

EFFECTS OF CAREER PLANNING EDUCATION ON CAREER READINESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES BASED ON SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to enhance undergraduates' career readiness through the implementation of career planning education strategies on social learning theory. As the modern workforce becomes increasingly dynamic, it is crucial for students to develop the necessary career readiness to navigate their career paths effectively. This paper explores the contents of career planning education in fostering career readiness, contributing to the ongoing discourse on best practices in career development. Guided by social learning theory, the paper explores how to improve students' career readiness through career planning education. The paper emphasizes the value of developing career planning education base on social learning theory and suggests practical strategies for designing and implementing effective programs. Ultimately, this research proposes career planning education strategies based on social learning theory as a means to enhance undergraduates' career readiness, bridging the gap between graduates and employers' expectations and fostering a successful transition from school to work.

Keywords: Career Planning Education, Career Readiness, Social Learning Theory

INTRODUCTION

There is a significant correlation between career readiness and employment rate, and a strong correlation between career readiness and employment quality (Xiao & Huang, 2011). In addition, there is a significant correlation between graduates' future development status and their degree of career readiness (Hou, 2018). Thus, the transition of students from school to work is a major one and requires special consideration of career readiness (Lairio & Penttinen, 2006).

The majority of survey participants found career planning programming very useful in the development of their career readiness, confirming the effectiveness of career planning education (Waldron, 2019). A thematic analysis of course content using a career planning framework, and an analysis of course evaluation to assess whether additional career development courses are expected to enhance undergraduate career readiness. Therefore career intervention significantly increased high school students' career readiness (Chen,2022). Evidently, extensive research demonstrates the overall positive impact of career planning courses for students' career readiness (Stebleton et al,2020). Osborn and Belle' (2019) study outlined the potential applications of the career planning intervention approach in enhancing the career readiness of juveniles.

In term of theoretical construct

The social learning theory (Bandura,1982) proposed and studied by Bandura was synchronized with the rise of information technology in social production at that time. In today's society, massive high-speed information quickly generated, so that individuals in social life are completely liberated from personal experience and can obtain much more information through "learning".

Krumboltz's (2009) career determined social learning theory clearly captured some of the essence of Albert Bandura's social learning theory, combined the information revolution of social production with Bandura's social learning theory, put forward the social learning theory in the field of career counseling based on the influence of psychology and social life on individual career development. Its significance lies not only in the introduction of social learning theory into the field of career guidance, but also in the reconstruction and breakthrough exploration of the influence system of individual career decision-making process.

This theory highlights the importance of observation, modeling, and vicarious learning in shaping individuals' behaviors and choices. In the context of career readiness, the Social Learning Theory offers valuable insights into how individuals acquire the skills, competencies, and attitudes needed for successful careers. Notwithstanding, the social learning theory holds great relevance for practical application in educational settings, particularly in the realm of school practice, thereby aiding students in making informed decisions about their future careers (Jin, 2007). By adopting the theoretical steps and methods of social learning theory, career planners can benefit from valuable insights, enabling them to foster personal self-assessment and decision-making skills among university students. This approach bears significant guiding potential in facilitating individuals' exploration of personal career planning (Lu & Qin, 2021). Moreover, learners acquire knowledge and skills through observational learning within a social environment. This process of vicarious experiences plays a pivotal role in fostering the continuous development of adults (Chuang, 2021).

Career readiness

Career readiness is the ability to display skills needed to be successful in the workplace, including critical thinking, communication, leadership, work ethic, career management, and intercultural fluency (NACE, 2022). Career readiness is also defined in the research as a process to help students become work-ready (Daniels & Brooker, 2014). However, another definition describes career readiness as

generic employability skills that meet industry standards (Moore & Morton, 2017).

In our case, we choose the definition of Mansor because it is most relevant to the aims of the study. **This study defines career readiness as:** Career readiness can explain whether an individual is ready to find a job and establish their chosen career. It is described in the attitudinal and competency dimensions, indicating aspects of knowledge and skills that need to be developed throughout university education (Mansor, A.T.2009). In essence, career readiness is about ensuring that a candidate has the necessary qualifications, competencies, and attributes to perform effectively in their chosen field.

As for the main content and structure of undergraduates' career readiness, the academic circle is in the stage of different opinions, and no unified theoretical understanding has been formed. Career readiness was measured by two dimensions of readiness including career decidedness and perceived employability. (Al-Waqfi et al.,2023).

How to construct the structure system of undergraduates' career readiness, because of the different research objectives and focuses, there are many choices and perspectives. However, we should clearly realize that the purpose of undergraduates' career readiness is to improve their adaptability to future careers, strengthen the connection between talents and the market, and shorten the gap between graduates and employers' needs. Therefore, this study evaluates career readiness from the following four aspects: Need for Career Information, Need for Self-Knowledge, Career Choice Anxiety, Generalized Indecisiveness (Mansor, A.T.2009).

The level of career readiness among undergraduates in China remains a critical concern, with nearly 70% of students lacking sufficient career preparation (Hou, 2018). While the exploration of self and work environment is considered integral to career development, its impact on career readiness among Chinese students has not yielded the desired outcomes (Xu et al., 2014). Despite increasing graduate recruitment by companies, a significant portion of fresh graduates, approximately 36.69%, still lack a clear career objective (Liang et al., 2020). This lack of career readiness hinders the effective transition from school to work. Addressing this problem is crucial to ensure that university students in China acquire the necessary readiness and mindset to thrive in their future careers and contribute to the nation's economic growth and social development.

