

A Comparative Study of Career Guidance of Private Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan and the UK

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Abstract

This study investigates the importance of career guidance in private higher education institutions (PrHEIs) in Pakistan and the UK, focusing on comparative student perceptions. Employing a quantitative research design, the study utilized a self-report survey administered through Google Forms to a sample of 100 students (50 from Pakistan, 50 from the UK) across various disciplines within PrHEIs. The survey assessed student experiences with, and perceptions of, career guidance services, focusing on their impact on academic and professional decision-making. Data analysis, conducted with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26, revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between student participation in career guidance programs and their perceived ability to make informed decisions about their academic and professional paths. Notably, variations in perceived effectiveness were observed between the two countries. The findings underscore the critical role of robust career guidance frameworks in empowering students to align their educational choices with their career aspirations, ultimately enhancing their job prospects, fostering professional development, and contributing to the overall success of PrHEIs in preparing graduates for the global workforce.

Keywords: Career Guidance, Student Development, Decision-making, Private Higher Education Institutions (PrHEIs), Pakistan, UK

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

The process of career planning refers to the phase where students make decisions regarding their careers. There are a large number of factors that influence the decision-making of students during adolescence which convinces them to opt for a certain professional pathway. These may include individual interests, family pressure, educators' suggestions and recommendations, media, electronic data, and an exploration of the new occupation itself (Pascual, 2014). The students must seek guidance about their career choice as it helps them view their educational institute more meaningful to them. Such students are more focused and make informed decisions about their professional pathways. Several researchers in the past argued that having high education does not guarantee an individual transitioning to better skills, and professional competencies. Higher education graduates are mostly poorly prepared for job placement in most developing countries. This calls for a need to foster career development and quality learning outcomes for the students. A few past studies highlighted a disparity between the higher education students' acquired skills and the employers' required skills. Curriculum and educational programs of higher education institutions are incapable to develop adequate skills that can help develop their related employability skills demanded by employers. Career training can significantly enhance employment development, career choice, a transition from education to work, and good employment behaviours. This is because it enables the students to look for more opportunities to find out the answers to the career regarding queries or solutions to personal careers-related challenges or questions from career development experts directly who act as their mentors (Okolie et al., 2020). Traditionally, high-school years are the most important years as they are majorly characterised by the exploration stage of career development and play a vital role in establishing vocational identity by exploring possible careers, crystalising vocational choices, and generating professional alternatives. Therefore, the researchers have stated paying much attention to emphasising the importance to foster preparation for career development thereby improving the decision-making skills of adolescents. Furthermore, the study emphasised career adaptability and considered this aspect as a fundamental skill in the development of career and prepares adolescents with professionally encompassing behaviours including planning, exploring personal self and surrounding environment, and efficient decision-making (Karacan–Ozdemir and Guneri, 2017; Okolie et al., 2020). Therefore, the current study aims to investigate and assess the importance of career guidance in private higher education while comparing Pakistan and UK. Moreover, this study attempts to explore the role of career counsellors in the career development of private higher education students in Pakistan and the UK.

1.2. Research Gap

Several past scholars have explored the profound importance of careers in an individual's life and their impact on a student's employability. Though few studies have been reported on the role of career guidance and career counsellors in private higher education (Karacan–Ozdemir and Guneri, 2017; Okolie et al., 2020), there is a growing awareness of their significance. Additionally, only a handful of studies have delved into the transformative role that proper career guidance can have on the career development of Pakistani and UK students. Thus, bridging the gap between past academic literature and the current topic is necessary and inspiring. Several past scholars have studied the importance of careers in an individual's life and how they can affect a student's employability. However, a few studies have been reported that investigated the role of career guidance and career counsellors in private higher education (Karacan–Ozdemir and Guneri, 2017; Okolie et al., 2020). Furthermore, only a few studies have attempted to explore the significant role proper career guidance can play in the career development of Pakistani and UK students. Therefore, it is worth studying to bridge the gap between past academic literature and the current topic.

1.3. Research Aims and Objectives

This research aims to comparatively analyse the importance of career guidance in PrHEIs in Pakistan and the UK, examining student perceptions and preferences to understand how these services influence career decision-making and outcomes.

- To investigate student perceptions of the importance of career guidance in private higher education institutions in Pakistan and the UK.
- To compare the preferences and expectations of UK and Pakistani students regarding career guidance services.
- To examine the relationship between student utilisation of career guidance services and their career decision-making self-efficacy.
- To analyse the impact of career guidance on student career outcomes.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the perceived benefits and limitations of career guidance services among students in PrHEIs in Pakistan and the UK?
2. How do the preferred formats, content, and delivery methods of career guidance services differ between UK and Pakistani students in PrHEIs?
3. Does the utilisation of career guidance services predict career decision-making self-efficacy among students in PrHEIs in Pakistan and the UK?
4. What is the impact of career guidance services on the career outcomes of students in PrHEIs in Pakistan and the UK?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Development of Private Higher Education Worldwide, in Pakistan, and the UK

Private higher education has expanded significantly worldwide, driven by global trends of liberalisation, marketisation, and privatisation. According to Altbach (2005), approximately one-third of university students worldwide are enrolled in private higher education institutions (PrHEIs), reflecting their increasing role in addressing the growing demand for tertiary education. The shift towards private provision has been influenced by economic policies that encourage private sector participation in education, leading to greater accessibility, diversity in programme offerings, and competition in quality enhancement (Altbach, 2009).

