

**Relationship Between Career Counselling and Professional Success Among University Graduates of District Lahore**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the relationship between career counselling and professional success among university graduates of District Lahore, Pakistan. A quantitative, correlational design grounded in the positivist paradigm was adopted. The population comprised graduates of public and private universities of District Lahore who had received career counselling. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, one public university and one private university were selected through simple random sampling, and a total sample of 385 graduates (197 from the public and 188 from the private university) was drawn through purposive and convenience sampling; the sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula. Data were collected using two adapted instruments: the Career Counselling Scale (32 items; Cronbach's  $\alpha = .922$ ) measuring academic, social, and personal competence, and the Perceived Career Success Scale (21 items; Cronbach's  $\alpha = .861$ ) measuring job, interpersonal, non-organizational, hierarchical, and financial success. Descriptive statistics and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient were used for analysis. Results indicated that the level of career counselling attained by graduates was predominantly moderate, with 33.5% at a low level, 35.1% at a medium level, and 31.4% at a high level. Among professional success dimensions, job success recorded the highest mean ( $M = 23.62$ ,  $SD = 3.52$ ) and financial success the lowest ( $M = 11.21$ ,  $SD = 2.26$ ). A strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship was found between career counselling and professional success ( $r = .765$ ,  $n = 385$ ,  $p < .01$ ). All sub-scale correlations were positive and significant, ranging from weak to strong. The findings suggest that strengthening university career counselling services can meaningfully support graduate employability and professional development. Universities and policymakers are encouraged to institutionalize structured, personalized counselling to ease the transition from higher education to professional life.*

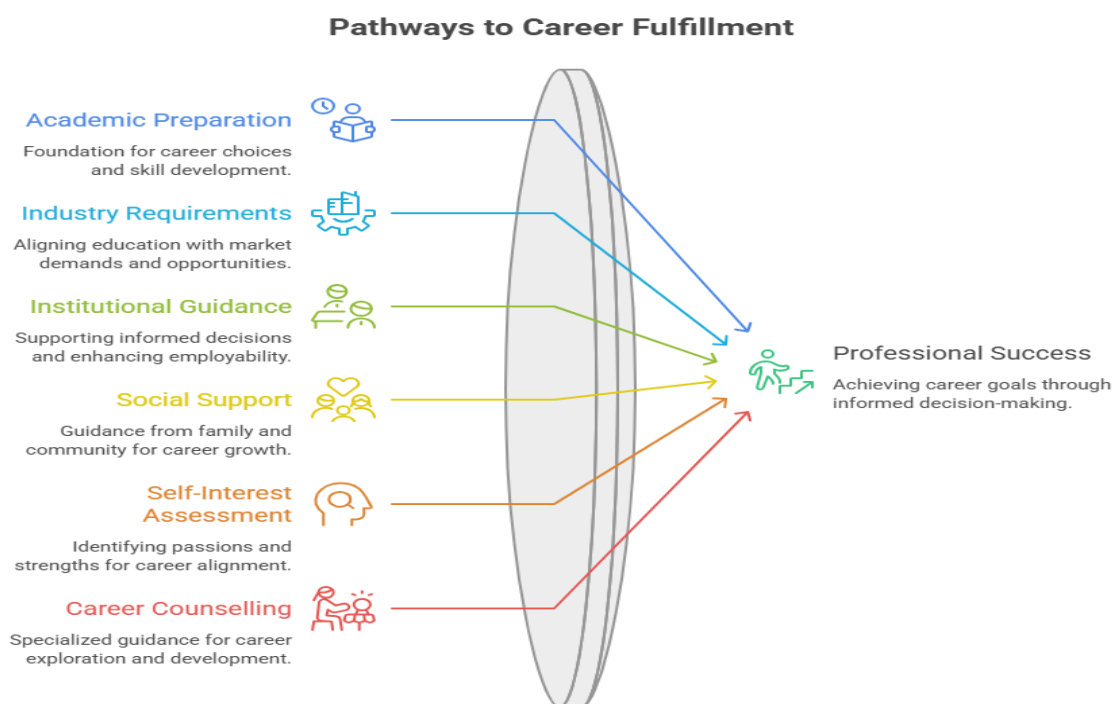
**Keywords:** Career counselling, professional success, university graduates, employability, District Lahore

**INTRODUCTION**

In the competitive landscape of Lahore's burgeoning labor market, effective career counselling serves as a critical bridge between academic preparation and the realization of professional success (Keshf & Khanum, 2021; Saya, 2023). In a socio-economic environment where there are often structural mismatches between the programs that students achieve and the industry requirements, institutional guidance plays a crucial role in supporting informed decision-making and improving employability (Naeem & Khan, 2023). The shift to

the industry is especially crucial in Lahore, where a mismatch between education and industry needs continues to be a longstanding issue for young professionals (Qomi et al., 2025).

Humans are communal beings as a result in specific way or other they need to be assist and supervised by others. Adolescents are guided by Mother, father, teachers, grandparents, elders, school and civilization to make their lives effective. With a huge amount of information, industrial development, economic development, society development and improved socio-economic condition the career counselling become a necessity of the time. Career counselling is well known to scan the interests of students and guide them in choosing their career based on their limitations, strengths, opportunities and resources. Students need specialized career counsellors to provide guidance to them to improve their knowledge of self-interests, abilities, potentials, knowledge and evaluate opportunities which are related to work such as occupational developments, competencies, conditions of service and work depiction (Kok & Low, 2017).



Made with Napkin

They also must develop a career plan in relation to career search, goal setting and how to make their goals come true and develop job searching skills. This includes identifying potential employers, preparing resumes, preparing for interviews (Getachew, 2016). Every country has its particular method of schooling its young ones into the world of profession. Within each state there are differences in professions and more generally work-related prospects and limitations depending on gender, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, urban rural residence, immigrant or migrant status. Thus, the importance of career counselling in empowering students to choose what career is the best match for them, according to their interest, aptitude and temperament, is invaluable, given that a happy and prosperous life is their long-term goal (Mutie & Ndambuki 2009).

