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Effect of Work-Based Learning on Students' Technical Competence in Electrical Workshop Practices in Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of work-based learning (WBL) on students' technical competence in electrical workshop practices at Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The research employed a quasi-experimental design with a sample of 120 National Diploma (ND) electrical students randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The experimental group received work-based learning instruction while the control group received traditional classroom-based instruction over a 12-week period. Data were collected using a validated Technical Competence Assessment Tool (TCAT) with reliability coefficient of 0.84. Results revealed significant differences in post-test scores between groups ($t = 8.47$, $p < 0.001$), with the experimental group showing superior performance in practical skills, problem-solving abilities, and workplace readiness. The study recommends increased integration of work-based learning approaches in technical education curricula to enhance students' employability and industry relevance.

Keywords: Work-based learning, technical competence, electrical workshop practices, technical education, vocational training

Introduction

Technical and vocational education has become increasingly critical in addressing the skills gap between educational outcomes and industry requirements in Nigeria's rapidly evolving technological landscape. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) has consistently emphasized the need for practical, industry-relevant training that prepares students for immediate workforce integration (Adesoji & Chike-Okoli, 2023). Polytechnics, as primary institutions for technical education delivery, face the challenge of ensuring their graduates possess the requisite competencies demanded by employers in the electrical and electronics sector as only the few period of practical exposure in the school laboratory and workshop and theoretical instruction administered via conventional teaching method is incapable of building the required industry skills in the students, hence the need for work-based learning.

Work-based learning represents a pedagogical approach that integrates academic learning with practical workplace experiences, enabling students to develop both theoretical knowledge and practical skills simultaneously (Bravenboer & Lester, 2022). This approach has gained significant attention globally as educational institutions seek to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and industry expectations. In the context of electrical workshop practices, work-based learning encompasses hands-on experiences in real or simulated workplace environments where students engage with actual electrical systems, tools, and challenges they will encounter in their professional careers upon graduation from tertiary institutions.

Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, serves as a crucial institution in Port Harcourt's technical education landscape, training hundreds of students annually in various technical disciplines including electrical/electronic engineering technology. However, concerns have been raised by industry stakeholders regarding the practical competence of graduates, particularly in electrical workshop practices where safety, precision, and technical

proficiency are paramount (Okoro & Ezeudu, 2023). This gap between educational outcomes and industry expectations necessitates an examination of current pedagogical approaches and the potential benefits of work-based learning implementation.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of electrical engineering graduates from Nigerian polytechnics has become a source of concern for industry stakeholders, with many employers reporting significant deficiencies in practical competencies required for effective workplace performance. Adebayo and Okafor (2023) identified that electrical engineering graduates from Nigerian polytechnics demonstrate inadequate practical skills, with only 34% of recent graduates meeting industry-standard competency requirements in electrical workshop practices. This skills gap has been attributed to the predominant use of traditional classroom-based instruction that emphasizes theoretical knowledge at the expense of practical, hands-on learning experiences. Supporting this assertion, Okwelle and Okoro (2022) observed that electrical engineering students in Nigerian polytechnics receive limited exposure to authentic workplace environments, resulting in graduates who lack the problem-solving abilities and technical confidence required for immediate workforce integration. Their study revealed that 68% of electrical engineering programs in Rivers State polytechnics allocate less than 30% of instructional time to practical activities, significantly below international best practices of 60-70% for technical programs. Again, Nwosu and Eze (2023) highlighted the disconnect between polytechnic electrical training and industry expectations, noting that employers consistently report dissatisfaction with graduates' ability to handle complex electrical systems, troubleshoot equipment failures, and maintain safety standards in workshop environments. This problem persists despite substantial government investments in technical education infrastructure and curriculum development, suggesting that pedagogical approaches rather than resource availability may be the primary constraint. The lack of adequate practical competence among electrical engineering graduates from Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, represents a critical challenge that undermines the institution's mission to produce industry-ready professionals. Traditional instructional methods appear insufficient for developing the complex technical competencies required in modern electrical engineering practice, necessitating investigation of alternative pedagogical approaches such as work-based learning that integrate authentic workplace experiences with formal education.

Purpose of the Study

The study was carried out to investigate the effect of work-based learning (WBL) on students' technical competence in electrical workshop practices at Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Specifically, the study was conducted to:

1. Determine the effect of work-based learning on students' practical performance competence in electrical workshop practices at Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt.
2. Determine the extent to which work-based learning influence students' problem-solving abilities in electrical systems at Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt.
3. Determine the effect of work-based learning on students' safety consciousness and professional behavior in electrical workshop practices at Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

The following three research questions guided the study:

1. What is the effect of work-based learning on students' practical performance competence in electrical workshop practices at Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola?

2. To what extent does work-based learning influence students' problem-solving abilities in electrical systems at Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola?
3. How does work-based learning affect students' safety consciousness and professional behavior in electrical workshop practices at Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola?

Literature Review

Work-Based Learning in Technical Education

Current research has consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of work-based learning in enhancing technical competence across various disciplines. Johnson et al. (2023) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of work-based learning outcomes in technical education, revealing significant improvements in practical skills, employability, and job readiness among participants. Their analysis of 47 studies across multiple countries showed effect sizes ranging from 0.65 to 0.89 for practical skill development, indicating substantial positive impacts. In the specific context of electrical engineering education, Martinez and Chen (2022) investigated the implementation of work-based learning in electrical workshop settings across five technical institutions in Southeast Asia. Their findings revealed that students who participated in work-based learning programs demonstrated 34% higher competency scores in practical assessments compared to their traditionally-taught counterparts. Furthermore, these students showed improved problem-solving abilities and greater confidence in handling complex electrical systems.

Technical Competence in Electrical Workshop Practices

Technical competence in electrical workshop practices encompasses multiple dimensions including theoretical knowledge application, practical skill execution, safety consciousness, problem-solving ability, and professional behavior (Thompson & Williams, 2023). The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) framework identifies key competency areas for electrical practitioners including circuit analysis, electrical installation, fault diagnosis, safety protocols, and equipment maintenance (ASQA, 2022). Recent studies have highlighted the complexity of assessing technical competence in electrical fields. Richardson et al. (2023) developed a comprehensive competency assessment framework that incorporates both cognitive and psychomotor domains, emphasizing the need for authentic assessment methods that reflect real-world electrical work environments. Their research demonstrated that traditional paper-and-pencil tests inadequately capture the full spectrum of technical competence required in electrical practice.

Technical Education Administration in Nigeria

In the Nigerian context, technical education faces unique challenges including inadequate funding, obsolete equipment, and limited industry partnerships (Ogbonna & Nwankwo, 2023). However, recent initiatives by the Federal Ministry of Education and various state governments have emphasized the importance of practical, industry-relevant training. Similarly, Adebayo and Okafor (2023) examined the state of electrical engineering education in Nigerian technical colleges, revealing significant deficiencies in practical training opportunities and industry engagement. Their study of 15 technical colleges across six states found that only 23% of instructional time was devoted to practical activities, well below international best practices of 60-70% for technical programs. Thus, the Rivers State Government's Technical Education Revitalization Program, launched in 2022, specifically targets the enhancement of practical skills training in technical colleges across the state.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation for this study draws primarily from experiential learning theory as proposed by Kolb (2015), which emphasizes learning through direct experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This cyclical process aligns closely with work-based learning principles where students engage

in practical activities, reflect on their experiences, develop theoretical understanding, and apply knowledge in new contexts. Furthermore, the study incorporates elements of social learning theory (Bandura, 2023), which highlights the importance of observation, modeling, and social interaction in skill acquisition being key components of effective work-based learning programs.

Work-Based Learning Models

Various models of work-based learning have emerged in technical education literature. The apprenticeship model, widely implemented in European contexts, combines structured workplace learning with formal education (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2023). This model has shown particular success in electrical trades, with completion rates exceeding 85% and high employment rates among graduates.

The cooperative education model, prevalent in North American institutions, alternates periods of academic study with paid work experience in relevant industries (Smith & Anderson, 2022). According to a study by Davis et al. (2023), electrical engineering students participating in cooperative education programs demonstrated superior technical competence and higher starting salaries compared to traditional program graduates.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test control group configuration. The quasi-experimental approach was selected due to the practical constraints of random assignment in educational settings and the need to work within existing class structures at the Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Port Harcourt.

Population and Sample

The population comprised all National Diploma (ND) electrical engineering students at Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, totaling 347 students across ND I and ND II levels. Using Taro Yamane's formula with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a sample size of 120 students was determined. Participants were randomly assigned to experimental (n=60) and control (n=60) groups using computer-generated random numbers.

Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across ND I and ND II levels. Students were first stratified by academic level, and then randomly selected within each stratum. This approach ensured balanced representation while maintaining the randomization principle essential for causal inference.

Instrumentation

Data collection employed the Technical Competence Assessment Tool (TCAT), developed specifically for this study based on NBTE curriculum standards and industry competency frameworks. The TCAT consists of three main components:

1. **Practical Performance Assessment (40 items):** Evaluates hands-on skills in electrical installation, circuit construction, and equipment operation
2. **Problem-Solving Assessment (25 items):** Measures ability to diagnose faults, design solutions, and troubleshoot electrical systems

3. **Safety and Professional Behavior Assessment (15 items):** Assesses adherence to safety protocols and professional conduct.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Content validity was established through expert review by five electrical engineering professionals and three technical education specialists. The experts evaluated item relevance, clarity, and alignment with learning objectives using a Content Validity Index (CVI) approach, achieving an overall CVI of 0.89.

Reliability was assessed through a pilot study with 30 students not included in the main study. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each subscale: Practical Performance ($\alpha = 0.87$), Problem-Solving ($\alpha = 0.82$), and Safety/Professional Behavior ($\alpha = 0.79$). The overall TCAT reliability coefficient was 0.84, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Experimental Procedure

The experimental intervention lasted 12 weeks, with both groups receiving identical theoretical content but different instructional approaches:

Experimental Group (Work-Based Learning)

- 60% of instructional time in simulated workplace environments
- Industry mentors co-facilitating sessions
- Real-world electrical projects and case studies
- Peer collaboration and problem-solving activities
- Regular reflection and feedback sessions

Control Group (Traditional Instruction)

- Conventional classroom-based instruction
- Teacher-centered delivery methods
- Textbook-based learning activities
- Limited hands-on practice sessions
- Traditional assessment methods

Data Collection Procedure

Pre-test assessments were conducted one week before intervention commencement to establish baseline competence levels. Post-test assessments occurred immediately following the 12-week intervention period. All assessments were conducted by trained evaluators blind to group assignment to minimize bias.