The growth of PrHEIs is not only a response to increasing demand but also a result of broader socio-economic shifts. Qureshi and Khawaja (2021) highlight that private higher education has flourished due to globalisation, deregulation, and the adoption of market-driven education policies. These institutions provide an alternative to public universities by offering more flexible curricula, industry-aligned programmes, and greater institutional autonomy. However, concerns regarding quality assurance, regulatory oversight, and affordability remain critical challenges globally.

2.1.1. Private Higher Education in Pakistan

In Pakistan, private higher education has experienced rapid growth since the 1990s. Economic reforms and government policies promoting private investment have led to the establishment of numerous private universities and colleges (Qureshi & Khawaja, 2021). The emergence of PrHEIs in Pakistan aimed to address gaps in access to higher education, particularly in regions underserved by public institutions. The Aga Khan University, established in 1983, was Pakistan's first private university, setting a precedent for other institutions to follow.

Despite their contributions, private universities in Pakistan face challenges related to accreditation, funding, and faculty development. Many institutions operate with minimal regulatory oversight, leading to concerns about academic quality and credibility (Qureshi & Khawaja, 2021). Additionally, disparities in tuition fees between private and public institutions create accessibility barriers for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. To ensure sustainable growth, there is a need for stronger governance frameworks, transparent accreditation processes, and increased collaboration between private and public sectors.

2.1.2. Private Higher Education in the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has a long-established higher education system dominated by public universities. However, private higher education providers have gained prominence in recent years, particularly in specialised fields such as business, law, and creative industries (Altbach, 2005). The UK's private higher education sector operates under strict quality assurance mechanisms, ensuring that institutions meet academic and professional standards.

Unlike in Pakistan, private providers in the UK often focus on niche markets, offering alternative pathways for students who seek non-traditional education models (Zia et al, 2023). These institutions contribute to the diversity of the higher education sector by introducing innovative teaching methods, industry partnerships, and flexible learning options. However, affordability and financial sustainability remain key issues, with many private providers relying on tuition fees rather than government funding.

2.2. Career Planning & Career Guidance

Career planning refers to the procedure of formulating an individual's career goals and developing plans to achieve those goals and objectives. Also, it can be defined as an activity in which an individual designs what he/she wants to develop from future work activities. Some important indicators and dimensions of this process are training, rewards, and turnover (Fahmi and Ali, 2022). Another study by Diogo et al. (2020) suggested that the condition of Independence in career planning is achieved when individual's standalone without being dependent on others according to their current circumstances. Appropriate Guidance and counselling play a strategic role in helping students and enables them to lead and be firm on their career choice. In relevance to the study, highlighted another goal of career guidance which is to cultivate diverse and individually developed professionals who are capable to adapt to the needs of social and economic development. Diogo et al. (2020) concluded that career planning and providing career guidance is an opportunistic and organized activity that aims to increase individual awareness and professional skills. This also aims to develop their vocational abilities and promotion of individual student career development that can help them make informed choices regarding their future career.

2.2.1. Student's Perceptions of Career Guidance

Student perceptions of career guidance are crucial in understanding the effectiveness and relevance of these services in higher education. Research consistently highlights the importance students place on career guidance in navigating their academic and professional journeys (Creed et al., 2017; Gati & Saka, 2017). Students perceive career guidance as instrumental in making informed decisions about their education and future careers, particularly in clarifying career goals, exploring career options, and developing job search skills (Fizer et al., 2019).

However, student perceptions of career guidance can vary depending on individual needs, backgrounds, and institutional contexts (Brown et al., 2016). Factors such as access to resources, quality of guidance services, and perceived relevance to their career aspirations can influence student satisfaction and engagement with career guidance (Gordon, 2018). Understanding these diverse perspectives is crucial for tailoring career guidance services to effectively meet the needs of all students, ultimately contributing to their successful transition into the workforce.

2.3. Role of Counsellors in the Career Guidance and Development

As suggested by Pascariati and Ali (2022), Career decision-making contributes vitally to determining an individual's career. Besides this, it helps understand oneself and various job options. Furthermore, another important aspect of career planning relates to realising the need for career decision-making, searching and exploring alternate options for a career, and

expanding professional networks thereby, making the appropriate career choices. The study emphasized several factors that include Decision making, environment, and career planning that contribute to an individual's choice about making career choice. Another study by Li et al. (2017) investigated the goals of higher school counselling programs and determined the impact of transitional counselling support of higher school counsellors on students during their school life. The study emphasised exploring measures taken by high school professional counsellors to help their students in making successful transitions at different educational stages using standards and relevant models introduced in the last decade. Other important findings of the study by Li et al. (2017) included the effectiveness of collaborative efforts between MS and HS counsellors during the transition period from middle school to high school. Furthermore, one of the most effective practices by HS counsellors was acting on this collaboration by incorporating a personalized placement program according to the tailored needs of individual High School students. Another study by Alekhina et al. (2020) pointed out the main direction of career guidance in high schools which includes advancing the personal traits of an individual required for a successful career, study own areas of interest and abilities and their correspondence with future careers, and informing students about the effective ways to get vocational education, as well as, the places where this education can be completed. The guidance seeking regarding career choice can significantly help inform the students regarding changing trends and the current market situation. This aspect can be very beneficial in making an informed choice regarding their future career which can affect the employability of the students.