In this context, professional success comes not only from landing a job, but from a graduate's ability to plan his or her career for the long-term and to ensure his or her interest is consistent with the changing needs of

an economy (Yousafzai, 2023). Considering Pakistan's education system's significant technical skill shortages and the lack of a strong connection with the job market, it is vital to implement career-oriented interventions in a structured manner to help improve the alignment between the education system and the needs of a technologically driven workforce (Ishaq & Asghar, 2025). Empirical evidence indicates that these services are seen as poly-functional and essential for helping students cope with these complex professional settings. Professional success is not a stationary or common concept, but a societal construct driven from the dynamic forces between the values, expectations and choices of individuals and the fundamental and related forces (Shockley, 2016). Additionally, as individuals involve in different age and life understandings, they may alter their thinking and definition of professional success (Santos, 2016).

Hence, it is crucial that universities in Lahore focus on introducing programs in collaboration with industries and tailoring guidance for students to overcome career indecision, as found by the significant number of such students. Therefore, it is necessary for the universities of Lahore to implement programs in collaboration with the industries and provide customized guidance to students to overcome career indecision, as revealed by the high number of career indecent students. These interventions help students understand themselves and their objectives through structured assessment tools and customized guidance, thereby improving their self-awareness and goal-setting abilities, which are vital for navigating the complexities of the local labor market (Sharma, 2026). This comprehensive support framework goes beyond just learning a new skill, enabling students to actively manage their careers, an aspect that is increasingly considered a predictor for the quality of employment and continuity of career (Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2015). This strategic approach aims to tackle the identified disconnect by offering crucial guidance for career decisions and promoting student autonomy in the transition from higher education to the dynamic job market in the region (Doganulku et al., 2026).

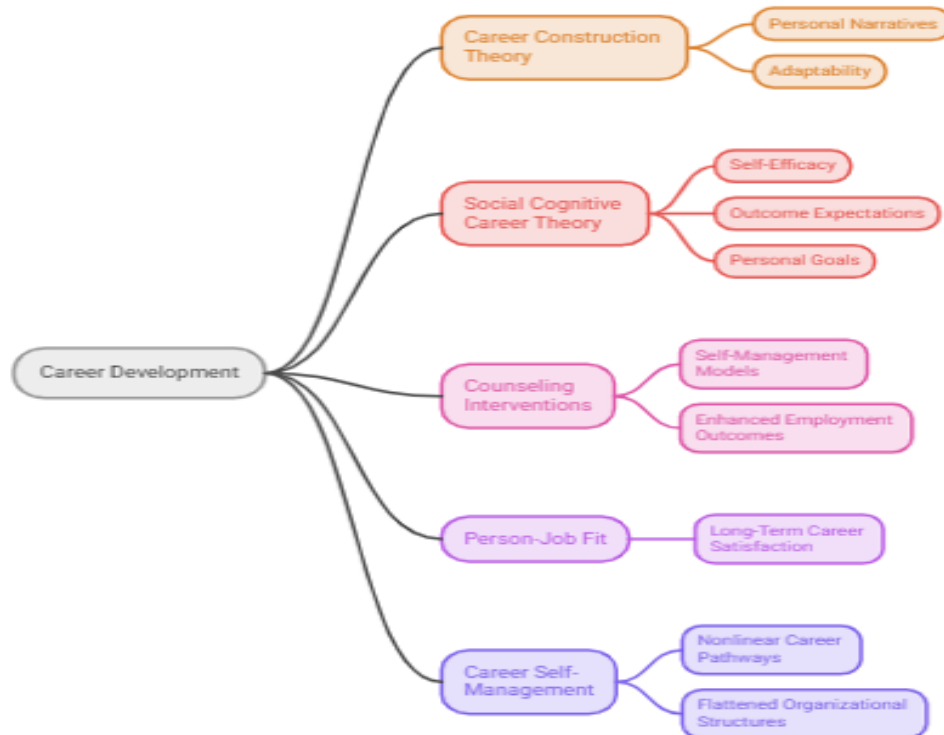
## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Current academic discourse defines career counseling as a strategic intervention designed to facilitate self-understanding, mitigate decision-making confusion, and enhance professional readiness (Nafsih et al., 2026). Professional success is defined as a person's ability to adapt their behavior and maintain their employability to reach long-term professional aims via adaptive self-efficacy (Pshembayeva et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2022). The need to include these services in career readiness tools, like Social Cognitive Career Theory, is also increasingly being discussed by scholars, as they believe that it is crucial to develop self-efficacy and goal setting skills in competitive environments (Yuan & Zainudin, 2025). Foundational research in this domain highlights the necessity of bridging graduate employability discourse with established career development theory to optimize institutional outcomes (Healy et al., 2020).

Thus, researchers stress the need for hybrid models that integrate universal vocational psychology theory with local sociocultural factors to make more accurate predictions of graduate success in Pakistan (Ariyanto et al., 2024) (Sampaio et al., 2024). In Pakistan, research has shown that using psychometric assessments with interventions shows a significant increase in career decision making confidence for individuals when compared to providing general career guidance (Saya et al., 2025). These targeted interventions can successfully reduce the gap between academic preparation and the ever-changing labor market demand for certain self-regulation skills that are essential for people to navigate the modern and fluid nature of career trajectories (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017; Soares et al., 2022). In addition, in developing countries where resources are often limited, a need for a proactive research paradigm shift from reactive guidance to social action is recognized to tackle systemic issues such as unemployment (Mohaiyuddin et al., 2025). These should not be limited to individualistic views, as employability is a socio-economic phenomenon and something that emerges from personal agency (Presti et al., 2021; Wang, 2026).