Data Analysis

Data analysis employed both descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS version 28.0. Descriptive statistics included means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions. Inferential analyses comprised independent samples t-tests for between-group comparisons and paired samples t-tests for within-group changes. Effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's d to determine practical significance. Statistical significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Results

Effect of Work-Based Learning on Students' Practical Performance Competence

Table 1: Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Practical Performance Competence

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Diff	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Experimental (n=60)	46.2	8.1	82.1	7.8	35.9	10.23	<0.001	2.45
Control (n=60)	45.8	7.9	61.3	9.4	15.5			

Table 2: Between-Group Comparison for Practical Performance Competence

Comparison	Mean Difference	Standard Error	t-value	df	p-value	95% CI
Experimental vs Control (Post-test)	20.8	2.03	10.25	118	<0.001	[16.78, 24.82]

The results show that work-based learning significantly improved students' practical performance competence. The experimental group achieved significantly higher post-test scores ($M = 82.1$, $SD = 7.8$) compared to the control group ($M = 61.3$, $SD = 9.4$), with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 2.45$).

Influence of Work-Based Learning on Students' Problem-Solving Abilities

Table 3: Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Students' Problem-Solving Abilities

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Diff	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Experimental (n=60)	44.7	9.2	76.8	8.9	32.1	11.47	<0.001	2.63
Control (n=60)	45.1	8.8	55.2	7.7	10.1			

Table 4: Between-Group Comparison for Problem-Solving Abilities

Comparison	Mean Difference	Standard Error	t-value	df	p-value	95% CI
Experimental vs Control (Post-test)	21.6	1.88	11.49	118	<0.001	[17.87, 25.33]

Work-based learning demonstrated substantial impact on students' problem-solving abilities. The experimental group showed significantly superior performance ($M = 76.8$, $SD = 8.9$) compared to the control group ($M = 55.2$, $SD = 7.7$), with the largest effect size observed in this study (Cohen's $d = 2.63$).

Effect of Work-Based Learning on Students' Safety Consciousness and Professional Behavior

Table 5: Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Safety Consciousness and Professional Behavior

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Diff	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Experimental (n=60)	46.8	7.4	85.6	6.4	38.8	9.84	<0.001	2.28
Control (n=60)	46.3	7.6	68.9	8.2	22.6			

Table 6: Between-Group Comparison for Safety Consciousness and Professional Behavior

Comparison	Mean Difference	Standard Error	t-value	df	p-value	95% CI
Experimental vs Control (Post-test)	16.7	1.70	9.82	118	<0.001	[13.33, 20.07]

The results demonstrate that work-based learning significantly enhanced students' safety consciousness and professional behavior. The experimental group achieved markedly higher scores (M = 85.6, SD = 6.4) than the control group (M = 68.9, SD = 8.2), with a large effect size (Cohen's d = 2.28).

Table 7: Overall Technical Competence Comparison

Group	Overall Pre-test		Overall Post-test		Mean Gain	Effect Size
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Experimental (n=60)	45.7	8.3	78.4	9.2	32.7	2.21
Control (n=60)	44.9	7.8	58.7	8.6	13.8	1.68

The overall analysis reveals that work-based learning produced substantially greater improvements in technical competence compared to traditional instruction methods, with the experimental group showing more than double the mean gain of the control group.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence for the effectiveness of work-based learning in improving technical competence among electrical engineering students. The substantial differences observed between experimental and control groups across all competency dimensions support the theoretical proposition that experiential learning approaches yield superior outcomes in technical skill development. Thus, the findings of the study were discussed under the following headings:

Practical Performance Enhancement

The particularly strong effect of work-based learning on practical performance (Cohen's d = 2.45) aligns with extensive literature demonstrating the superiority of hands-on learning approaches in technical education. Students in the experimental group showed marked improvement in circuit construction, electrical installation, and equipment operation skills. This finding corroborates research by Martinez and Chen (2022), who reported similar magnitude effects in Southeast Asian technical institutions. The observed enhancement in practical skills likely stems from the increased exposure to authentic learning environments that mirror actual workplace conditions. Unlike traditional laboratory exercises that often involve simplified, predetermined procedures, work-based learning exposes students to the complexity and variability inherent in real electrical systems. This exposure develops adaptive expertise, that is, the ability to apply knowledge flexibly in novel situations (Crawford & Reeves, 2023).

Problem-Solving Competence Development

The largest effect size was observed in problem-solving competence (Cohen's $d = 2.63$), highlighting work-based learning's particular strength in developing higher-order thinking skills. Traditional instruction often emphasizes procedural knowledge and routine problem-solving, while work-based learning presents students with ill-structured problems that require creative and analytical thinking. This finding has significant implications for electrical engineering practice, where professionals regularly encounter complex, multi-faceted problems requiring innovative solutions. The ability to diagnose faults, design appropriate interventions, and troubleshoot system failures represents core competencies that distinguish proficient electrical practitioners from novices (Richardson et al., 2023).

Safety and Professional Behavior Development

The substantial improvement in safety consciousness and professional behavior among students who engaged in work-based learning (Cohen's $d = 2.28$) addresses a critical concern in electrical engineering education. Electrical work inherently involves significant safety risks, making safety competence a non-negotiable requirement for professional practice. Work-based learning environments naturally emphasize safety protocols because students work with actual electrical systems where safety lapses have immediate, tangible consequences. This authentic context creates meaningful learning experiences that traditional classroom instruction cannot replicate. The finding supports arguments by Thompson and Williams (2023) regarding the importance of authentic assessment and learning environments in safety education.

Theoretical Implications

The results strongly support experiential learning theory, demonstrating that the complete experiential learning cycle including concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation which produces superior learning outcomes compared to traditional instructional approaches that primarily emphasize abstract conceptualization and passive knowledge absorption.

The findings also provide empirical support for social learning theory's emphasis on modeling and social interaction in skill acquisition. Work-based learning environments facilitate peer learning, mentorship relationships, and collaborative problem-solving that enhance individual competence development through social processes.

Practical Implications

For technical education institutions, these findings suggest the need for substantial pedagogical reform emphasizing work-based learning approaches. The magnitude of observed effects indicates that such reforms could dramatically improve graduate competence and employability. However, successful implementation requires significant institutional commitment, including faculty development, industry partnerships, and investment in infrastructure.

The study which bothers on technical education administration in Nigeria provides particularly valuable insights for developing countries facing similar challenges in technical education. The successful implementation of work-based learning at Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt demonstrates the feasibility of such approaches even in resource-constrained environments.

Conclusion

This study provided robust evidence that work-based learning significantly enhances technical competence in electrical workshop practices among students at Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola. The substantial effect sizes observed across all competency dimensions of practical performance, problem-solving, and safety/professional behavior demonstrate both statistical significance and practical importance of the intervention. The findings have profound implications for technical education policy and practice in Nigeria and similar contexts. The traditional emphasis on theoretical knowledge transmission appears inadequate for developing the complex competencies required in modern electrical engineering practice. Work-based learning approaches that integrate authentic workplace experiences with formal instruction offer a promising pathway for enhancing graduate competence and industry relevance. The study contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting experiential learning approaches in technical education while providing specific insights into electrical engineering competence development. The particularly strong effects on problem-solving competence highlight work-based learning's unique capacity to develop higher-order thinking skills essential for professional success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, some recommendations were suggested as follows:

1. Polytechnics should integrate work-based learning approaches into their electrical engineering curricula immediately.
2. Faculty development programs should be established to prepare instructors for work-based learning facilitation.
3. Simulated workplace environments should be created within polytechnic premises to support authentic learning experiences.
4. Industry-Institution partnerships should be established to provide students with real workplace exposure.
5. Graduate employment pathways should be created for students completing work-based learning programs.
6. Assessment methods should be revised to emphasize practical competence evaluation over theoretical knowledge testing.
7. Curriculum standards should mandate minimum 60% work-based learning components in electrical engineering programs.
8. Funding mechanisms should be established to support work-based learning infrastructure development in polytechnics.
9. Quality assurance frameworks should be developed to monitor work-based learning implementation effectiveness.
10. Accreditation requirements should include work-based learning components as mandatory criteria for program approval.
11. Teacher training programs should incorporate work-based learning pedagogical approaches in their curricula.
12. Mentorship programs should be established to connect industry professionals with students.
13. Industry-polytechnic advisory committees should be formed to guide curriculum development.
14. Studies should explore optimal ratios of workplace experience to classroom instruction in technical programs.
15. Equipment and technology sharing agreements should be developed between industry and polytechnics.

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Regional Curriculum in the Secondary Technical and Vocational Education Branch

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to introduce the dimensions and consequences of the regional curriculum in the second year of secondary technical and vocational education. This curriculum is trying to move from centralized to decentralized education. This research is a qualitative research with a case study approach. The field unit of the research includes all documents, regulations, research and resources related to technical and vocational curricula and interviews with curriculum planners. The participants in this research are 20 experts in the technical and vocational education curriculum. This research was conducted by reviewing and studying upstream documents, general policies, existing laws and regulations and scientific articles, as well as examining the approaches of other countries and recommendations of international congresses in the technical and vocational education curriculum, and examined the dimensions of participation in these trainings and the role of participants.

The results of the study show that a regional curriculum can be a useful solution appropriate to the climate and regional planning, and it can generate employment appropriate to the climate and regional planning, economic growth, and migration adjustment. Also, the presence of regional participants in curriculum planning and the importance of students' talents and abilities will be the strength of this type of program in the world of education. The consequence of participation in a regional curriculum will be the presence of upstream institutions in policy-making at the macro-level of planning and the participation of non-governmental organizations, private and real enterprises at the implementation and micro-level of the regional curriculum.

Keywords: Curriculum-Technical and Vocational-Regional-Labor Market

Introduction

Curriculum is considered as a general map of experiences and students are expected to learn it and use it in real and practical situations of life. Therefore, the main curriculum becomes the foundation in education (Skillback, 1991). It was said that curriculum planning is also the curriculum of designers of opportunities, activities and businesses (Maleki, 2007). A curriculum refers to the formal recognition and teaching of non-formal and informal programs by which the student, under the guidance of the school, learns knowledge, acquires skills and changes attitudes and values in himself (2004).

Curriculum planning attempts to follow the different elements of the curriculum in a systematic and logical relationship from the planned curriculum to the experienced curriculum. If this process is made in an organization or institution, decisions are made and sent to other departments, it is planned, and with a cross-sectoral perspective, other stakeholders also participate in its preparation. It is considered decentralized. But these two points each have their strengths and weaknesses.

Considering the shortcomings and problems of education and educational programs, they transform and create a different search for their education system. In these schools and in the role of effective factors, they cause. Teachers, as executors, merely create the education curriculum, and in this view, only the curriculum implementation programs are removed from them, causing concepts such as school-centered curriculum to be placed (Saber, 1994).

