ROLE OF CAREER GUIDANCE IN STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE FROM THAINGUYEN UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (TUEBA) IN VIETNAM

Nguyen Bich Hong[1], Tran Thi Tuyet[2], Do Thi Thuy Linh[3], Do Anh Tai[4]

[1] *Faculty of Economics, Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration, Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam*
[2] *Faculty of Hospitality – Tourism, Thuongmai University, Hanoi, Vietnam*
[3] *Faculty of Marketing, Commerce and Tourism, Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration, Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam*
[4] *Faculty of Economics, Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration, Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam*

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of career guidance in students' academic performance in Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration (TUEBA). 260 students participated in this experimental study. The result showed that students who attended career guidance gain higher academic performance than those who did not attend career guidance; and interestingly, students who attend career guidance by managers obtained better academic performances than those who attend career guidance by lecturers. This can give educational institutions some useful suggestions in order to make students gain better academic performance; in particular, career guidance should be a mandatory subject of each training program.

Keywords: *career guidance, academic performance, TUEBA students*

1. INTRODUCTION

Career guidance (CG) has been playing a key role in enhancing students' overall development in general and in academic performance in particular. The reason is this program assists students in harmonizing their abilities, interests and values and enables them to develop their full potential. This also directs students towards appropriate career and subject choices; solving discipline, education, social and psychological problems; and general adjustment to school life (Gerardo, 1996). For instance, Makinde (1984) found that the U.S. students who participated in career guidance and counselling obtained higher academic performance than those who did not attend the program. This proves that career guidance is important; therefore, it should be included in curricula in all universities.

In contrast, lack of career guidance leads to poor learners' choices, poor academic performance (Daniels, 2007). Donne (2006) finds out the impact of lack of career guidance that the career and life choices young people need to make as they move from young students into world-of-work-orientated adulthood are severely constrained by the lack of career guidance aggravated by a failure to appreciate the significance of completing further education. To help disadvantaged students make informed career decisions to obtain better academic results, career guidance programme should be developed and implemented in the mandatory university curricula.

In Vietnam, provision of career guidance and counselling program at university is limited and in Thai Nguyen university, there has been none yet. The like is only an extra-curricular subject mostly informed by lecturers and surprisingly almost all students are not interested in attending this kind of guidance. As a result, students selected courses and careers preferred by parents and close associations rather than from their knowledge of self, of occupations and their confidence to integrate the two. Hence, after graduation, they are not confident to find a job that is suitable to their abilities.

Literature review shows that career guidance services in Vietnamese educational system are limited. Therefore, this study sought to establish the role of career guidance on students academic performance by comparing 3 groups of students: group 1 includes those who attend career guidance provided by managers from companies, group 2 includes those who attend career guidance provided by lecturers, and group 3 includes those who do not attend any career guidance. Found-out results can provide useful evidence to educators to include career guidance as a mandatory subject at university.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic achievement/performance is defined by two terms. Academic pertains to school subjects or to fields of liberal arts or to the sphere of ideas and abstraction, while achievement is denoted by knowledge attained or skills developed by pupils usually in the schools, measured by test scores or by marks assigned by teachers (Chaudhary, 2004). In other words, an academic achievement/performance is defined as knowledge acquired and skills developed in school subjects, generally indicated by marks obtained in tests in an annual examination. Achievement is the glittering crown which reflects a sense of sincerity, candidness and perseverance on the part of achievers and also parents, teachers and all those helping to achieve it, and thus a result of bidirectional results. Achievement behaviour may be defined as any action directed of gaining approval where public standards of excellence are applicable. Crow and Crow (1969) define academic achievement as the extent to which a learner is profiting from instructions in a given area of learning i.e., achievement is reflected by the extent to which skill or knowledge has been imparted to him. Aremu and Sokan (2003) submit that the search for the causations of poor academic achievement is unending and some of the factors they put forward are: motivational orientation, self-esteem/self-efficacy, emotional problems, study habits, teacher consultation and poor interpersonal relationships.

Researchers find out that career guidance has a positive effect on students' academic performance. Denison et al. (2006) examined the role of academic guidance interviews. The programme was evaluated by questionnaires issued to staff and students involved in the guidance interviews, and by recording the performance of students who had failed the formative assessment in the subsequent summative assessment. It is concluded that the rescue of failing students requires early recognition and tailored intervention, with support for all participants. Winters et al. (2009) examined the analysis of vocational training conversations in Dutch vocational education from a career learning perspective. Research evidence shows that a career dialogue is a central part of any powerful learning environment for career learning.