### Theoretical Perspectives

The Career Construction Theory serves as a primary lens, positing that individuals actively "construct" their careers by imposing meaning on their vocational experiences through personal narratives and adaptability (David & Mohebi, 2026; Nawaz et al., 2025). Concurrently, Social Cognitive Career Theory highlights that the interlocking of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals constitutes the triad that facilitates students' vocational persistence, especially for those who have the capacity to counter perceived obstacles (Azhenov et al., 2025). By leveraging these frameworks, counseling interventions specifically catalyze the transition from passive skill acquisition to proactive agency, as evidenced by studies correlating self-management models with enhanced employment outcomes (Zhao et al., 2023). These theoretical mechanisms create a pathway that makes the counseling process a very strong predictor of better person–job fit, which in turn is a powerful predictor of long-term career satisfaction (Xin et al., 2020). This theoretical alignment supports graduates to engage with career self-management in an active way, skills that is critical to career pathways that are often nonlinear and have flattened organizational structures in today's workplace (Jackson et al., 2024; Kundi et al., 2020).



### Statement of the Problem

Career counselling is an essential tool for students and graduates of the University to become aware of their characteristics, interests, career objectives and work opportunities. While university education equips the students with academic knowledge and professional qualifications, sometimes it is not enough for a successful career growth. The graduates may experience problems in choosing appropriate career options, preparing for job, developing professional skills, and making appropriate career decisions. Career counselling can support graduates in self-assessment, understanding labour market needs, planning for their career and making informed choices regarding their career. University graduates should be equipped with

the right academic knowledge, skills and career direction upon entering the labour market. But having a university degree does not automatically mean that a person will prosper in their working life. Graduates may have problems choosing the right career paths, finding work, job interviews, building career skills or planning for their future career. These challenges can increase in today's competitive workplace, where graduates are expected to have career-planning, employability, as well as academic skills.

Career counselling is one of the important services that can help students and graduates to gain insight into their skills, interests, career options, and career opportunities. Career counselling may be used to provide information on career planning and decision making, job opportunities, skill building, and career growth. But the effectiveness and contribution of career counselling can differ based on the quality, availability and utilization of counselling service. In particular, it is important to know if there is a link between career counselling and higher professional results among university graduates. Talking about District Lahore, many students are produced from the universities of the district annually and enter the job market with a competitive scenario. Students with relevant academic qualifications might be facing challenges in getting a job or advancing in their careers. Students who have the relevant academic qualifications might find it difficult to obtain suitable employment or to grow in their careers. Career counselling may help youth make a connection between their academic preparation and the needs of the profession, by offering information on career planning, job seeking, preparing for interviews, professional development, and career decision making. As a result, it is crucial to analyze the link between career counselling and career success to determine if graduates who are provided with appropriate career guidance are better equipped to reach their career objectives.

### **Significance of the study**

The findings of this study may be useful for different stakeholders, particularly students, teachers, parents, counsellors, and policymakers. This study can provide some insights to the University students and graduates about the significance of career counselling in their academic and career development. Career counselling can help them determine their interests, ability, strengths and career objectives. The results could motivate students to proactively seek professional career guidance in their decision-making process for their career. The study can also make students aware about the need for career planning, employability skills, decision making and career development to achieve success in career. Teachers regularly engage in interaction with university students and can be a valuable asset in determining the academic and career-related needs of students. This study can assist teachers in appreciating the significance of career guidance and make them more aware to refer students to professional counsellors as and when they need it. Parents can have an impact on their children's choices of education and careers. The study could help parents to realize that career selection should be determined by students' ability, interest, qualification, and career aspirations and not just social expectations.

The study might be valuable for university career counsellors specifically where it can offer evidence of the connection between career counselling and graduates' achievement of career success. Results can be used to guide counsellors in the areas that graduates need to be supported in, such as career planning, career decision making, job search strategy, interview preparation, professional skills and career development. The results might be helpful information for policy makers and higher education authorities about career counselling services in universities. The research could also help inform policies to enhance graduate employability and career development and the transition from university education to the world of work. Overall, this study can have a positive impact in the field of higher education as it provides empirical evidence of the relationship between career counselling and professional success of the university graduates in District Lahore. The results could assist other organizations and institutions, particularly universities, in designing a better career guidance system to help graduates make better choices about their careers and move toward their professional goals.

### **Research Objectives**

The research objectives of this study were given as follows:

1. To examine the professional success of university graduates.
2. To assess the level of career counselling attained by university graduates.
3. To investigate the relationship between career counselling and professional success of university graduates.

### **Research Questions**

The research study was consisted of the following research questions:

1. What is the professional success of university graduates?
2. What is the level of career counselling attained by university graduates?
3. Is there any statistically significant relationship between career counselling and professional success of university graduates.

### **Research Design**

The present study followed the positivist research paradigm. The positivist paradigm was suitable for this study because it allowed the researcher to collect measurable data through standardized questionnaires and analyze the relationship between variables statistically without manipulating them. The present study was quantitative in nature and correlational research design was used because the study aimed to examine the relationship between career counselling and professional success among university graduates of District Lahore.

### **Population**

The population of the study was comprised of all the graduates of public and private universities of district Lahore who had attained career counselling.

