus on different online courses and focus on own career development was made.

The lockdown has disrupted focus and the comfort level due to online learning has disrupted quality learning and online learning and use of gadgets has also led to increased distraction other than academic works.

Though the student career counselors learned a lot from online platforms and LinkedIn but the implementation aspect remained weak and application opportunities remained limited. The career education students obtained several research opportunities during the COVID and that helped to utilize their learning later.

The need to know and utilize the innovative methods to bridge the gaps in services is now realized more than ever. The trainings on ICT are required to trained career counselors more than ever. The need to use ICT for career education and information was reflected by the practicing career counselors. The associated challenges include trainings and fundings to strategize and streamline ICT use for careers education and information. In this connection, the existing levels of evidence-based works, lack of indigenous tests for career choice assessments, and unavailability of national career competency framework restrict career counselors to expand their services through ICT mode.

One of the career guidance students completed her research on employability, entrepreneur and enterprise skills embedded in psychology undergraduate curriculum through telephonic and online interviews. She reported that the demand of skill set has changed globally, initially employers were not asking of but now the employers are asking of ICT skills and innovation and creativity skills. Mainly because the students' skill set was improvised in the lock down. Now the students know the online portals and search information and students have been modified educationally. Now we need to modify education system or career related learning.

3. The practices and initiatives of Pakistan to overcome the said challenges and promote career development support in the aftermath of COVID-19

Student career counselors shared that there is a rise in the awareness and need of vocational training. Such as people now are aware of Amazon trainings. Now there is a Pakistan Television PTV state owned channel for online lessons. It is a starting point to increase literacy which will provide foundations to careers education. Now small business starts up has a lot of content on Youtube. Even, TikTok has educational pages to guide about skillset and digital safety.

Students have started courses online and they are even learning different skill sets such as programming. There are opportunities to develop skill sets which eventually may help to realize and identify skill sets for young people. A youtuber doctor through online information is creating awareness about medical tests and admissions.

Now textbooks and newspaper articles do not only support learning. This is a new era in which social learning platforms support.

The practicing career counselors shared that there is readiness in career guidance counselors to adopt the change. People are obtaining information from social media and portals and now ask

questions from career experts. Now parents are not always perceived as rigid. There is an increased trend of organizing careers and STEM expo.

COVID led to this situation, but the festivals and expo were offered after COVID lockdown. Career guidance expo by the federal government is an example which took place after the lockdown, and this shows a dire need to prepare experts and young people for online career expo.

4. The quality standards and the skills of career guidance practitioners for our society to transform into a more sustainable, resilient, and digital-rich one

The MS Career Counseling and Education Program at the National University of Sciences and Technology is focusing on the National Career Development Association- NCDA competencies for student career counselors. The practicing counselors and students through Focus Group Discussion shared that we need to gel standards in career guidance practice for Pakistan. The skill sets largely depend upon practice and work experience. There is a lack of mentoring as we do not have a body to regulate. There is a dire need to focus on skill set development through career education activities.

Standardized career tools are required to standardized career guidance practices. The lack of funds to purchase tools and lack of indigenous tools is one of the reasons that many experts either use or develop ways of assessment through their own models of practice.

5. Reflections by Career Guidance Educator

The career guidance educator from the MS Career Counseling and Education (NUST) indicated the unpreparedness for online education was itself a challenge. Despite this the higher education streamlined curriculum delivery within the given resources and expertise. Teaching and learning in the MS Career Counseling and Education was also challenged. There was a huge struggle to enhance the required skills of students. After the lockdown, it was observed that students showed increased passion to complete their degree. Majority of them showed interest to seek experiential learning opportunities to compensate for practice sessions which they could not conduct in an online mode.

During the online mode in COVID 19, students created online videos on career-related learning and the importance of new and innovative ways of learning was realized to the great extent. Students also conducted role plays through the online mode during their classes.

All these initiatives helped us to understand that innovative ways by using technology for career related learning is a need of future.

As a result of online mode, we now strongly realize importance of networking through LinkedIn and encourage students to network and learn from other professionals by connecting through LinkedIn.

Students also exhibited their sensitivity to the situation. One of the students investigated work readiness as a result on internships and to complete the thesis, the student collected data from undergraduate students who completed internships in both face to face and online mode.

COVID 19 has opened an array of opportunities for career guidance educators. The focus on online mode of career guidance and exploration of how career guidance through an online mode has increased. There is a need to develop, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of online programs for training in career guidance which can develop a comparable level of skill set which face to face mode of education develop.

The most important indicator of quality is to focus on the competencies which the program develops. There is a keen focus on how students develop their competencies after the lockdown because of COVID 19 was over and how their competencies can further be improved as desired by engaging them

in experiential learning. The students who graduated are in the field are encouraged to visit their professors and seek guidance where required as there is a deep realization that students who completed degree in the online mode may require guidance for practical works. However, considering the challenges of the current era, the career guidance counselor must be able to solve problems in innovative and creative manners and shall remain updated about global trends in both labor market and career guidance through networking. Adaptability to novel situations is also key to success. Therefore, other than key competencies, it is important to focus on innovation, creativity, networking, and adaptability.

Quality can be best attained by analyzing the outcomes and destinations of students who studied in an online and face to face mode and investing their performance in relation to their competencies. Such research may provide insight for the way forward.

6. Practitioner Perspective

It is important to consider that Pakistan, in comparison with other developing countries, is facing a dual challenge when it comes to the education and training for young people and adults due to the Covid'19 Pandemic (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2021) and the recent Flood'22 (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UN-OCHA], 2022). Currently, there are around 2M students who are unable to continue their education because of the absence of classrooms or learning spaces just because of the Flood'22 (Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives, 2022).

If we look at the canvas of the career development industry in Pakistan and analyze the aftermaths of the Covid'19 Pandemic, we can see a silver lining. For example, after the Covid'19 Pandemic, there is a significant increase in the use of online career counseling via platforms such as Upwork and MentoGa. Now, more career guidance practitioners are providing online services to students using these platforms.

