

Availability of Career-related Practices in Pakistani Universities



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Abstract

Career related practices are the services intended to assist the young individuals to make informed choices regarding their educational and occupational choices. Career related practices provide the understanding of personal attributes, skills and knowledge required for the work life. It is essential to guide the young individuals to be self-controlled and be able to deal with the life challenges, to explore themselves, their educational and social setup, and to identify the chances available for them in the world of work. The paper reviewed the career related services practiced by NUST, COMSATS and FAST Islamabad Pakistan by survey. Workshops, career fairs, talent expos, resume writing and interview skills training, employability skills training, job placement opportunities and international linkages with the universities and industries are being provided by these educational institutes to their students and faculty. Career guidance may be provided to enable an individual to come at a realistic career choice to reduce the frustration and dissatisfaction.

Keywords: Career Guidance, Personal Attributes, Work Life, Job Placement, Dissatisfaction

Abbreviations: ACEG: American Counselling and Educational Guidance; NUST: National University of Science and Technology; OOD: Office of Development; COMSATS: Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South; CIIT: COMSATS Institute of Information Technology; EME: Electrical and Mechanical Engineering; CAC: Corporate Advisory Council; CIE: Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship; CEME: College of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering; MCS: Military College of Signal; MCE: College of Aeronautical Engineering

Introduction

It is very challenging to build a right career or getting a suitable job in wanted way now a day. It is becoming more important that key changes taking place in the workplace including continuous learning and skill development by workers of all ages. Speedy changes in technology and in business strategies occurred which shows that new skills are required just to continue to perform efficient jobs of workers at midlife and beyond [1].

In order to enable students to make the right choices within a multitude of new possibilities and to get the most from job opportunities on the labour market, lifelong guidance and student information services need to be developed. Career related practices are the learning experience that link the academic content with the skills needed for the practical applications. Career related practices are not limited to work place, apprenticeship and in field investigation. Career related learning connects the educational experiences with the world

of work. They are prearranges in the students educational setting related to their career interest and their specific goals. These experiences help the students to apply their academic knowledge and skills which they have according to their career in practical field which help them to achieve their career goals [2]. International Association of Education and Career guidance defined the term career related learning is the support given to the persons in addressing the problem related to their career choices. It provides an opportunity for the personal development, satisfaction in work life [3].

Institute play an important role in developing the qualities, skills and understanding of the work life in graduation time period which help the students to make their profession. Career related practices are the most effective method to fill the gap between academic and world of work as well as between the institute and society [4].

Evidence shows that career related guidance is needed for the young people to make informed decision. ACEG (American Counselling and Educational Guidance) frame work was identified as a conceptual frame work appropriate for career related learning. According to the framework young individual should have the access to career information and guidance to plan and decide their own career. They need to develop the skills to manage their career, to explore the opportunities available to advance their career by managing transitions [5]. Career related practices provide the understanding of personal attributes, skills and knowledge required for the work life. It is essential to guide the young individuals to be self-controlled and be able to deal with the life challenges, to explore themselves, their educational and social setup, and to identify the chances available for them in world of work for future required for their career and career management and development [6].

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this paper is to review the need and availability of career related practices in universities and key issues linked with the provision of effective career related guidance. Literature on career related practices were reviewed with the following objectives:

- A. To review the career related practices around the globe.
- B. To identify the current level of career related practices in the educational institutes of Pakistan
- C. To investigate the career related practices in NUST, FAST and COMSATS
- D. To provide the recommendations for effective career related practices for higher education.

