



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING ON STUDENTS- NEW TREND IN CAREER COUNSELLING

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ABSTRACT

Psychometric tests are a standard and scientific methods used to measure individuals' mental capabilities, cognitive abilities and behavioral style. These tests widely used in recruitment and selection processes are now trending in the field of career counselling where students at a young age take them up to understand their skills, knowledge and abilities which help them choose a right career path. This study evaluates the effectiveness of the psychometric tests conducted by the career counselling centres with the view to help the students identify their interests and abilities for making right career choices. The study is descriptive in nature; It includes questionnaire and the secondary data such as the company reports, web sources, research papers and projects. The study is based on a survey carried out on a sample of 120 students between the age group of 12-16 years who had taken up the career assessment test at Glocon Training and Research Centre Private Limited, Bangalore. The main purpose of the study was to find out if the psychometric tests helped the students discover their interest inclination and aware of the career options they have accordingly. Along with this the study has also evaluated the effectiveness of the test report and the counselling sessions conducted by the facilitators. It was found that the psychometric test has served the purpose of helping the students discover their interest inclination. The study also discovered that the counselling sessions by the counsellors with the help of the test reports has helped them get an in-depth knowledge about the career choices they can make for the future.

KEYWORDS: Psychometric testing, Career Counselling.

INTRODUCTION:

Career is an individual's metaphorical "journey" through learning, work and other aspects of life. Choosing a career that matches one's aptitude and personality itself translates into professional success and popularity. This choice is important, but may also be a difficult one. It may not be easy to decide what stream to choose or what type of job would be the best suited for oneself. Determining one's best options for career decision is not just about the person's employability. The fact that a field sparks interest and passion in a field makes the person free the mental troubles related to the occupation. The output of such people tends to have a high yield and quality, this helps the person grow beyond what one might grow in any other field. While everything is linked to making the right choices in the beginning, it is not always possible to independently have clarity over it. Hence, here comes the concept of career counselling, in which an expert helps the individual using a process that is designed in choosing, changing, or leaving a career and also is available at any stage in life.

Although the counseling could be of help to any candidate irrespective of age or professional status the career counselling is most impactful if done at the root level or an early stage, especially from school level (9th, 10th or 12th). Since, these are the levels where students make their first choice in the direction of their far-sighted career by choosing a particular stream as their specialization. This will be helpful for them to decide the stream they should opt for. This is because many students are not satisfied with the stream they choose and tend to change it and this happens in absence of proper guidance about options available as per their interest and different education stream. On the other hand, human capacities are infinite and can never be measured, nor are we to judge of what one can do. Every person has unique characteristics, for everyone has his or her own strengths and weaknesses. This understanding of one's strengths is essential for any further analysis. The key to identify these unique qualities is through Psychometric Test.

Psychometric tests measure the brain's working and provides a determinable measurement of the mental ability. They include aptitude tests, ability tests, personality tests and interest tests. Popularly used by organizations for the process of recruitment, selection, talent acquisition and management, psychometric tests today are trending in the field of career counselling and assistance programs. With increasing competition and number of career options available students at a very young age i.e. between 13 to 17 years are often under stress due to confusion or lack of clarity with respect to choosing the course or stream that best suits them. To avoid

such confusions from happening it very important to approach a career expert. Today, a lot of company's offer career guidance, planning and development programs which helps individuals to make right choices or choose right career path and become successful in life.

The companies offering career related products today have introduced psychometric testing to help them analyze and get a better understanding of the individuals rather than just counselling them. These psychometric tests unlike before are not only used on professionals but also is trending on younger students taking up the test to understand their interests and abilities so that they make a wise choice at an early stage. There are different psychometric tools being extensively used by the career experts today and one such tool is the Strong's Interest Inventory. The Strong Interest Inventory is an interest inventory used in career assessment. It provides robust insights into a person's career interest, helping them to discover potential career paths they may not have considered, and giving them a wealth of information about how they approach the world of work through test and counselling sessions. In this regard, the present study is an attempt to study the effectiveness of psychometric testing on students which is a new trend in career counselling.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

