



Evidence in Action

A K20 Center Research Brief

Investigating the Effects of Career Education Programs on High School Students' Career Development Competencies in Korea

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2023

Introduction

This intervention brief explores the research article "Investigating the Effects of Career Education Programs on High School Students' Career Development Competencies in Korea" by Youngsik Kim and Hojun Lee, published in 2023. The article addresses the critical role of career education during high school years, a transitional phase that significantly impacts lifelong personal development. The research problem focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of career education programs in enhancing students' career development competencies. The objectives are to estimate the causal impact of these programs and examine how their effectiveness varies based on students' post-graduation career plans. The significance of the research lies in its potential to optimize career education by emphasizing firsthand experiences and considering individual career plans.

Methodology

Research Design:

The study employs Difference-in-Differences (DID) and Triple-Difference (DDD) models to estimate the causal effects of career education programs. These models help correct for biased sampling and other confounding factors, leading to more reliable results.

Sample:

The sample consists of 9,090 high school students who participated in both the first and second-year surveys of the Korean Education & Employment Panel II (KEEP II). The balanced panel dataset spans two years, from 2016 to 2017.

Data Analysis:

The study uses DID and DDD methods to analyze the impact of career education programs on three components of career development competency: understanding of work and the world of jobs, career exploration, and career design and preparation. Covariates related to individual, school, and family characteristics are included to control for confounding variables.



Results

The study identifies significant positive impacts of career education programs on high school students' career development competencies:

1. **Understanding of Work and the World of Jobs:** Participation in career clubs, career lectures, career field trips, department experiences, field job experiences, job simulations, and career camps significantly enhances students' understanding of work and the world of jobs.
2. **Career Exploration:** Career counseling, career clubs, career field trips, field job experiences, job simulations, and career camps positively impact students' career exploration competencies.
3. **Career Design and Preparation:** Career psychological tests are positively associated with students' career design and preparation competencies.

The results highlight the effectiveness of career clubs and experiential career programs, emphasizing firsthand engagement and exposure. Traditional career education programs such as career lectures, career psychological tests, career counseling, and career field trips did not show significant associations with career development competencies when explanatory variables were considered.

Application into Practice

To replicate this intervention in a school context, educators can:

1. **Develop Experiential Career Programs:** Design and implement career education programs that provide students with direct opportunities for experiential learning and skill development. Focus on career clubs, field job experiences, job simulations, and career camps.
2. **Tailor Programs to Individual Career Plans:** Provide tailored career education programs based on students' post-graduation plans. Differentiate between programs for college-bound students and those planning to enter the job market.
3. **Enhance Traditional Career Education:** Conduct rigorous evaluations of traditional career education programs and improve their content and delivery methods. Ensure these programs effectively contribute to students' career development competencies.
4. **Collaborate with Community:** Establish a career experiential network that facilitates collaboration between schools, Local Education Agencies, and external institutions. Utilize community-level infrastructure to provide diverse career experiential opportunities.
5. **Allocate Resources:** Ensure Local Education Agencies and the Ministry of Education allocate educational and financial resources to support the development of career experiential infrastructure.



By integrating these strategies, schools can create a dynamic and engaging career education program that supports students' career development and prepares them for their future careers.

Work Cited

Kim, Y., & Lee, H. (2023). Investigating the Effects of Career Education Programs on High School Students' Career Development Competencies in Korea. *Sustainability*, 15(18), 13970.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/su151813970>