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Perspective on career assessment tools for evaluating students with specific learning disabilities

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Abstract

Purpose - The purpose of this research was to examine career assessment tools for evaluating students with specific learning disabilities (SLDs).

Method - The paper adopted a narrative literature review of research papers connected to assessment tools for SLD students. Among the databases looked at were Pubmed, Google Scholar, Index Copernicus, and PsycINFO.

Result - The results emphasize the need for assessment tools to take certain domains of difficulty into consideration when evaluating the interests and skills of students with SLDs and profiling the learning characteristics linked with the individual learning impairment also offers useful information for job preparation.

Implication – Students with SLDs typically have limited career options so it would be crucial to consider career evaluation as part of the career planning and transitioning process for this group.

Originality - This research reinforces the significance of employing career assessment tools for the evaluation of persons with SLDs in the process of career transition.

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Abstrak

Tujuan - Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji alat asesmen karir untuk mengevaluasi siswa dengan ketidakmampuan belaiar spesifik (SLD).

Metode - Makalah ini menggunakan tinjauan literatur naratif terhadap makalah penelitian yang berhubungan dengan alat penilaian untuk siswa SLD. Di antara basis data yang ditinjau adalah Pubmed, Google Scholar, Index Copernicus, dan PsycINFO.

Hasil - Hasil penelitian menekankan perlunya alat asesmen untuk mempertimbangkan domain kesulitan tertentu ketika mengevaluasi minat dan keterampilan siswa dengan SLD dan membuat profil karakteristik pembelajaran yang terkait dengan gangguan belajar individu juga menawarkan informasi yang berguna untuk persiapan kerja.

Implikasi - Siswa dengan SLD biasanya memiliki pilihan karir yang terbatas, sehingga akan sangat penting untuk mempertimbangkan evaluasi karir sebagai bagian dari perencanaan karir dan proses transisi untuk kelompok ini.

Keaslian - Penelitian ini memperkuat pentingnya penggunaan alat asesmen karir untuk mengevaluasi siswa dengan SLD dalam proses transisi karir.

Introduction

All individuals benefit from work in a variety of ways, including financial security, the chance to build connections, a boost of a sense of purpose in life, as well as a sense of good self-esteem. In fact, people frequently base their identities on their professions (Davies, Stock, Davies, & Wehmeyer, 2018). Carpinelli, Bruno, and Savarese (2021) found that individuals with specific learning disabilities (SLDs) were more predisposed to being jobless and earning less income. It is important to emphasize that some students with SLDs sometimes appear to have no disabilities at all to most people, including potential employers (Madaus, Gerber, & Price, 2008; McKim, 2012). Specialists in vocational rehabilitation have prioritized giving individuals with SLDs the chance to select the preferences that would determine their future pathways (Hall, Morgan, & Salzberg, 2014). According to Ross (2011), the vast majority of jobs in our culture need verbal or written interactions. This implies that we must be able to effectively communicate with coworkers, peers, the general public, and, most importantly, superiors in the workplace. Workplace communication hurdles hinder the effectiveness of these exchanges, affecting job performance, particularly for persons with SLDs.

Individuals with SLDs typically have limited career options (Wehmeyer, 2005). Most individuals with SLDs possess very little experience when it comes to career selections (Iacomini, Berardo, Cavallini & Dipace, 2021). Knowing about a particular profession can assist students, especially those with SLDs, in making a seamless transition after graduation, as Abdullah and Yasin (2014) pointed out. In order for students to acquire the necessary concepts and inspirations, they should be informed about the responsibilities of businesses and educational institutions (Eseadi, 2023). Additionally, jobs should be thoroughly explained to students with SLDs, along with any difficulties they could have and potential solutions. Knowledge of the numerous business opportunities available also influences how ambitious a person can be in their professional life. Knowledge and aspirations for the future, according to Charney and Libecap (2000), are correlated in a positive way. Similar arguments were made by Othman and Ishak (2009) and Evans and Leighton (2007) that knowledge is crucial for career accomplishment and that it forms the basis of all successful occupations. As a result, career assessments are necessary in order to help students with SLDs successfully connect with employers.