- Social- cognitive predictors of career exploration and decision- making: Longitudinal test of the career self- management model :The theoretical model of career decision-making was tested on 420 college students at three different time instances over the course of an academic year ; a) The beginning of the academic year b) Middle of the academic year c) Ending of the academic year. The test carried out was based on the social- cognitive career theory. According to Lent, R. W., Morris, T. R., Penn, L. T., & Ireland, G. W., (2019 p 184) the test results showed that the students' level of career decidedness and decisional anxiety was found to be high in all the instances. The author proposed that the students also lacked self-efficacy. The model provides a good overall fit to the data and also allows a variance for students who make exploratory decisions over time. The findings also support the hypothesis that the decision-making being bidirectional; i.e. both self-efficacy and the expected outcome could individually aid the decision.
- A pre-post evaluation of an online career planning module on university students' career adaptability: Teychenne, Parker, Sahlqvist, Macfarlane and Costigan (2019) aim was to test the effectiveness of an online career planning module on students' career

adaptability. The module used was based on the constructs of Savickas' (2005) theory of career construction, and was tailored to students' skills and interests. In 2018, 80 students completed the online module, along with pre- and post-intervention questionnaires assessing career adaptability, elements including career planning and decision making. Thereafter dependent t-tests were conducted to assess differences in these measures pre- and post-intervention. The researchers found that 80% of participants identified jobs and 71% of participants perceived improvements in confidence regarding job ideas or making career choices post intervention.

Findings from this research indicated that completing a brief online career education module, improved the career choosing and decision-making ability of the participated students. Further research utilising longer-term follow-up and randomised controlled trial designs are required to confirm the reliability and transferability of the findings.

- A Need Assessment on Students' Career Guidance: The paper consists of a need assessment on the students' career guidance and career counselling programs in the university. The study was conducted with the sample size of 130 students from the university in Romania. According to Crisan, Pavelea and Ghimbulu, 2015 students are poorly informed about job opportunities, their expectations for the future are not connected with their own knowledge and abilities, they do not have a coherent career plan and encounter major barriers in the career decision process. This study according to the author has mentioned could be used by the career counsellors for developing a career guidance program in the university environment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

In the midst of uncertainty faced by the students in making right career decisions, a wrong choice can disturb their entire life. It not only leads to dissatisfaction and regret but also causes mental stress. Until now though there existed career counselling centers with counsellors helping students to make career choices the problem of accurately understanding the students interests and needs persisted. Today, the psychometric tools have been introduced in the fields of career assistance and this has paved the way for accessing the knowledge, interests and abilities of the students with better precision. This research will enable the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of the psychometric test used in career assessment.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE:

Psychometric test is an internationality accepted and widely used method to gauge a person's capabilities. Today, these tests have been implemented in career counselling and guidance centers to understand the skills, knowledge and abilities of the students and cater to their needs by helping them choose a right career path. The psychometric tests like the Strong's Interest Inventory is said to be one of the world's most widely respected and frequently used career planning tools. It addresses the areas of career exploration and entry for high school and college students, career disengagement and transition for working professionals etc.

1. This study will help the researcher analyze the role and effectiveness of psychometric testing in career assessment.
2. It will enable the researcher to understand the right age to take up the test.
3. This study will the researcher understand the barriers faced while taking up the test.
4. It will help the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of the counsellors and counselling sessions in the career guidance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH:

1. To study the impact of psychometric test in discovering interests and making right career choices.
2. To identify the most suitable age and time to take up the test.
3. To evaluate the impact of the counselling sessions conducted after taking up the test.
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of the counsellor during the test as well as the counselling session.
5. To identify the barriers with respect to the questions in the test.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

In order to conduct this study, a descriptive method of research was performed on basis of simple random sampling technique, where the primary data was collected through questionnaire from a sample size of 120 respondents who had taken up the test from Glocon. The collected data was then put through a series of tables and graphs to assess the effectiveness of psychometric testing on students – new trend in career counselling through percentage analysis.

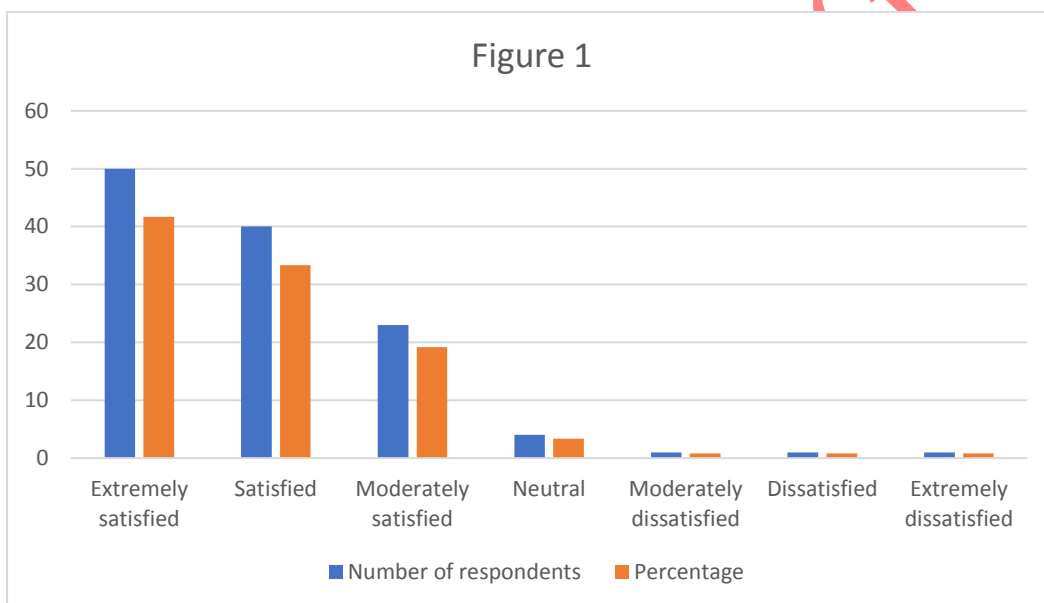
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Table 1: Showing the age group of the respondents.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
12-13years	87	72.50
14 years	27	22.50
15-16years	6	5.00

