STUDENTS' CONFIDANT REGARDING ONLINE AND OFFLINE CAREER EXPLORATION METHODS FOR SUCCESSFUL CAREER EXPLORATION OUTCOMEAN EXPERIMENT STUDY BASED ON MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES OF A STATE UNIVERSITY IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

For management graduates, the prospect of career planning and decision making can be quite daunting. It is also of critical importance as they embark into the world of work in a seamless fashion. This process begins with career exploration while still engaged in their university education.Career exploration has been defined by as those activities in which individuals acquire information about the external environment and oneself to facilitate their decision-making process, job entry, and also for vocational adjustment processes(Berlyne, 1965; Blustein, 1989 & Stumpf et al., 1983). Career exploration methods can be classified as based on online and offline modes. The main objective of this research is to identify which of these methods, are viewed as effective from the perspective of those who use them. We study behavioral and cognitive aspects of career exploration. The study used a pre-post experimental design with three between-subject conditions. Two offline methods, consulting with peers/parents/professionals' network and reviewing newspapers were used to operationalise offline exploration and internet/email based methods was used to operationalise online exploration. Seventy-five final year management undergraduates from a national university in Sri Lanka were selected randomly from their cohort to participate in the study. As a pre-test measure, students' beliefs in finding career by their respective exploration method were assessed. As the treatment, participants' were then asked to either communicate with their peers/ professionals/parents, read the jobs column in newspapers, or search online career sites about potential career opportunities, for a one month period in a control environment. After the treatment, the students' post-beliefs were measured at the post-test. Changes in beliefs reflected the effectiveness of each career exploration method. Comparisons were made on several indicators. The results generally suggested that the peer/parent/professional consultation method resulted in strengthening beliefs in obtaining successful career exploration outcome.

Keywords: Career Exploration, Newspaper Exploration, Online Exploration, Peer, Professional & Parent Exploration.