

Career planning, enhancement, and internship experience among students in Chinese vocational colleges

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Abstract

This descriptive research design paper described the profile, career planning, career enhancement, and internship experience of students from vocational colleges served as sample respondents of the study. The majority of the respondents are male, in their senior year, and are nursing majors. Past experiences play a significant role in shaping an individual's career goals, providing a foundation for their aspirations and decisions. Out-of-class experiences are also crucial in career planning, offering practical insights and knowledge that complement formal education. Building professional connections is essential, as these relationships provide guidance, opportunities, and support. Additionally, the ability to reflect on and apply transferable skills from various experiences is vital for career development and adaptability, ensuring that individuals can navigate and succeed in their chosen career paths. The analysis revealed that career planning, career enhancement, and internship experiences vary significantly based on grade level. Specifically, career planning shows notable differences across different grade levels. Career enhancement, on the other hand, is influenced not only by grade level but also by the student's major, indicating that both academic progression and field of study play crucial roles. Additionally, internship experiences are significantly impacted by the student's grade level, suggesting that as students advance in their education, their internship experiences and opportunities evolve accordingly. The analysis indicates that there is a significant relationship between career planning and career enhancement, as well as between career planning and internship experiences. This suggests that effective career planning not only contributes to professional growth and advancement but also enhances the quality and impact of internship experiences.

Keywords: career planning, career enhancement, internship experience, vocational colleges

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1. Introduction

Encouraging emerging professionals to succeed in their new career path and helping them find employment both depend heavily on graduates having the necessary skills. Students who do not have the requisite abilities will soon discover that their new role is difficult for them. They could begin to doubt themselves and become confused about what to do. Businesses who hire them will also experience frustration since they waste time and money. They find themselves having to train new employees who lack the perspective and real-world experience necessary to do the tasks for which they were employed.

For students, strategically planning their career path is not only crucial for personal development but also profoundly impacts the composition of the workforce and the sustainability of the economy. College students can choose a career path that best fits them by using career planning to better match their interests and strengths. Moreover, by means of efficient preparation, they can consistently improve their abilities and comprehension, accommodating the always changing professional terrain. This is crucial for improving both their general personal well-being and ability to compete in the employment market (Zhang et al., 2024). Despite the recognized importance of career planning, there is a lack of comprehensive strategies that integrate real-world experience with academic learning. This research aims to bridge that gap by proposing a framework for effective career planning that includes practical training and mentorship. Early career planning allows students to better prepare for their future roles, which in turn benefits businesses by reducing training costs and improving productivity. Career planning is a vital process for vocational college students in China, as it helps them align their educational pursuits with their career aspirations. Effective career planning involves understanding one's interests, strengths, and the demands of the job market. Meanwhile, career enhancement refers to the continuous development of skills and competencies that improve an individual's job performance and career prospects. In the context of vocational education in China, career enhancement is crucial for addressing the skilled labor shortages that the country faces.

Internships play a critical role in bridging the gap between academic learning and real-world application. They provide students with hands-on experience, enhancing their knowledge, skills, and employability. Arthur et al. (2023) highlighted that internships are essential for vocational students as they offer opportunities to develop practical skills such as discipline, responsibility, teamwork, and problem-solving. However, the quality of internships can vary, and issues such as irrelevant job assignments and lack of proper guidance can hinder the learning experience (Hou et al., 2020). In China, there have been efforts to improve the quality of internships and ensure that they are relevant to students' fields of study. For instance, the government has set guidelines to prevent vocational students from being exploited through repetitive and intensive labor (Zhou, 2019). Furthermore, Aqli et al. (2019) stated that internship programs may be beneficial through the relationship of classroom learning to the work environment; developing valuable practical experiences; giving students more familiarity with the workplace; opportunity to communicate and establish relationships with supervisors in the industry and help clarify career expectations. These benefits are available in various countries and industries. In addition, internships are a valuable opportunity for students and recent graduates to gain hands-on experience in their chosen field and develop skills that will be critical to their future careers. They provide a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world application, allowing students to gain practical knowledge and insight that cannot be learned in a classroom (Lahoria, 2023).