Mr. Raza Abbas took an initiative in the pandemic to advocating for career development in the time of COVID by establishing a youtube channel and interviewing leading career influencers from around the globe, so the spotlight remains on career development. Advocating for career development in the time of COVID - CareerWise (ceric.ca).

Links of 17 career conversations with global career influencers till date are as follows:

Maximizing Career Guidance & Development- 17th Conversation- Ilze- Euroguidance Programme Manager - YouTube

Maximizing Career Guidance & Development- 16th Conversation- Natalie- KauffmanNcareers, LLC-CEO - YouTube

Maximizing Career Guidance & Development- 15th Conversation- Dr. Elissavet- MD Square Dot Team - YouTube

Maximizing Career Guidance & Development- 14th Conversation- Dr. Rie- Professor Aarhus University - YouTube

Maximizing Career Guidance & Development- 13th Conversation- Mr. Riz Ibrahim- ED-CERIC - YouTube

Maximizing Career Guidance & Development- 12th Conversation- Dr. Brian- Past President-APCDA - YouTube

Maximizing Career Guidance & Development- 11th Conversation- Mr. Phil Jarvis- Chief Edu. Reimagineer - YouTube

[Maximizing Career: Guidance & Development- 10th Conversation- Ms. Anjana Kulasekara- CEO-Careerme - YouTube](#)

[Maximizing Career: Guidance & Development- 9th Conversation- Ms. Sareena- Global Career Luminary - YouTube](#)

[Maximizing Career: Guidance & Development- 8th Conversation- Ms. Tracey- Global Career Practitioner - YouTube](#)

[Maximizing Career: Guidance & Development- 7th Conversation- Mr. Avron Herr- Global Career Luminary - YouTube](#)

[Maximizing Career: Guidance & Development- 6th Conversation- Dr. Gert- President IAEVG - YouTube](#)

[Maximizing Career: Guidance & Development- 5th Conversation- Dr. Lisa Raufman- Career Strategist - YouTube](#)

[Maximizing Career: Guidance & Development- 4th Conversation- Dr. Roberta Neault- Career Luminary - YouTube](#)

[Maximizing Career: Guidance & Development- 3rd Conversation- Dr. Deirdre Hughes- UK- OBE - YouTube](#)

[Maximizing Career: Guidance & Development- 2nd Conversation- Ms. Paula W. Yerama- Canada - YouTube](#)

[Maximizing Career: Guidance & Development- 1st Conversation- Dr. Seth Hayden- USA - YouTube](#)

On the national level, the government also took some initiatives focusing on the career guidance of university graduates and students enrolled in vocational education institutions. These initiatives include Prime Minister Youth Program, Rehnumai Markaz from Punjab Higher Education Commission, and Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) - Reforms for Career Counselling and Job placement. The main objective is to assist students in better career decision-making.

Career Readiness Private Sector Projects in Pakistan (Part 2)

1. Career Readiness Online Program-Youth & Teachers

1) Overview

A career readiness institutionalized program of creating hope by career counseling has been strategically and culturally developed keeping in view the social economic challenges of youth of Pakistan. Institutionalized career counseling model highlights the key competencies of career counseling: hope, self-actualization, self-clarity, visualization, goal setting, and execution which is integrated in its teacher training counseling programs. Teachers and career counselors are facing increasing demands; they need to identify the hidden competencies of the youth to consistently provide a support system of career guidance and career counseling.

By offering a holistic institutionalized career readiness program and by educating and developing competent career counselors we are instilling and creating hope amongst the teacher and youth community. As the need for career counseling increases, so does the requirement for skilled career practitioners arises. The program involves the relevant stakeholders i.e. schools, colleges, universities, employers, parents and most significantly the youth in its career counseling teacher training program. The institutionalized model caters to educators of schools, colleges, universities that enroll themselves in a strategically and culturally relevant 40-hour career counseling training program spilt in 20 hours each with a two-week interval of implementing career counseling and career readiness at their respective organizations. The impact of these creative teacher training career counseling and career education programs has a sustainable impact on the respective educational institutions to create hope amongst the dis-advantaged yet talented youth of Pakistan.

2) Private sector initiative- Pathway Global Career Institute

Initiated research and culturally based 40 hour holistic career readiness program for youth and teachers of grades 8-12 to identify youth's career field as per their interest, skills, aptitude and temperament and then provide youth with skills for job employability and job creation and develop teachers to be Career Educators.

Impact: Executed the program to countless dis-advantaged youth and under-privilege teachers. Scaling up the program nationally.

2. Parental Career Guidance & Youth Online Career Dialogues

1) Overview

According to UNESCO and leading global institutions of excellence, Pakistan's current population is comprised of 60% youth. Considering Asia's regional cultural context, parents are the key decision-makers in Pakistan when it comes to helping their children decide career fields. Realizing the importance of parents' influence, a pioneering parental career guidance best career practice is currently in execution. The career practice was designed to instill hope in parents and share ground realities of various career fields in Pakistan so that their youth select career fields leading to meaningful and skilled jobs or to fields which help them establish start-ups and promote regional entrepreneurship.

The focus of the best career practice is on parents whose son/daughters are currently studying in 8-12 grade at public and private schools in Pakistan. The practice is aimed at informing them about diverse career fields commonly known in the country and also sharing information about emerging career fields

which will have bright future career prospects. The best practice provides career awareness to parents about the significance of futuristic career fields and how career selection influences career transformation for youth, their respective families and the Asian region as well. In summary this innovative career thinking practice will be a paradigm-shift in the career counseling and career guidance sector. This best practice was presented and well acknowledged at the OECD International Conference by scholars and practitioners.

Presentation PowerPoint (oecd.org)

Impact: Executed with great success- Scaling up the program nationally.