The issue of de-debating has long been a source of controversy and discussion in various educational systems. Studies show that in the past few decades, there has been a mental perception of the issue of educational de-studying among different countries of the world and also among international development institutions. In fact, it seems that currently these countries are carrying out some kind of educational reforms in all parts of the world (Lee Yong, 2004). Experts have suggested interpreting some cases conditionally. Transferring decision-making authority to different regions of the country will weaken the national and ideological unity of the country, because the country's education system is expected to educate Muslim and Iranian people (Malaki, 2018).

On the other hand, according to Bruner, precise and unobtrusive implementation of standard curricula is nothing more than an illusion. Klein also lists negative consequences for centralized curriculum planning. For example, it states that in this type of planning, it is important for learning to be determined by others, and in this case, learning is external and not personal. In this type of program, less attention is paid to individual differences.

Hassan Maleki (2018) is about the need for research "Consider programs that are prepared at the center of this program without considering the needs and requirements of different regions, but to what extent can I make such programs successful, these programs were hoped that these programs could be taught in different regions as inappropriate programs. Therefore, it should be accompanied by a reduction in the curriculum planning system. Decentralization in education allows more practical freedom to be given to provinces, regions, communities and local schools. This liberalization can continue from the provision of teaching resources to more general policies. This study also applies to skills training.

Vocational training can only be carried out where the skills of the training are carried out in the same way, with the same operations, the same tools and the same devices (Prosser, Charles, 1949). In recent years, there has been an increasing attention to important regions as a focus for planning and technical and vocational education and to the provision of methods and the formation of national policies taking into account the needs of the regions and, more broadly, to the special regions as a focus for the development and advancement of skills and innovations. Regions can be defined in a number of ways. Regions may be defined by their formal boundaries and their population by government structures. These are usually defined as federal states, provinces or local government areas. Regions may also be geographical areas within states, provinces or local government areas with specific ethnic, cultural, economic or geographical characteristics (Peter Noonan, 2008, p. 921).

Statement of the problem

The curricula of technical and vocational education and vocational knowledge, due to the diversity and plurality of disciplines and needs assessment based on jobs and professions, require more attention to attracting external participation and various specializations in curriculum development. Although the private sector is one of the most important beneficiaries of technical and vocational education; however, due to the legal sovereignty of the government in education, the share of private sector participation in these educations has always been small.

In this regard, to reduce concentration and increase participation in technical and vocational education and vocational knowledge, regional planning can be proposed as a strategy. Due to its dependence on expensive hardware and educational infrastructure, these educations will be more feasible with external participation.

Iran has different capacities in different provinces in various fields of industry, services, agriculture and art due to its climate, planning, language and culture. It seems that designing and implementing a curriculum appropriate to the region or regions of the same family is a suitable solution for decentralizing the curriculum of skills training. Feasibility assessment of regionally-based curriculum planning for technical and vocational education, decision-making about the level of the curriculum, the type of curricula developed, and the people participating in planning, designing and developing curricula, implementing curricula, and evaluating curricula are some of the steps to achieve this type of planning. (Hosseini, Technical and Vocational Development, 2014).

Technical and vocational education, as the closest part of education to the labor market, is designed to deal with the current and future challenges of each society; first, by creating professional ability and flexibility, it prepares individuals for career changes in their lives, and in the second step, it connects them to the economy and society (New Approach to Competence and Competence, UNESCO, 2021, p. 8). One of the country's educational systems for training specialized, skilled and efficient human resources in accordance with the needs of the labor market (current and future) and promoting entrepreneurial capacity is the Ministry of Education, which has also tasked this educational institution with combining education and skills and attracting the cooperation of economic enterprises to use their capacity (General Employment Policies, 2011, paragraph 2). Having a job that people in society like is their legal right. Based on Article 28 of the Constitution, "Everyone has the right to choose a job that they want and that is not against Islam, public interests, and the rights of others. The government is obliged to create the possibility of employment and equal conditions for obtaining jobs for all people, taking into account the need of society for various jobs" (Constitution).

A review of the current situation shows that formal, focused skills training is not in line with the aforementioned solutions. Therefore, it seems that it is necessary to move away from focusing on skills training and develop the participation of external capacities in these trainings. Decentralized education has several advantages that can be considered for theoretical and empirical reasons. Advantages such as responsibility and accountability, better cooperation, more effective and responsive management, better and more local educational development, the development of democracy and freedom, increased efficiency through delegation of authority and responsibilities, higher quality of services, and increased and strengthened educational and social development. (Teheran University Regional Research, 2007). This change in approach from centralized to decentralized management seems to be a transition from government to governance; in that actors outside the formal boundaries of the government enter the process of administration and micro-entities penetrate the organizational body of the government (Gholampour Ahangar, Majles Research Center, 2015, p. 3)

Methodology

The methodology of this research is synthesis research or integrated research. For curriculum planning appropriate to technical and vocational education, different knowledge and information are needed; In this article, by evaluating and criticizing the current situation and examining the different normative and value spectrums of these educations at the national and international levels, the knowledge required for the research has been collected and an attempt has been made to integrate and align them, and to search for today's need for the technical and vocational education curriculum in the regional curriculum; therefore, since different knowledge in different studies and systems cannot be directly exploited; the need for their logical connection

with each other seems essential in a way that will ultimately be beneficial and useful for the country's technical and vocational education educational decisions.

Regional Curriculum Development

If we consider a spectrum between centralized curriculum and school-based curriculum development, regional curriculum planning falls somewhere in between. In other words, regional curriculum planning is defined within a space between centralized curriculum and school-based curriculum.

A regional or provincial curriculum has the ability to design, produce, implement, and evaluate educational programs. It determines what the curriculum should be, how it should be executed, and how it should be assessed (Mehr Mohammadi, 2002). Regional curriculum planning refers to the delegation of curriculum development to a region, often consisting of several provinces with similar geographical, economic, and social conditions, involving practical engagement in the design, execution, and evaluation of the curriculum (Seyed Mohammad Hossein Hosseini, 2014).

In some past regional curriculum planning efforts, the region was assumed to be equivalent to a province. Regional curriculum planning aims to respond to local needs such as women's employment, preventing migration, transitioning gradually to school-based education, aligning the curriculum with regional conditions, and diversifying educational programs in response to territorial planning (Regional Curriculum Research, Educational Research and Planning Organization, 2009). The "Special Curriculum for Schools (BOOM)" can also be considered an example of a regional curriculum with a school-centered approach.

Regional curriculum planning is conducted based on local and climatic conditions, technological environments, and through collaboration with industry professionals, trade unions, and educational organizations at the provincial level. This planning can extend down to individual schools (Azad, Ebrahim, 2004).

Thus, regional curriculum planning has been recognized as a strategy for improving curriculum development. In some schools or educational regions, specific individuals or groups take responsibility for designing curricula (Walker, 2003).

Regional Curriculum Design Model

The model selected for regional curriculum planning in this research is derived from Klein's (1991) curriculum planning model. One of the earliest theorists to identify decision-making levels within curriculum development was Goodlad, who introduced six levels: academic, societal, formal, institutional, instructional, and experiential (Mehr Mohammadi, 2002).

This model was later expanded in school education and developed into seven levels, adding an executive level

Table 1

Table 1-The role of the government in a decentralized education system

Curriculum Elements	Level and Element	
Curriculum Specialists	Academic	Curriculum levels
Social Institutions	Social	
Curriculum Planners	Formal	
Teachers and School Administrators	Institutional	
Teacher	Educational	
Student and Teacher	Performative	
Student	Experiential	

According to multi-level needs assessments aligned with Klein and Goodlad’s decision-making levels, the most critical part of regional curriculum planning is identifying and defining needs. After assessing needs and determining stakeholders, it is essential to align these needs with curriculum decision-making levels (Table 2).

Table 2

Table 2 - The Current Status of Technical and Vocational Education

Needs Assessment Levels	Geographical Coverage	Needs Assessment Outcome or Product	Needs Assessment Participants	Correspondence of Needs Assessment Levels with Decision-Making Levels in the Curriculum
Level1	Country	Curriculum Ideology	Subject matter experts and specialists	Social and formal level
Level2	Province	Curriculum Framework	Researchers and academic centers	Academic
Level3	District	Curriculum Framework Revision or Textbook Selection	Local educational authorities Experts and teachers	Institutional and educational level
Level4	School	Textbook Revision or Selection	Students (Main focus) ,Teachers and parents	Executive and experimental level

Regional Curriculum for Technical, Vocational, and Skills Training

Proper and continuous education is essential to meet the country's employment needs and optimize human resources. Without proper alignment between educational planning and job market demands, financial and human resources may be wasted, hindering employment opportunities.

Therefore, curriculum planning for technical and vocational education should be developed in alignment with labor market needs. Graduates of these programs should possess essential competencies to reduce the need for supplementary training before entering the workforce.

Many skills and professions within technical and vocational education are closely tied to geographical, climatic, and territorial planning at the provincial level. Paying attention to these aspects can enhance youth employment opportunities within local regions.

This planning helps prevent unnecessary migration to major cities and supports the expansion of school-centered education. It ensures better compatibility of vocational education with local conditions, making technical schools central hubs for community development.

Moreover, when local stakeholders—such as provincial officials, experts, and educators—are actively involved in curriculum planning, they will be more committed to its successful implementation. If experts recognize their influence in shaping curriculum decisions, they will work harder to ensure its effective execution. Additionally, aligning curricula with regional needs creates stronger coherence between intended and implemented curricula (Azad, 2004).

The approach to regional curriculum development should consider a needs assessment that is meaningfully connected to the demand and supply dynamics of vocational education programs. This model is demand-driven

rather than supply-driven, with employment needs shaping educational offerings rather than predetermined curriculum structures.

One effective criterion for assessing regional job needs is determining whether it is feasible to offer internship or apprenticeship programs within a given skill area. The ability to implement these programs indicates whether a profession is relevant to local labor markets.

The importance of apprenticeships is reinforced by international recommendations. Official global statements emphasize the importance of high-quality apprenticeships, urging governments to create legal frameworks and qualification systems to facilitate the recognition of competencies obtained through apprenticeships (ILO Apprenticeship Recommendation, 2023).

Apprenticeship and International Labor Organization Guidelines

Apprenticeship is a highly effective model for work-based learning and must be supported through industry partnerships and quality assurance mechanisms (OECD, 2014).

Regional curriculum planning follows approaches such as social efficiency, community growth, apprenticeship opportunities, poverty reduction, lowering regional unemployment rates, improving the quality of locally produced goods for both domestic and international markets, and reducing migration rates.

