IJCRT.ORG ISSN : 2320-2882

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

FROM ASSESSMENT TO AWARENESS: A HUMAN-CENTRIC MODEL FOR STUDENT CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Ms Veena Vaishy* Dr. Priya Rajkumar Dr. Richa Chaudhary*****

Counsellor* Head & Assistant Professor** Assistant Professor***

School of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, AURO University, Surat, Gujarat

Abstract: This study proposes a human-centric career development model that introduces a student-driven approach to profiling, learning, and career awareness under structured supervision by academic mentors. The model emphasizes active student participation in understanding personal competencies, work styles, and career aspirations. A mixed-method research design with purposive sampling was adopted. The sample comprised 51 postgraduate students from diverse disciplines, including Business, Journalism and Mass Communication, Information Technology, and related fields. Three standardized assessment tools—the RAISEC Test, Emotional Competency Scale (ECS), and Big Five Personality Test—were administered to all participants. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted, followed by individualized feedback reports shared with students. Both the participants and the primary executors of the model evaluated their experiences to assess the model's effectiveness in enhancing self-awareness regarding preferred work styles and potential career paths. Findings indicate that integrating emotional competency, personality traits, and work-style preferences provides a holistic understanding of student outcomes. The proposed model supports informed career decision-making, facilitates aptitude awareness, and addresses student concerns related to career planning. Overall, the model demonstrates potential as an effective framework for student-centered career guidance and developmental interventions in higher education.

Index Terms: Career Development, Emotional Competency, Personality, Higher Education, Student Centered Approach

I. INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a pivotal role in preparing students not only with academic knowledge but also with the skills and clarity required to navigate an increasingly complex career landscape. As students transition from education to professional life, career awareness becomes essential in helping them understand their strengths, interests, and suitable work environments. Informed career awareness enables students to make purposeful academic and occupational choices, reducing career indecision and related stress. It also fosters self-confidence, adaptability, and long-term career satisfaction. Therefore, integrating structured career awareness initiatives within higher education is crucial for holistic student development and employability readiness.

Career development has emerged as a critical developmental task in higher education, particularly in the context of rapidly changing labor markets, technological advancements, and evolving organizational expectations. Students today are required to make complex career decisions at increasingly early stages of their academic lives, often in the absence of adequate self-awareness, structured guidance, or exposure to realistic career pathways. As higher education institutions strive to prepare students for employability and lifelong career adaptability, the need for effective, student-centered career development models has become more pronounced (Savickas, 2013; Super, 1990).

Traditional career guidance practices in educational settings have largely emphasized information dissemination, aptitude matching, or placement-oriented interventions. While these approaches offer utility, they often remain externally driven and assessment-heavy, providing limited scope for student agency, reflection, and emotional understanding. Such models frequently overlook the multidimensional nature of career development, which encompasses not only skills and interests but also personality traits, emotional competencies, values, and preferred work styles (Brown & Lent, 2019). Consequently, students may experience confusion, anxiety, and dissatisfaction regarding career choices, despite having access to academic resources and professional opportunities.

In recent years, there has been a growing shift toward human-centric and developmental perspectives in career psychology, emphasizing the individual as an active participant in constructing their career path rather than a passive recipient of expert advice. This paradigm highlights self-awareness, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and meaning-making as central components of career development (Savickas et al., 2009). Within this framework, higher education institutions are increasingly recognized as crucial environments for facilitating holistic career exploration under structured academic mentorship.

Personality traits, emotional competencies, and work-style preferences constitute foundational elements of career development and occupational adjustment. Personality theories, particularly the Five-Factor Model, have consistently demonstrated associations between personality traits and career interests, job performance, and work satisfaction (McCrae & Costa, 2008). Traits such as conscientiousness, openness to experience, and emotional stability play significant roles in shaping career behavior and adaptability.

Similarly, emotional competency—often conceptualized within the broader framework of emotional intelligence—has been identified as a critical determinant of career success and well-being. Emotional competencies enable individuals to recognize, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively in personal and professional contexts (Goleman, 1998). In academic and career settings, higher emotional competency is linked to improved decision-making, resilience, interpersonal effectiveness, and leadership potential (Bar-On, 2006).