3. Instilling Hope in Disadvantaged Youth and Teachers

1) Overview: Interventions of Hope in Pakistan

By having the willingness to learn and un-learn, young people not only become more hopeful themselves - they can also enhance hope in their communities, which is the need of the hour. I facilitate hope-centered workshops for students in Karachi, Pakistan. To thrive in the 21st century, hope is the new pre-requisite and way of life. It is a healthy practice to appreciate and enjoy the countless blessings that we currently possess.

While we have the largest population of youth in Pakistan's history, we are presented with the challenge of tapping the potential of young people for the country's socio and economic development. This aspiration cannot be achieved without understanding the fundamental problems young people experience today and pondering over solutions to these problems. Some of the challenges towards youth development include high anxiety levels, unemployment, and inadequate career counseling and career guidance.

The Hope-Centered Workshop is an integrative, evidenced-based approach to conceptualizing, assessing and building hope that can be used across cultures and spiritual belief systems. It is based on the work of Dr. Anthony Scioli. The workshops are a "whole-brain" approach, combining cognitive-behavioural exercises with philosophical reflections and meditative-hypnotic exercises. Five modules are included in this intervention: two attachment modules, and one each for mastery, survival, and spiritual hope. A comprehensive self-report hope scale is administered before and after the workshop.

2) Positive mindset

In our pilot research in Pakistan, hope scores increased significantly, with an effect size of 1.07. The qualitative feedback was equally encouraging. An exit interview was conducted after the intervention with all participants. Themes of empowerment (mastery), greater openness (attachment), hope for improved self-regulation and coping (survival), and heightened awareness to spiritual needs were commonly reported.

"I started off the workshop with a very demoralizing mindset. Currently my mindset is really very different and positive than what I initiated with. I will give credit to hope workshops for diverting me towards positivity," says student Anushay Hussain. "The idea of carrying out a research on such a rare studied topic in Pakistan was not only unique but zealous at the same time. It has been a great learning experience. I feel more hopeful towards my life and profession now. I hope there are more alike researches carried out in future in Pakistan and the region," says Senior Lecturer Ifrah Shah.

3) Torch bearers

The pilot of the research was to strengthen the supply side of youth character building and employability by facilitating hope centered institutionalized teacher and youth training at educational institutions. To improve the demand side by instilling hope in students at all levels in making educated and informed career decisions. The implication of the study is a source for socio- economic think tank to re-strategize educational policy. Based on the pilot study program, hope should be introduced as an elective in the university's and school curriculum nationally and globally in order to make a sustainable impact leading to optimistic graduates prepared to face the challenges of work in the 21st century.

The keys:

- ✓ The Hope-Centered Workshop is an integrative, evidenced-based approach to conceptualizing, assessing and building hope that can be used across cultures and spiritual belief systems.
- ✓ Establishment of a hope centered foundation is the need of the hour that inspires humanity, irrespective of race, gender, age, religion and disability.
- ✓ People should have self-confidence and belief in themselves and the future, especially at times of adversity.

Source: Extracted from Global Best-seller "*The World Book of Hope"*

4) Private sector initiative- Pathway Global

Pioneered and collaborated in a ground-breaking cross-cultural research study; hope-centered workshops are an integrative, evidence based approach to conceptualizing, assessing, and building hope that can be used across cultures and spiritual belief systems in higher secondary schools and university students and teachers.

6 interactive workshops of 120 minutes each with a pre and post hope test.

Impact: Executed with great success, scaling up and replicating it nationally and globally

4. Conclusion

There continues to be a substantial disconnect between employment preparedness and academia's responsiveness to cater to this need for preparing young potential graduates with employability skills. We have educational policies in place in Pakistan but implementation can be improved significantly and career readiness, career guidance and career counseling policies need to initiated as it is the need of current economic times, especially with a more vigorous scaling up of policy initiatives and social interventions led by the government in partnership with the private sector which already is relatively more proactive in tapping into the employability gap and the gap in terms of graduate preparedness. On the impact of policies and practices, it must be emphasized that across Pakistan, these are not adequately cross-sectoral. This means that while the number of women entering the workforce has increased in recent years, there needs to be greater collection of evidence to quantify women's retention in workforce, the inclusion of other gender and sexual minorities in the mainstream workforce, the creation of inclusive employment opportunities for other marginalized communities. It has yet to be seen in terms of the evidence gathered, what practices can impact greater employment inclusion in Pakistan, since the data available is not significant.

Pakistan requires career reforms that are sustainable. A coherent national policy is needed for supporting career development in Pakistan. This national policy has to then translate into policy

endorsement at the levels of provincial and local governments in Pakistan. Specifically, the content and delivery of career services must be informed by evidence-based policy research and intervention.

Global best practices must be explored for their relevance and must be contextualized to respond to Pakistan's local demographic and preparedness dynamics. Policy levers in place that support necessary reforms are at the infancy level of their development. Multi-stakeholder advocacy for career counseling is a growing need which can be responded to by ensuring coherence between national and provincial level career policy arrangements. These policy arrangements must not be demarcated and held in exclusion to the provincially overlapping nature of local labour market. The need is for more exhaustive, more comprehensive cross-sectoral policies.

Main Barriers of Career Readiness- Missing focus in education, youth, and labour policies - Lack of career counseling professional awareness - Lack of qualified career practitioners - Often confused career counseling as sending students abroad for higher education - Lack of budget appropriations Success Factors - Youth, Teachers, Parents realize the importance of career counseling that it is required for the country's economic development. - Corporate Sector through its corporate social responsibility-CSR programs has supported career counseling projects which are positive developments in Pakistan. - The Government has initiated some career counseling teacher training projects; however more can be implemented. Philanthropists have also financially supported career reform projects, which is a good sign of social acceptance.