Literature Review

Over the past decade many countries noted the significant changes in the structure of work and learning. This shifting expectation put a greater demand of career information and guidance services. Kenya government recognized the importance of career guidance in administration and management at the time of independence. Educational policies (Kenya) report of 1976 recommended theta career related services should be given to the students to enable them to promote the self-growth between the students. Career related practices provide the gate way to the students to technology and career development [7]. Career guidance is provided to enable the university and individuals to come at a realistic career choice for their children's according to their true potentials to reduce the frustration and dissatisfaction from the society. Without clear attention to the existing problem young individual may not be able to establish solution to the problem facing them. For empowering young individuals to have hope confidence and hope in them they must be enabled to resolve the life by themselves and have change in the way they respond to problem. In this process their institute standards will be improved, therefore creating a sense of responsibility

to deal with the life challenges so proper guidance services and activities is essential.

Higher institutes play an importance role in helping the European meet the challenges of becoming the world best knowledge based society. Innovation is needed in many areas which are directly linked to the student growth and through higher education and world of work. New skills and competencies are needed in work place setting in current demand of the world which requires new learning approaches. Universities in Europe are going through new reforms to meet the challenges [8].

They are developing skills oriented curriculum which have an influence on students, subject choices and workloads. Life long career guidance and student information services need to be developing to make the right choice with in a multitude of new possibilities and to get the more opportunities available in the European world of work. Most of the European universities providing a career related guidance to the students but still there areas where guidance can be improve including transitions from college to university education, from graduation to higher education and from academics to labor market. It is essential to promote and develop new connection between the industry, higher education and students [9].

Career services centers at the higher education institutes in Austria have the function of providing a guidance services to university students in their transition from university to work place setting as well as to the students who want to restructure and plan their studies most suitable to meet the current demands of labor market. Career planning centers act as a link between the graduate students and industry employers. They provide the career pathway guidance and further training options to the young graduates and facilitate the students to enter into the labor market and help the industry in their search for workers (graduate students)[7].

Higher education institutes of the Belgium have career guidance and information centers which help the university students to explore their careers and link the students with the world of work. Career related guidance is also provided by a few volunteer students to help the students of French community. In universities career guidance services are free of charge for the university students which prepare the young students to manage their respective career and to deal with the transitions from academic to world of work. These centers also link the education ministries, students and job provides [10]. Career related practices play a key role in preparing the university students to choose, manage and to develop their career in Asian countries but still improvement is needed in career guidance services in Asian countries. Many of Asian counties are trying to improve educational polices in which attention is given to career learning.

In Malaysian universities career learning activities are managed and controlled by the career guidance centers in public

sector universities. The job of the career advisor is to provide the career guidance and information, Interview skill training, time management training, and job application training. These centers also encourage the young graduates to develop the transferable skills which are vital for labour market demands.

They also arrange job placement opportunities for the final year students [11]. Career related guidance is the structure learning experiences which are designed to fit the person to achieve the goal related to their career and gain an employment in recognized profession which include the guidance and assistance linked with an occupation [12].

Federal educational policy (2009) of Nigeria states that career education is an important part of general education a mean for student preparation for career selection and for effective participation in the labor market. Every university has a career guidance center but they are providing their services for the students to provide help in career selection. Career guidance is a tool for empowering the students to become a responsible citizenship and a way of reducing poverty from the country it empower the students with the skills required for their profession [13].

Career Learning Practices in Pakistan

In Pakistan, career practical learning is a new idea. Only few educational institutions offer guidance services to students that too at university levels. People of Pakistan are aware of the significance of higher education. In fact, universities in Pakistan are not enough to cater the growing population demands and many of youth population unable to achieve their goals. Students are also not able to decide their own field of study because of unawareness about their own personality traits and hidden talents. In Pakistan very few institutes are offering career guidance services and their role is much broader than career guidance include educational and personal guidance also [14].

Common Issues around the Globe

According to existing literature in some of the countries career learning practices are inadequate according to the current demand. Ironically, career guidance role with in education tend to be least strongly in higher education which is the sector of occupational training in the respective careers as whole. In some countries career guidance services in only limited to subject selection and make assumptions that students can manage their transition into the world of work without any assistance. This may be possible when students covered only small area of content, which normally have a more practical exposure to the world of work [15]. There is a need to guide the students to develop their lifelong strategies for career management. Currently they have a very narrow approach to targeted the audience (university students). Assistance is required for the students to develop their short term goals, to achieve their long life goal, to help them to identify their barriers to success and to learn the strategies to manage their career transitions [16].