Necessity of Regional Curriculum Planning

Beyond addressing the negative consequences of centralized curriculum planning, Klein's perspective highlights its challenges:

- In centralized education systems, learning objectives are often determined by external authorities rather than learners themselves, making education an impersonal process.
- Academic success is typically measured through standardized tests, which may overlook individual talents and differences among students.
- In centralized systems, curriculum decision-making is dominated by a few authorities, leaving teachers with little agency (Colin J. Marsh, 2007).

Regional Curriculum Design Approach in Iran

To develop a regional curriculum planning model, combining Eisner and Klein's approaches enables both large-scale governmental involvement and smaller-scale private sector participation.

Using the semi-centralized model and defining large- and small-scale stakeholders can create an effective model for regional curriculum planning. This participatory framework is illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3

Table 3 - Participation Model in Regional Curriculum Planning

Vocational and Technical Curriculum							
External to the Organization (participation A&B)						Inside the organization	
A	Contributor	Type of participation	B	Contributor	Type of participation	Contributor	Type of participation
Governmental Partnership	Technical and Vocational Education Organization	Occupational Needs Assessment	Non-Governmental Partnership	Labor Market and Industries	Task and Job Analysis	Managers, experts and teachers	Vocational and Technical Curriculum
	Statistical Center of Iran	Occupational Needs Assessment		Unions and Guilds			
	Deputy of Secondary Education	Educational Needs Assessment		Employers			
	Planning and Budget Organization	Land Planning		Civic Organizations			

Survey results indicate that education experts prefer localized decision-making in content selection and textbook design. Experts overwhelmingly support transferring decision-making authority to local educational districts.

Those regions with higher decision-making scores (darker cells in the survey matrix) show stronger tendencies toward decentralized curriculum planning. While academic and formal goal-setting remains at the national level, other elements, such as teaching strategies, learning activities, student grouping, and instructional materials, are recommended to be governed by regional educational authorities.

Overall, the survey results suggest that experts favor semi-centralized curriculum planning, allowing local educational stakeholders greater authority in planning technical and vocational education

Table 4

Expert Predictions on Regional Curriculum Planning

Assessment	Student grouping	Instructional space	Instructional time	Teaching-learning strategies	Learning activities	Educational materials and resources	Content	Objective	Curriculum Elements	Level and Element	Curriculum levels
7	3	3	7	11	5	9	8	19	Curriculum Specialists	Academic	
8	3	14	4	3	6	7	11	10	Social Institutions	Social	
13	9	12	13	15	12	17	15	17	Curriculum Planners	Formal	
13	11	16	14	12	13	8	9	6	Teachers and School Administrators	Institutional	
19	16	11	15	16	16	13	12	6	Teacher	Educational	
10	13	7	6	9	16	8	4	3	Student and Teacher	Performative	
8	10	3	4	4	9	0	0	0	Student	Experiential	

Conclusion

Regional curriculum planning for technical and vocational education aims to balance existing fields of study with regional and climatic needs. If properly implemented, vocational education can be tailored to local conditions, guiding students effectively toward suitable career paths.

Decentralized curriculum development also requires regulatory execution and collaboration among various sectors. A needs-based approach in curriculum design leads to demand-driven education, ensuring educational offerings align with labor market needs.

One major challenge in regional curriculum planning includes the dependency on social and economic structures, requiring harmonization across different institutional capacities. Other challenges include insufficient demand-driven focus, uneven distribution of vocational fields, high costs of skills-based education, and lack of specialized curriculum experts in certain regions.

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The Rise of Youth Entrepreneurship in Dhaka City

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Abstract

Youth entrepreneurship refers to young people actively pursuing business ventures and social initiatives, often driven by innovation and a desire for economic and social independence. It also encompasses more than just starting new companies; it is about developing skills, exploring new opportunities, and contributing to economic growth. This paper focuses on the rise of youth entrepreneurship in Dhaka City after August 8, 2024, when an interim government was formed in Bangladesh. Observations from the surveys of the two City Corporations (Dhaka North City Corporation and Dhaka South City Corporation) are used. This paper focuses on online small to medium-sized business owners among young entrepreneurs, using a purposeful sampling method in which in-depth interviews were conducted over one month. It employs a qualitative methodology, conducting interviews with forty-four young entrepreneurs. Results show that young entrepreneurs are more interested in running small to medium-sized businesses rather than being wage workers, due to factors such as unemployment, a racist society, and the flexibility of their schedules. Youth entrepreneurs are creating their place by using their digital marketing skills. The study aims to analyze the motivations and factors that influence the rise of youth entrepreneurship in Dhaka City. Moreover, two groups of young entrepreneurs are compared: those who started a business out of opportunity and those who began out of necessity. According to this study, it is observed that Dhaka's young entrepreneurs are career-oriented and driven by opportunities. Ultimately, this study offers several recommendations derived from qualitative research. It is hoped that the findings of this paper will benefit policymakers, academic researchers, professionals, all young entrepreneurs, and all concerned people of this world.

Keywords: *Young People, Young Entrepreneurs, Youth Entrepreneurship, Opportunity-based Entrepreneurs, Necessity-based Entrepreneurs, Dhaka, Bangladesh*

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is the key to creating new enterprises that energize and revitalize the economy. Praag and Versloot (2007) hold that entrepreneurship should fulfil one of the three conditions: fewer than 100 employees, younger than 7 years, or the entrepreneur has to be a new entrant in the market. Multiple topics in the area of entrepreneurship have already been addressed extensively. Examples are the determinants of engagement in entrepreneurship (Parker, 2009), the importance of entrepreneurship for a country's economy (Praag & Versloot, 2007; Amin, 2017), and the growing importance of entrepreneurship over time (Audretsch & Thurik, 2004; Amin, 2024). Bangladesh is an overpopulated country with limited resources. Economic, political, and social recognition are determined based on gender, social class, and location (Amin, 2017; Amin, 2018a). On 8 August 2024, an interim government led by Muhammad Yunus was formed in Bangladesh, following the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 5 August 2024 amid nationwide student and public protests

against the government (<https://bangladesh.gov.bd/>). Today's business market is excessively competitive, as the development of digital media has altered the traditional market landscape (Amin, 2019; Amin, 2020; Amin, 2022). The contribution of entrepreneurs to Bangladesh's economy is vital for its economic development. Without the meaningful and active participation of young people, half of the total population, in regular economic activities, sustainable economic growth is impossible to maintain. (Chowdhury, 2007; Amin, 2020; Amin, 2021a; Amin, 2021b; Amin, 2023; Amin, 2024). Schumpeter's definition is acceptably precise. An entrepreneur is a person who starts new business firms with innovative ideas. A wage worker who operates an existing business, perhaps even with continuous adjustment in small steps, does not cause discontinuity and thus, by definition, is not an entrepreneur (Schumpeter, 1947). Youth entrepreneurship is widely considered an essential ingredient in the modern global economic improvement recipe (Kirschhoff & Phillips, 1989; Keeble et al., 1990; Audretsch & Fritsch, 1992; Amin, 2017). Studies on youth entrepreneurship show that many different factors have an impact on a young person's decision to become a young entrepreneur. Youth entrepreneurship is a rapidly growing phenomenon in many developing countries, including Bangladesh (Amin, 2019; Amin, 2023).

It is observed that customers have numerous opportunities to engage with the digital platform (Amin, 2019). Business firms also have various options, including expanding communication through different digital media to create broader connections with clients in the global village (Khan, A., & Islam, M. A., 2017; Amin, 2019). Sarasvathy (2008) states that expert entrepreneurs behave more like explorers, rather than rulers. Historically, it has been proven that with each economic downturn in both developed and developing countries, entrepreneurial drive and persistence bring us blessings (Kuratko, 2006; Amin, 2017, 2019). There is a research gap in identifying the rise of youth entrepreneurship in Dhaka city after 8th August 2024, when an interim government was formed in Bangladesh. This study aims to fill these gaps in a proper methodological system.

2. Objectives of the Study

It was observed that youth entrepreneurship is a rapidly growing phenomenon in many developing countries, including Bangladesh (Amin, 2019; Amin, 2022). The study aims to investigate the rise of youth entrepreneurship in promoting its growth and development in Dhaka City, Bangladesh, following the formation of an interim government on August 8, 2024. To achieve this objective, the following specific objectives are outlined:

- a) To analyze and discuss the rise of youth entrepreneurs in Dhaka city after an interim government was formed
- . b) To explore the growing importance of youth entrepreneurship in Dhaka city after an interim government was formed

3. Methodology of the Study

In light of the study's objectives, this paper aims to illustrate the available support services and their impact and effectiveness on youth entrepreneurship in Dhaka City. To this end, an extensive literature survey has been conducted. It utilizes a qualitative methodology by conducting interviews with forty-four young entrepreneurs of online business holders located in both Dhaka city corporations (Dhaka North City Corporation and Dhaka South City Corporation). The choice of sample size is based on the work of Amin (2024), Amin (2023), Schoof (2006), and Uddin et al. (2015). This paper focuses on young entrepreneurs using a purposeful sampling method,

where in-depth interviews were conducted over one month (from September 16, 2024, to October 16, 2024). Dhaka city has been selected for only one reason. Youth entrepreneurs in Dhaka city are more active, and the number of online business holders is greater than in any other division of Bangladesh (Amin, 2018a; Amin, 2018b; Amin, 2019; Amin, 2020; Amin, 2023; Amin, 2024). According to Smith et al. (2013), Suddaby et al. (2015), Ramadani et al. (2015), Amin (2018b), Amin (2023), and Amin (2024), qualitative research is better for in-depth research perceptions into understanding the complex psycho-social issues in the case of women entrepreneurship in Dhaka city. Other data and information were collected from various relevant journals, studies conducted by donor and development agencies, international publications, and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) reports.

With this small sample size, it would be inappropriate to draw any conclusions about the youth entrepreneurship in Dhaka City. Furthermore, the collected perceptions, opinions, and experiences were analyzed in light of the barriers, hindrances, and incentives to participate in entrepreneurial activities among young entrepreneurs in this city. It will help future academic researchers to gain more knowledge about youth entrepreneurship in Bangladesh.