In recent years, China has actively expanded its vocational education to align with the demands of enterprises. According to a report, the country will redouble its efforts to improve vocational education (Li et al., 2023). College students pursuing vocational programs need to be well-informed on the benefits and drawbacks of their chosen careers. A single, straightforward employment advantage cannot be used to

characterize “high-tech and applied talents” in the complicated and dynamic job market, where higher vocational education is becoming more widely available and higher education is becoming more widely accepted. Instead, vocational college students who have solid problem-solving ability, lifelong learning awareness, and innovative competition should. It is the talent who can have significant potential for development in future positions (Li, 2023).

Incorporating apprenticeships and internships into vocational education programs is one crucial way for hands-on learning and industry readiness. Establishing partnerships with local businesses provides students with real-world experience. Structured mentorship programs and hands-on projects allow apprentices to apply theoretical knowledge. Regular feedback loops between educators and industry professionals enhance the relevance of curriculum. However, several problems have been identified as to the conduct of internship. Liu et al. (2023) found that students lacked proper practice concept, role orientation, and psychological endurance. Second, the company’s talent training awareness is poor, and the job arrangement, housing, remuneration, and other areas need improvement. Third, the internship system’s guarantee and monitoring need to be reinforced, and internship units and new ways to promote internships are lacking. Another study by Hou et al. (2020) found that students are often assigned jobs that are not related to the subjects they are studying. Furthermore, it has been revealed that Chinese universities were sending their students to complete irrelevant internships, working overtime almost daily, and working night shifts. Because of these instances, China has drawn red lines for vocational school students’ internships to prevent them from being forced into doing repetitive and intensive labor. The internships should be related to students’ majors and should not be repetitive, labor-intensive or profit-driven (Zhou, 2019).

The researcher conceptualized this study focusing on describing the relationship among career planning, career enhancement, and internship experience, and determining if each one impacts the other. Internships play a vital role in students’ personal and professional development. This can be considered a preparatory step for students to gain practical knowledge and supervised experience. However, what students encounter and how they perceive internships are still debatable. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on internships and career development uncovering how these elements influence each other and contribute to overall career development. Ultimately, this seeks to significantly enhance career development in vocational colleges in China. By providing insights into effective career planning and enhancement strategies, as well as a deep understanding of the impact of internships, this study offers practical and actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers. Implementing these recommendations can lead to the design of more effective internship programs and career development initiatives, thereby better preparing students for successful and fulfilling careers. Moreover, these improvements can contribute to a more skilled and adaptable workforce, which is essential for the sustainable growth and competitiveness of the economy.

Objectives of the Study - The study aimed to determine career development paths, ability enhancement, and internship experience among students in Chinese vocational colleges to propose an enhanced career development program for vocational colleges. Specifically, it sought to determine their career planning in terms of assessment, exploration, experience, and transition; identify their career enhancement in terms of ambition, knowledge and network, confidence, determination, commitment, and self-belief; assess their internship experience in terms of positive work environment, comfortable work environment, personal traits, job prospects, and new skills; test the relationships among career planning, enhancement, and internship experience; and propose an enhanced career development program for vocational colleges.

2. Method

Research Design - The descriptive research design was applied to the current study. A descriptive study aimed to systematically gather data to describe a group of people, event, or phenomenon. According to McCombes (2023), descriptive research sought to describe a population, circumstance, or phenomenon accurately and methodically. It could respond to what, where, when, and how inquiries, but not why. In addition, it was useful

when little was known about a topic or problem. Before one could investigate why anything happened, one needed first to understand how, when, and where it occurred. Descriptive research was an appropriate choice when the research aim was to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories. Quantitative methods were used in the data collection. Specifically, the survey technique was utilized. For the actual data collection, the researcher used the survey and interview techniques. The survey technique helped researchers find solutions, create discussions, and make decisions. Survey research meant collecting information about a group of people by asking them questions and analyzing the results. Surveys were used as a method of gathering data in many different fields. They were a good choice when one wanted to find out about the characteristics, preferences, opinions, or beliefs of a group of people (McCombes, 2023; Mahmutovic, 2020).