2.4. Career Guidance for Students in Private Higher Education in the UK

Past research in the UK has paid limited attention to the role of career values in shaping the approaches of high education students to career management. The study by Jackson and Tomlinson (2019) conducted in the UK evaluated the career values of the students in the UK and their relationship to proactivity in career self-management. The findings revealed that it significantly helps students to align their profiles effectively as well as emerging career identities more strongly towards targeted jobs and organizations, which enables them to become a perfect fit for a given workplace. The outcomes of the study indicated the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic values in the students of higher education's career decision-making (Jackson and Tomlinson, 2019). The study explored their significant role in assessing proactivity in career management behaviour. Findings revealed that students with value-driven decision-making are more likely to represent proactive career management behaviours. Another study was conducted in the UK by interviewing 22 HE career counsellors who reflected on their one-to-one practice with university students, describing their approaches and techniques, and identifying the major challenges they face. The outcomes of the study highlighted several benefits of this practice with UK university students including a boost of confidence and a rise in self-awareness of the students regarding what are the demands of employers and in return what the students want from their job. however, the study also has some challenges for example dealing with students who are over-ambitious or have unrealistic expectations for their future (Yates and Hirsh, 2022). This is in line with the

findings of the study by Pitan and Atiku (2017) who investigated the influence of career guidance activities on the employability of HE students in the context of the UK. The outcomes of the study suggested a positive correlation between transition learning that includes job searching and self-presentation skills and the undergraduate's employability. Therefore, the study strongly recommended developing appropriate strategies to ensure an effective transition making from learning to work. In addition to this, career readiness is a significant short-term outcome of career guidance activities in the UK. Therefore, Dodd et al. (2022) conducted three studies aimed to examine whether an increase in the quality & quantity of career guidance would result in increased career readiness for young people in the UK. Study one evaluated framework mapping and cognitive ability of the students to be important factors to contribute towards career readiness. Study 2 conducted configure and metric invariance tests for three variables including Ethnicity, Key stage, and gender. The findings of the study suggested Study 3 discussed the role of career guidance in increasing career readiness which was found to be impacted by demographic and intervention variables. All the studies indicated a positive relationship between higher levels of participation in career guidance and higher levels of career readiness.

2.5. Career Guidance for Students in Private Higher Education in Pakistan

There is very little research available in Pakistan regarding the concept of career counselling among high education students, particularly in the private sector. Zahid et al. (2020) revealed that alignment concerns between skills supply and demand are the key drivers for career guidance development as well as for aider reform of higher education. However, the study indicated that career guidance practices in Pakistan are found to be lagging behind policy aspirations which are mainly due to limited investment in the sector as well as fundamental cultural challenges that are currently unaddressed. New and strong policies & resources along with indigenous theories are crucial for the development of career guidance within Pakistan. Another study by Zafar (2019) that was carried out on secondary school students in Pakistan indicated that the students who seek career counselling services reported the minimization of difficulties in career decision-making procedures. Furthermore, career guidance information contributes vitally to the process of career decision-making. Similar to this, another study at a private university in Punjab was conducted which revealed that there is a persistent need to take a clear picture in the minds of students regarding the possible educational benefits and universities. A student cannot grasp the concept of freedom and development without understanding the role of universities as societal drivers for a better future (Ameen et al., 2023).

Another study by Arif et al. (2019) revealed the influencing factors that impact the choice of careers among private HE (higher education) students. according to the results, family factor was found to be one of the major players in choosing an academic career in a student's life in Pakistan. It was suggested that the social group of students contributes vitally to providing career guidance assistance, the peer pressure and the role models of students help them seek a suitable career choice for them and satisfy them after choosing a specific one. However,

the study also highlighted that since the students belong to a private university, therefore, economic factors were found to be insignificant for them in choosing a career.

2.6. Comparing UK and Pakistani Student Preferences for Career Guidance Services

Comparing student preferences and expectations regarding career guidance services in the UK and Pakistan requires understanding the unique cultural, educational, and economic contexts shaping these perspectives. While research on career guidance is extensive, direct comparisons between these two countries are limited. This review synthesizes relevant literature to highlight potential areas of convergence and divergence in student expectations.

2.6.1. UK Context:

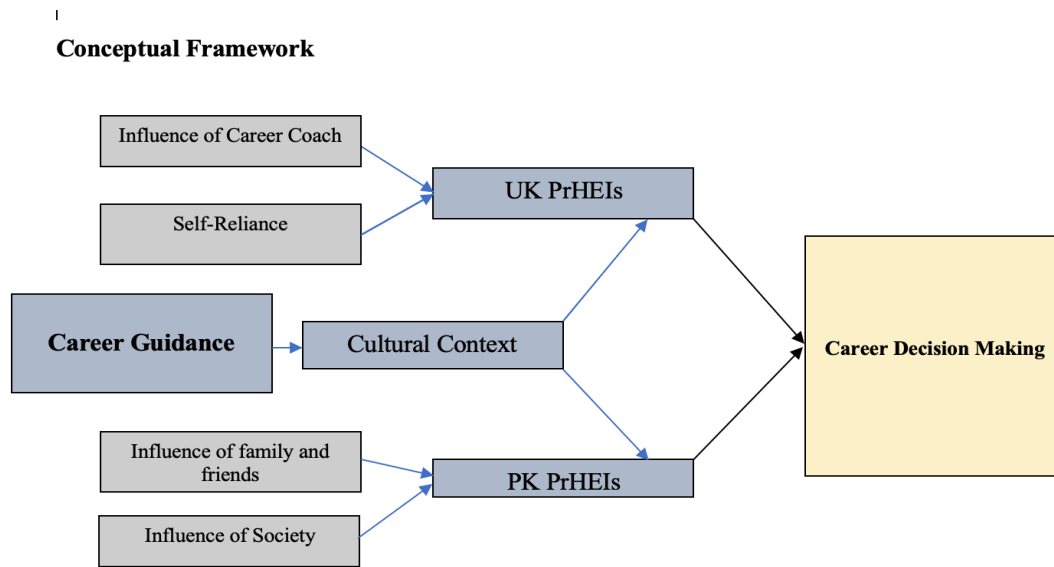
- **Emphasis on Individualism and Self-Reliance:** The UK's neoliberal ideology emphasizes individual responsibility for career planning (Watts, 2005). Students may prioritize personalized guidance, self-assessment tools, and resources for independent exploration of career options (Law & Watts, 2010).
- **Structured Career Services:** UK universities generally have well-established career services offering diverse resources like workshops, career fairs, and individual counseling (Morey et al., 2015). Students may expect access to these services and anticipate guidance tailored to their specific academic programs and career goals.
- **Focus on Employability Skills:** With increasing graduate unemployment, UK students may prioritize guidance that develops skills like CV writing, interview techniques, and networking (Tomlinson, 2012). They might expect support in identifying internships, placements, and graduate schemes.