The objective of this investigation is to examine career assessment tools that can be used to evaluate students who have specific learning disabilities based on earlier studies. An individual's career assessment helps to determine their strengths, which may boost their chances of success at work; weaknesses, which might jeopardize their prospects; and ways to overcome these weaknesses (Morgan, 2008). To meet their needs and help them attain their full potential during career transitioning, they require specific services, such as career evaluation services. As a result, people with SLDs need to do more than simply plan and research their careers. They also need to evaluate those careers to see how wellequipped they are for certain jobs. However, they can only do this effectively and successfully through the assistance of career counselling and transition practitioners. To this end, this study emphasizes the need for career counsellors to employ career assessment tools for the evaluation of students with SLDs during career transitioning. The study provides a preliminary understanding and collation of career assessment tools used to assist individuals with SLDs and summarizes the findings of studies focused on this topic.

Research Methods

A narrative-integrative technique for literature review was used in this study. While conducting the literature research for this research paper, the researchers looked for published works that only discussed empirical studies of assessment methods for evaluating students with SLDs. Among the databases looked at were Pubmed, Google Scholar, Index Copernicus, and PsycINFO. The authors looked for, evaluated, picked, combined, and narrated both qualitative and quantitative articles and resources that had been published in this area. The authors restricted their search to the years 2000 through 2022. Each report contained a brief discussion of the research objectives, research methods, assessment tools investigated, and results.

Results and Discussion

Conceptualizing career assessment and its relevance to students with SLDs

The majority of educational systems place a strong emphasis on a student's capacity for reading, comprehension, and knowledge expression in language and writing. As a result, for students with SLDs, academic underachievement frequently becomes a key concern. Engaging these students in quality learning and skill acquisition for life job transition, regardless of their neurodevelopmental status, requires a full grasp of and accurate use of suitable career assessment tools in evaluating them

Contextually, assessment refers to a technique for judging how well a student has mastered a particular behavior and how often they engage in activities that demonstrate newly learned abilities (Oloruntegbe, 2011). The educational system, including teaching, learning, and job preparation, heavily relies on assessment. It is crucial to keep in mind that the purpose of student evaluations is to gather pertinent and important data regarding their performance, progress, and interests as well as to spot any issues, including SLDs (Bennett, Gardner, & Rizzi, 2014). Teachers can consider the information they have gathered to adjust and customize their instruction and career mentorship in order to provide a positive and secure

learning environment for all students, including those with SLDs (Neild & Clark, 2020). Career assessment is a significant activity in career counselling for students with SLD. The difficulties that these students face in career counselling differ from those faced by their peers with typical development (Nag, 2011) such as in the aspect of job placement (Aravind & Nag, 2013; Clark, Konrad, & Test, 2018). Counsellors must be knowledgeable enough to comprehend the difficulties faced by young adults with SLDs if they are to address them properly. Research has revealed that a lot of individuals with SLDs exhibit resentment because their perception is that formal education treated them poorly or misunderstood them (Boulet et al., 2011). If counsellors want to gain the confidence necessary for effective therapy, they cannot afford to misunderstand this group of learners.

For a student with SLD, discovering their potential may be a liberating experience. Knowing one's skills and being able to find occupations that fit one's strengths might help one regain confidence (Aravind & Nag, 2013). Given the burden of SLD, one may need to evaluate the practicality of jobs involving a great deal of language use realistically. Success in fields like journalism, law, or the social sciences, for instance, depends a lot on a person's capacity to put thoughts into words and communicate them verbally or in writing. By having a clear knowledge of the kind and degree of the child's SLD, the counsellor can examine the viability of such vocations.