### **Sample of the study**

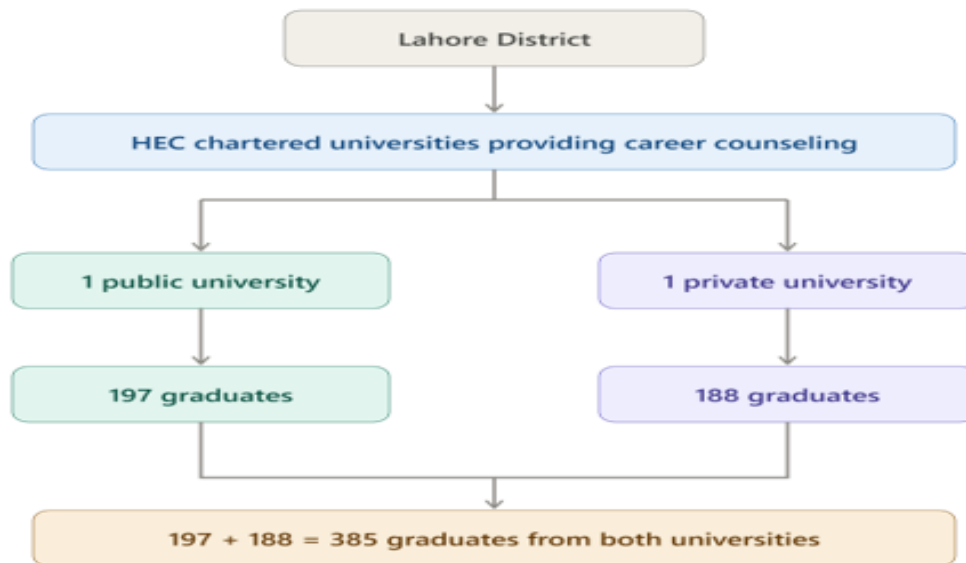
In this research study the researcher used multi-stage sampling technique. At the initial stage one public and one private university was selected through simple random sampling technique. The researcher collected the data from university graduates who had attained career counselling through purposive sampling technique. Approximately 197 graduates were selected from public university and 188 graduates were selected from private university on convenience basis. Total sample of study was 385 graduates. Sample size was found out by Krejcie Morgan formula for sample size calculation.



**Table 1: Population and sample of the research**

| Sr.# | Universities                 | Population | Sample Size |
|------|------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1    | University of the Punjab     | 26,612     | 197         |
| 2    | University of central Punjab | 11,500     | 188         |
|      | Total                        | 38,112     | 385         |

**Figure 1: Sample of the study**



## INSTRUMENTATION

Two research instruments were used for data collection by the researcher from respondents. In this study there were two variables career counselling and professional success. Two questionnaires were used to collect data; one questionnaire for career counselling and the other for professional success.

### *Career Counselling Scale (ccs)*

Career Counselling Scale (CCS) was used which was developed by Ann Samson in 2014-15. Researcher used this scale to find out the level of career counselling. Career Counselling Scale (CCS) contains thirty-two items. Responses were asked using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This instrument was adapted by the researcher. It contains three factors that are Academic COMPETENCE, SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND PERSONAL COMPETENCE.

***Perceived Career Success Scale (pcss)***

For professional success Perceived Career Success Scale was used, it was developed by Gattiker and Larwood and used in the recent studies by Du Toit in 2014. This scale was also adapted by researcher. Responses were asked using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This instrument contains twenty-one items grouped into 5 factors which are Job Success, Interpersonal Success, Non-organizational Success, Hierarchical Success and Financial Success.

**Reliability and Validity of the Instruments**

***Validity of the Instruments***

The research questionnaire was validated from experts review and changes were done in the instruments according to those suggestions which were given by the experts.

**Table 2: Reliability of instruments**

| Sr.# | Instrument                     | Number of items | Cronbach's alpha |
|------|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1    | Career counselling scale       | 32              | 0.922            |
| 2    | Perceived career success scale | 21              | 0.861            |

The table above shows that the reliability of career counselling scale was 0.922 and reliability of perceived career success scale was 0.861. The factor-wise reliability of career counselling scale given as under in the table 3

**Table 3: Reliability of sub-scales of Career counselling scale.**

| Sr.# | Factors             | Number of items | Cronbach's alpha |
|------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1    | Academic competence | 12              | 0.811            |
| 2    | Social competence   | 10              | 0.827            |
| 3    | Personal competence | 10              | 0.893            |

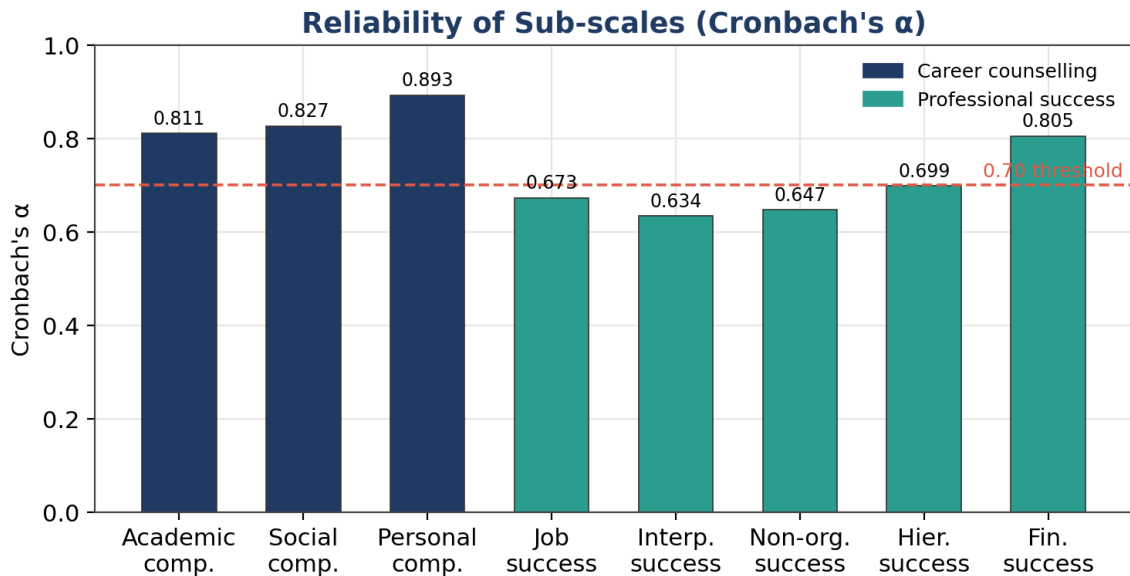
The factor-wise reliability of perceived career success scale given as under in the table 4