4. The Findings of the Study

4.1. The Reason for the Rise of Youth Entrepreneurship in Dhaka City

Table 1: The Reason for the Rise of Youth Entrepreneurship in Dhaka City

Motivational Factors	Supported	Not Supported
Feel like a young entrepreneur, not a profit-maker	90%	10%
Have practical business knowledge, like digital marketing skills	80%	20%
Working in full-time/flexible timing (usage of social media)	70%	30%
Minimum Start-up capital	90%	10%
Hope for sustainable business growth, which is mainly influenced by many successful young entrepreneurs mainly influence in Dhaka city	100%	0%
Most of the youth entrepreneurs are career-oriented	100%	0%

Source: Empirical analysis and findings from own survey (from 16th September 2024 to 16th October 2024)

Discussion (based on Table 1)

One of the important motivational factors that comes into the picture is the start-up capital. When entry barriers are low, it becomes easier to start a business, even for low-skilled young entrepreneurs. Any academic course of study has great value when it has a particular application in real life. Only theoretical knowledge bears little importance unless it applies to practical life. Young entrepreneurs now have better practical business knowledge than before due to digital media (Amin, 2020; Amin, 2019; Amin, 2023). Akhtar (2011) and Amin (2023) specified that the most important role played by digital media is that it has changed the strategy of communication among customers and digital marketers. This study also supported the view of Akhtar (2011)

and Amin (2023). In the end, it can be concluded that for young entrepreneurs' success, there needs to be a balance between profit maximization and value creation.

4.2. The Factors Influencing Youth Entrepreneurship in Dhaka City

4.2.1. Unemployment

Unemployment is one of the major problems in almost all countries of the world. It has been the most consistent problem faced by both industrially advanced and developing countries (Amin, 2017). Unemployment is defined as the condition of having no job or being out of work or the proportion of people who can work and actively search for jobs but are unable to find them (Amin, 2019). In this study, it is observed that lack of opportunities for young people as wage workers due to the job crisis in Dhaka city. Unemployment and lack of job opportunities are one of the important reasons for the rise of youth entrepreneurship in Dhaka city of Bangladesh. The young respondents reported that the lack of job opportunities and low salary offers are the main two reasons to start their own business as a 'professional career'. Many of them are applying for many government and private jobs to know their capability as 'salaried employees' (reported by all respondents).

4.2.2. Opportunity/Necessity-based Youth Entrepreneurs

Youth entrepreneurship is a wide concept; in this section, a distinction is made between necessity and opportunity-based entrepreneurship. To know the differences between necessity and opportunity definitions are given on the two types of entrepreneurship (Amin, 2019). Necessity-based entrepreneurship can be defined as someone who starts their own business as a response to unemployment or a lack of job possibilities as a wage worker (Cowling and Bygrave, 2002). An opportunity-based young entrepreneur is someone who starts their own company because they see an opportunity (Verheul et al., 2005). The business owners who started out for mixed reasons are not considered to keep a good separation between necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs. Hessels et al. (2008) and Amin (2024) state that the number of opportunity-based entrepreneurs is higher than the number of necessity-based young entrepreneurs. This study also supported all these views on publication. According to this research, it is observed that 100% of our young respondents are opportunity-based young entrepreneurs.

Table 2: Two Groups of Young Entrepreneurship

Necessity-based Young Entrepreneurs	Opportunity-based Young Entrepreneurs
0 (Out of 44)	44 (Out of 44)
0%	100%

Source: Empirical analysis and findings from own survey (from 16th September 2024 to 16th October 2024)

4.2.3. *Racist / Biased Society*

Young people are involved in various small and medium enterprises, take on the challenge of working in a rich-dominated society, and a competitive and complex economic and business environment. When a young person opens a business, the thoughts that all too often come to mind are profits, workshops, hiring employees, business plans, and long-term goals (Amin, 2019). The author of this paper found that the opportunities are as great as the challenges are for young entrepreneurs of Dhaka city. It found that respondents complained about the huge humiliation faced by buying raw materials for their business. Many respondents said that eve-teasing was a problem faced by them when they were on a public bus or place with their industrial raw materials for their own business.

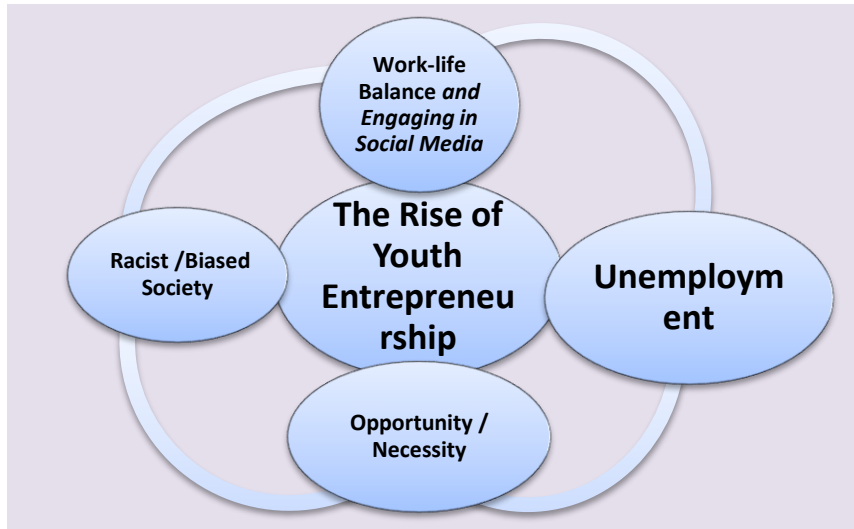
4.2.4. *Work-Life Balance and Engaging in Social Media*

According to Nawaz (2009), Alam and Chaudhury (2008), and Amin (2018a, 2018b), young people are always career-oriented, not family-oriented (table-2). According to this study, this study also supported this concept. Young people prefer fewer hours to work, due to their other digital media-based activities (Amin 2019). This lack of work hours is not because young people do not want to work, but because they have more diversity in their daily work activities (Amin, 2019; Amin, 2022; Amin, 2023). Approximately 20 percent of young entrepreneurs work from home, which allows them to engage in different activities on digital and social media (Amin, 2019). This study also supported all these views. Flexible timing and work-life balance are other major reasons for the rise of youth entrepreneurship in Dhaka city.

4.2.5. *Discussion (based on figure-1, table-1& table-2)*

In the 21st century, young entrepreneurs of Dhaka city are still facing traditional challenges which is remarkably frustrating news for the modern digital world. However, young people who own firms are the fastest-growing segment of businesses, and many succeed. Young people must overcome barriers that other aged entrepreneurs do not need to face. To get a good insight into the two types of entrepreneurship, Block and Wagner (2010) examine opportunity and necessity entrepreneurs based on their earnings and found that opportunity entrepreneurs earn around 16 percent more than necessity entrepreneurs and that they also pursue more profitable decisions. It is observed that there are differences between the types of entrepreneurship, which makes it important to know more about both types of entrepreneurship. However, the effect of knowing an entrepreneur on opportunity and necessity entrepreneurs separately remains unclear. The future research direction is to find out the difference between opportunity-based young entrepreneurs and necessity-based young entrepreneurs in a proper methodological way in Dhaka city of Bangladesh.

Figure 1: The Rise of Youth Entrepreneurship in Dhaka City



Source: Empirical analysis and findings from own survey (from 16th September 2024 to 16th October 2024)

5. Conclusion

Amin (2019) states that youth entrepreneurship refers to young people actively pursuing business ventures, social initiatives, or digital projects, often driven by innovation and a desire for economic independence. It also encompasses more than just starting companies; it's about developing skills, exploring new opportunities, and contributing to economic growth (Amin, 2020). The main objective of this study is to identify the rise of youth entrepreneurship in Dhaka city of Bangladesh after the formation of the interim government in Bangladesh. According to ILO publications (2004,2005,2007) and Amin (2017), reducing young people's unemployment and increasing young entrepreneurs could contribute to the addition of GDP, societies may gain direct economic benefits, and violence and crime, as well as vulnerability and exclusion, might be reduced. This study has also supported this concept. Youth entrepreneurship catalyzes the process of industrialization and economic growth. It is observed that it can play an energetic role in combating poverty in Bangladesh. (Amin, 2018b; Amin, 2019; Amin, 2022; Amin, 2023; Amin, 2024). Considering their contributions to their family as well as the nation, they should receive proper recognition and support from the new government of Bangladesh (after 8th August 2024).

6. Recommendations for Policy Implications

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for policy implications, especially for young entrepreneurs in Dhaka city.

For Young entrepreneurs:-

- Youth entrepreneurs should take some time to study the nature of challenges young people face in business and possibly proffer solutions to them before starting their business in Dhaka city.

- Attending training programs, seminars, workshops, and conferences by successful entrepreneurs is necessary for Dhaka's young people. There is also a need for young entrepreneurs who are successful in their field. They can assist other young entrepreneurs who are newcomers to a business through a mentorship program.

These two steps will help to reduce the challenges these young people are likely to face in business in Dhaka city of Bangladesh.

For the new government of Bangladesh (after August 2024):-

- The new government of Bangladesh should take the necessary steps to create more training programs, seminars, workshops, and conferences for young people in the major cities in Bangladesh.

7. Acknowledgment

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Necessity and Impact of incorporating career counselling in high schools

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Abstract:

A career is more than just a job - it's a long-term pursuit that can provide personal fulfillment, financial stability, and a sense of purpose. Career counselling can be highly beneficial for high school students as they navigate the critical decision of choosing a career path. The primary aim of counselling is to motivate students to set higher goals. The purpose of this paper is to provide an understanding of how career development and counselling help individuals to choose the right career path according to their personal characteristics, education, and personal goals. The aim of this paper is also to discover and identify the talents of each student.

Introduction

Every child is unique and has potential. When the child grows up, he needs guidance to choose a proper way to explore himself. At that time, career counselling in high school plays a crucial role in guiding students towards making informed decisions about their future. Here are some vital reasons why it's important:

Finding the correct passion for a career:

Career choice turns the life of a person by a great measure. High school students often lack awareness of their own skills, interests, and values. Career counselling helps them explore their strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to align their choices with their personal characteristics.

Exploring the potential of individual students:

Since every child has two potential careers, career counselling helps them to explore their potential. Counselling helps to discover and identify the talents of each student. Such as:

Act as a booster for the students:

Proper career counselling will help boost the motivation of students to fulfill their career dreams. It will allow students to set their proper career vision.

Keeping a track of one's career trajectory:

With so many options and opportunities, it isn't easy to keep track of one's career trajectory. Just as we have regular health check-ups, continued interaction at regular preset intervals with a career counsellor can help students ensure they are progressing in the right career direction.

Identify proper career expectations:

Careers have limitations, too. We need to identify the extent to which a job can be pursued and what the possible pathways are that may exist now and in the future. A student doesn't take up a course at university

without considering how it will be related and necessary in their professional journey. Even though we can't estimate possible changes over time, we can surely understand a profession's importance based on the current and past data that we have. Career counselling also aims to provide clarity and guidance in setting realistic expectations for respective careers.

Aware Parents about the changing trends in careers:

Sometimes parents tend to believe they know best for their child; they surely intend to help the child work towards the perfect career, but the definition of the ideal career is sometimes suited to them and not their child.