Participants of the Study - The participants of this study were students from vocational colleges in China. They are the ones who can provide the objective data needed to meet the current study's aims. Their unique educational background and experiences make them ideal candidates for this research. By focusing on vocational college students, the study aims to gather insights that are specifically relevant to this demographic, which is often underrepresented in academic research. Using the Raosoft sample size calculator, a sample size of 425 was included from a total of 500 teachers. The confidence level of this study was 95% and the margin of error was 5%. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the students to be surveyed.

Data Collection Instrument - The survey questionnaire contained four parts. The first part determined the respondents' profiles, such as sex, year level, and major. The second part focused on the respondents' career planning in terms of assessment, exploration, experience, and transition. This section was modified from the Career Planning Questionnaire from the Messiah College Career Center (2013). The third part assessed the respondents' career enhancement in terms of ambition, knowledge and networks, confidence, determination, commitment, and self-belief. This section was adapted from the Career Enhancement Model of Employability (CEME) Self-assessment Questionnaire (2022). Meanwhile, the fourth part focused on the respondents' internship experience, including aspects such as positive work environment, comfortable work environment, personal traits, job prospects, and new skills. This section was modified from the study "Exploration of Internship Experience and Satisfaction Leading to Better Career Prospects among Business Students in UAE" by Jawabri (2017). The questionnaires were validated to ensure its dependability. A group of subject-matter experts first assessed the instrument to ensure it appropriately measured the specified variables.

Data Gathering Procedure - The study was initially conceived based on the researcher's observations of the current scenario regarding the predominance of digital reading among students. To select the variables for the study, the researcher gathered firsthand information on the topic. The variables were finalized after a thorough review of the literature. Additionally, the researcher chose a research design and data collection strategy based on the available literature. The survey questionnaire, developed based on existing literature, included a mix of closed-ended and Likert scale questions to gather quantitative data on various indicators related to the research objectives. The questionnaire was validated and refined through pilot testing to ensure its reliability and validity. After the research instrument was approved, the necessary letters were prepared for the study's administration. With permission from the school leaders, the surveys were personally distributed to the selected respondents. The questionnaires were given to students from vocational colleges in China, who were chosen because they could provide the objective data needed to meet the study's aims. Once the data were collected, they were analyzed to identify trends and patterns. The findings were then discussed, interpreted, and validated against previous research. Conclusions were drawn after discussing and interpreting the findings, and recommendations were made based on the findings, along with suggestions for future research.

Data Analysis - Weighted means and ranks were calculated. All statistical analyses and data processing were conducted using SPSS version 26. The quantitative data collected was analyzed with SPSS to address the study's objectives. Descriptive statistics were specifically used to examine the responses to various variables and indicators. Weighted means and rankings identified the respondents' career planning in terms of assessment, exploration, experience, and transition. They also determined the respondents' career enhancement in terms of

ambition, knowledge and network, confidence, determination, commitment, and self-belief. Additionally, internship experience was assessed in terms of positive work environment, comfortable work environment, personal traits, job prospects, and new skills. Pearson’s correlation examined the significant relationships among career planning, career enhancement, and internship experience.

Ethical Consideration - The researcher did not disclose the identities of the respondents or any other personal information to respect their right to privacy. The researcher obtained approval before accessing any sensitive data and gathered information with the highest discretion. Throughout the analysis process, the researcher prioritized the well-being of the participants and ensured that all relevant data were incorporated into the study. Regarding the inferences made based on the data collected, the researcher did not provide their personal views. Participants were guaranteed that the data they provided would only be used for this research. In addition, the study was authorized via an ethics review procedure.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1
Summary Table on Respondents’ Career Planning

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| Assessment | 2.88 | Agree | 2 |
| Exploration | 2.77 | Agree | 3 |
| Experience | 2.90 | Agree | 1 |
| Transition | 2.76 | Agree | 4 |
| Composite Mean | 2.83 | Agree | |