Except for a few mostly private sector universities, most public sector universities are yet to establish highly functional and well-resourced career counseling departments dedicated specifically to the task of mentoring students in their career needs and in facilitating their career trajectories. On this front, the eagerness of public reform is also widely absent and therefore the private sector has been able to tap into this void and create a space and market for career-focused counsel and training.

Increasing professional career counseling, career guidance and career readiness advocacy is required not just in Pakistan but in the Asian region. Re-strategize policy in line with the contemporary market demands; Aim for a focused yet vigorous and urgent building of connection between academia and the market. Mutual collaborations where Career Readiness, Career Counseling, Career Guidance has strengthened as a national policy in Asia can be initiated in Pakistan which will lead to peace, co-existence in a strategic region of the world.

Over the years, we have quality evidence, reliable data, and best career development practices from career scholars and career practitioners globally that have significantly contributed to UN Sustainable Development Goals. As a careers sector we are united to collectively advocate and act for a UN Careers & Livelihood Day in collaboration with multi stakeholders around the globe promoting that 'Career Development is the change we wish to see in the world'. Raza Abbas. Join us in the global careers movement by contributing to our blog for UN Careers & Livelihood Day: https:// www.undcl.org/

Greater collective synergy, cooperation, and co-creation are "the need of the hour' Let's make the world better through championing career development in a world that sorely needs more of it!

References

Abidi, S. (2022, March 24). *The importance of career counseling in Pakistan* - Career Counsellor and Educationist. https://syedabidi.com/index.php/2022/03/24/the-importance-of-career-counseling-in-pakistan-2/

Akram, K. T. (2020, August 26). COVID-19 and the problem faced by the Higher Education System in Pakistan. *Islamabad Post*. https://islamabadpost.com.pk/covid-19-and-the-problem-faced-by-the-higher-education-system-in-pakistan/

Career Fest 2022. (2022, March). http://www.mofept.gov.pk. http://www.mofept.gov.pk/TopStoryDetail

Keshf, Z., & Khanum, S. (2021). Career guidance and counseling needs in a developing country's context: A qualitative study. *SAGE Open*, *11*(3), 215824402110401. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211040119

Khan, D. A. (2021, June 9). *Skills Development to Accelerate Economic Recovery during Covid-19*. Tabadlab | Understanding Change. https://tabadlab.com/skills-development-to-accelerate-economic-recovery-during-covid-19/

Mian, B. (2021, June 11). Lockdowns rendered 20.7m workers jobless. DAWN.COM. https://www.dawn.com/news1628655

Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives. (2022). *Pakistan Floods 2022 - Post-Disaster Needs Assessment.* Islamabad. https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/downloads/PDNA-2022.pdf

Pakistan, M. U. S. (2022, May 12). The United States and Pakistan launch an initiative to strengthen Higher education. U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Pakistan. https://pk.usembassy.gov/the-united-states-and-pakistan-launch-an-initiative-to-strengthen-higher-education/

*United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2021). Pakistan case Study - situation analysis on the effects of and responses to COVID-19 on the education sector in Asia. Nepal.*https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/media/4011/file/UNESCO%20and%20UNICEF%20Education%20Case%20Study.pdf

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA). (2022). *Pakistan: 2022 monsoon floods, situation report No. 9.* https://reliefweb.int/report/pakistan/pakistan-2022-monsoon-floods-situation-report-no-9-14-october-2022

V

Country Report: India

Promoting Career Development and Livelihood Planning in Post-Pandemic India: Challenges and Examples

Country Paper from India for the Global Career Month, 2022

Sachin Kumar *, Gideon Arulmani**, & Rayan Miranda***

*Associate Professor, Government Degree College, Shahpur, Himachal Pradesh, India.
  Email: samparksachin@gmail.com (Corresponding author)
**Director, The Promise Foundation, Bangalore, Karnataka, India. Email: garulmani@t-p-f.org
*** Assistant Director, The Promise Foundation, Bangalore, Karnataka, India
    Email: miranda@t-p-f.org

Abstract

   India is a lower-middle-income South Asian country. It is home to 17.7% of humanity with a median age of 28.4 years. Currently, it is one of the largest economies in the world, yet it ranks very low in terms of per capita GDP. Paradoxically, it records overall prosperity and resilience amidst growing poverty and glaring inequalities. India is said to be inadequately formalized, financialized, urbanized, industrialized, and skilled with growing unemployment and unemployability. The pandemic has hit the lives and livelihoods of people the world over. India has not been an exception. COVID-19 has exacerbated the challenges that India has been struggling with. This country report aims to list challenges that India is currently facing in promoting livelihoods and supporting jobs and careers of young people in the aftermath of COVID-19; and, to document some of the practices being adopted and initiatives being taken up by the state as well as non-state actors to deal with these challenges. The paper begins by outlining the country context as the backdrop and lists out key issues in the realms of livelihood promotion and career development support. Then it goes on to give a brief summary of the repercussions of the pandemic in the Indian context. Its main section presents 5 diverse case studies, each dealing with a specific target group or a specific challenge. The first case documents the initiative taken by the Government of India for ameliorating the conditions of street vendors, one of the main constituents of the informal economy and one of the worst-affected victims of the pandemic. The second case presents the development of a module for nurturing employability skills in the vocational sector leveraging digital technology. The third case addresses the social justice deficits through career guidance. The fourth example highlights an online career education initiative for secondary school students by one of the provincial governments. The final case sums up the experience of creating a culture-resonant evidence-based structure and system for career guidance. The final section of this country paper presents a brief account of the current status of quality standards and the skills of career guidance practitioners in India.