Career assessment is a crucial component of most types of career counselling and tries to advance understanding of individual interests and skills. A career-related assessment is helpful for students with SLDs because it fosters self-awareness, which then boosts their sense of self-determination. Additionally, when evaluating students with SLDs, particularly for career transitions, a successful career assessment begins with teachers and career counsellors gathering sufficient background information about their students to pick appropriate activities, interpret their communicative and cognitive behaviors, and collect accurate information for the career assessment. To assist in this process, an "activity inventory" can be completed (Beukelman & Mirenda 2013). With a greater grasp of their functional vision and other abilities in relation to career transitions, the teacher will be able to better support the student. Bornman and Heard (2020)

stated that a teacher's planned duties ought to include routine team meetings since the learner's assistance for job transition and further education will benefit from the team members' perspectives.

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Career counsellors are required to carry out a variety of assessments in order to learn more about persons with SLDs and decide how best to support them as they change career (Firkola, 2021). Career assessments are therefore an essential initial step for students making the transition from college to the workforce. These assessments may aid them in learning more about themselves, fostering stronger relationships with others, capitalizing on their strengths, identifying their weaknesses, and better preparing for their future career path. The goal of career assessment should include providing the students with ideas and recommendations they should consider implementing in order to attain their career objectives. Frank Parsons is credited with using career assessments for the first time (Parsons, 1909). Parsons promoted systematic evaluation to find candidates for employment brought forth by the Industrial Revolution. Since then, a variety of tools have been developed to evaluate people's interests, talents, demands, and professional maturity, among other characteristics.

Constructs to be considered during career assessment of students with SLDs

Career assessment may be a helpful tool for inspiring ideas and recognizing the possessed and needed talents that may lead to self-understanding towards a chosen career, whether a person with SLDs is just starting out in their employment or wants to change jobs. As Aravind and Nag (2013) pointed out, self-understanding is a crucial element of career counselling. Interests, aptitudes, personalities, social cognitions, and ideas and beliefs related to work are some of the characteristics that are regularly analyzed. It is also crucial to remember that, when working with students who have SLDs, the timing of the assessment is crucial (Nag & Snowling, 2012). In order to comprehend the evolving profile of the SLD and its implications for career guidance, periodic evaluation is required. People with expertise in audiology, psychology, speech and language pathology, are often those who evaluate children for SLDs. They try to determine what prevents a child

from achieving academic and vocational success by performing a number of evaluations and interviews (Logsdon, 2020). A number of components must be evaluated in order to diagnose a SLD and determine the best career match. While conducting a career assessment for students with SLDs, in addition to thinking about work-related thoughts and beliefs, assessors should look out for common constructs like interests, aptitudes, values, personalities, and social cognitions. Depending on the assessor's preferences and the student's professional needs, other constructs could also be evaluated (Roessler, 2009).

Interests: The focus of interests is on the things we "enjoy" or "prefer." Different methodologies have been used to approach and research interests. "Motivations that influence life decisions" is one way to define interests (Dik & Hansen, 2008). Individuals in particular jobs have a distinct set of interests from those in other jobs (Cohen, 2017). Holland notes that personality type is an influencer of an individual's professional interests (Gottfredson, Jones, & Holland, 1993).

Aptitudes: The capacity to perform things now and the potential to do things in the future if given the chance to learn are both measured by aptitude. Aptitude testing has advantages such as helping clients identify their potential, inspiring and motivating them, helping them establish realistic objectives, and choosing the right vocation. According to Firkola (2021), some of the key competencies include business, clerical, logic, mechanical, numerical, and social. Arulmani (2014) summarizes the research on aptitudes and abilities by saying that aptitudes measure an individual's chances of success in performing a certain task (emphasis in original), while abilities describe an individual's innate capabilities and capacity to excel at that task.

Values: Values use words like "important" or "motive," and frequently require a ranking of the possibilities. It is crucial to strike a balance between needs and values. Few people are able to discover a work that truly fulfills them. Individuals with SLDs must understand what they are prepared to give up and, perhaps more crucially, what they are not.