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 1 shows the summary of the respondents’ career planning. The composite mean of 2.83 indicates that the respondents generally agreed. Among the indicators, "Experience" gained the highest mean, which is 2.90, followed by "Assessment" with a mean of 2.88. "Exploration" and "Transition" received lower rankings, with means of 2.77 and 2.76, respectively. The high mean score for “Experience” in career planning indicates that respondents place significant value on practical, hands-on experience. This finding aligns with recent literature and studies emphasizing the importance of experience in career development. Experience is often considered a critical component of career planning because it provides individuals with practical skills, knowledge, and insights that are not easily acquired through theoretical learning alone. According to a study by Nunes (2019), career development plans should be intentional and focused on the big picture of the experiences one wants in life. Nunes emphasized that varied experiences across different roles and industries can significantly enhance an individual’s career trajectory. Additionally, a study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2019) found that employers highly value candidates with relevant work experience, often considering it a top factor in hiring decisions. This aligns with the respondents’ high rating of “Experience” in the survey, indicating that they recognize its importance in enhancing employability and career growth.

Table 2 shows the summary of the respondents’ career enhancement indicators. The composite mean of 2.83 indicates that the respondents generally agreed. Among the indicators, Confidence received the highest mean score of 2.95, followed by Ambition with a mean score of 2.89. This was followed by commitment (2.88), knowledge and network (2.83), determination (2.81), and self-belief (2.62).

Table 2
Summary Table on Career Enhancement

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| Ambition | 2.89 | Agree | 2 |
| Knowledge and Network | 2.83 | Agree | 4 |
| Confidence | 2.95 | Agree | 1 |
| Determination | 2.81 | Agree | 5 |
| Commitment | 2.88 | Agree | 3 |
| Self-belief | 2.62 | Agree | 6 |
| Composite Mean | 2.83 | Agree | |

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

The finding that confidence received the highest mean score among career enhancement indicators underscores its critical role in professional growth.

Table 3
Summary Table on Internship experience

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|------|
| positive work environment | 2.87 | Agree | 4 |
| comfortable work environment | 2.97 | Agree | 2 |
| job prospects | 2.96 | Agree | 3 |
| new skills | 3.02 | Agree | 1 |
| Composite Mean | 2.96 | Agree | |

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 3 shows the summary of the respondents' internship experience. The composite mean of 2.96 indicates that the respondents generally agreed. Among the indicators, new skills received the highest mean score of 3.02, followed by a comfortable work environment with a mean score of 2.97. This was closely followed by job prospects (2.96) and a positive work environment (2.87). The finding that new skills received the highest mean score (3.02) among the indicators of internship experience underscores the critical role of internships in skill acquisition. Recent literature supports this, highlighting that internships are pivotal in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical application.

Table 4 shows the association between career planning and career enhancement. the computed r-values indicates a strong direct correlation and the resulted p-values were less than the alpha level. This means that a significant relationship exists, implying that the better the career planning, the better the career enhancement. The significant relationship between career planning and career enhancement, as indicated by the strong direct correlation and p-values less than the alpha level, suggests that effective career planning is crucial for career advancement. This finding aligns with recent literature emphasizing the importance of strategic career planning in achieving career success. Furthermore, Career adaptability refers to an individual's ability to adjust to changing career circumstances and demands, which is increasingly important in today's rapidly evolving job market. The study found that individuals who engage in thorough career planning are better equipped to handle career transitions, cope with job-related challenges, and seize new opportunities. This adaptability not only enhances their immediate job performance but also contributes to long-term career satisfaction and success. By fostering career adaptability through effective planning, individuals can build resilience and maintain a competitive edge in their professional lives.

Table 4
Relationship between Career Planning and Career Enhancement

| Assessment | r-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| ambition | .857 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| knowledge and network | .726 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| confidence | .912 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| determination | .521 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| commitment | .827 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| self - belief | .516 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Exploration | | | |
| ambition | .518 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| knowledge and network | .567 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| confidence | .526 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| determination | .815 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| commitment | .479 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| self - belief | .432 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Experience | | | |
| ambition | .861 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| knowledge and network | .742 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| confidence | .858 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| determination | .502 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| commitment | .862 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| self - belief | .550 | .000 | Highly Significant |

| Transition | | | |
|-----------------------|------|------|--------------------|
| ambition | .416 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| knowledge and network | .528 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| confidence | .324 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| determination | .712 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| commitment | .276 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| self - belief | .232 | .000 | Highly Significant |

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

The collective research confirms that diligent and forward-thinking career planning is linked to improved career prospects, reinforcing the survey’s implication that superior career planning is associated with greater career advancement.