Career information is very important but in universities around the globe is not sufficient. If the student is able to find the information related to their career, to understand this information regarding their personal needs and then to adapt it for private action many will need support, such type of support is provided at a distance in some countries. Web based guidance services and help lines must be extending access to guidance.

National University of Science and Technology (NUST)

National University of Science and Technology is a public sector university established in 1991. NUST was established to promote the higher education in Pakistan in the field of science and technology. NUST has achieved a remarkable position in last two decade in promotion of higher education. NUST produced the highest caliber expert of their fields and professional researchers in the field of science and technology to meet the challenges of 21 century. University maintained its traditional values and excellence in research area and teaching, the aim is to challenge the conventional mentality to increase the horizon of the knowledge. To review the academic matters in the university there is a board of Governors and Academic council. The rector is the executive officer of the university assisted by Pro-Rector. NUST was ranked among 250 top class universities in the world in 2016. NUST is the member of Association of Common Wealth Universities. NUST is an institution for higher learning with the campuses across the country with the headquarter located in Islamabad H-12 main campus. College of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (CEME), Military College of Signal (MCS) College of Aeronautical Engineering (MCE), Pakistan Navy Engineering College (PNEC). NUST has 15000 full time enrolled students in a 20 departments with the 1280 faculty.

Career Related Activities in NUST

NUST is conducting a different events related to career practical learning in different schools to prepare the students for the future and to connect the students with the world of work on a monthly basis.

Centre for Counseling and Career Advisory

Centre for Counseling and Career Advisory provide psychological and professional guidance, educational assessment and career related services to the NUST students and faculty to advance the self-growth of the NUST community. This Centre has a devoted team of counselors, psychologists conducting the testing and assessment (aptitude test, intelligence test, interest and career attitude test etc.) with counseling. Testing and assessment at the Centre help the students to get a better understanding of their personality, their strength and weaknesses, and to guide them to choose the best career according to their interest and skills. Guidance and training is one of the important functions of this Centre. The most frequent among these are related to NUST students and faculty. These are intended to train the NUST Community to survive well in struggle of life and utilize their maximum potential in their respective fields of work.

Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

NUST promotes the entrepreneurial culture and guide the students to become a job provider instead of job seekers through the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE). CIE has Technology Incubation Centre which helps the students to establish their own start up business. CIE organizes a national business plan competition under banner of Discover.

Corporate Advisory Council (CAC)

Career advisory council is a platform for the NUST students which link the students with the industry. They have a collaboration with the nine industry including information technology, Automotive, telecom engineering, banking and Finance services, power and energy, Chemical, Biotechnology and Social Sector on mutual benefit policy.

Encourage domestic and international trade to take a position in NUST R&D facilities. Help initiate appropriate projects in NUST Science & Technology Park. NUST has developed strong international linkages with foreign universities and institutions of repute. The purpose of this networking is to share their knowledge on an international platform and to and to exchange their research projects and finding. These linkages help the students to add a global perspective in their field and related activities according to latest technology.

NUST HR is the icon for the faculty development and to prepare them for the opportunities available for them in their respective career and to guide them to create an environment of practical learning in class room setting.

The Career Development Center

Career development Centre of the NUST provides the services to the students and faculty to explore their respective career. This Centre provides the platform to the students and alumni to develop the network with the professional and to guide them in meeting their requirement needs. This Centre helps the students in their personal and professional development. This center provides the opportunity to explore their self in terms of their skills, interest and values and to investigate the relevant information for through apprenticeship and jobs. They provide the assistance in resume and cover letters preparation which are the components of the job search process. Members of this Centre review the resumes and cover letters of the students and recommend them to the various organizations. Career development Centre provides the assistance to the students for their future interviews by arranging the mock interviews to improve their skills and to identify their strengths and weaknesses. NUST has collaboration with the 500 hundred high ranked companies both national and international to connect the students and employers with the labour market via job fairs and employers sessions.