Analysis: The above table shows that, out of the total 120 respondents who have taken the career assessment (psychometric) test 72.5% belong to the age group of 12-13 years, 22.5% belong to the age group of 14 years and 5% to the age group of 15-16 years.

Table 2: Represents the satisfaction level of the respondents after taking up the test.



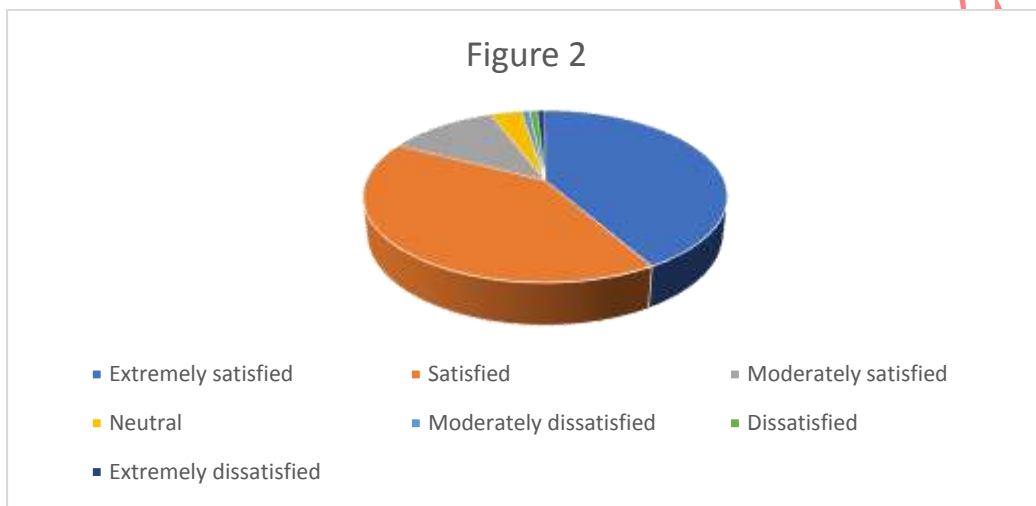
Interpretation: The above bar graph represents that majority of the respondents are extremely satisfied taking up the test.

Table 3: Represents the test's ability to discover the respondents interest inclination.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	109	90.83
Not so sure	8	6.67
Not at all	3	2.50

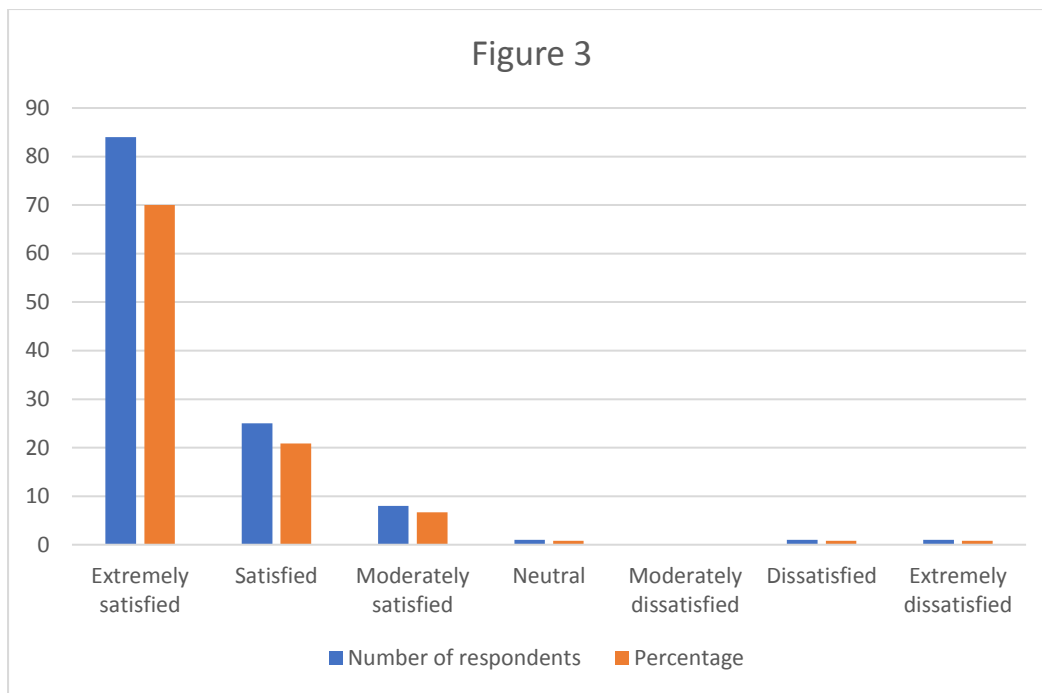
Analysis: The above table shows that 90.8% of the respondents were able to discover their interest inclination through the test while 6.7% were not sure if they discovered and 2.5% of the respondents did not discover them through the test.