Work-style preferences, as reflected in vocational interest models such as Holland's RIASEC framework, provide valuable insights into individuals' preferred work environments and activities. Holland's theory posits that congruence between personality types and occupational environments leads to greater satisfaction and stability (Holland, 1997). Integrating vocational interests with personality and emotional competencies allows for a more nuanced understanding of career fit, moving beyond simplistic aptitude matching.

Research indicates that inadequate career self-awareness is associated with career indecision, low self-efficacy, and reduced academic and occupational satisfaction (Betz & Taylor, 2006). Moreover, cultural expectations, parental influence, peer comparison, and societal definitions of success can further complicate the career decision-making process, especially in collectivist contexts such as India (Arulmani, 2014). These factors underscore the necessity for career development interventions that are reflective, contextualized, and responsive to students' psychological and emotional needs.

In higher education settings, emotional competency plays a crucial role in helping students manage academic stress, career uncertainty, and transitional challenges. Studies indicate that students with higher emotional awareness and regulation skills are better equipped to engage in career exploration and cope with ambiguity (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2016). Despite its significance, emotional competency is often underrepresented in traditional career guidance models. Integrating emotional competency assessments with personality and vocational interest measures offers a comprehensive framework for fostering holistic career self-awareness and informed career planning.

Career indecision is a prevalent concern among postgraduate students, often resulting from inadequate self-knowledge, conflicting external expectations, and limited exposure to career alternatives. Gati, Krausz, and Osipow (1996) conceptualized career indecision as a multidimensional construct involving lack of readiness, lack of information, and inconsistent information. Empirical studies have demonstrated that deficits in self-awareness regarding abilities, interests, and personal values significantly contribute to prolonged career indecision and anxiety (Kelly & Lee, 2002).

Research in higher education settings indicates that structured career interventions focusing on self-exploration reduce decisional difficulties and enhance career confidence (Gati & Levin, 2014). Particularly for postgraduate students, who are at a critical transition point between academia and professional life, interventions that emphasize reflective self-assessment and guided interpretation have been found to be more

effective than purely informational approaches. These findings highlight the importance of models that move students from assessment toward awareness and informed decision-making.

A student-driven approach aligns closely with these principles by actively involving learners in understanding their competencies, preferences, and emotional patterns. Research suggests that when students participate actively in career assessment and interpretation, they demonstrate higher engagement, greater self-efficacy, and improved decision-making outcomes (Whiston et al., 2017). Structured supervision by academic mentors further enhances this process by providing guidance, contextual interpretation, and emotional support, thereby bridging the gap between assessment outcomes and real-world application.

Incorporating psychological assessments within a reflective and developmental framework allows students to move beyond surface-level career matching toward deeper self-understanding. However, assessments in isolation may be insufficient or even counterproductive if not accompanied by personalized feedback and guided exploration (Nauta, 2010). Hence, an integrated model that combines standardized tools with mentorship and reflective dialogue holds promise for meaningful career development in higher education settings.

Academic mentors play a pivotal role in this process by contextualizing assessment results, facilitating reflection, and supporting students in translating insights into actionable career plans. Structured mentorship ensures ethical use of assessments, reduces misinterpretation, and fosters a supportive environment for exploration and growth. This collaborative model positions career development as a shared responsibility between students and institutions rather than an isolated service.

Despite the growing emphasis on employability skills and outcome-based education, career guidance in many institutions remains fragmented, optional, or limited to placement-oriented activities. Such approaches may fail to address students' deeper concerns related to identity, purpose, and alignment between personal characteristics and occupational roles. Therefore, there is a pressing need for integrative career development models that embed psychological assessment, guided reflection, and mentorship within the academic ecosystem.

II. RESEARCH METHODLOGY

In response to the identified gaps, the present study proposes and evaluates a human-centric, student-driven career development model implemented under structured academic mentorship. The model integrates standardized assessments of vocational interests (RIASEC), emotional competency, and personality traits to facilitate comprehensive self-awareness among postgraduate students from diverse academic disciplines.

Using a quantitative research design, the study examines students' experiences of participating in the model, the perceived effectiveness of integrated assessment and feedback, and the role of mentorship in enhancing career clarity and confidence. Additionally, feedback from the primary executors of the model provides insights into its practical feasibility and developmental value within higher education settings.

By offering an empirically grounded and contextually relevant framework, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on holistic career development and student-centered guidance practices. The proposed model seeks to bridge the gap between assessment and awareness, enabling students to make informed, reflective, and meaningful career decisions in an increasingly complex professional world.