Over the years, things have changed completely, and the choices are endless. It is a learning curve that many people are unaware of or have intentionally chosen to ignore. Forced decisions always lead to challenges. Career guidance attempts to solve this problem by helping students and their respective parents come up with viable career directions for the student.

Skill enhancement: Counselors can identify skill gaps and recommend training or educational programs to enhance employability in chosen fields.

Long-term career management: Beyond initial career decisions, counselling supports ongoing career management, including advancement strategies and managing career transitions.

What kind of career do you want?

Unfortunately, in most cases, people answer this question with a significant level of fantasy rather than rationalism. Maybe you want to be a lawyer! But are you psychologically ready for it? Maybe not. And if you are not, your goal to be a lawyer is the wrong choice. Let's have a look at some cases:

Case Study1:

Sima, a 25-year-old recent college graduate with a degree in Mathematics, has been working as a marketing assistant for a tech company for two years. While she is proficient in her role and enjoys the creative aspects of marketing, she feels unfulfilled and lacks direction in her career. She feels like she's simply "going through the motions" and is unsure about her long-term goals. She feels like she doesn't belong in the tech industry.

Problem:

Lack of career clarity:

Sima is unsure about her interests, values, and how they relate to her career.

Unfulfillment:

She feels unmotivated and lacks passion for her current role.

Imposter Syndrome: She doubts her abilities and feels like she doesn't belong in the current industry.

Stuck in a rut: She feels like she needs to make a change, but is unsure of what change should be.

Solution:

A career counselor could help Sima by:

1. **Career Exploration:** Self-assessment using tools like the Myers-Briggs type indicator to help Sima understand her personality type, skills, interests, and values.
2. **Industry research:** Exploring different career paths that align with her interests and values, such as writing, editing, content creation, or even exploring careers in mathematics-related jobs.
3. **Networking:** Connecting with professionals in fields that interest her to learn about their experiences and gain insight into potential career paths.

Goal Setting:

- a. **Smart goals:** Working with Sima to set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals for her career development.
- b. **Action Plan:** Developing a plan of action to help Sima achieve her goals, which may include taking courses, volunteering, or seeking mentorship.

4. **Addressing Imposter Syndrome:**

- a. **Identifying triggers:** Helping Sima identify the specific situations and the thoughts that trigger her imposter syndrome.
- b. **Challenging negative thoughts,** encouraging Sima to challenge her negative self-talk and replace it with positive affirmations.
- c. **Building:** Helping Sima focus on her strengths and accomplishments and celebrating her success.

5. **Resume and Interview skills:**

- a. **Tailoring resumes:** Helping Sima to customize her resume for each job application, emphasizing the skills and experiences most relevant to the specific role.
- b. **Research the company:** Encourage Sima to understand the company's mission, values, and the specific requirements of the job.

Outcome: By the end of the career counseling process, Sima should have a clear understanding of her career options, a more realistic view of the job market, and a plan of action to achieve her career goals. She should also feel more confident and empowered to make decisions about her future.

Case study 2: career counselling for a high school student:

Aydin is uncertain about his career path after the 12th class. Though he has a strong interest in creative fields like interior design. His parents are encouraging him to pursue a government job due to job security. He is feeling confused and under pressure, leading to anxiety and loss of motivation.

Assessment tools used:

- a. Career interest inventory
- b. Multiple Intelligence Personality assessment
- c. Aptitude test (verbal, numerical, spatial)

Key Findings:

- a. Interests: High scores in artistic and enterprising domains
- b. Aptitude: strong spatial reasoning, average numerical ability, And excellent verbal communication.
- c. Personality type: creative, enthusiastic, and people-oriented.
- d. Values: creative, freedom, innovation, working in dynamic environments.

Counselling sessions:

Case study 1:

Session 1:

Explored her academic background, family expectations, and personal interests. Helped her express her concerns openly and discussed available options.

Session 2:

Shared assessment results and explained how her strengths align with more creative or people-centric careers. Introduced her to career options in design (ux, product design, animation), media, and business communication.

Case study 2:

Session 1:

Conducted career exploration activities: Job shadowing and an interview with professionals in his areas of interest. Discussed realistic options for higher studies in one's own country and abroad.

Session 2:

Navigating Educational Pathways: Career counseling helps Aydin navigates this landscape by providing information about different educational programs, courses, and institutions. This guidance helps him select the right academic path that aligns with his career aspirations.

Having an open discussion with his parents, Aydin can have a clear discussion with his parents about his choice of creative fields, like interior design, and he can motivate his parents to let him choose his career.

The Future of Career Counseling in Schools

As the world of work continues to evolve, the role of career counseling in schools will become increasingly important. Here are some trends and developments that will shape the future of career counseling:

- **Integrating Career Education into the Curriculum:** Integrating career education into the school curriculum will provide students with continuous exposure to career planning and development. This approach ensures that career guidance is an ongoing process, rather than a one-time event.
- **Focusing on Lifelong Learning:** Career counseling will emphasize the importance of lifelong learning and continuous professional development. Students will be encouraged to pursue ongoing education and skills development to stay competitive in the job market.

Conclusion: We all agree that parents are the best advisors and well-wishers for their children. However, we should also recognize that we may be limited in our exposure and constrained in our understanding of our children's aspirations and aptitudes.

In today's world, students are spoiled for career options; therefore, career counselling has become a necessary intervention. Career satisfaction often aligns more with personality and interests than academic background. This paper presents the foundations for a robust framework, outlining the various steps, theories, and tools that can be used to help students achieve career satisfaction.

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Why Professionals Reconsider Career Pathway at their Midlife?

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Abstract:

Over the past years, an increasing rate of individuals in their midlife age between the age of 40 and 65 years started re-evaluating their career choices, questioning assumptions about stability, success and fulfillment at work. This paper discusses how the midlife career transition has become an increasing phenomenon and the complex interrelation of forces that stimulate this shift. Based on the secondary data available in the academic literature, research papers, journals, industry reports, surveys, studies around the globe, the research highlights the key psychological, social and economic forces such as burnout, the need to find purpose in work, technological upheaval, and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the long run. The analysis also discusses psychological aspects of identity reconstruction and the willingness to seek meaningful work, and obstacles that individuals have to struggle with including the lack of skills, economic risk, and age based discrimination. By placing these in the larger socioeconomic and organizational contexts, This study seeks to add further insights and explain the motivations of midlife career re-assessment and its implications in the wider context for individuals, employers, and counselors. The data indicates that this change is not temporal,, but a substantial change in the perception and the approach towards career in the contemporary world. The research is relevant to enriching the perceptions of motives and barriers that determine career paths in the modern period.

Introduction:

Midlife is a construct that has in recent years been given definitions in a variety of ways. In literature different interpretations of what this stage of development actually involves continue to be discussed. These future career changes/transitions of adults are however, most of the time accompanied by a load of psychological, emotional, cultural and physical changes that may take place in the process.

Middle adulthood/midlife is identified as the stage of life between 40-65 years as noted by Levinson (1996) (Rege & Kamini, 2016). Frustration is more likely to be experienced by people in this age group, and is characterised, among others by, a neglect of the role played to the detriment of the ideals and integrity of the profession when it started (Morison et al., 2006). It is a transition point in the work life of a person which is marked by the feeling of disillusionment, dissatisfaction and doubt hence making people wonder what and why they are doing in their careers. The conceptualization and consideration of mid-career crisis is of paramount importance, because it allows individuals and organisations to deal with the problems and potential of mid-career crisis.

Midlife career changes usually include an internal review of what success, purpose and fulfillment mean. Midlife cognitive trajectory studies have shown that neighborhood socioeconomic status (Cheng et al., 2024), early-life metabolic variables (Hazzouri et al., 2020), and social determinants including proximity to roads (Parker -Allotey et al., 2022) can either favor or hinder such reinterpretations in their effects on mental and emotional functioning. Midlife career transition does not just mean leaving one job and moving to another. It is an embodied, effectual, and social procedure, and in most cases involves identity disruption and rebuilding (Deshmukh & Sharma, 2025).

According to Veloso et al. (2020), in the modern world, the shift of careers is an extremely common occurrence and the research on the topic is aimed at reconciling various positions. According to Agi and Fiddo (2018), career change is among the decisions that people may undergo during middle age, as it is a period when workers are devoted to achieving the highest positions, the most expressive salary, and the peak of their career.

The paper is a synthesis of secondary data, which seeks to explain why many individuals are reconsidering their career choices in mid-life, and looks into the social, economic, and psychological aspects of this escalating trend. The study will combine the information presented in the academic literature, industry reports, and case studies, research papers, journals, articles etc to create a clear picture of career transitions in midlife and present the recommendations that can be applied by individuals and institutions to manage this changing environment.

1.1 Career change

1.2 Psychological Theories of Midlife

1.3 Work Values from Adolescence to Midlife

1.1 Career change

As mentioned by Rice (2014), Akkermans and Kubasch (2017), and Barley et al. (2017), career change has become widespread across the globe. For instance, statistics provided by the U.S. labor market indicate that individuals have 12 job changes on average across the course of their careers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015, cited in Ahn et al., 2017). In line with this, the literature of career change depicts the internal issues and the means of coping with the career changes. As a result, the internal barriers and coping mechanisms are represented in the literature regarding career changes. Career switching is characterized by adaptation (Brown et al., 2012; Johnston, 2018), movement capital (Peeters et al., 2020), financial and mental costs (e.g., Holtom et al., 2005), and a new work identity (Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2010).

On the definition of what a career change is, and what is the difference between a career and a job change, Carless and Arnup (2011) draw the line between the small and major career changes. In addition, a more general definition of career change would allow the recognition of the different costs that characterize the various types of changes (e.g., Holtom et al., 2005). Therefore career change is viewed in a continuum of minor modifications in one's career track to significant shifts of disciplines and industry.

1.2 Psychological Theologies of Midlife

The most renowned theories dealing with midlife are those by Carl Jung and Erik Erikson. Jung called the midlife the afternoon of life and considered it as a stage that could be differentiated by early and later adulthood (Lachman & James, 1997). Erikson (1993) stage theory of development views the psychosocial crisis of midlife as one that is centered on the generativity versus stagnation and self-absorbedness. In addition, middle adulthood is marked by great psychological development since personality is built as one surmounts life problems. The second last stage of development is generativity versus stagnation by Erikson (Cherry, 2024). Ehlman and Ligon (2012), describe that midlife is frequently associated with a more intense pursuit of meaning, leading these people to reconcile their careers with personal values, such as giving back and making a positive contribution. This transition demonstrates a generative force, based upon the theory of generativity and stagnation by Erikson, in which adults desire meaning, authenticity, and legacy. They underline that the transitions are not merely transitions of jobs, but the way to satisfy psychological needs using meaningful activity. Pursuing this inner drive will increase wellbeing and decrease future regrets whereas disregarding it might cause dissatisfaction.