Personality: Understanding one's personality, usually referred to as traits is a crucial factor in influencing one's happiness and success in a profession. People vary fundamentally from one another (Firkola, 2021). They have diverse interests, goals, aims, values, drives, and instincts, and they have various wants and desires. Even while everyone has the same core instincts that drive them from within, according to Jung, people are fundamentally different from one another. There is no superior or inferior instinct. Our preference for how we "function" is what matters. We may be "typed" by our choice for a certain "function," which is one of our defining characteristics (Jung, 2014).

A person might not necessarily have an interest in every skill they possess. However, a person's potential is the point at which their interests and aptitudes overlap, and Arulmani (2014) refers to this intersection as the person's profile. A person could be considered to have a high potential for activities involving numbers, for instance, if they enjoy working with numbers and are proficient in mathematical computations. Within this framework, career evaluation tries to properly and compassionately construct a person's profile (Ackerman & Beier, 2003; Aravind & Nag, 2013).

Career assessment tools for evaluating students with SLDs

Education aims to improve the quality of life of students by equipping them with knowledge and skills. To achieve this, students are assessed by the teachers to determine their strengths, weaknesses, and skills, plan instruction, monitor their progress, adjust instruction, and assess their learning using a variety of assessment tools. With the assessments of student learning, policymakers, administrators, educators, and parents can determine a student's performance in relation to learning objectives as well as the extent to which improvement goals are being met (OECD, 2012).

Teachers can monitor their student's progress and determine if they fully comprehend the subject matter by using assessment tools. Adams and Toyin (2012) assert that effective use of a number of assessment tools is required in order to perform a thorough review. Assessment tools are measures used to look at a student's aptitudes, competencies, and fluency in a particular subject. According to

Neild and Clark (2020), an assessment tool is a technique for collating data in order to determine how much knowledge a person has and whether or not that knowledge fits into the overall framework. Employing career evaluation tools enables educators and career counsellors to make well-informed decisions about how to enhance students' learning and skill acquisition. The following are some of the career evaluation techniques for students with SLDs covered in this research paper:

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Observational Record: The observation record's goals are to pinpoint each child's needs and abilities as well as to chart their development over the course of their academic lives and transition into the workforce. Teachers and career counsellors may also use this record to assess their roles as learning role models.

Intelligence Tests: The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, and the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Intelligence Scale are among the most frequently utilised intelligence tests to diagnose SLD. In addition, the Differential Abilities Scales, the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test, and the Woodcock-Johnson Test of Cognitive Abilities are some of the most frequently administered tests. The results of these tests can be used to identify a person's strengths and weaknesses. Schools can utilise the information gathered to provide specialized support to the students (Logsdon, 2020).

Achievement Tests: The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT), the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, and the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Accomplishment (WJ) are common achievement tests used in the identification of SLDs. In these tests, the emphasis is placed on reading, writing, and arithmetic(Logsdon, 2020).

Career Test: Career fitter, a 10-minute, 60-question job test that offers a free report that emphasizes personality characteristics and prospective career matches, is one of the career test tools that are accessible to students with SLDs (CERIC, 2022).

Career Structured Interviews: Despite the fact that they take a lot of time, structured interviews are good when there is a need to ask a student specific questions about their intended vocation and to provide time for unforeseen topics

or ideas to come up. Most often, this assessment is used as part of career interventions for students with SLDs.

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Career Survey Scales: A well-designed survey might offer insightful information on the opinions and experiences of students. In order to identify career clusters that suit their preferences, students with SLDs can evaluate the activities they like, the qualities they value in others, and the academic courses they appreciate. It takes between five and ten minutes to complete. Well-crafted survey questions can provide crucial information on the students' perspectives and experiences.

Visual Motor Integration Tests: Two popular tests in this category are the Developmental Test of Visual Motor Integration and Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test. These tests are used based on the notion that children's brains may function effectively if their visual signals are linked to motor coordination based on these tests' results. Those who struggle to integrate their visual and motor abilities will have difficulty learning to write or draw effectively without specialized assistance (Logsdon, 2020).