1. The Indian Context: An Introduction

India is a country of continental proportions. It is the seventh-largest country by area, the second-most populous country, and the most populous democracy in the world. Considered a lower-middle-income nation, India has been a federal republic since 1950. It is the world's fastest-growing and fifth-largest economy by nominal GDP and the third-largest by purchasing power parity (PPP) (IMF, 2022). However, in terms of per capita GDP, India is ranked 142nd and 125th on a nominal basis and on the basis of PPP respectively (IMF, 2022) demonstrating a growing nation with glaring inequalities as exemplified in Gini Coefficient and Gender Inequality Index (BTI, 2022).   With a poverty headcount ratio (at $2.15 a day of 2017 PPP) standing at 10 % (World Bank, 2022), the top 1% of the Indian population holds more than one-fifth of the total national income in 2021, and the bottom half just 13% presenting a situation of 'rising poverty and affluent elites' (Chancel, Picketty & Saez, 2022).   India has more than 50% of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35. In 2020, the average age of an Indian was 29 years, compared to 37 for China and 48 for Japan; by 2030 India's dependency ratio will be just over 0.4 (Basu, 2007). This huge youth population is affording India an opportunity to reap a   demographic dividend. If it is not harnessed correctly, it is likely to turn into a demographic disaster (Goswami, 2022; Singh, 2022)). By 2030, India is expected to have a talent deficit of 85.2 million workers and at the same time, it is projected to have a skilled labour surplus of 245.3 million workers by 2030   creating, what has been earlier termed as the Great Indian Talent Conundrum (Singh & Majumdar, 2018). However, the unemployment among Indian Youth stood at 28.26%, and the unemployability rate at 54.1 % in 2021. In 2019-20, of the 542 million young people, only 73 million or nearly 13 percent received any form of vocational training and only 3 percent were formally skilled (Kapuria, 2022).   India has been ranked at the 116th position in Human Capital Index, a position lower than other BRICS countries and few of its South Asian neighbours as well.   On the social front, India is a pluralistic, multilingual, and multi-ethnic society with considerable strides in human development over the years but still has to traverse long distances since it ranks 132 out of 191 countries in Human Development Index (HDI).

2. Facilitating Career Development and Promoting livelihood in India: Key Challenges

1) Pre-COVID scenario

Even before the pandemic, India was beset with a number of knotty issues impacting the lives and livelihoods of the people. Kumar & Kumar (2019) described these key political, social, economic, and technological issues in another country report written just before the onset of the pandemic. They point to issues pertaining to: the growing footprints of climate change, particularly in the agrarian sector; erosion of natural resource-dependent livelihood bases in rural areas; climate change-induced migration; shift towards a green, low-carbon economy; movement towards the fourth industrial revolution; the alarming divide between digital haves and have-nots;   structural shift of the economy from agrarian-rural to becoming an urban and non-agrarian one; trends toward greater home-based work, informalisation, casualisation, contractualisation and sub-contractualisation. They also point out the crisis in the sphere of learning in terms of poor achievement levels, low rates of skill acquisition, low employability, and lack of mastery in fundamental competencies. These deficits resulted in a poor level of workforce preparedness leading to a suboptimal transition into the world of work. At the same time, they point toward growing vulnerabilities of marginalised groups, those who are excluded on the basis of their caste, class, gender, location, ethnicity, religion, or ability status due to the combined effect of a number of factors such as exclusionary neoliberal economic policies, jobless growth, existing structural hierarchies, and unrestrained and reckless exploitation of natural resources.

As far as the facilitation of career development is concerned, even during pre-pandemic times, career services were limited in their coverage, These services are still largely available to persons who: are living in urban centres, particularly in metropolitan cities; are in formal educational institutions; belong to

socially privileged communities; are tech-savvy and possess digital literacy; want to join formal labour markets; whose parents/guardians are educationally aware and economically independent. The groups that are excluded are mainly: girls, women, tribal, minorities, those who are neither in education, employment, or training; persons with disability, informal workers, poor, Dalits (persons from the lower rungs of the caste hierarchy); persons who are in the vocational sector; persons in remote areas; digital have-nots; persons whose parents are uneducated or less informed and less resourceful. Other than limited coverage, efficacy and quality of such services have also been questioned.

2.2 Aftermath of COVID 19

COVID -19 resulted, world over, in 'the Great Pause' resulting in an unprecedented downturn in socioeconomic processes impacting everyone but jeopardizing the lives and livelihoods of those at the lower end of the economic spectrum. An ILO report documenting the impact of COVID -19 on youth's education, jobs, and mental health (ILO, 2020) notes that even before the onset of the crisis, the social and economic integration of young people was an ongoing challenge. The impact of the pandemic has been systematic, deep, and disproportionate. It has been particularly hard on young women, younger youth, and youth in lower-income countries with a heavy toll on young workers, destroying their employment and undermining their career prospects. Severe disruption to learning and working, compounded by the health crisis, has seen a deterioration in young people's mental well-being.

In the Indian context, a number of studies have documented the impact of the pandemic on the careers and livelihoods of the people (e.g., Ali & Kamraju, 2020; Basole, 2021; Kesar, Abraham, Lahoti,Nath, & Basole, 2021; Basole et al, 2021; Roy, 2021; Sircar, 2021). As Basole (2021) observes, the pandemic struck an already weak economy in early 2020, which was going through its greatest economic downturn since 1991. In addition, economic growth over the previous ten years had fallen short of producing the necessary number of employment opportunities, notably in formal, productive work, leading to the continuation of high levels of informality. The number of people in working age increased by 115.5 million between 2011–12 and 2017–18. However, the workforce actually decreased by 11.3 million, and the unemployment rate increased from 2.2% to 6.1%. Every educational level saw a rise in youth unemployment, those with post-secondary education had the highest level of unemployment (33%). The pandemic compounded the situation further due to curtailment in opportunities for education, training, and employment. Just like every other country. the bulk of Indian households was severely impacted by the nationwide lockdown in 2020, with incomes decreasing anywhere from 40% to 100%, depending on the type of work and location.. The casual daily-wage workers, who make up over a third of all workers in the nation, were one of the largest victims of the lockdown. These workers lost their jobs as factories closed their doors. Women, youth, and migrants got affected disproportionately. Nearly half of formally salaried workers moved into informal employment in 2020. Incomes for the bottom 10 percent of households collapsed due to job losses and wage reductions engendering steep in-equalities. As Quest Alliance (2021) rightly observes, the socio-economic changes that were beginning to take shape by mid-2020 turned out to be characterized by the skill gap that emerged with the pandemic. The nature of work and the skills needed to succeed in that setting likewise underwent an irreversible change as the economy started to "distance" and digitize at an unprecedented rate.