**Table 4: Reliability of sub-scales of perceived career success scale.**

| Sr.# | Factors                    | Number of items | Cronbach's alpha |
|------|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1    | Job success                | 6               | 0.673            |
| 2    | Interpersonal success      | 4               | 0.634            |
| 3    | Non-organizational success | 4               | 0.647            |



|   |                      |   |       |
|---|----------------------|---|-------|
| 4 | Hierarchical success | 4 | 0.699 |
| 5 | Financial success    | 3 | 0.805 |



**Figure:2. Reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) of all sub-scales; dashed line marks the 0.70 acceptability threshold.**

### ***Pilot testing***

The instrument was tested in a pilot study of district Lahore. For piloting instruments were delivered to 50 graduates. The data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 17 (SPSS). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used for measuring the reliability of both instruments. The Cronbach's alpha value for Career Counselling was 0.922 and for Professional Success was 0.861.

### **Research Question 1**

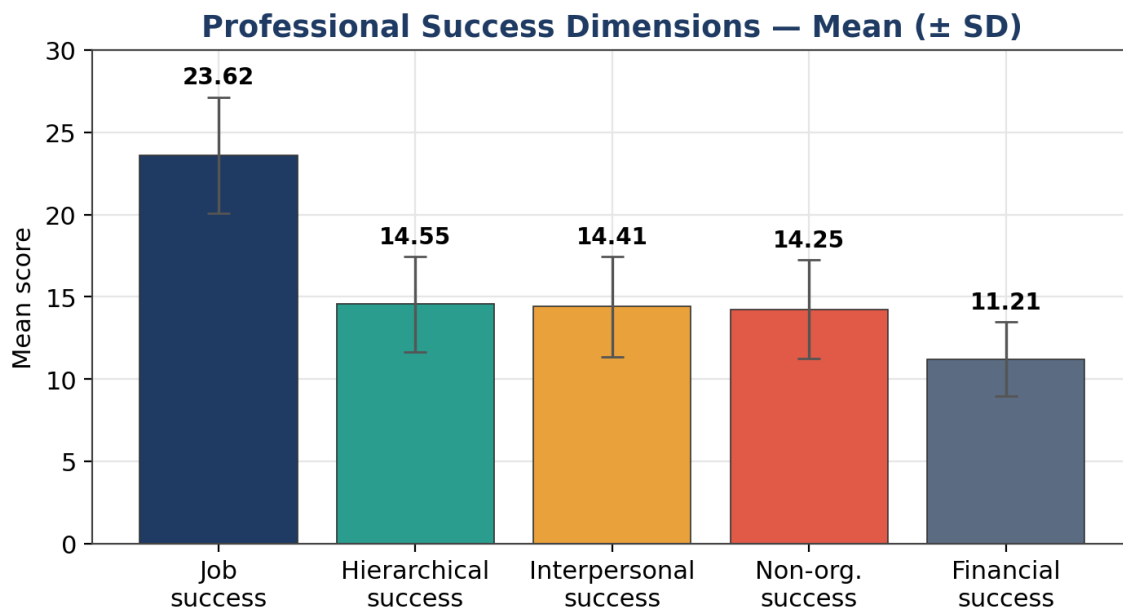
What is the professional success of university graduates?

**Table 5: Descriptive statistics for professional success**

| Sr. # | Factors                    | M     | SD   | Min. | Max.  |
|-------|----------------------------|-------|------|------|-------|
| 1     | Job success                | 23.62 | 3.52 | 10.0 | 30.00 |
| 2     | Interpersonal success      | 14.41 | 3.05 | 6.00 | 20.00 |
| 3     | Non-organizational success | 14.25 | 3.00 | 4.00 | 20.00 |

|   |                      |       |      |      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|------|------|-------|
| 4 | Hierarchical success | 14.55 | 2.88 | 5.00 | 20.00 |
| 5 | Financial success    | 11.21 | 2.26 | 3.00 | 15.00 |

The table above shows the range of possible responses for each sub-scale of the perceived career success scale is between 1.00 (Strongly Disagree) and 5.00 (Strong Agree). Mean and standard deviation of graduates on factor job success ( $M=23.62$ ,  $SD=3.52$ ), interpersonal success ( $M=14.41$ ,  $SD=3.05$ ), Non-organizational success ( $M=14.25$ ,  $SD=3.00$ ), Hierarchical success ( $M=14.55$ ,  $SD=2.88$ ), Financial success ( $M=11.21$ ,  $SD=2.26$ ).