The sample consisted of 51 postgraduate students from diverse disciplines (Business, Journalism and Mass Communication, Information Technology, and related fields) in a higher education institute. Participants were purposively selected based on availability and enrollment in relevant programs during the 2025 academic year. Three standardized tools—the RIASEC Test (Holland, 1997), Emotional Competency Scale (ECS; Bar-On, 2006), and Big Five Personality Test (McCrae & Costa, 2008)—were administered to all 51 students.

Additionally, quantitative feedback on experiences was collected from a subset of 17 students who underwent psychological profiling (derived from assessment results). Feedback from 13 psychology postgraduate students, who served as primary executors administering the tests and providing individualized feedback reports, was also gathered via Likert-type items.

The study followed a structured, multi-phase implementation under academic mentorship:

1. Assessment Phase: All 51 students completed the RIASEC Test, ECS, and Big Five Personality Test online via a secure platform (Google Forms) during a scheduled workshop. Assessments took approximately 45-60 minutes, with instructions emphasizing honest self-reporting.
2. Feedback and Profiling Phase: Psychology postgraduate students (executors; n=13) generated individualized feedback reports integrating quantitative scores from the three tools. Reports highlighted key patterns in vocational interests, emotional competencies, and personality traits, with mentor-guided interpretations shared in one-on-one sessions (15-20 minutes per student).
3. Evaluation Phase: Post-intervention, 17 profiled students rated their experiences using a custom 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*) covering items such as "The profiling enhanced my self-awareness of career preferences" and "Feedback was actionable for my career planning" (Cronbach's α = 0.965]). Similarly, the 13 executors completed a parallel Likert scale assessing model feasibility (Cronbach's α = 0.949). This indicates that the there is excellent internal consistency of items and they consistently measure the impact of the testing process on both student respondents and student executors of the testing process

Informed consent was secured, and data were anonymized.

Questionnaire	n	Items	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Student Experiences	17	10	0.965	Acceptable
Executor Feedback	13	10	0.949	Acceptable

III. Results and Discussion

3.1 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using **SPSS Version 27**. For the full sample of 51 students, assessment data from the RIASEC, Emotional Competency Scale, and Big Five Personality inventory were examined using descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations. Frequency distributions were inspected to identify dominant RIASEC vocational profiles within the cohort. To explore associations among key psychological variables, Spearman's rho correlations were conducted between personality traits and emotional competency scores, given initial concerns regarding normality.

For the evaluation component involving 17 students and 13 executors, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were computed for all Likert-scale items and composite scores. One-sample t-tests were performed against the neutral midpoint of 3.0 to determine whether perceptions of the career profiling model were significantly positive. Effect sizes were estimated using Cohen's d to assess the magnitude of observed effects. Assumptions of normality were evaluated through skewness and kurtosis values. For students, skewness was -0.98 and kurtosis was -1.68, while for executors, skewness was -0.71 and kurtosis was -0.07. As these values fell within acceptable limits (±2), the use of parametric analyses was justified.

3.2 Stakeholder Perceptions of the Career Profiling Model

Overall, career awareness scores indicated strongly favourable perceptions of the model from both stakeholder groups. Table 1 presents the mean scores, standard deviations, and one-sample t-test results for students and executors.

Table 1. Overall Career Awareness Scores of Students and Executors

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
Students	17	4.20	0.80	5.12	< .001	1.25
Executors	13	4.00	0.70	4.33	< .001	1.10

Students (M = 4.20, SD = 0.80) reported significantly higher-than-neutral career awareness, with a large effect size (d = 1.25). Executors (M = 4.00, SD = 0.70) similarly endorsed the model's feasibility and impact, also demonstrating a large effect (d = 1.10). These findings indicate strong overall acceptance of the model by both stakeholder groups.

3.3 Student Perceptions of Career Profiling Benefits

Students consistently rated the benefits of the career profiling process highly across all measured dimensions. Table 2 summarizes item-wise descriptive statistics for student responses.

Table 2. Student Perceptions of Career Profiling Benefits (n = 17)

Item	Mean	SD
Helped me understand myself	4.12	0.60
Clarity about career paths	4.00	0.79
More aware of my unique strengths	4.24	0.83
Understood areas for improvement	**4.29**	0.77
Understand how my behaviour affects others	4.18	0.73
More confidence in career decisions	4.18	0.81
Connect personal qualities with potential jobs	4.24	0.56
Better able to handle emotions and stress	4.18	0.73
Contributed to overall personal growth	3.94	0.75
Testing was useful in career planning	4.06	0.75

The overall mean across items was 4.13 (SD = 0.25), with a range from 3.94 to 4.29, indicating that responses clustered between "Agree" and "Strongly Agree."