Generativity may be defined as efforts to make some significant contribution to the world, usually by building relationships with other people, or by creating and achieving something good. But middle adults who fail to attain generativity feel stagnation or what is usually termed as self-absorption that is normally related to

invalidism and self-indulgence. Stagnation causes low life satisfaction and poor quality relationships in addition to the feeling of mortality (Lumen, n.d.).

Another set of findings was put forward by Daniel Levinson that every individual has five primary stages of life wherein the third is the middle adulthood. Midlife transition years (40-45) into middle adulthood may be characterized by change and questioning that culminates in the re-evaluation or reinstatement of life goals, commitments, and past decisions. It is a reflective period but is as well a time when one can recalibrate the aspects that are of significance in life like family and work. The upheaval is also accompanied by the reconciliation of contradictions in the sense of self (Levinson, 1977).

Midlife lies at a cross between growth and decline trajectories. This is the period where middle adults start losing functional health, processing cognition, and working memory, as well as acquire an aspect of knowledge, experience, and emotional control (Lachman, 2015). Looking from a holistic perspective, it is still an opportune moment to change, adjust and recalibrate to be happy with the remaining part of life.

1.3 Adolescence to Midlife Work Values

One of the key developmental tasks of this transition between adolescence and adulthood is preparation for a career. Childhood and adolescent work experiences have effect on adult employment (Greve & Seidel, 2014), and work values of youth (perceived importance of job characteristics; Mortimer & Lorence, 1979) are important predictors in influencing postsecondary education (PSE) (Johnson & Elder, 2002). Also, values of work during the late adolescence determine job rewards (e.g. income) through youth adulthood (Johnson & Monserud, 2010).

Despite the supposedly long-term consequence of work values, minimal studies connect adolescent work values with midlife work outcome. Intraindividual change in work values has been found to be great in longitudinal studies (Chow, Krahn, & Galambos, 2014; Jin & Rounds, 2012) as people enter adulthood. It is these observations of stability and change that cause us to speculate that adolescent work values can have longer term career implications as a result of their associations with work values during and after the transition to adult life. These cumulative associations may have progressive, spreading effects (i.e., developmental cascades; Masten et al., 2005) on educational, career, and even non-career outcomes. These factors could add to the urgency and self-introspection during middle adulthood, as people strive to acquire congruence between their ideals and work satisfaction.

2 Midlife Crisis

As mentioned by Rice (2014), Akkermans and Kubasch (2017), and Barley et al. (2017), career change has become widespread across the globe. It is during the midlife crisis that the individuals reflect on their lives and hence there is a possibility of growth or stagnation on how the individual resolves the crisis. It is generally a transition between alloplastic and autoplatic mastery and may take place when people are more inclined to self-mastery. Elliot Jaques, a psychoanalyst who coined the term Midlife crisis way back in 1965. Though we do not have a complete theory of the Mid-career crisis, according to the Webster dictionary, Mid means that it is in the middle and Career says employment, job, life-work, occupation (Salgaonkar, 2023).

Midlife crisis is not a universal phenomenon, it is a social construction applicable to certain cohorts and historical times.. They consider it as a creation of social and economic circumstances that prevailed after World War II, characterized by increased life expectancy and a general increase in expectations of what needs to be fulfilled (Kearl & Hoag, 1984).

Moreover, according to Freund and Ritter (2009), there is a lenient conceptualization of the midlife crisis, which abandons the view that it is a prevalent, turbulent process. The given perspective takes into consideration the

fact that midlife may be the time of reflection and re-adjustment as people deal with unmet aspirations, age-related demands, and shifting priorities.

Although individuals tend to adjust to their condition, the disappointment over a long period may influence their behaviour. They might think that they have not accomplished a lot and have not much time to do so, and make hasty decisions, engaging in the challenges they might be unprepared to. Moreover, where one undergoes emotional upheaval, another perceives it as a socially and historically influenced period. Depending on how individuals manage such challenges, the outcomes will differ; they may include personal growth or stagnation.

3. Key Drivers Behind Midlife Career Reconsideration

A research study states that reasons that prompt career change in midlife professionals are directly associated with personal growth and changing values in life. The finding showed that the top-mentioned reason was self-renewal and spiritual growth, cited by 24 percent of the respondents, wanting deeper personal significance in their careers. This was followed by a want to do something completely new or creative (21%), a change towards an intrinsic motivation. Other causes were career saturation once they hit the peak (9%), perceiving themselves as unnecessary or outdated due to generational shift (8%), and wanting to leave high-stress corporate jobs to seek more flexible or part-time work (7%). Together these results highlight the increasing role of meaning, flexibility and flourishing in mid-career decision making (Phanse & Kaur, 2015).

Moreover, other factors that also compel mid-lifers to rethink their career:

3.1. Lack of Job Satisfaction and Sense of Purpose:

One of the most popular causes of career re-evaluation during midlife is the development of dissatisfaction with the current work and the absence of a sense of purpose. Due to the changing personal values, most midlife professionals feel disillusioned as their work no longer fits their self-identity or ambitions.

According to the data from the “Midlife Crisis Job Satisfaction Statistics” (2024), the Navigating the Mid-Career Talent Crisis study indicates job dissatisfaction to the mid-career professionals. A survey conducted by Infographic of 284 participants, 75.9% were frustrated by the leadership and 72.4% wanted an improved company culture - showing that job satisfaction strongly depends on non-financial aspects. Although 44.8% mentioned salary dissatisfaction, underpayment (47%) and restricted growth opportunities (44%) also figured among the causes of midlife career frustration. Leadership and workplace culture are more important to midlife professionals as sources of dissatisfaction compared with other age groups. As this life phase evolves and self-understanding grows, a growing number of people start valuing meaningful work more than status or prestige and feel out of alignment with the roles that have lost their sense of purpose.

3.2. Mental Health:

Indeed, studies revealed that the burnout, chronic stress, and health-related limitations tend to peak in midlife and therefore pose a higher risk of career reconsideration (Ganasarajah et al., 2019; Horst et al., 2025). The health concerns were a considerably distinct notable trigger which proves the research findings that midlife mental health issues and physical decline significantly influencing the decision-making process and sense of fulfillment in living (Hazzouri et al., 2020; Jyworthori et al., 2020).

Emotional reactions of fear of the unknown, fear of the future are equally common in a career transition too. Changing careers comes with uncertainty which translates to stress and fear of not being able to make it in a new field. Additionally the fear of failure and worries about financial stability are also a big stressor at this time. Besides, the Midlife women usually encounter a series of mental as well as physical health issues which could fuel career changes. The mood swings, depression, and anxiety experienced due to the hormonal fluctuations

related to pre-menopause and menopause may influence the daily emotional balance and employment functionality. Career dissatisfaction is also evident at this age, whereby most women start to wonder the relevance or satisfaction of their present roles. The stress of maintaining the duty of having aging parents and having a professional career is usually the result that leads to burnout and emotional exhaustion. Energy levels and productivity are further affected by physical health issues, including weight gain and chronic fatigue along with other age-related disorders. It is the combination of these pressures that often propels midlife women into seeking new career directions that are more flexible, meaningful, or congruent with their changing life priorities.

3.3 Financial pressure

A recent article by the Macmillan Financial Planning, on “The importance of financial planning for “midlifers” (n.d), the current generational midlifers are feeling the immense financial pressure more acutely because of many compounding reasons. The first is longer life expectancy due to medical innovation, which has prolonged the duration individuals spend suffering chronic disease conditions - with the addition of long-term health expenses. At the same time, the increasing expense of home ownership also implies that the adult children stay longer with their parents; indeed, the average age of first-time buyers has climbed recently, by 29 to 32 years (Halifax study via The Guardian). Meanwhile, a number of midlifers are providing aging parents and adult children and saving up to retirement, frequently placing family before their financial future. This monetary pressure is also added to by increasing living expenses and the postponement of homeownership.

3.4 COVID-19's Influence

The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant employment changes across the globe, such as loss of jobs, dissolution of work-life separation, and the introduction of excessive health risks and anxiety (Autin et al., 2020). It also triggered a broad self-reflection, with many people reexamining their careers and wanting to achieve more congruence between work and personal values (McKinsey, 2020).

With mass lay-offs and industrial stagnation, employment security was replaced by concern with financial stability and family requirements. Career reassessment also gained momentum during the pandemic as remote work, changing priorities, and increased mental health consciousness made more people abandon jobs that did not align with their values, making career changes not only a necessity but also a way to find satisfaction (Vega, 2025).

A study reported that COVID-19 has also led to the desire to change careers which was reported by 35% of the respondents, but is more common among the 25-34 age group (41%) and among those 55+ (43%) compared to an average of other age groups (31%). The decision to change careers did not vary much by job level, with the majority of jobs experiencing an impact of 31-33% with exception of supervisors/team leaders where the figure was slightly higher impact at 39% (Pang, 2024). Pandemic remote and hybrid working increased career flexibility, with midlifers taking location independent positions and making the move to digital or freelance occupations more aligned to their values and lives.

3.5 Education-Employment Mismatch

One of the main reasons for rethinking a career in midlife is the increased irrelevance between the education people have received and what is needed in the current job market. A recent study on the PIAAC survey indicates that 20-35% of employees in OECD countries are exposed to skill mismatches, of which overeducation and overskilling are prevalent (Esposito & Scicchitano, 2022). Most middle adulthood got into the job market with degrees that are no longer relevant to the digital and fast-changing economy.

Changes in technology rendered other skills irrelevant and heightened the need in others such as data analytics, digital marketing, and AI. The fear about human labor being replaced by technological progress is not a recent discovery (Mokyr et al., 2015). Thus, the midlife workers either feel abandoned or unqualified, which makes

them retrain or change their careers. Such a discrepancy may result in disappointments and stagnation, which prompts career reconsideration.

4. What is Midlife MOT and How It Helps Career Changers:

Mid-life MOT is a cost-free online check up to workers aged 40s, 50s and 60s to enable them review their finances, skills and health. Introduced by the Department for Work and Pensions in the UK in 2019, it was originally focused upon assisting with the financial planning aspects of retirement but has now been extended to motivate older workers to remain in the workforce (Megson-Harvey, 2023).

The toolkit assists employers to retain an ageing workforce, by providing mid-life MOTs. These assist workers to look back on where they are, deal with change and think comprehensively about job, health and money. Employees get clarity and confidence regarding how they can shape their future at work through group discussions, workshops, one-on-ones, and online tools.