**Figure 3. Professional success dimensions — mean scores with standard deviation.**

## Research Question 2

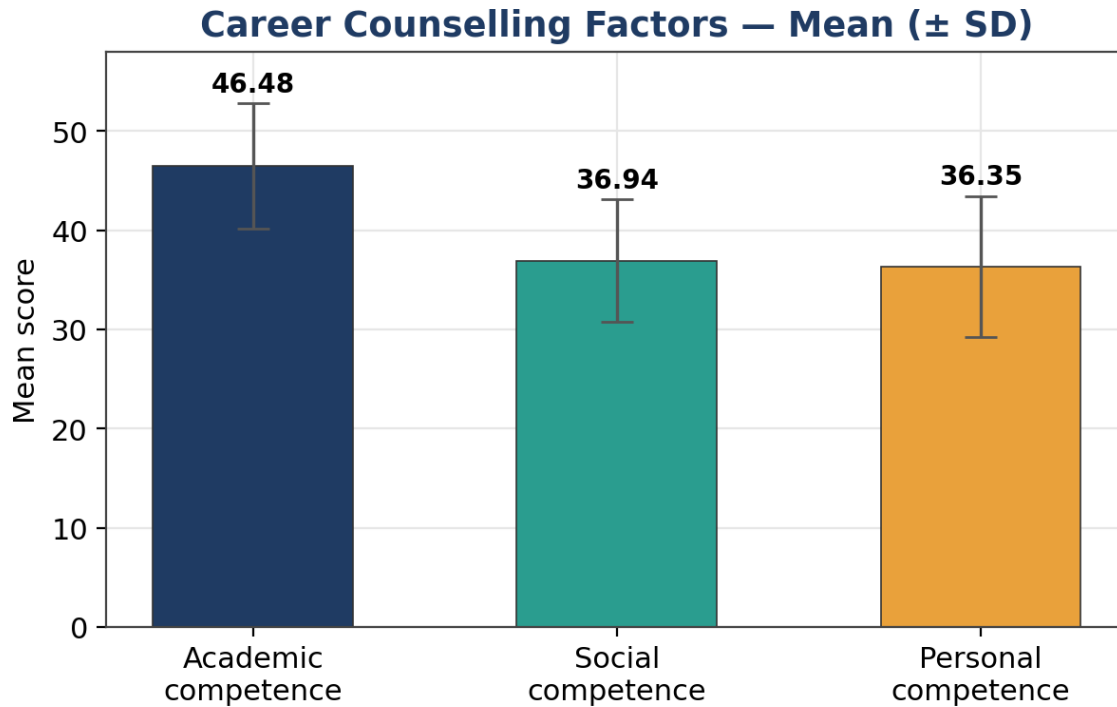
What is the the level of career counselling attained by university graduates?

**Table 6: Descriptive statistics for Career Counselling**

| Sr. # | Factors             | M     | SD   | Min. | Max.  |
|-------|---------------------|-------|------|------|-------|
| 1     | Academic competence | 46.48 | 6.32 | 23.0 | 60.00 |
| 2     | Social competence   | 36.94 | 6.16 | 19.0 | 50.00 |
| 5     | Personal competence | 36.35 | 7.10 | 15.0 | 50.00 |

The table above shows the descriptive statistics were collected, specifically the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum value for the survey data collected in the study. The range of possible responses

for each sub-scale of the career counselling scale is between 1.00 (Strongly Disagree) and 5.00 (Strong Agree). Mean and standard deviation of graduates on factor academic competence ( $M=46.48$ ,  $SD=6.32$ ), social competence ( $M=36.94$ ,  $SD=6.16$ ) and personal competence ( $M=36.35$ ,  $SD=7.10$ ).



*Figure 4. Career counselling factors — mean scores with standard deviation.*

**Table 7: Level of Career Counselling**

|                    | Low     | Medium  | High    | M    | SD   |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|------|------|
| Career counselling | (33.5%) | (35.1%) | (31.4%) | 1.98 | .807 |

The table above shows the level of career counselling of university graduates. Responses for career counselling are included with the score that fell within the low, medium and high level of each category. Three hundred and eighty-five university graduates in the current research, 129 (33.5%) were at low level of career counselling, 135(35.1%) were at medium level and 121(31.4%) were at high level. So, it can be concluded that level of career counselling was at medium level in university graduates.

### Level of Career Counselling Attained

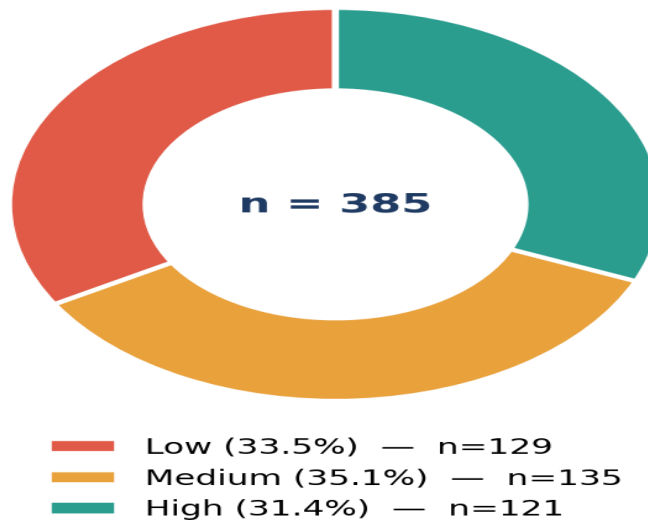


Figure 5. Distribution of graduates across low, medium, and high career counselling levels (n = 385).

#### Research question 3

Is there any statistically significant relationship between career counselling and professional success of university graduates?

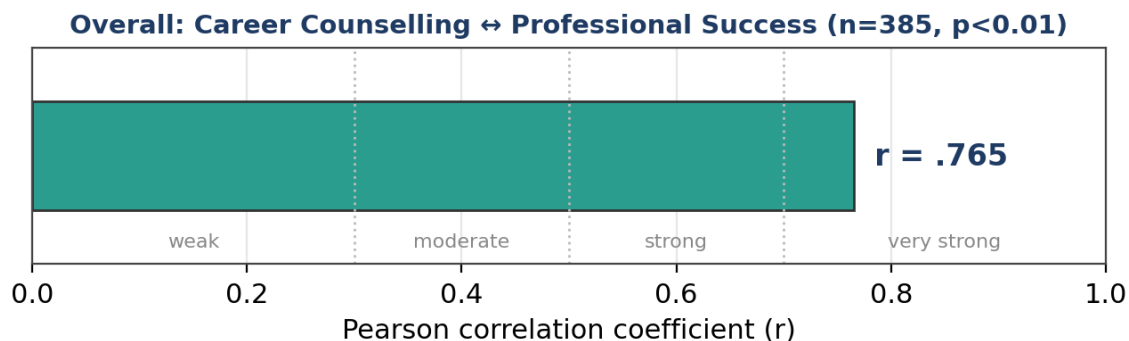
Table 8: Pearson Product moment coefficient of correlation between Career Counselling and Professional Success