2.6.2. Pakistani Context:

- **Influence of Family and Friends:** Career decisions in Pakistan are often influenced by family expectations and friends (Shahid & Ashraf, 2013). Students may seek guidance that considers these factors and provides support in navigating cultural expectations.
- **Limited Career Services:** Career guidance infrastructure in Pakistani universities is often underdeveloped compared to the UK (Khan et al, 2018). Students may have lower expectations regarding the availability and comprehensiveness of services.
- **Emphasis on Traditional Careers:** Societal pressures and limited exposure to diverse career paths may lead Pakistani students to prioritize traditional careers (e.g., medicine, engineering, civil service) (Memon & Arain, 2011). They might expect guidance that aligns with these conventional choices.

2.7. Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework illustrates the influence of career **guidance** on **career decision-making** within private higher education institutions (PrHEIs) in the UK and Pakistan, highlighting the role of cultural context.



Source: Authors' conceptualisation

- **Career Guidance** serves as the foundation of the model, shaping students' career decision-making processes.
- The **cultural context** acts as a mediator, influencing how career guidance is perceived and utilised in different educational environments.
- In the **UK PrHEIs**, career decision-making is influenced by **career coaches** and **self-reliance**, emphasising an individualistic approach where students are encouraged to take personal responsibility for their career paths.
- In contrast, in **Pakistan's PrHEIs**, career decision-making is shaped by **family, friends, and societal influences**, reflecting a more collective and socially driven approach to career choices.
- Ultimately, both pathways contribute to **career decision-making**, highlighting how career guidance, shaped by cultural context, affects students' professional choices in diverse educational settings.

This framework underscores the necessity of tailoring career guidance strategies to align with cultural differences in PrHEIs.

2.8. Context for Research Hypotheses

The role of career guidance in higher education has gained significant attention, particularly in private higher education institutions (PrHEIs), where students often require structured support to navigate career pathways (Watts & Fretwell, 2004). Career guidance encompasses various forms of support, including mentorship, counselling, and skill development programmes, which contribute to students' employability and professional growth (OECD, 2004). Studies suggest that effective career guidance can enhance students' decision-making abilities, career adaptability, and long-term job satisfaction (Hooley, 2014). As Altbach (2013)

highlights, with nearly one-third of students globally enrolled in PrHEIs, the need for structured career services in these institutions has become even more critical.

2.8.1 Career Guidance in Private Higher Education Institutions

Career guidance plays a crucial role in shaping students' career choices and professional trajectories, particularly in PrHEIs, where institutional resources and support systems vary significantly from public institutions (Alajmi, 2024). Unlike public universities, private institutions often operate in market-driven environments where employability outcomes significantly impact institutional reputation and student satisfaction (Marginson, 2018). Career guidance not only helps students make informed decisions but also aligns their skills with market demands, improving overall employment prospects (Brown et al., 2016).

2.8.2 Comparative Perspectives: Career Guidance in the UK and Pakistan

Career guidance services in private higher education vary across cultural and economic contexts. In the UK, PrHEIs have well-structured career support systems, including career counselling, employability workshops, and industry linkages, which help students become self-reliant in career decision-making (Zwane, 2012). The UK's emphasis on individual career responsibility encourages students to engage actively with career development opportunities, often facilitated by career coaches and industry mentors (Tomlinson et al., 2022).

In contrast, career guidance in Pakistan's PrHEIs is heavily influenced by cultural and societal factors. Research indicates that career choices among Pakistani students are often shaped by family expectations and societal norms, with limited access to professional career counselling services (Malik & Courtney, 2011). A study by Qureshi (2021) on the **growth of private higher education in the context of globalisation, marketisation, and liberalisation** highlights how career guidance remains underdeveloped in many Pakistani PrHEIs due to resource constraints and a lack of institutional focus on employability outcomes. Additionally, Qureshi's work on defining private higher education underscores the need for structured career services tailored to the local economic and cultural environment. These distinctions between the UK and Pakistan highlight the significant differences in career guidance approaches within PrHEIs, leading to the formulation of the following research hypotheses:

- Career guidance plays a significant role in private higher education institutions.
- There are notable differences in career guidance experiences among students in UK and Pakistani PrHEIs.

By addressing these hypotheses, this study aims to explore the effectiveness of career guidance in diverse higher education landscapes and offer insights for enhancing employability support in different cultural contexts.

2.9. Conclusion

This review highlights the need for further research to directly compare student preferences and expectations regarding career guidance in the UK and Pakistan. Understanding these nuances is crucial for developing culturally relevant and effective career services that cater to the diverse needs of students in both contexts.