Table 5

Relationship between Career Planning and Internship Experience

| Assessment | r-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| Positive Work Environment | .877 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Comfortable Work Environment | .916 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Job Prospects | .416 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| New Skills | .033 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Exploration | | | |
| Positive Work Environment | .482 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Comfortable Work Environment | .532 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Job Prospects | .271 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| New Skills | .033 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Experience | | | |
| Positive Work Environment | .842 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Comfortable Work Environment | .912 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Job Prospects | .444 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| New Skills | .028 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Transition | | | |
| Positive Work Environment | .891 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Comfortable Work Environment | .439 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| Job Prospects | .402 | .000 | Highly Significant |
| New Skills | .022 | .000 | Highly Significant |

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

Table 5 displays the association between career planning and internship experience. the computed r-values indicates a strong direct correlation and the resulted p-values were less than the alpha level. This means that a significant relationship exists, implying that the better the career planning, the better the internship experience. The significant relationship between career planning and internship experience, as indicated by the strong direct correlation and p-values less than the alpha level, suggests that effective career planning is crucial for a positive internship experience. This finding aligns with recent literature emphasizing the importance of strategic career planning in enhancing internship outcomes.

Table 6

A Proposed Enhanced Career Development Program for Vocational Colleges

| Key Result Area | Objectives | Program/ Projects | Success Indicators | Persons involved |
|--|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Career Planning in terms of Transition | To engage students with prospective employers or graduate schools | CAREER CONNECT 1. Offering workshops, seminars, and mentorship to help students with job and graduate school applications 2. Creating chances for students to meet professionals, alumni, and graduate school reps for career and educational opportunities | 1. 90% of students report increased confidence in their job and graduate school application skills after attending workshops and seminars. | Students Teachers School Admin |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| | | 3. Providing resources and assistance to help students get internships, jobs, and graduate school placements, improving their success rates | 2. 90% of students participate in at least one networking event with industry professionals, alumni, or graduate school representatives. 90% of students who utilize the program's resources secure internships, job offers, or graduate school admissions within six months of graduation. | |
| To have students participate in mock interviews | Mock Interview Initiative | 1. Providing students with practical experience and feedback through simulated interview sessions. 2. Creating a supportive environment where students can practice and improve their interview techniques without the pressure of a real job interview. 3. Offering workshops and resources to help students understand common interview questions and effective responses. | 1. 90% of students report increased confidence in their interview skills after participating in mock interviews. 2. 90% of students attend at least one mock interview session during the program. 3. 90% of students receive positive feedback from mock interviewers on their performance and improvement. | Students Teachers School Admin |
| To help students develop a network of professional and educational references | Network Builder | 1. Pairing students with professionals and educators who can provide guidance and serve as references. 2. Organizing events where students can meet and interact with industry professionals, alumni, and educators. 3. Developing online platforms for continuous professional interaction and support, allowing students to maintain and expand their network. | 1. 90% of students will have established at least one mentor-mentee relationship within six months. 2. 90% of students will have attended at least two networking events within the academic year. 3. 90% of students will actively participate in an online professional network platform, engaging at least once a month | Students Teachers School Admin |
| Career Enhancement in terms of Determination | To provide knowledge and skills to students to successfully secure their dream profession | Dream Profession Pathway Offering specialized training and workshops tailored to the skills required for students' desired professions. Providing guidance on crafting effective resumes, cover letters, and preparing for interviews specific to their dream jobs. Creating opportunities for internships, job shadowing, and project-based learning to give students hands-on experience in their chosen fields. | 90% of students report improved proficiency in career-specific skills after attending training sessions and workshops. 90% of students feel more confident in their job application materials and interview readiness after participating in guidance sessions. 90% of students complete at least one internship, job shadowing experience, or project-based learning activity related to their dream profession within the academic year. | Students Teachers School Admin |
| To encourage confidence in career planning | Career Confidence Booster | Providing students with comprehensive information about various career paths and industries. Helping students identify their strengths, interests, and values through workshops and assessments. Facilitating interactions with industry professionals through mentorship programs, networking events, and guest lectures. | 1. 90% of students report an increased awareness of different career options after participating in the program. 2. 90% of students demonstrate improved ability to articulate their strengths, interests, and career goals after attending self-assessment workshops. 3. 90% of students have interacted with at least one industry professional through mentorship programs or networking events within the academic year. | Students Teachers School Admin |
| Internship Experience in terms of Positive Work Environment | To enhance high-level skills for employment | Future Skills Academy Offering advanced training in industry-specific tools, technologies, and methodologies to ensure students are well-equipped for their chosen fields. Providing workshops and seminars focused on communication, leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills essential for professional success. Creating opportunities for students to apply their skills through internships, project-based learning, and collaboration with industry partners. | 90% of students report improved technical proficiency in their field after completing advanced training sessions. 90% of students demonstrate enhanced soft skills, such as communication and leadership, through participation in workshops and seminars. 90% of students complete at least one internship or project-based learning experience, applying their skills in a real-world context within the academic year. | Students Teachers School Admin |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| To promote completion of tasks during internship | <p>Internship Success Program</p> <p>Providing students with training on effective task management and prioritization techniques to ensure timely completion of internship tasks.</p> <p>Facilitating regular check-ins and feedback sessions between interns and supervisors to address any challenges and ensure progress.</p> <p>3. Implementing a system of goal-setting and progress tracking to keep students motivated and accountable for their internship responsibilities</p> | <p>90% of students report improved task management skills and the ability to prioritize tasks effectively after participating in the program.</p> <p>90% of students receive positive feedback from their supervisors on their communication and responsiveness during the internship.</p> <p>90% of students complete all assigned tasks and projects within the given deadlines during their internship period.</p> | <p>Students</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>School</p> <p>Admin</p> |
| To promote work satisfaction during internship | <p>Internship Satisfaction Enhancement</p> <p>Creating initiatives that promote a supportive and inclusive workplace culture for interns.</p> <p>Providing opportunities for interns to learn and grow through training sessions, mentorship, and feedback.</p> <p>Implementing strategies to help interns manage their workload effectively while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.</p> | <p>90% of students report feeling supported and included in their workplace environment during their internship.</p> <p>90% of students participate in professional development activities and feel they have grown in their role.</p> <p>90% of students maintain a healthy work-life balance and report high levels of overall satisfaction with their internship experience.</p> | <p>Students</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>School</p> <p>Admin</p> |