3. Facilitating Livelihoods and Careers in India: Key initiatives

The government of India came up with a number of initiatives to ameliorate the conditions of workers and to support their survival and livelihoods. The key strategies included food security, distribution, cash transfers, credit support, upskilling, reskilling, and start-up support (e.g., Government of India, 2022; Sircar, 2021). Earlier efforts for using information and communication technologies got accelerated and strengthened especially in the realm of education and training. Online delivery of learning services

became the norm and a number of EdTech companies jumped in along with various government initiatives. As reported internationally as well, career guidance was not the explicit part of the response and recovery process in India (Cedefop, European Commission, ETF, ICCDPP,   ILO, OECD, UNESCO, 2020) barring a few exceptions at the provincial levels, primarily due to other priorities. While the demand for career and livelihood support services got multiplied, the availability, adequacy, and quality of services reduced drastically. However, a number of non-state actors adapted quickly and came up with innovative solutions as well. This section presents 5 case studies of initiatives to support livelihoods and careers both by state and non-state entities. The range of cases covers efforts made to address a number of contemporary issues such as informal labour, vocational education, social justice, green career development, and technology adoption.

3.1 Government support of workers in the informal sector: Case of street vendors

The pandemic proved more fatal to workers in the informal and unorganised sector that employs nearly 93% of the Indian workforce. In the financial year 2020, the retail and allied sector has been found to be the second highest employment generator after agriculture, in India. Informal retail can be divided into two categories: those who operate from fixed shops and others who do not. Generally, it is the latter category of street vendors that is closer to the bottom of the pyramid for want of resources. Street vendors, the most visible yet largely unacknowledged section of the urban economy were the first hit during the pandemic. In fact, other than usual vendors, a number of return migrants also took to vending as a livelihood option.   Government circulars and schemes assisted in ameliorating conditions of street vendors during and after the pandemic. The key initiatives are listed here:

- ✓ A circular was issued that classified fruit and vegetable as essential commodities enabling vendors to do their business uninterrupted.
- ✓ Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs launched a scheme PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi)to empower vendors through credit support. The scheme intends to facilitate collateral-free working capital loans of up to INR10,000/- of one-year tenure, to approximately 50 lakh street vendors, to help resume their businesses.
- ✓ Before giving loans it was necessary to recognise them and their vocation. As a consequence, a number of street vendors received licenses, and identity cards in a short period of time and gained immediate visibility.
- ✓ Various state governments such as Odisha and Rajasthan ensured direct fund transfers to vendors' accounts.
- ✓ The Prime Minister himself held online meetings with vendors that bolstered their morale and gave a message to officials that top leadership in the government was serious about vendors' issues.
- ✓ During and after the lockdown, a number of reports sprang of cases of atrocities committed on vendors by law enforcement agencies. Circulars were issued by the ministry to the state governments for conducting sensitization and behavior change training for police personnel to prevent harassment and eviction orders to improve their dealings with vendors.
- ✓ Standing committee on urban development came with a report on the status of implementation of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihoods and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, and came with a number of recommendations which were put into action shortly.

2) Leveraging technology for employability skills in TVET sector: Case of Quest Alliance

Established in 2005, Quest Alliance (https://www.questalliance.net/) is an Indian non-profit organisation that seeks to empower youth by employing educational technology to provide self-learning pathways for 21st-century skills. Its work includes enhancing the ecosystem's capacities, particularly those of governments, teachers, and principals. Quest collaborates with government primary and secondary

schools, engineering institutions, vocational training institutes, and industrial training institutes (ITIs). It creates scalable solutions that give educators and system administrators the tools they need to close significant gaps in India's ecosystem for education and skills development. This is accomplished through projects with various partners that encourage the efficient and responsible use of technology to grow initiatives in entrepreneurship, education, and employability.

One of the key products has been named Quest App which claims to facilitate anytime, anywhere, any device learning. This App includes over 170 mobile-first lessons covering a variety of topics including Communicative English, Career Development, Life Skills, Digital Literacy, Self-employment, Work Readiness, and Customer Interaction. Aimed at young people entering work, this multi-device, gamified platform may be used in offline environments and track learners' progress and performance in real-time. One of the segments of this App is called My Career Toolkit which is a collection of 36 interactive "mobisodes" (mobile episodes) intended to provide young people with the mindset and skills they need to construct successful careers for themselves. The toolkit, which is geared toward 15–21-year-olds from lower socioeconomic groups, empowers learners to take charge of their professional journeys by helping them gain a fundamental understanding of who they are and the potential careers that are open to them. This helps them get ready to start working. The course teaches important 21st-century skills like communication, critical thinking, reflection, negotiation, and initiative in addition to career development ideas like self-awareness, understanding the working environment, career research, and planning.

Experiences of Quest with multiple partners across various geographies helped it develop a unique curriculum on Employability Skills which was scaled up due to adoption by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India. More than 2.5 million students from over 15,600 government and private Industrial Training Institutes (it is) are going to be benefited from the program which includes 120- hour curriculum in both Hindi and English languages. Some of the modules include an introduction to employability skills, digital skills, citizenship, diversity and inclusion, career development and goal setting, getting ready for work, and entrepreneurship. There will be different variants of the curriculum like 30, 60, and 90-hour duration for both long-term and short-term courses accordingly. Building a self-learning mentality, creating a career-ready route in this post-pandemic world, creating awareness about new vocations, and nurturing the skills required for this century are the three primary benefits the curriculum will offer to aspiring students. The programme will assist educators to become more adept at blended learning methods and enhance their skills for modern classrooms. The curriculum's various sections have been designed with the volatile post-COVID job market in mind. The lessons support students in developing self-learning mindsets and locating positions in emerging industries like the gig economy and green jobs

3) Building a social justice perspective through career guidance: Case of Samvada .