3. Methods

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to investigate the importance of career guidance in PrHEIs in Pakistan and the UK. The quantitative design is deemed suitable as it allows for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This approach aligns with the research objectives, which seek to measure and compare student perceptions, preferences, and outcomes related to career guidance services.

3.1 Data Collection

- **Instrument:** A structured questionnaire was developed to collect data from students in PrHEIs in Pakistan and the UK. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions with Likert-scale responses to measure student perceptions, preferences, and experiences related to career guidance services. The questionnaire begins with the aim of research and a brief introduction. Section A is reserved to cover the demographic information. Section B is based on variables involved in the study. For instance, the importance of career guidance in private higher institutions. Demographic information was also collected to enable comparative analysis between different student groups.
- **Sampling:** A convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants from PrHEIs in both countries. The target sample size was 100 respondents, with 50 students from Pakistan and 50 students from the UK. This sample size was considered adequate for quantitative analysis and allowed for meaningful comparisons between the two groups.
- **Procedure:** The questionnaire was administered online through a secure platform to ensure accessibility and anonymity for participants. Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the data collection process, including obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring data confidentiality.

3.2 Data Analysis

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the characteristics of the sample, including demographic information and key variables related to career guidance.
- **Inferential Statistics:** Inferential statistics, such as t-tests and chi-square tests, were used to test the research hypotheses and examine the differences between Pakistani

and UK students regarding their perceptions, preferences, and outcomes related to career guidance.

- **Correlation Analysis:** Correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between student utilization of career guidance services and their career decision-making self-efficacy.
- **Regression Analysis:** Regression analysis was employed to analyze the impact of career guidance on student career outcomes, controlling for other relevant factors such as academic performance and socioeconomic background.
- **Software:** Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software, version 26.

3.3. Justification for Quantitative Approach:

The quantitative approach was justified for this study due to the following reasons:

- **Objective Measurement:** It allowed for the objective measurement and comparison of student perceptions and preferences regarding career guidance services.
- **Generalisability:** The findings can be generalized to a larger population of students in private higher education institutions in Pakistan and the UK.
- **Statistical Analysis:** It enabled the use of statistical techniques to test hypotheses and identify significant relationships between variables.
- **Replicability:** The structured nature of the quantitative approach allows for the replication of the study in different contexts.

3.4 Research Ethics

According to Hasan et al, (2021), research ethics deals with moral principles and guidelines that are essential to conduct a survey. For this study, the researcher has tried his best to maintain the anonymity level of respondents, their identity has been kept confidential and there is informed consent taken from the participants involved in the study. Ethics has been taken into consideration by pro-Besides, each paragraph in the literature sector is cited with references to show the originality of the work.

4. Results and Interpretation

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics provide a concise summary of data, offering insights into its central tendencies, variability, and distribution. They allow researchers to understand the fundamental characteristics of a dataset without drawing inferences.

Age:

- Mean = **1.89** (Categories: 1 = 18-25, 2 = 26-30, 3 = Above 30)
- Since the mean is closer to 2, it suggests that most respondents are in the **26-30 age group**, but with some representation from the **18-25 group** as well.

- **Standard Deviation = 0.777**, indicating moderate variation in age distribution.

• *Table 1: Age*

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	36	36.0	36.0	36.0
	26-30	39	39.0	39.0	75.0
	above 30	25	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Gender:

- Mean = **1.49** (Categories: 1 = Male, 2 = Female)
- The near **1.5 mean value** suggests an almost equal distribution of males and females.
- **Standard Deviation = 0.502**, indicating a balanced mix.

• *Table 2: Gender*

Gender	Frequency (n)	Frequency (n)
Male (1)	51	51%
Female (2)	49	49%
Total	100	100%

Experience:

- Mean = **1.44** (Categories: 1 = 1-2 years, 2 = 3-4 years)
- Since the mean is closer to **1**, most respondents likely have **1-2 years of experience**.
- **Standard Deviation = 0.498**, suggesting responses are somewhat concentrated around the lower experience range.

• *Table 1: Experience*

Experience					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-2 years	56	56.0	56.0	56.0
	3-4 years	44	44.0	44.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Nationality:

- Mean = 1.49 (Categories: 1 = Pakistani, 2 = UK)
- Again, the mean of 1.49 suggests an almost equal proportion of respondents from Pakistan and the UK.
- Standard Deviation = 0.502, reinforcing an even distribution.