|                        | 1      | 2     | 3      | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|------------------------|--------|-------|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Career counselling  | -      |       |        |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Academic competence | .821** | -     |        |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. Social competence   | .872** | .598* | -      |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Personal competence | .861** | .519* | .646** | - |   |   |   |   |   |

|                                          |        |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|------------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>5. Perceived career success scale</b> | .765** | .578* | .693** | .681* | -     |       |       |       |       |
| <b>6. Job success</b>                    | .545** | .569* | .462** | .372* | .741* | -     |       |       |       |
| <b>7. Interpersonal success</b>          | .598** | .416* | .575** | .534* | .785* | .428* | -     |       |       |
| <b>8. Non-organizational success</b>     | .645** | .431* | .639*  | .576* | .761* | .427* | .534* | -     |       |
| <b>9. Hierarchical success</b>           | .616** | .427* | .535*  | .602* | .804* | .465* | .595* | .500* | -     |
| <b>10. Financial success</b>             | .404** | .228* | .328*  | .460* | .587* | .288* | .310* | .329* | .419* |

\*\*0.01 level (2-tailed)

The table above shows the relationship between career counselling and professional success of university graduates and their factors was investigated by Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a strong positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling and professional success ( $r=.765$ ,  $n=385$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) of university graduates of district Lahore.



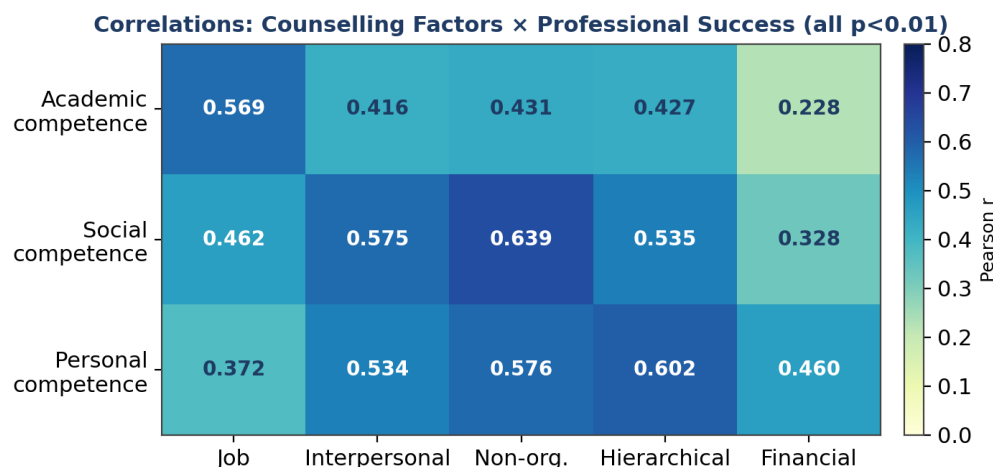
**Figure 6. Overall strength of the career counselling – professional success relationship ( $r = .765$ ).**

There was a strong positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor academic competence and professional success' factor job success ( $r=.569$ ,  $n=385$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). There was a

moderate positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor academic competence and professional success' factor interpersonal success ( $r=.416, n=385, p<0.01$ ). There was a moderate positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor academic competence and professional success' factor non organizational success ( $r=.431, n=385, p<0.01$ ). There was a moderate positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor academic competence and professional success' factor hierarchical success ( $r=.427, n=385, p<0.01$ ). There was a weak positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor academic competence and professional success' factor financial success ( $r=.228, n=385, p<0.01$ ).

There was a moderate positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor social competence and professional success' factor job success ( $r=.462, n=385, p<0.01$ ). There was a strong positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor social competence and professional success' factor interpersonal success ( $r=.575, n=385, p<0.01$ ). There was a strong positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor social competence and professional success' factor non-organizational success ( $r=.639, n=385, p<0.01$ ). There was a strong positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor social competence and professional success' factor hierarchical success ( $r=.535, n=385, p<0.01$ ). There was a moderate positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor social competence and professional success' factor financial success ( $r=.328, n=385, p<0.01$ ).

There was a moderate positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor personal competence and professional success' factor job success ( $r=.372, n=385, p<0.01$ ). There was a strong positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor personal competence and professional success' factor interpersonal success ( $r=.534, n=385, p<0.01$ ). There was a strong positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor personal competence and professional success' factor non-organizational success ( $r=.576, n=385, p<0.01$ ). There was a strong positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor personal competence and professional success' factor hierarchical success ( $r=.602, n=385, p<0.01$ ). There was a moderate positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling's factor personal competence and professional success' factor financial success ( $r=.460, n=385, p<0.01$ ).



**Figure 7. Correlation matrix of counselling factors with professional success dimensions (all  $p < 0.01$ ).**



## FINDINGS

After analysis of data, various findings were identified on the basis of frequencies, standard deviation, and mean by applying inferential statistics with regards to demographics variables.