Language Tests: A number of language tests can be utilised to diagnose SLDs, such as the Test of Language Development, the Goldman Fristoe Test of Articulation, and the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals. Children are tested on their ability to recognize written and spoken language, as well as on their capability to orally provide responses to questions and prompts(Logsdon, 2020).

Career Interest Inventories: In an effort to find a match between their interests and probable career routes, people can ascertain their interests using interest inventories. This type of evaluation is meant to help individual with SLDs match their skills and interests to positions that are similar to theirs. It could help them start thinking about how their personality will fit into various jobs and careers. Many students with SLDs find that interest inventories help them navigate through their possible interests.

Career Values Test: Compared to other tests one may have previously completed, the career values test is unique. The career values test employs "cards" containing comments regarding various elements of employment in place of

questions. The students are required to read the statements on each card about their ideal work, or the kind of employment they would most want to have, then arrange the cards into groups depending on how significant they feel each statement is to them.

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Career Checklist: This checklist covers a variety of indicators that may be used to identify whether a child with SLD has the required abilities, characteristics, talents, and skills to succeed in the chosen vocation.

Studies on career assessment tools for evaluating students with SLDs

Transitions from one career to another have become an integral part of professional growth as people move between occupations, organizations, and nations (Cawthon, 2008; Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). Various studies have examined the evaluation techniques for assessing individuals during their transition from the school to workplace by Billard et al, (2021), Yeatman et al, (2021), Walsh et al (2019), Vidyadharan et al, (2017), Sideridis (2016), ElSaheli-Elhage et al (2016), Hall et al (2014), Dipeolu et al (2012), Schimmel (2008), Morgan (2008), Kasler et al (2007), Mattie, (2000). When it comes to how much evaluation tools assist students with SLDs in transitioning into new occupations, study findings are mixed. It can be inferred that among the assessment tools used in the studies examined are interest surveys, researcher-made tests, reference tests, self-directed search, personality questionnaires, job preference assessments, and job matching tests, online-based career tests, ability tests, interviews, and observation scales.

In most of the studies, the assessment tools used to assess participants' work preferences are effective. Additionally, career counsellors, vocational rehabilitation specialists, or instructors conducted most of the evaluation and job-matching procedures. In the majority of the studies, participants with SLDs were diagnosed primarily with reading problems, which were less frequently associated with writing and arithmetic difficulties. Additionally, results showed that most assessments were much more challenging for students with SLDs than for normal students, as predicted while examining the degree of difficulty of the majority of the assessment instruments utilized in the evaluated studies. A negative

motivating message, or ought avoidance for the SLDs group, made the difference more pronounced.

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Various studies shows that in some studies, participants were assigned to either vocational subject areas or post-high school transition programmes, while others were hired for part-time shifts in supported employment. While few were high school students, others were volunteers, jobless individuals with less than a year of work experience, or participants in vocational rehabilitation institutes. This suggests that, particularly for students with SLDs, having a solid understanding of a particular vocation is essential throughout career transition. It is also worth noting from the table that some of the research participants in the various studies examined were high schoolers. Finally, it was shown that there have been remarkably few studies, notably on tools for assessing students with SLDs for careers. As a result, it is suggested that further research be directed toward various career assessment techniques for evaluating students with SLDs so as to improve the existing literature and foster the provision of necessary career transition assistance to students with SLDs. Furthermore, career evaluation of students with SLDs should be viewed as a broad problem in which all stakeholders are concerned about a student's achievement as well as their capacity to navigate through their desired career route.

Conclusion

This research paper looked at a number of research studies on career assessment tools for students with SLDs. This research paper emphasizes the need for assessment tools to take certain domains of difficulty into consideration when evaluating the interests and skills of students with SLDs. Profiling the learning characteristics linked with the individual learning impairment also offers useful information for job preparation. Evaluations are advantageous to persons with SLDs, especially those who find it difficult to interact and communicate with others.

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