Literature reviewed shows that career guidance has a significant impact on student academic performance. Interestingly, career guidance is mainly provided by professors, and rarely is this guidance provided by managers from companies. The main objective of this study is to find out whether university should include career guidance as a mandatory subject and who should provide this kind of course. It is predicted that students attending career guidance by managers of companies will achieve higher academic performance than those attending career guidance by lecturers and those who do not attend career guidance. The hypothesis is as follow:

Students attending career guidance by managers of companies will achieve higher academic performance than those attending career guidance by lecturers and those who do not attend career guidance

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Participants. Two hundred and seventy first year students from faculty of Business Administration of Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration (TUEBA) were originally recruited. We excluded students from second, third, and last year. The final sample included 260 first year students (M_{age} = 18.42, SD = 0.963 ranging from 18 - 24 years). There were 155 females (59.62%) and 105 males (40.38%) participated in the study.

Design and Procedure. A simple design with 3 groups: Group 1 (CG by managers), Group 2 (CG by lecturers), and Group 3 (student's life talk) were between-subject design. Individual subjects in the experiment were randomly assigned to each condition. In the experiment, respondents (1) provided personal information, (2) listened to career guidance and answered questions, and finally (3) answered measurement items for manipulation check. The content of guidance career was focused on learning motivation which included "approach to schoolwork; beliefs about their own attitudes towards learning, achievement, and school study skills, reasons for learning".

Manipulation check. Because the career guidance program was delivered to the first-year students, it was necessary to check the quality of this program. After attendence, students answered three parts related to this program: (1) learning objects, (2) career positions and (3) outcome standards with Likert 7 - point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Regarding learning objects, two items formed a "learning objectives" scale. Alpha coefficient for two items is 0.79, suggesting that the items are reliable. Respondents in "CG by managers" understand more (M = 6.40, SD = 0.99) than those in "CG by lecturers" (M = 5.37, SD = 0.84). The difference was significant, $F(112) = 23.64$, $p < 0.001$. These results indicate a successful manipulation of learning objectives.

Regarding career positions, three items formed a "career positions" index. Alpha coefficient for three items is 0.88, suggesting that the items are reliable. Respondents in "CG by managers" understand more (M = 6.83, SD = 1.46) than those in "CG by lecturers" (M = 5.65, SD = 1.19). The difference was significant, $F(112) = 22.59$, $p < 0.001$. These results indicate a successful manipulation of career positions.

Regarding outcome standards, nine items formed a "outcome standards" index. Alpha coefficient for three items is 0.91, suggesting that the items are reliable. Respondents in "CG by managers" understand more (M = 6.05, SD = 0.89) than those in "CG by lecturers" (M = 5.65, SD = 0.70). The difference was significant, $F(112) = 13.96$, $p < 0.001$. These results indicate a successful manipulation of outcome standards.

Dependent measures. Everyone answered one question "What is your academic performance at the end of this year (this semester)" with 5 choices from very poor to very good.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result. A one-way ANOVA was conducted with three groups (CG by managers, CG by lecturers, student's life talk) as independent variables, and "academic performance" as a dependent variable. Results were presented in Table 1 and 2. There were significant effects of three groups condition $F(1, 259) = 23.13$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta 2 = 0.17$) on "academic performance". Moreover, group 1 (CG by managers) is statistically and significantly different from group 2 (CG by lecturers) and group 3 (Student's life talk).

Table 1. ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	29.225	2	14.613	23.13	0.000
Within Groups	76.137	258	0.295		
Total	105.362	260			

Source: by authors

Table 2. Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Academic performance							
			Mean			95% Confidence Interval	
	(I) V1	(J) V1	Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tukey HSD	1	2	1.13	0.154	0.0012	-0.57	0.16
		3	3.07	0.176	0.0000	-0.58	0.25
	2	1	-1.13	0.154	00.012	-0.16	0.57
		3	2.02	0.154	0.0000	-0.32	0.41
	3	1	-3.07	0.176	0.0000	-0.25	0.58
		2	-2.02	0.154	0.0000	-0.41	0.32
Scheffe	1	2	1.09	0.154	0.0021	-0.59	0.17
		3	3.01	0.176	0.0000	-0.60	0.27
	2	1	-1.09	0.154	0.0021	-0.17	0.59
		3	2.42	0.154	0.0000	-0.34	0.42
	3	1	-3.01	0.176	0.0000	-0.27	0.60
		2	-2.42	0.154	0.0000	-0.42	0.34

Source: by authors

Discussion. As predicted, the finding showed that students attending career guidance gained better performance than those who did not attend career guidance. Surprisingly, students attending career guidance by managers of companies gained better academic performance than those attending career guidance by lecturers.

5. CONCLUSION

This research examined the role of career guidance on academic performance. We sought to investigate this by examining three groups of different treatments: group 1 received career guidance by managers of companies, group 2 received career guidance by lecturers, and group 3 just attended small talk about students' life. The results are career guidance plays an important effect on academic performance and students attending career guidance gained better performance than those who did not attend career guidance, and students attending career guidance by managers of companies gained better academic performance than those attending career guidance by lecturers.

Suggestion to educational institutions especially Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration is that the University should include career guidance as a required subject in order to guide students about (1) learning objects, (2) career positions and (3) outcome standards so that they can focus on what subjects and skills they need and to gain better academic performance.

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