• *Table 4: Nationality*

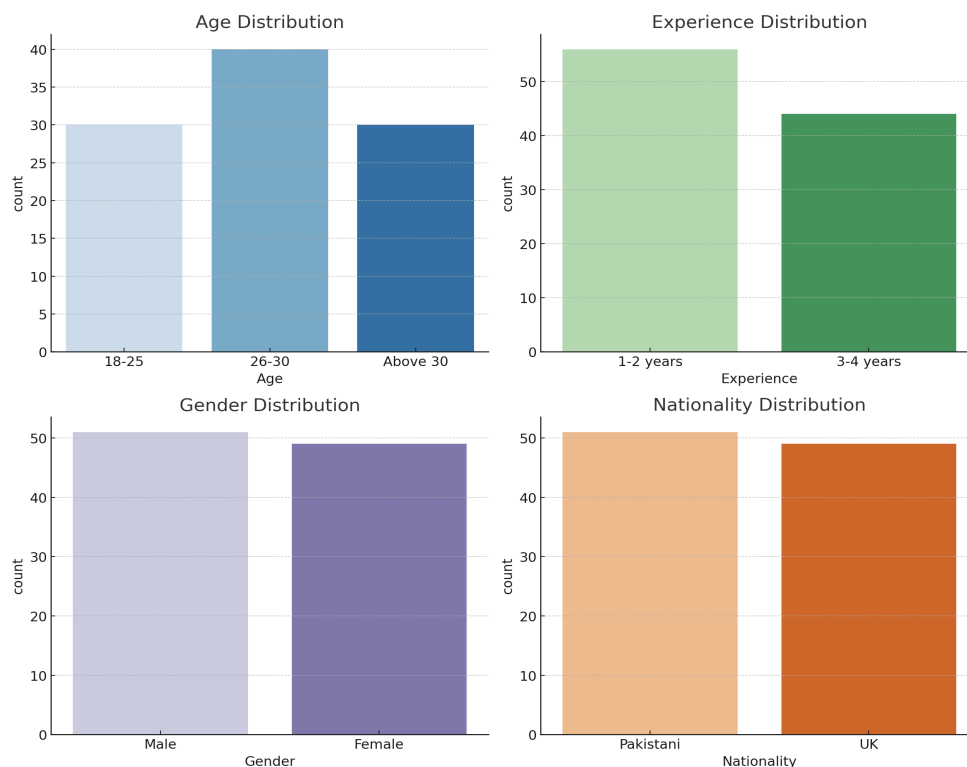
Nationality	Nationality	Nationality
Pakistani (1)	51	51%
UK (2)	49	49%
Total	100	100%

The descriptive statistics showed in the table 5 that the average mean value for age is 1.890 and for experience is 1.440. The average mean value for gender was reported to be 1.49 and nationality was reported to be 1.49 respectively.

• *Table 5: Descriptives*

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	100	1.00	3.00	1.8900	.77714
Experience	100	1.00	2.00	1.4400	.49889
Gender	100	1.00	2.00	1.4900	.50242
Nationality	100	1.00	2.00	1.4900	.50242
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Figure:1



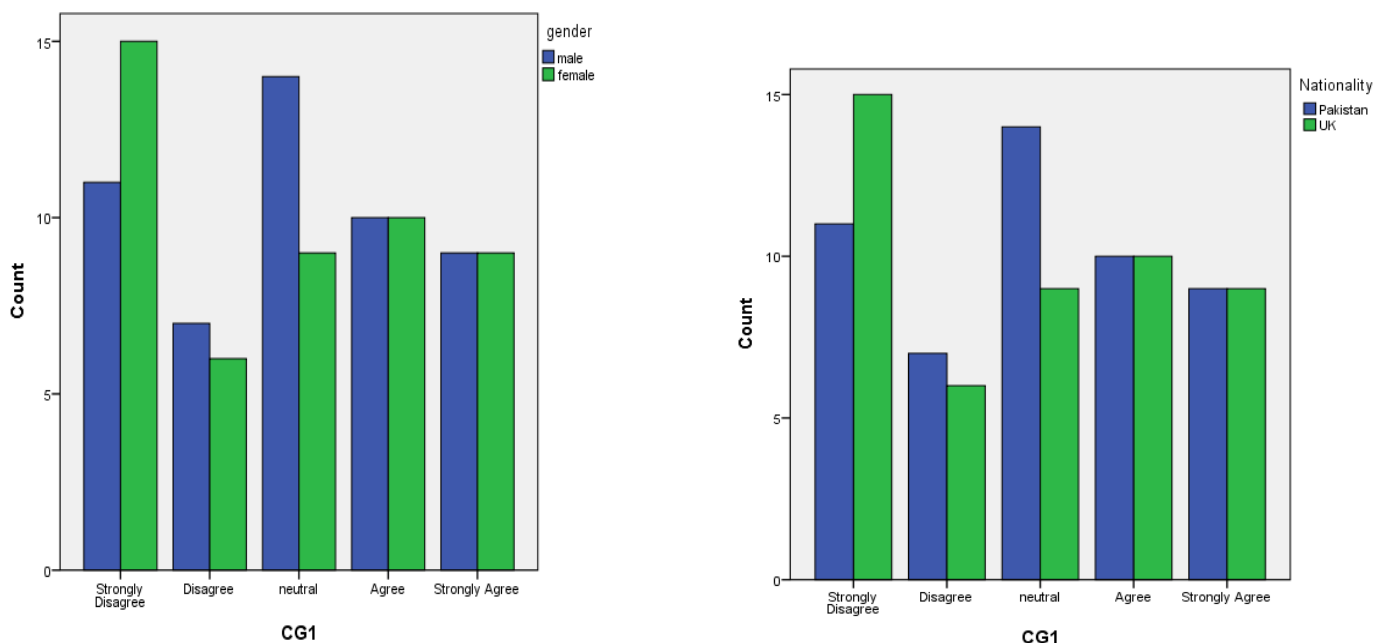
The age analysis showed that out of 100 respondents, 36 of them were in the age bracket of 18 to 25 years old and 39 of them 26 to 30 years old while the remaining 25 of them were above 30 years old.

The experience analysis showed that 56 of them had the experience of 1 to 2 years and 44 of them had the experience of 3 to 4 years.

For the gender analysis, 51 of the respondents were reported to be male and 49 of them were reported to be female.

The nationality of respondents showed that 51 are from Pakistan and 49 are from UK.

Figure 2: Preference for Career Guidance



For the question linked with the importance of career guidance for the UK and Pakistani students, Findings showed that students from UK gave more importance to the career guidance factor as compared to Pakistani students. However, for students in Pakistan, career guidance was important for career progression only, while UK students were reported to prefer the guidance for making good choice for career, for progression and for successful future as well.