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Past experiences shape career goals and provide a foundation for aspirations. Out-of-class experiences offer practical insights, while professional connections provide guidance and support. Reflecting on and applying transferable skills is crucial for career development and adaptability. Choosing a career path should bring purpose to one's life. Mastery in a specialized area, critical thinking skills, clear career objectives, dedication, and innovation are essential for professional success. Applying theoretical concepts is key to a meaningful internship. Enjoying the organization and having supportive supervisors enhance the experience, while confidence in job prospects and effective communication skills are critical outcomes. There is a significant relationship between career planning, career enhancement, and internship experiences. Effective career planning boosts professional growth and enhances internship quality, highlighting the need for comprehensive career planning in education and professional development. The researcher proposed an enhanced career development program for vocational colleges.

Career development programs may benefit from tailoring resources and support specifically for senior male nursing students to address their unique needs and challenges. Vocational institutions may incorporate more opportunities for students to engage in out-of-class experiences and build professional connections to enhance career planning and development. Career counseling services may emphasize the importance of aligning career choices with personal values and purpose to help students achieve fulfillment and success. Internship programs may ensure that students have ample opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings, enhancing their overall learning and satisfaction. Educational institutions may develop grade-specific career planning and enhancement programs to address the evolving needs and opportunities of students at different stages of their education. Educational curricula developers may integrate comprehensive career planning initiatives into curricula to support students' professional growth and improve the quality of their internship experiences. Vocational colleges may implement the proposed enhanced career development program to better prepare students for successful careers and ensure they have the necessary skills and support.

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