Samvada, a collective based in Bangalore but with footprints across many provinces of the country, envisions creating a gender-just, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable world by partnering with young people (https://samvadabaduku.org/). Samvada created Baduku Centre for Livelihood Learning, a community college in 2007. Instead of preparing for labour market-driven options, Baduku trains youth from disadvantaged backgrounds for career and livelihood options that emanate from the contemporary challenges of our times. It creates spaces where young people can learn in a stimulating and caring environment. They are continually pushed to evaluate their worldviews and self-perceptions. Students gain new skill sets and emerge as competent and committed social leaders.   Baduku college has currently 4 centres through which 8 socially critical courses are being offered. Centre for Wellness and Justice offers a Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education; Post Graduate Diploma in Counseling for Women's Wellness and Justice; and, Certificate Course in Gender Justice and Law. Centre for Youth and Sustainable Development offers Cultivating Hope – Certificate Course in

Sustainable Farming; Waste Adventurers – Certificate course in Waste Management; Certificate Course in Agri Entrepreneurship; and Certificate Course on Responsible Tourism. Centre for Transformative Education offers a Diploma in Career Guidance named Diksoochi and another Diploma in Critical and Creative Teaching named Learning Lenses. Centre for Creative and Critical Media Creative Media offers Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism; and a Certificate Course on Reporting.

   The course Diksoochi (literally meaning 'compass'), which aims to prepare career guides emerged out of Samavada's experience of encountering aspirations, dreams and stories of marginalised youth for nearly 3 decades. Since career aspirations are not formed in isolation and they are a product of an individual's social location, the nature of exposure youth have, and the kind of futures they can imagine for themselves become crucial. Recognising that finding meaningful livelihoods are a critical component of youth self-definitions, and identities, Samvada began Vrutti Notas (or ways of looking at work) as a perspective-building exercise with young people in Karnataka. Through these workshops, youth were empowered to unpack how their career aspirations were formed- not just as individual dreams, but as socially conditioned understandings of their futures. The unpacking of aspirations was then followed up with enabling young people to rethink their aspirations, taking into account their interests, capabilities and possibilities for socio-economic mobility. This reconfiguration of future work lives, and clearer pathways proved to be empowering for many young people we worked with. Over time, it was realized that there was a need for career guides who could facilitate such a reconfiguration of career aspirations, and help plan in realistic terms- this provided the impetus to start Diksoochi. The intent of the course, of which 5 batches have been held, is to enable youth from socially marginalized locations to become career guides, and to support youth similar to themselves. The understanding is that those with similar shared realities of the social world will understand the precarity and possibilities of careers in more empathetic ways. Diksoochi course now positions itself as a learning resource for youth workers, already placed within youth organisations working for the socially marginalized- empowering them to better guide young people they mentor in their career paths. While Samvada has been working to enable socially marginalized youth to think more clearly about their career paths, and plan their futures for several years now, COVID and the post-pandemic world have made this a more pressing need. When designing the youth work course in the post-pandemic world, partner organisations across the country expressed a need to understand and address the question of livelihood precarity. Recognising this need, Samvada's national-level youth work course included a module on career guidance, incorporating Samvada's unique experience of seeing meaningful careers as part of youth rights, and social justice.

4) Career education for students in secondary school during pandemic: Case of Samagra Career Online

   In order to ensure that studies do not get disrupted during COVID-19, the Department of Education, Government of Himachal Pradesh in India started an initiative christened Har Ghar Pathashala (literally meaning every home, a school). Spearheaded by Samagra Shiksha,   this initiative could reach more than 70% of students virtually through the daily sharing of video lessons, weekly quizzes, and quarterly e-Parent Teacher Meetings. A need was also felt to provide counselling assistance to the students. One of the areas where secondary students feel confused and stressed pertains to career decision-making. The questions related to the choice of courses and careers keep haunting young people and their parents because they are aware that a suboptimal choice would lead to a life without fulfilment. Therefore, a career education service was started with the name Samagra Career Online. Specifically tailor-made for students in secondary and senior secondary classes, this initiative aimed to facilitate self-understanding, understanding of the world of education and occupation, career decision-making, and career planning. A series of short educational videos were prepared and got uploaded twice a week. These videos have been viewed by a number of students, teachers, and parents. Questions and queries were sent through a dedicated email and answers were given through personalized videos. Some of the video titles that were prepared under this initiative are listed below: Characteristics of career; Career

choice and development: Key step; Getting into a career –key steps; Understanding interests; Aptitude, Abilities, Skills; Interests Vs. Ability; Values and Preferences; Career beliefs; Career Name; Career Tasks; Advantages and Disadvantages of a Career; Entry routes; Integrating information and listing options; Evaluating and finalizing options; Exploring and prioritizing options; Charting entry routes; Drawing Career Path; Preparing for a path; Developing an action plan; Scheduling key activities.

5) Creating culture resonant evidence based, structures and systems for Career Guidance: Case of Jiva, The Promise Foundation.

The Promise Foundation has been engaged with career guidance in India for the last three decades (http://thepromisefoundation.org/jiva). The flagship careers programme of the Foundation is the Jiva System of Career and Livelihood Planning. This method of career guidance emerged from a national survey in 2005 of young people's orientations to career and livelihood. The data from the survey was discussed at a national consultation on career psychology. The recommendations from this consultation led to the development of the Jiva approach. As indicated in the sections above, over the last few years, India has seen a gradual increase in career guidance interventions and programme.   However as discussed in the following section, a matter of urgency for India is the creation of sound theoretical, evidence-based systems for career guidance through which programmes could be implemented. Capacity building for delivery of career guidance remains a challenge. It is the aim and objective of The Promise Foundation to address this gap. During the COVID years, the Foundation in partnership with the Martin Luther Christian University has embarked on creating courses at the certificate and diploma levels for capacity building in the area of career guidance.