4.2 T-test

A t-test is a statistical hypothesis test used to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups. It's particularly useful when dealing with small sample sizes or when the population standard deviation is unknown. The t-test calculates a t-statistic, which is then compared to a critical value from the t-distribution.

Table 2: T-Test

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Career guidance	100	11.4500	2.80827	.28083
Private Higher Education	100	8.9600	2.49411	.24941

Table 7: T-Test

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Career guidance	40.772	99	.000	11.45000	10.8928	12.0072
Higher education	35.925	99	.000	8.96000	8.4651	9.4549

One sample T-test was conducted to test the hypothesis of the study. The findings demonstrated that the sig value is less than the p value and therefore this draws the decision that we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative one stating that there is a significant importance of career guidance in the private higher education.

4.3 Correlation

Correlation is a statistical measure that describes the extent to which two variables are related. 1 It quantifies the strength and direction of a linear relationship between them. The correlation coefficient, typically represented as "r," ranges from -1 to +1. 3 A positive correlation ($r > 0$) indicates that as one variable increases, the other also tends to increase. 1 A negative correlation ($r < 0$) signifies that as one variable increases, the other tends to decrease. 4 A correlation of 0 implies no linear relationship between the variables. 5 While correlation reveals an association, it's crucial to remember that it does not establish causation.

Table 8: Correlation

Correlations			
		Career Guidance	Private Higher Education
Career guidance	Pearson Correlation	1	.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	100	100
Higher education	Pearson Correlation	.077	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	100	100

The Pearson correlation test has been conducted to assess the relationship between the career guidance and higher education in private institutes. The Pearson value was reported to be 0.77 which demonstrated that there is a strong correlation between career guidance and higher education students. The positive correlation here states that student prefer the career guidance as important factor, and this significantly would help them to make effective choices for their work and education life at the same time. The sig value was reported to be .001 which again reported that null hypothesis is rejected, and significant correlation was seen to be existing among the variables under study. The findings of Pearson are in line with past studies showing similar results. Past studies highlighted several benefits of this practice with UK university students including a boost of confidence and a rise in self-awareness of the students regarding what are the demands of employers and in return what the students want from their job. However, the study also has some challenges for example dealing with students who are over-ambitious or have unrealistic expectations for their future (Yates and Hirsh, 2022). This is in line with the findings of the study by Pitan and Atiku (2017) who investigated the influence of career guidance activities on the employability of HE students in the context of the UK. The outcomes of the study suggested a positive correlation between transition learning that includes job searching and self-presentation skills and the undergraduate's employability. Therefore, the study strongly recommended developing appropriate strategies to ensure an effective transition making from learning to work. In addition to this, career readiness is a significant short – term outcome of career guidance activities in the UK

4.4 ANOVA

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is a statistical technique used to determine if there are statistically significant differences between the means of three or more independent groups. It partitions the total variability of the data into different sources, allowing researchers to assess whether the observed differences between group means are likely due to chance or a genuine effect of the independent variable. ANOVA calculates an F-statistic, which compares the variance between groups to the variance within groups. A significant F-statistic indicates that at least one group mean is significantly different from the others, but it doesn't specify which groups differ. Post-hoc tests are then used to identify the specific pairwise differences

between group means. ANOVA is a powerful tool for examining the effects of categorical independent variables on continuous dependent variables.

Table 3: ANOVA

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Career guidance	Between Groups	6.815	1	6.815	.863	.000
	Within Groups	773.935	98	7.897		
	Total	780.750	99			
Higher education	Between Groups	4.807	1	4.807	.771	.000
	Within Groups	611.033	98	6.235		
	Total	615.840	99			

The results of ANOVA stated that the sig value is less than 0.05 which showed that significant difference exist among the groups for career guidance importance. This implies that among students of UK and Pakistan, there is significant difference among the preferences of the students. Students in UK prefer career guidance more important as compared to the ones in Pakistan.

The outcomes of the study highlighted several benefits of this practice with UK university students including a boost of confidence and a rise in self-awareness of the students regarding what are the demands of employers and in return what the students want from their job. However, the study also has some challenges for example dealing with students who are over-ambitious or have unrealistic expectations for their future (Yates and Hirsh, 2022). This is in line with the findings of the study by Pitan and Atiku (2017) who investigated the influence of career guidance activities on the employability of HE students in the context of the UK. The outcomes of the study suggested a positive correlation between transition learning that includes job searching and self-presentation skills and the undergraduate's employability. Therefore, the study strongly recommended developing appropriate strategies to ensure an effective transition making from learning to work. In addition to this, career readiness is a significant short-term outcome of career guidance activities in England. The literature regarding the importance of career guidance is limited in this era of tough competition for fresh graduates. Therefore, it is important to know the importance of the topic as work needs to be an exciting blend of accomplishment and challenge (Pordelan, 2022). Career choice must meet professional and personal growth. Career guidance is beneficial in the school setting as it allows students to explore different career opportunities. Policymakers, educators, and researchers agree that career readiness and college are important components. Hence, it is said that private higher education institutions allow students to explore different career opportunities as they prepare them for their career choices in a school setting. 50% of them agree that career centres help them to know about their interests and they choose their fields of specialisation accordingly.

In addition, the study has incorporated different demographic questions in the survey and found that students aged 21 years and more want to know about the importance of career guidance in both the UK and Pakistan. 50% of them agree that career centres help them to know about their interests and they choose their fields of specialisation accordingly. 30% of the students agreed that they need career centres in private higher education students to have guidance about their career choices. It was reported that the average score for students who were interested in career guidance sessions is more than the average.