The programme, Midlife MOT, will help employees (44-56 years old) with three fundamental aspects, namely Job, Money and Health

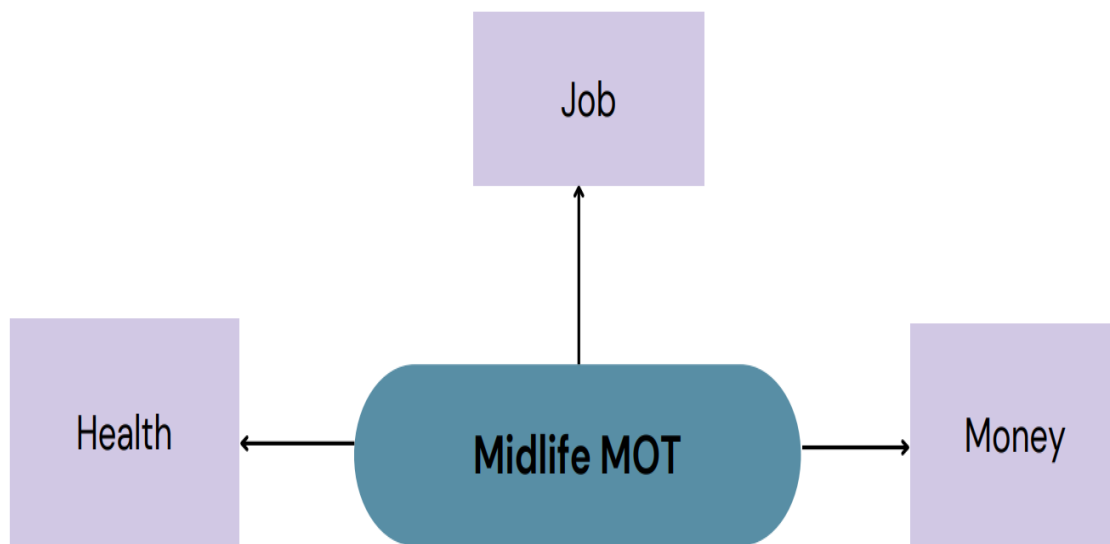


Figure 1: The three core themes

4.1 How Does a Midlife MOT Help Midlife Career Changers?

A Midlife MOT have great advantages to individuals contemplating a career shift in their mid-life.

<i>How Does a Midlife MOT Help Midlife Career Changers?</i>	
Self-Assessment and Clarity	The MOT provides a framework for individuals to reflect on their current situation, identify transferable skills, and recognize areas for development or retraining. It encourages realistic planning by helping people understand their strengths, interests, and the opportunities available for career transition.
Skills and Career Guidance	Provides advice on reskilling and exploring new career paths. It highlights training options, career adjustments, and strategies for a smoother transition.
Financial Planning	Offers guidance on managing income, savings, and pensions. This helps reduce uncertainty and supports both short- and long-term financial decisions.
Health and Wellbeing Support	Includes resources for managing stress, health, and work-life balance—making the transition less overwhelming and more sustainable.
Confidence and Empowerment	Boosts self-confidence by helping individuals set goals, understand options, and take clear steps toward their desired future.
Access to Support Networks	Encourages group discussions and workshops, creating community and shared experience among others on a similar journey.

Figure 2: How Does a Midlife MOT Help Midlife Career Changers?

5. Dual Consequences of Midlife Career Rethinking

5.1 Psychological and Personal Impacts on Midlife Career Changers

Midlife career switch can bring new meaning and fulfillment especially when they combine with individual interests. The shift in career can present new opportunities and networks into which the person is moving, with upgraded opportunities and earning power. Finally, it can promote overall well-being and boost motivation. According to Deshmukh and Sharma (2025), midlife career rethinking has its positive and negative effects. It increases self-assurance, identity, and personal development on a positive note. By means of narrative reconstruction and self-reflection, people slowly regain confidence and transform their extra-motives (such as status or salary) to inner values like sense and balance. This is an emotionally and cognitive-straining process but it can lead to transformation in themselves and emotional versatility, and lasting well-being, especially when they have adequate support to them.

Furthermore, the change is often initiated by emotional distress, loss of confidence and identity disruption. Midlifers had expressed a sense of uncertainty, vulnerability and social displacement, eventuated by loss of job, illness, or industry changes. Psychological strain was enhanced by age-related biases and an insufficient amount of institutional support. Moreover, McAllister (2024) observes that anxiety and fear are mainstream since careers are highly relevant to the sense of accomplishment and social identity.

5.2 Impact on Employee and Organizational Turnover

Studies have shown that a flexible work environment, like Results Only Work Environment (ROWE), can have quite a positive impact on the employers in terms of minimizing turnover rates. Through employee autonomy on work schedules, organizations can increase work-life balance and job satisfaction leading to the reduced intention to leave the organization. The results of this study indicates developing a flexible working policy is a practical approach that employers can use to retain talent and reduce turnover in organizations (Moen et al., 2011).

However, ROWE does help with retention, but it does not directly help solve midlife career reconsideration. Most midlifers want fulfillment, ease of work, flexibility. For example, approximately 38% of the employees who switched to a different career after they reached the age of 45 years were successful and contented that they made the change (Revankar, 2025).

Nonetheless, in the absence of proactive strategy, transitions may lead to loss of institutional knowledge, teams whose performance is impaired, and new stages of recruitment and training. Midlife employees may also quit due to lack of growth opportunities or as a result of work-family conflict problems. Midlife career support should therefore be supported in order to reduce risks and maximize potential workforce.

5.3 Broader Labor Market Implications and Employment Trends

The shift by the midlife career changers towards such areas as education, healthcare, non-profits or starting their own businesses-all which are areas with frequent labor shortages-also has a positive impact on the employment trends. Such a reconsideration of their career also encourages a lifestyle of continuous learning and upskilling, which is in demand today in terms of digital literacy and the ability to change. Thus, midlifers maintain their economic activity with the more resilient, diverse, and dynamic labor market being enhanced as a result. Nevertheless, this change is not without barriers. The outcome in many cases is loss of professional identity and as a result, emotional stress, indecisiveness, or the acceptance of jobs that do not fully utilize their abilities. Age discrimination is also known to restrict re-employment since they (mid lifers) can be regarded as less flexible or too expensive. Career change may also be discouraged by financial insecurity especially among those people approaching the retirement age or sustaining families. The combination of these issues can lead to underemployment, psychological problems, and participation in the work force of this population.

6. Strategic Recommendations for Organizations, Career Advisors and Individuals

6.1 Organizational Support:

- Ensure effective communication by identifying expectations and measures of success. Engage the midlifers in purposeful work and relationships, elevate their experiences using mentorship and reverse mentoring, and thus bridging the generational gap.
- Promote a value driven culture based on trust, resilience and support mechanism to empower the midlife professionals. Programs such the Mid-life MoT are used to explore the health of employees, their financial and career aspirations, and encourage both retention and planning ahead (Sinha, 2024).

- Employers are advised to formulate flexible career development policies and offer training opportunities to those older workers transitioning to new careers (Deshmukh & Sharma, 2025).
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- Additionally, From the web article by Fuse Workforce on “How to Guide Employees Through a Mid-Career Crisis” (n.d.), support career transitions by creating clear development opportunities, offering lateral positions to develop new skills, and mentorship programs to keep talent and achieve growth.
- Investments in upskilling and internal movement to develop inclusive adaptable cultures that support care and health needs. The transition of performance-centered models to purpose-driven ones enhances engagement and ensures that experienced workers have maximum value.
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6.2 Counselling Approaches for Navigating Midlife Career Change

- Assist midlife clients to overcome emotional effects of losing the job, find transferable skills, and restore confidence with help of self-assessment and upskilling. Promote informational interviews, support of peers, and attainable goal-setting.
- Support in establishing career objectives, increase self-confidence, and provide work-life balance tips, which are essential in unpredictable transitions (Khamisa, 2024).
- Apply assessment tools, reflection tools, and external feedback to help the clients match careers and personal values. Consider trying various experiences in volunteering, internship, or small courses to obtain practical experience before a significant change.
- Coaching will encourage accountability and motivation during the transition of the career. Midlife transitions require emotional, cognitive, and identity-specific needs which must be met during tailored counseling programs (Deshmukh & Sharma, 2025).
- Midlifers need comprehensive career counseling focused on values, emotional well-being and strategic planning. Client-centered transitions are achieved with empathetic support and confidence towards finding the right path to a fulfilling career.

6.3 Practical Guidance for the Career Changer in Transition:

- Midlife career changers must focus on their personal needs and clear objectives, an evaluation of financial needs, and time and upskilling needs. The ability to be flexible with salary demands and investigating job positions are also a factor to an easy, sustainable shift.
- Emotional readiness is also necessary. Embracing discomfort, coping with fear and being mindful with the help of meditation, journaling, or personal reflections can increase clarity and resilience. Taking small but regular actions even in the state of ambiguity develops momentum (Dorene, n.d.).
- Optimize chances of employment by updating professional profiles, exploring job sites, undertaking relevant online courses. In addition to that, a strategic plan involves forming transferable talents, and analyzing financial preparedness, establishing effective networks, and keeping up with digital trends (Marteleira, 2024).

Conclusion:

Midlife is no longer a static period in a career winding-down, it is a dynamic movement of reinvention, reflection and a new sense of meaning. This research indicates that transitions in careers during midlife are profoundly influenced by changes in identities, emotional states, and pursuit of meaning that goes beyond making money. One of the most frequent questions is: "Is it too late to change careers in my 40s or 50s?" It is a big no. It is never too late. Indeed, it is during this midlife period that an individual has the distinct privilege of experience, self-understanding, and the elucidation to make deliberate and satisfying decisions. Although such aspects as age prejudice, depreciation in skill, and lack of monetary security are still challenges, they are not invincible. Midlife professionals can learn to go through transitions in a way that is confident, clear and strong using the appropriate support systems.

Employers must develop age-inclusive, goal-oriented work environments valuing experience with flexible work, mentorship and trust. Career counselors, in turn, must ensure more holistic assistance, through the process of incorporating emotional understanding with strategic planning that advise on how to approach change with focus and certainty in midlife. Above everything, midlife professionals need to change themselves through the redefinition of the transition as a period of improvement rather than a crisis. They shouldn't see this as starting over, rather as they are developing on, but with a renewed purpose.

In conclusion, by acknowledging and managing the drives and obstacles of midlife career changers, we prepare a more engaged and dynamic workforce geared up to face the challenges of the modern world. By accepting this journey, there are personal and institutional benefits that can be gained, tapping into fresh potential, mission, purpose and fulfillment in the emerging world of work.

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