Talent Expos

University conducts the talent expos in which students portfolios and their final year projects are displayed to for the

employers. In these expose final year graduates are recruited on the campus which provide the e which provide an excellent opportunity to the students to discuss their career goals with employers and practice their skills in professional setting.

Workshops

NUST conducts workshops for the students and faculty related to the Training courses are organized to build better careers at various colleges and schools. These workshops help graduates and students learn managerial skills, interviewing techniques, resume-editing and confidence-building skills. The office conducts workshops to enhance students' career development and aid in achieving career targets.

Career Fairs

The college of EME (Electrical and Mechanical Engineering) opens its door for public and private sector organizations and academia to witness the final year projects on its Open House. The Open house serves as a gateway between industry and academia. A talent expo which provides an opportunity to visit academic and research facilities, meet qualified faculty and discuss research collaboration and interview young graduating engineers for possible job opportunities.

COMSATS

COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT), as a project of the "Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South" (COMSATS) was established in 1998. The organization is inter-governmental with member countries in three continents; Asia, Africa and Latin America. The 21 member countries include Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, China, Kazakhstan, Philippines, Korea (DPRK), Syria, Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Tunisia, Ghana, Senegal, Uganda Jamaica, and Colombia is an inter-governmental organization. The Institute is currently a public-sector higher education institution with degree awarding status. The federally chartered institute's vision is to be among the top institutes regarding research productivity and education in Pakistan. It has eight campuses all over the Pakistan which are; first campus was established at Islamabad in April 1998.

University offers 39 Undergraduate programs, 57 graduate programs and one associate degree programs so the total programs offered by university are 97. As of April 2015, in its eight campuses CIIT has six faculties and a total of 18 Departments apart from several independent research facilities. Abbottabad campus of COMSATS was established on 3 September 2001. Currently, there are 11 departments in the university offering 20 undergraduates programs, 18 graduate programs and 86 PhD programs. In CIIT Abbottabad campus there are more than 175 highly competent PhD qualified faculty members. The institute also boasts state of the art Laboratories and research facilities. In COMSATS Abbottabad an advisor is assigned to every class. The duty of these advisors is to guide students regarding any personal as well as educational career concern. The duty of

advisor is to encourage students to develop coping skills, which will help students to deal with problematic issues, to identify personal goals and to identify the steps necessary to achieve these goals.

In CIIT Abbottabad to promote career guidance services office of development (OOD) was established on 3rd June, 2011 to promote the activities to help the students to achieve their goals, to arrange career related workshops, seminars and find funding sources for the students on campus. Mission of office of development is to help students and alumni, discover the value of their investment and arrange events like workshops, seminars and alumni reunion. From 2011 onwards, four career development workshops were arranged for the graduates on interviewing skills and CV writing. Jobs were arranged for approximately 70 Alumni students in different organizations.

Almost 216 internships were arranged for the students. Students and graduates are enabled to choose a domain, time their job search, prepare job search material, network with potential employers and search company websites and attend job fairs. OOD also arranges mock interviews for the students which help to enhance their interviewing skills and feedback is given to them. OOD arranges internships programs for the students to prepare them for practical job placement. From the work of developmental office it can be concluded that they are not conducting sufficient activities for the students in order to help them to explore their interests, skills and values gaining experience through internships. As mentioned above they have only conducted four career developmental workshops from 2011 onwards which is not the sufficient figure. By reviewing the career related work of international universities it is obvious that in the COMSATS Abbottabad career related work is not sufficient to help the students. To help the students to explore their interests, strengths and to build a confidence career developmental frame work must be used. Frame work, such as, DOTS can be used to learn domains of self-awareness, opportunity awareness, decision making and transition learning. International universities are preparing youngsters for workplace by conducting career related activities in order to enhance their skills. To help the graduates of COMSATS there is need to arrange more career related workshops on interviewing skills, CV writing, employability skills, time management, confidence building so that students have the skills to meet the challenges of changing nature of world of work.