- The mean and standard deviation of Professional Success' factor Job success ( $M=23.62$ ,  $SD=3.52$ ), was highest among all other factors. The mean and standard deviation of Professional Success' factor Hierarchical success ( $M=14.55$ ,  $SD=2.88$ ), was 2<sup>nd</sup> highest among all other factors. The mean and standard deviation of Professional Success' factor Interpersonal success ( $M=14.41$ ,  $SD=3.05$ ) was 3<sup>rd</sup> highest among all other styles. The mean and standard deviation of Professional Success' factor non-organizational success ( $M=14.25$ ,  $SD=3.00$ ), was 4<sup>th</sup> highest among all other styles. The mean and standard deviation of Professional Success' factor financial success ( $M=11.21$ ,  $SD=2.26$ ) was lowest among all other styles.
- The mean and standard deviation of career counselling's factor academic competence ( $M=46.48$ ,  $SD=6.32$ ) was highest among other factors. The mean and standard deviation of career counselling's factor social competence ( $M=36.94$ ,  $SD=6.16$ ) was 2<sup>nd</sup> highest among other factors. The mean and standard deviation of career counselling's factor personal competence ( $M=36.35$ ,  $SD=7.10$ ) was lowest among other factors. Findings revealed that out of three hundred and eighty-five university graduates in the current research, 129 (33.5%) were at low level of career counselling, 135(35.1%) were at medium level and 121(31.4%) were at high level. So, it can be concluded that level of career counselling was at medium level in university graduates ( $M=1.98$ ,  $SD=.807$ )
- There was a strong positive statistically significant relationship between career counselling and professional success of university graduates ( $r=.765$ ,  $n=385$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

## CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to understand the role of career counselling in the professional success of university graduates in District Lahore. The study revealed that career counselling was received to a certain degree by the university graduates, however the level of the career counselling was not high. This indicates that graduates received some type of career guidance, especially in the area of academic and social development. But there was need for more support in personal development, career decision making, self-understanding and planning for future careers. That implies that the level of career counselling service in the university should be increased and more regular and useful for graduates. The study also measured the performance of university graduates in their professions. It revealed that the graduates were successful in their careers in various domains. They were relatively more pleased with their work accomplishments and work duties. But financial success was not quite as good. This indicates that being professionally successful does not only depend on earning a high income. Successful professional behaviors can also include working well as a team member, building a good working relationship with others, advancing one's career and meeting personal and professional objectives.

The most important conclusion of the study is that career counselling and professional success are closely related. To put it simply, the students who were provided with improved career guidance were more likely to have positive career outcomes. Career counselling can assist people to better understand their capabilities and interests, explore appropriate career choices, establish realistic career objectives, make informed career decisions, and prepare for employment and career transition. It can also facilitate graduates to grasp the needs of the labor market and determine the skills to be developed. The study revealed that career counseling is a vital component of graduates' career development and career success. University, thus, must

offer career counseling services that are available, ongoing and effective. These services should not be restricted to assisting post-secondary students with employment post-graduation rather it should be helping students and graduates to better understand themselves, choose appropriate career paths, strengthen their work skills, make career choices and plan their future development. Graduates can benefit from this by boosting their confidence, preparation and ability to succeed in their careers.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of the present study are consistent with Ahmad et al. (2019) who found that career competencies and career-related resources are important factors in career success. They found that those who have the right career competencies can better manage their careers and attain favorable career outcomes. This reinforces the current finding that people's capacity to manage and develop their careers can be linked to a professional success. The results of the present study also support the results of Coetzee et al. (2023) who identified career related psychological resources, career adaptability and career resilience as important factors for individuals career development and success. They concluded that success in the workplace is not just about financial gains and it is also associated with an individual's flexibility and coping ability in the workplace. University graduates' higher job success in the current study can be attributed to their academic qualification and professional knowledge that enables them to carry out their assigned job duties. They also might gain further skills in managing work duties and problems as a result of work experience. But lower levels of success might have a connection with graduates being in early stages of their careers, lower level starting salaries, competition for employment and disparities in career progression. The results of the present study are similar to the study conducted by Keshf and Khanum (2022) where they studied the career counselling services available in Pakistani universities and found that students needed support in many areas including self-awareness and decision making. They also cited difficulties with limited resources and students' expectations among challenges of career service providers. The researchers highlighted the importance of improving the career services and making it link to the students' academic and professional needs. The results obtained in the present study are consistent with Carvalho et al. (2023) who concluded that career counselling interventions helped university students adapt to their careers, develop professionally and be more employable. They concluded that the career counseling enhances students' preparedness for career life and they motivated to take some active steps for achievement of career objectives. This offers confirmation of the present finding that career counselling is positively related to professional success.

Likewise, the results of the present study were consistent with Gerçek (2024) which found positive relationships between career competencies, career adaptability, self-perceived employability and job-search self-efficacy. The study highlighted the significance of providing career management resources to university students to help them successfully navigate into the labour market. This aligns with the present finding in that career counselling can enable students to acquire career management skills and prepare for future job opportunities. These results also support the results of Wang et al. (2023), which found a career education to be related to career adaptability and career decision-making self-efficacy. They concluded that if students can obtain confidence and resources through career education they are more likely to make an appropriate career decision. This could be the reason that improved career counselling among graduates can lead to improved career success. This is especially significant in the area of university education as academic credentials do not always equip the graduates with enough knowledge on how to re-enter or move in the labour market. Career counselling offers a way to make the transition from the classroom to the workplace by helping graduates to link their knowledge and skills to the professional world.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the present study, the following recommendations were made to improve career counselling and promote the professional success of university graduates in District Lahore.

- Universities should provide opportunities that help graduates improve their professional success, particularly in areas of financial growth, career advancement, interpersonal skills, and professional development. Graduates should be supported in developing the skills and competencies needed to achieve long-term career success.
- Universities should strengthen and regularly provide career counselling services for students and graduates. Special attention should be given to personal competence, including self-awareness, confidence, career decision-making, and career planning, along with academic and social competence.
- Since the study found a strong positive relationship between career counselling and professional success, universities should integrate effective career counselling with academic programmes and professional preparation. Career counselling should help graduates make informed career decisions, identify suitable career opportunities, and prepare for successful professional lives.

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