Career planning education

Career planning education is a course that facilitates students in gaining a comprehensive understanding of their abilities while continuously exploring various professional domains. It aids them in determining their future career trajectory, thus enabling the establishment and implementation of development objectives during their university years (Peng, 2020).

China's current curriculum design is founded upon the principles of trait-factor theory and Holland theory (Han,2022), does not adequately address the challenges posed by the highly complex environment brought about by globalization and informatization. It fails to accommodate the rapid changes and innovations in the career world, resulting in a mismatch between the curriculum and the characteristics of current career development. This calls for the development of career planning education that can effectively meet the actual needs of society and students, reflecting the real career development process.

The study of career planning education in China is still in its infancy (Han,2022), and a complete mechanism has not yet been formed at the level of education system. In particular, the theoretical research on career guidance is not enough to provide effective guidance for relevant practice in both the breadth and depth of research.

OBJECTIVE

Objective of the paper is to propose career planning education strategies based on social learning theory to enhance undergraduates' career readiness.

DISCUSSION

This conference paper aims to propose strategies for improving undergraduates' career readiness by leveraging Bandura's social learning theory within the context of career planning education. Bandura's theory emphasizes the role of observation, imitation, and vicarious learning in shaping individuals' behaviors and career choices. By applying this theory to career planning education, educators and career counselors can design effective interventions and activities that foster the development of key skills and competencies necessary for successful career exploration and decision-making. This paper presents a set of practical strategies that integrate social learning principles to enhance undergraduates' career readiness.

1. The ability of adjusting student' own roles.

For university students, adjusting their state is a process to realize self-management and improve the ability to adapt to the environment. From high school to university, students should adjust their roles in time and identify their goals and needs.

Super's career rainbow chart can help students adjust their initiative. In the process of guidance to stimulate university students' study self-consciousness and enthusiasm to work towards their career ideals, stimulate their subjective initiative, and reposition the purpose and meaning of learning.

The design of tasks such as the list of university students' visions allows students to complete the tasks in a relaxed, pleasant and experiential manner. After the experience and involvement, they will be professionally prepared for deeper thinking and self-reflection.

Career goal refers to a person's future career planning and career development ideas. Clear career development goal can provide strong motivation for students' development. Clear goals provide guidance for development, while unclear goals affect and restrict students' enthusiasm and initiative for independent development. The importance will be the basis for curriculum of the suggested career planning education.

2. The ability to stimulate the potential learning environment.

In Bandura's view, "the personal and environmental factors that play a role in learning are interdependent and indivisible". Therefore, subjects should also pay attention to cultivating their ability to stimulate the potential learning environment in the process of improving career readiness, that is, to dig out and create an environment conducive to their mental growth outside the formal development environment in school.

Utilize the power of role models and mentors to inspire and guide students in their career exploration journey. Arrange mentorship programs, internship opportunities, and networking events that facilitate interaction between students and professionals in their desired fields. Encourage students to observe and learn from the experiences, skills, and behaviors of successful individuals who can serve as role models. Peer sharing method can help students learn the experience and strengths of their peers, so as to stimulate their potential and enrich themselves. The career planning content should include learning environment, role model and mentor.

3. The impact of individual counseling on students' career readiness.

Individual counseling can be a valuable approach to address the differences in career readiness between boys and girls following career planning education among university students. By offering individual counseling sessions, tailored to the unique needs and experiences of each student, educational institutions can provide targeted support to bridge any gaps in career readiness that may arise due to gender-related factors. Through these one-on-one sessions, trained counselors can engage students in meaningful discussions, helping them explore their aspirations, interests, and potential career paths while addressing any concerns or challenges they may face.

Overall, by providing individual counseling to address the differences in career readiness between boys and girls after career planning education, universities can ensure that students receive tailored support to navigate the unique challenges they may face. These counseling sessions can empower students to make informed career decisions, overcome gender-related barriers, and develop the necessary skills and confidence to excel in their chosen fields. Therefore career planning education must also include individual counseling.

IMPLICATION OF FINDINGS

Enhancing career planning education programs: The findings of this study underscore the importance of developing and implementing comprehensive career planning education programs within undergraduate institutions. These programs should be designed to provide students with structured guidance, resources, and opportunities for experiential learning, in line with the principles of social learning theory. By integrating social learning theory principles into career planning education, institutions can effectively enhance students' career readiness and equip them with the necessary skills to make informed career decisions.

CONCLUSION

This study delved into the effects of career planning education on students' career readiness among undergraduates, drawing upon the principles of social learning theory. It stresses the importance of role, learning environment and individual counseling. In summary, the findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature on career development and offer valuable insights into the effects of career planning education on students' career readiness based on the social learning theory. By exploring the connections between the Social Learning Theory and career readiness, we can uncover valuable insights into the processes through which individuals acquire the necessary skills and attitudes for career success. By investing in comprehensive career planning education, educational institutions can empower undergraduates to make informed career choices, develop the necessary skills, and successfully transition into the professional world. In follow-up studies, quantitative studies can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of career planning education programs. Explore methods such as pre - and post-assessment, longitudinal studies, and more to measure the impact of interventions on student career readiness and long-term success.

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