4. Quality standards and the skills of career guidance practitioners

In the Indian context, career services are largely being delivered by people who are not primarily trained as a careers practitioner because there is an increasingly high demand for career counselling services and but acute paucity of trained professionals. The key people who are delivering career services are: teachers, social workers, human resource managers, IT professionals, representatives of professional bodies and industry associations. In fact, most of the successful companies delivering career services are being run by people who are self-taught individuals who just 'wanted to help' young person choose a suitable career trajectory. There are very few courses and programmes are there that prepare career practitioners. An informal review of extant course curricula designed for preparing careers practitioners shows that changes in labour market and role of information and communication technology in the process of career delivery are being discussed in few of these courses. Generally, course curricula are silent on taking account of new evidence and encouraging innovation. Professionalization of career services in India is still weak. A competency framework, standard of quality practice and a well-rounded code of conduct for career practitioners because the practice of careers work remains varied and unregulated. While they are given input on professional ethics during their capacity building programmes, but in day-to-day practice, there is no system of monitoring and ensuring strict adherence to professional behaviour. There is not any mechanism in place to ensure that the service is being professionally delivered.

5. Conclusion

The future is not what it used to be!

This quip by Paul Valéry has never been so pertinent as it is now in the aftermath of COVID-19. The pandemic marks a watershed moment in the contemporary world, which has irreversibly altered ways in which humanity functions.   As Borgen & Borgen (2021) point out, *pre-COVID logic* of control over

and planning for future does not hold true any longer and a *COVID logic* has emerged which is more cognizant of contextual limits engendering flexibility and even minded planfulness. Preparing young people for a future that is stark contrast to their current situation is difficult challenge indeed. Facilitating their access to socioeconomic resources, cultural capital and digital tools would go a long way in putting them on the trajectory of life long learning, sustainable careers and livelihoods. Interventions need ot be designed that are socially just, equitable, environmentally sensitive and culture-resonant. Technology is likely to enhance the efficiency, impact, and scale of interventions. This paper attempted to document few of the such innovations in policy and practice in the realm of career and livelihood support but these initiatives need to be scaled up in order to ensure availability and quality of support services.

References

Ali, M. A., & Kamraju, M. (2020). A study on impact of covid-19 pandemic on unemployment in India. *Re-Imagining the New Normal-The Transformational Lens of COVID*, *19*, 50-61.

Basole, A. (2021). Reviving Employment and Livelihoods in India: Covid-19 and After. Economy Matters (Employment and Livelihood), 29 (6), 8-10.

Basole, A., Abraham, R., Lahoti, R., Kesar, S., Jha, M., Nath, P., ... & Narayanan, R. (2021). State of working India 2021: one year of Covid-19.

Basu, K. (2007, July 25). India's demographic dividend. BBC News. Retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6911544.st

Borgen, W. A., & Borgen, R. A. What Now! What Next? Navigating COVID-19 Challenges. Indian Journal of Career and Livelihood Planning, 10(1), 55-64.

Bertelsmann Stiftung (BTI) (2022). BTI 2022 Country Report — India. Gütersloh: Author. Retrieved from https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2022_IND.pdf

Cedefop; European Commission; ETF; ICCDPP; ILO; OECD; UNESCO (2020). Career guidance policy and practice in the pandemic: results of a joint international survey – June to August 2020. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Chancel, L., Piketty, T., & Saez, E. (Eds.). (2022). *World inequality report 2022*. Harvard University Press.

Goswami, B. (2022 May 5). Jobs crisis: Dividend to disaster.   Retrieved from ttps://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/comment/jobs-crisis-dividend-to-disaster-1106826.html

Government of India (2022). Economic Survey 2021-22. New Delhi: Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

International Labour Organization. (2020). Youth & COVID-19: Impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being. Geneva, Switzerland: Author.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2022). World Economic Outlook Database, April 2022. Retrieved from: https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2022/April/select-country-group

Kapuria, P. (2022, July 5). World Youth Skills Day 2022: Upskilling the youth of India. Retrieved from: https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/upskilling-the-youth-of-india/#:~:text=The%20employability%20rate%20has%20shown,to%2046.2%20percent%20in%202021.

Kesar, S., Abraham, R., Lahoti, R., Nath, P., & Basole, A. (2021). Pandemic, informality, and vulnerability: Impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods in India. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue canadienne d'études du développement*, *42*(1-2), 145-164.

Kumar S. & Kumar, K. (2019). India Country Report on Leading career development services into uncertain future: Ensuring access, *integration,* innovation. An invited country paper for the International Symposium on Career development and Public Policy, Tromso, Norway in June 2019.

Quest Alliance (2021). Enabling Effective School to Work Transitions: COVID-19 and Beyond. Bangalore, India: Author.

Roy, D K 2021; June 9 Impact of Covid-19 on Employment in India.   Retrieved from:

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/small-thoughts/impact-of-covid-19-on-employment-in-india-33336/

Singh, A. K. & Majumdar, P. (2018). The Great Indian Talent Conundrum. Retrieved from: https://countercurrents.org/2018/08/the-great-indian-talent-conundrum/

Singh, D. (2022, 11 July).   India's Demographic Dividend Is Withering Away, Mere Lip Service to the Term Won't Help. Retrieved from: https://thewire.in/rights/world-population-day-withering-demographic-dividend

Sircar, A. (2021). Livelihoods Policies in COVID Times. Survey of India's Livelihoods 2021. New Delhi: ACC ESS Development Services.

World Bank (2022). India: overview. Retrieved from: https://data.worldbank.org/country/india?view=chart