The correlation values stated that students who were guided for their careers were likely to choose the jobs and fields of their choice as compared to the ones who did not attend a single career guidance session. The impact of career guidance on the job and field performance of students was significant which highlights the importance of the topic. Career guidance importance has been highlighted in Pakistan not just in the UK as some organisations have appeared in the recent past such as Edvisehub, Eduvision, and Afaq that provide career guidance services (Hilling, 2017). The significance of the topic is confirmed by the literature and study results.

The findings can conclude that it has been found that career guidance is associated with improved confidence levels, self-esteem, and improved motivation among private higher education students. This is backed by evidence that the self-worth of students is boosted once they know which career is a good fit for them (Dislere, 2020). Therefore, we conclude that our quantitative data demonstrated a strong effect of career guidance on students that benefit them in the future.

5. Discussion

The research states that career guidance acts as a common requirement for students for future growth. This is because career counselling needs are diversified and vary from student to student. Several career guidance needs are found in the literature including personal abilities, development, awareness level regarding career planning, decision-making, academic information, and career information (Yoon, 2018). Such needs highlight the importance of the topic for the future advancement of students.

It is always crucial to highlight the importance of career counselling which is defined by each social scientist diversely (Sharif & Sarwar, 2019). One definition of career counselling is that it is a face-to-face procedure that has a clear focus on career-related concerns while another definition is that the career counselling procedure addresses the different needs of clients (Hilling, 2017).

The contemporary literature also suggests that career counselling is important because it helps to promote agency by making choices related to careers for private higher education students. Varieties of factors are considered during the process such as leisure, work, and family. Career guidance helps to remediate or prevent problems related to careers for students (Hilling, 2017). Overall, work and career are regarded as immense components of a student's future. This shows that career guidance is always helpful and valuable for the financial well-being of students that solve a lot of work-related problems.

Different private higher education institutions use different strategies to counsel students regarding their career choices. Pakistani private higher education institutions have started to establish career guidance service centres for students (Sharif & Sarwar, 2019). The United Kingdom has also some rules and policies regarding career guidance services offered to students. The UK is working consistently to increase their career guidance services as many well-known universities as possible like the University of Oxford and Stanford University have established career guidance services so that they can help students with matters related to their careers. In Pakistan, Bahria University, FAST, and the University of Agriculture have also developed career centres for the advancement of students (Keshf, 2020). Diversified strategies are available for career guidance for students in Pakistan such as industry-academia linkages, CV writing, job hunting, job opportunities, job fairs, group sessions, one on one sessions, career seminars, and much more. It has been identified that international students avail of career guidance services at an early age and benefit from it the most.

The literature regarding the importance of career guidance is limited in this era of tough competition for fresh graduates. Therefore, it is important to know the importance of the topic as work needs to be an exciting blend of accomplishment and challenge (Pordelan, 2022). Career choice must meet professional and personal growth. Career guidance is beneficial in the school setting as it allows students to explore different career opportunities. Policymakers, educators, and researchers agree that career readiness and college are important components. Hence, it is said that private higher education institutions allow students to explore different career opportunities as they prepare them for their career choices in a school setting. 50% of them agree that career centres help them to know about their interests and they choose their fields of specialisation accordingly.

In addition, the study has incorporated different demographic questions in the survey and found that students aged 21 years and more want to know about the importance of career guidance in both the UK and Pakistan. 50% of them agree that career centres help them to know about their interests and they choose their fields of specialization accordingly. 30% of the students agreed that they need career centres in private higher education students to have guidance about their career choices. It was reported that the average score for students who were interested in career guidance sessions is more than the average.

The correlation values stated that students who were guided for their careers were likely to choose the jobs and fields of their choice as compared to the ones who did not attend a single career guidance session. The impact of career guidance on the job and field performance of students was significant which highlights the importance of the topic. Career guidance importance has been highlighted in Pakistan not just in the UK as some organizations have appeared in the recent past such as Edviserhub, Eduvision, and Afaq that provide career guidance services (Hilling, 2017). The significance of the topic is confirmed by the literature and study results.

6. Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of career guidance in private higher education across Pakistan and the UK, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Primarily, the sample size of 100 respondents, evenly distributed between the two countries, may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader student populations in these regions. Future research should consider employing significantly larger and more diverse samples to enhance the robustness of the results. Additionally, this study primarily focused on student perceptions through self-report surveys. Future investigations could incorporate mixed-methods approaches, including qualitative interviews with students, career counselors, and faculty, to gain a deeper understanding of the nuances and complexities of career guidance practices. Longitudinal studies tracking student career trajectories post-graduation would also offer valuable insights into the long-term impact of career guidance interventions. Finally, exploring the influence of specific institutional and socio-cultural factors on career guidance effectiveness would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of this critical area.

7. Conclusion

The results witnessed the importance of career guidance in private higher education institutions. Career choice remains the potential element for a bright future for students as they need to be mentally and physically well to perform a job. The results are in line with the past study conducted by Zahid (2020) which highlights the importance of career guidance and choice both in the developing and developed nations by saying that career guidance is an important part of private education institutions in various countries around the globe. It has been established well in some private institutions, and some are on their way to establishing career guidance service centres for the ease of their students.

Moreover, it has been found that career guidance is associated with improved confidence levels, self-esteem, and improved motivation among private higher education students. This is backed by evidence that the self-worth of students is boosted once they know which career is a good fit for them (Dislere, 2020). Therefore, we conclude that our quantitative data demonstrated a strong effect of career guidance on students that benefit them in the future.

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