The highest-rated outcomes were related to self-awareness and reflective insight. Students particularly endorsed understanding areas for improvement (M = 4.29, SD = 0.77), awareness of unique strengths (M = 4.24, SD = 0.83), and connecting personal qualities with potential jobs (M = 4.24, SD = 0.56). These results suggest that the integrated assessments effectively facilitated deeper self-understanding relevant to career decision-making.

Items showing comparatively greater variability included awareness of strengths (SD = 0.83), confidence in career decisions (SD = 0.81), and clarity about career paths (SD = 0.79). Although still positively rated, these findings indicate that while students gained insight, they maintained realistic levels of certainty regarding career choices.

These findings reflect a strong and meaningful impact of the intervention on students' self-development. The high overall mean suggests that participants generally experienced the process as beneficial, particularly in enhancing self-awareness and reflective insight. The strong endorsement of understanding strengths, areas for improvement, and linking personal qualities with career options indicates that the assessments successfully supported informed and thoughtful career exploration.

At the same time, the relatively higher variability in confidence and career clarity suggests a healthy and realistic outcome. Rather than fostering overconfidence, the model appears to have encouraged reflective consideration, allowing students to develop insight while still navigating uncertainties about long-term decisions. This balance between awareness and cautious optimism strengthens the credibility and developmental value of the approach.

The present findings are consistent with research emphasizing the role of self-reflection and career adaptability in informed career decision-making.

Savickas (2005), in his Career Construction Theory, proposed that career development is a process of meaning-making through self-reflection. He argued that individuals develop vocational identity by integrating personal strengths, values, and life themes into career choices. The high ratings related to understanding strengths and connecting personal qualities with career options strongly align with this theoretical framework.

Similarly, **Gati, Krausz, and Osipow (1996)** identified that career decision-making difficulties often stem from lack of information about self and occupations. Their work suggests that structured assessment and guided reflection reduce indecisiveness by enhancing self-knowledge. The present findings—especially improved insight alongside realistic levels of certainty—support this perspective, indicating that awareness precedes confident career commitment.

3.4 Student Executor's Perceptions of Model Implementation

Executor feedback revealed exceptionally strong endorsement of the career model's implementation and developmental value. Table 3 presents the item-wise descriptive statistics.

Table 3. Executor Perceptions of Model Implementation Benefits (n = 13)

Item	Mean	SD
Event organization improved work	4.38	0.65
Better communication skills	4.23	1.01
Increased responsibility	4.31	0.63
Time and task management	4.23	0.73
Increased patience	4.23	0.93
Developed leadership	4.15	0.80
Improved ability to cope with pressure	**4.46**	0.78
More empathetic to others' needs	**4.38**	0.77
Improved planning and coordination	4.31	0.63
Professional and personal growth	**4.46**	0.66

The overall mean across items was 4.31 (SD = 0.11), with scores ranging from 4.15 to 4.46, indicating consistent agreement that the model was beneficial.

The highest-rated aspects included improved ability to cope with pressure (M = 4.46, SD = 0.78) and greater professional and personal growth (M = 4.46, SD = 0.66). Executors also highly valued the impact of event organization on work efficiency (M = 4.38, SD = 0.65) and reported increased empathy toward others' needs (M = 4.38, SD = 0.77).

Items with the greatest consensus, reflected in the lowest standard deviations, included increased responsibility (SD = 0.63), improved planning and coordination skills (SD = 0.63), and professional growth (SD = 0.66). The low variability suggests strong shared agreement among executors regarding the positive impact of their involvement in the model.

Taken together, the findings provide converging evidence for the effectiveness and feasibility of the proposed human-centric, student-driven career development model. Both students and executors reported significantly positive experiences, indicating that the model successfully integrated psychological assessment with structured mentorship in a meaningful and impactful way.

The results suggest that the approach enhanced students' self-awareness, reflective thinking, and emotional understanding while supporting informed career decision-making. Simultaneously, the model functioned as a valuable experiential learning platform for student-executors, fostering leadership, communication, planning, and stress-management skills.