Table 4: Represents the satisfaction level of the respondents on the counselling session.



Interpretation: The above graph shows that majority of the respondents are extremely satisfied with the counselling session held by the counsellors after completion of the test.

Table 4: Represents the satisfaction level of the respondents on the facilitators or counsellors.



Interpretation: Figure 3 shows that highest number of respondents are extremely satisfied about the counsellors who counselled them.

Table 5: Represents the respondents' opinion on the clarification of the questions during the test.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	94	78.33
Not so sure	20	16.67
Not at all	6	5.00

Analysis: The above table shows that 78% of the respondents' opinion were positive, 17% of them were not sure and 5% had negative opinion with respect to clarification of doubts in the questions during the test.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

1. The responses to the questionnaire with respect to the current state of mind of the respondents in the chosen sample size may change over a period of time.

2. All limitations of primary data are applicable to this study.
3. The respondents may not have been earnest while filling the questionnaire due to their age factor.
4. Time constraints.
5. The study could be conducted on only those who have taken up the test from Glocon.

FINDINGS:

1. Majority respondents of the research belong to the age group of 12-13 years while few belong to the age group of 14 years and the least to the group of 15-16 years.
2. A significant number of respondents are satisfied taking up the career assessment test.
3. 90.8% of the respondents who had taken up the psychometric test were able to discover their interest inclination whereas only 2.5% were not able to.
4. Majority (82%) of the respondents are satisfied about the SII (psychometric test) report which was explained and provided to them after the completion of the test.
5. About 95% of the respondents have a positive response towards the counsellors or facilitators who helped them throughout the assessment either by clarifying their doubts with respect to the questions in the test or counselling them and helping them understand their interests by analyzing the report.
6. With 78% of the respondent's positive response it was very well understood that majority of the respondents had clarifications with respect to the questions in the test and they were clarified by the facilitators.
7. Though the majority respondents belonged to the age group of 12-14 years the responses from the age group 15-16 years were more confident as the understanding ability is higher in them.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. The company can focus more on the students at crossroads, the age group between 14-17 years as most of them will be in dilemma with respect to making right career decisions.
2. Generally, age factor plays a major role in the concentration ability of the students. The career assessment session can have more breaks filled with fun activities between the sessions or can reduce the time taken for completing the career assessment program for lower age group students.

3. Psychometric tests are widely used in organizations for recruitment and selection of right candidates. The SII or the psychometric test used by Glocon Training and Research Private Limited being able to cater to the needs of both students and professionals can tie up with these organizations and help them get the right talent for the right job.

CONCLUSION:

Today, career plays a vital role in every individual's life. With large number of career options available, students are often in a dilemma about their respective courses or careers. Therefore, the need for career counselling and guidance is increasing. The career counselling centers and the counsellors are trying their best to help the individuals in need of this guidance and as a result they have implemented the psychometric tests in this program to better analyze and gauge the interests, abilities, skills and intelligence of the candidates. One such career guidance program is offered in Glocon Training and Research Centre Private Limited with the use of an assessment tool called the Strong Interest Inventory® which is one of the world's most widely accepted and frequently used career assessment tool. The main purpose of this study was to find out the effectiveness of psychometric testing which is trending among the young students.

In order to fulfill the purpose of the study a pre designed questionnaire was given to a sample size of 120 respondents who had taken up the assessment and the responses collected were used for the analysis. On analyzing the data, the study can be concluded that the test has served the purpose of helping the students discover their interest inclination. It was observed that though the students above 13 years are eligible to take up the test and were able to discover their interests, the most ideal age would be 15 years and above, as their level of understanding of the test and the seriousness towards career would be high. The study also aided in finding that the counselling sessions by the counsellors and the test reports were very effective in helping the students get an in-depth knowledge about the career choices they can make for the future.

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