Fast

Fast is a public sector university which has a multiple campuses based cosmopolitan cities of Pakistan at Islamabad, Karachi, Peshawar and Chiniot-Faisalabad. University established in July 2000 the National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences is a premiere University of Pakistan, renowned for the quality and impacts of its students in the development of local software and other industries.

Placement Office

FAST Islamabad has an active placement office since 2014. This office is solely dedicated for the development of students, job placements and linkages with the industry and linkages with the industry .this office ensure the maximum help is provided to the students to help them define their goals and equip them with the skills required for a successful career .This placement office facilitate both the students and alumni. This office is responsible for arranging array of activities such as career development workshops and seminars, career counseling camps, career boost camps and mock interviews, recruitment drives for the jobs and internships and annual job fair. It helps the students and alumni to make informed choices and also help the corporate world.

Recruitment Drives

Recruitment drives are scheduled effort to recruit members for any organization. Students studying in 6th semester can participate in these recruitment drives to ensure that they have right jobs once they graduate.

Fast has organized numerous recruitment drives within the campus and ensures the maximum hiring of the students in the renowned organizations. It organizes 40 plus drives per year and briefs its students about the nature of the job and how to attempt the test of the interview.

Job Fairs

FAST university Islamabad campus arranges the job fairs annually. A job fair can be described as an event in which employers, recruiters and institutes give information to the potential employers.

Career counseling camp

Each year, a one day career counseling camp is arranged with in the campus with the support of the Centre for Career Counseling and Advisory (C3A) NUST. This camp provides opportunity to all the employees to meet with the psychologist and counselor to discuss their career interests, career challenges, stress and time management issues, personal development, and dimensions of personality, aptitude and attitude to have a successful career .The counseling camp offers the following facilities to the participants

1. Career counseling
2. Emotional counseling
3. Personality analysis

Career Boost Camp

From past three years FAST is organizing career boost camps within the institute for the graduating batches of all three schools. These boost camps are organized to facilitate students learning and equip them to with the modern job techniques and networking. Through these boost camps students learn to job

search effectively, speak confidently about their qualification and stand out as a candidate for future employment.

Career Development Workshops and Seminar

Fast university arranged numerous workshops seminar through the academic year to help its students in the development of their career. Experts from the field and guest speakers are invited to the institute for the purpose. Topic such as interviewing skills, employability skills, CV building, networking, exploring career interests are often chosen for the workshops or seminars.

Conclusion

Within lifelong learning strategies from Pakistan NUST, COMSATS and FAST was a strong case for viewing career guidance in more practical terms. Until recently, such services have been viewed largely as a device, designed to help young people to manage the necessary transition from education to the labour market, and unemployed people to return to work as quickly as possible. This means that services need to be made available only when they have a problem which services can help them to solve. Secondary data collected from universities concluded that most of the universities have career guidance centers but only few of them are implementing the activities which they meant to do Career guidance is essentially a soft rather than a hard policy intervention. Higher institutes should be encouraged to determine their role, and their contribution to, the society of which they are part.

Recommendations

Career guidance services should be made compulsory and provided for universities to help students in making realistic career choices. Universities must increase their inclusion of career related learning. Career related learning is generally understood to comprise elements of self-assessment, job evaluation, information gathering about specific courses, the skills of job application and interviews, and work experience. Governments should encourage universities to cooperate with foreign universities in upgrading educational capabilities. However, before the cooperation can take place, domestic universities need to improve their educational quality by adopting the total quality management approach. Careers

advisory services need to further raise awareness of their existence: the effectiveness of promoting the service, at all stages including induction, should be assessed.

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