The alignment of positive perceptions across two distinct stakeholder groups strengthens the validity and credibility of the model, supporting its potential for broader application and further empirical investigation in career development research and practice.

These findings reflect a remarkably strong and consistent endorsement of the model's impact. The high overall mean, combined with low variability, suggests not only positive outcomes but also shared agreement among participants about its effectiveness. Improvements in coping with pressure, responsibility, planning, empathy, and professional growth indicate that the model moved beyond theoretical exposure to meaningful skill development.

Kolb and Kolb (2005) highlighted that experiential learning enhances reflective thinking, self-awareness, and the integration of theory with practice. Their work demonstrates that structured experiential models significantly improve professional competencies, leadership skills, and decision-making abilities — outcomes consistent with the improvements observed among both students and executors in the current model.

Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) in their Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) emphasized that self-efficacy, personal agency, and guided mastery experiences are central to effective career development. Their model supports the present findings by showing that structured mentorship and skill-based engagement enhance career clarity, confidence, and adaptive coping mechanisms.

Together, these studies provide theoretical and empirical grounding for the effectiveness of a human-centric, student-driven career development approach.

Also, the results highlight a dual-layered benefit: students gained deeper self-awareness and clarity in career decision-making, while executors developed leadership and stress-management competencies through experiential engagement. This convergence of academic structure with psychological insight strengthens the model's feasibility and practical relevance. Overall, the data suggest that the human-centric, student-driven framework is both impactful and sustainable within higher education settings.

IV. Limitations

Despite the strengths of the proposed human-centric, student-driven career development model, certain limitations of the present study must be acknowledged.

First, the sample size of the study was relatively small, comprising 51 postgraduate students. Although the sample included participants from diverse academic disciplines, the limited number restricts the generalizability of the findings to a broader student population. Future studies may benefit from larger samples across multiple institutions to enhance external validity.

Second, the study employed purposive sampling, which, while appropriate for exploratory and developmental research, may introduce selection bias. Participants who volunteered or were selected may have had a pre-existing interest in self-development or career planning, potentially influencing their engagement and responses.

Third, the study relied on standardized self-report assessment tools to measure personality traits, emotional competency, and work-style preferences. Self-report measures are susceptible to social desirability bias, response distortion, and subjective interpretation, which may affect the accuracy of the results despite the standardized nature of the instruments.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMNT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the participating students for their active involvement and openness throughout the study. Appreciation is also extended to the mentors for their guidance and support in implementing the model. Special thanks are due to the institution for providing the necessary resources and an enabling environment for the successful completion of this research.

REFERENCES

[1] Arulmani, G. (2014). *Career psychology in the Indian context*. Springer.

[2] Brown, S. D., & Lent, R. W. (2019). *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (3rd ed.). Wiley.

[3] Di Fabio, A., & Kenny, M. E. (2016). From decent work to decent lives: Positive self and relational management (PS&RM) in the twenty-first century. *Frontiers in Psychology, 7*, 361.

[4] Gati, I., Krausz, M., & Osipow, S. H. (1996). A taxonomy of difficulties in career decision making. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 43*(4), 510–526.

[5] Gati, I., & Levin, N. (2014). Counseling for career decision-making difficulties: Measures and methods. *Career Development Quarterly, 62*(2), 98–113.

[6] Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. Bantam Books.

[7] Holland, J. L. (1997). *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments* (3rd ed.). Psychological Assessment Resources.

[8] Kelly, K. R., & Lee, W. C. (2002). Mapping the domain of career decision problems. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 61*(2), 302–326.

[9] Kolb, A. Y., & Kolb, D. A. (2005). Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 4*(2), 193–212.

[10] Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45*(1), 79–122.

[11] McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (2008). The Five-Factor Theory of personality. In O. P. John et al. (Eds.), *Handbook of personality* (pp. 159–181). Guilford Press.

[12] Nauta, M. M. (2010). Finding the right work: Fit, needs, and values. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling* (pp. 147–166). Wiley.

[13] Savickas, M. L. (2013). Career construction theory and practice. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling* (pp. 147–183). Wiley.

[14] Savickas, M. L., et al. (2009). Life designing: A paradigm for career construction. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75(3), 239–250.

[15] Whiston, S. C., Li, Y., Mitts, N. G., & Wright, L. (2017). Effectiveness of career choice interventions. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 25(4), 593–610.