

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project examines the choice of future career paths by High School students (Advanced Level) and its relationship to factors relating to students' individual self (Internal Locus of Control) and factors relating to students learning environment (External Locus of Control). The factors relating to individual self are students' Aptitude and Self-assessment of Intelligence. Among the environmental factors considered are the role of Parents, Teachers, Peers, and Career Counsellors in school. Recent studies show that a mismatch between Advanced level subjects chosen and career expectations has been a factor affecting unemployment problem among youths in Sri Lanka. The theory of Implicit Intelligence suggests that the degree of students' awareness of own intelligence is likely to affect choice of subjects and performance level. This study proposes to find out the factors affecting the success in career path finding by using the mixed method of research methodology, with a survey sample of 100 High School students and an interview sample of 20 students. Twenty students from each subject stream were taken for the survey and five students from each stream was interviewed. A questionnaire was administered to hundred students in grade 12 studying in different subject streams, twenty students randomly taken from one stream. The questionnaire focused on analyzing the high school students' confidence about the subject stream they have chosen.

A SWOT analysis is performed on the organization (Dharmapala Vidyalaya, Pannipitiya) which is a popular national school in Jayewardenepura zone. Availability of a professionally qualified academic staff, supportive Past Pupils' Association, Dedicated School Development Society and Management team have contributed immensely to the successful implementation of the curriculum. From the survys, it can be concluded that there are three key factors contributory to the subject exchange rate among Advanced Level students: influences of people, self-awareness, and mechanism of support.

A review of literature relating to the major problem and its components related to a number of major factors and conditions prevail due to many reasons including lack of psychometric tests and their interpretations, lack of teacher skills, readiness in the school administration. It is also found that the influence of parents, teachers and peers on

students' choices prevail on differing levels or degrees. Proper curriculum design, support mechanism for students to obtain guidance and counselling where necessary and lack of education administration instructions from the hierarchy are found worthy of further study.

An analysis of the situation with regard to the possible influences of different types of persons on the choice of subjects by students revealed that in addition to the level of self determination by students on their own, the most influential category was parents followed by teachers. Category of others also accounted for a high rate. It is also noted that the role of career guidance (in the absence of a Unit in school at present) was zero. In a country where the majority of parents are not educated enough to advise their children on their future, it is expected to raise the role of the career guidance, while reducing the role of "other" group. Among the key solutions are: Adoption of multiple intelligence tests, adoption of skills identification tests, adoption of student career preference identification tests, test awareness programs for students, test awareness programs for teachers, and setting up of a career guidance unit.

Outcomes of the project are identifiable in three areas. Firstly, a reduction of the students failure in examinations due to students clarity of subject choice and motivation. Secondly, there will be an increase of school administration efficiency resulting from a reduction of the rate of subject exchange over time. These will be seen in staff time reduction, communication clarity, and savings of processing time. Thirdly, and more importantly, students will be highly motivated to study the chosen subject because they are closer to their hearts and minds. They will have increased faith and confidence in their future achievements. Overall, this project will result in higher level of education reforms goals such as matching education with economic development needs of the country. Expenditure on education will be then seen as an investment in the economy. Recommendations for implementation included setting up a career guidance unit, provision of psychometric tests, making a Hand Book focusing on the issue, setting up an information on career unit, teacher training on career guidance, implementing awareness programs for parents and students.