

# Career development for students at Algonquin College of Kuwait

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore students' opinions and perspectives regarding career development and evaluation using focus group interviews at Algonquin College of Kuwait from last semester. The focus group interview was conducted with five students. The results indicated that the teachers provided Knowledge and information in supporting the career development of students, shared their personal experiences with the subject, and planned activities at the College to assist and secure knowledge and information. Additionally, each student has their own objectives, such as business management. However, some students were exclusively interested in entrepreneurship. While some students want to focus on completing their degree, others want to start their own businesses as their professional objective. In order for the student to gain career experience, the students are taught at the university some subjects that help them gain knowledge in their future job for example, when the students are in the foundation, they learn some of the courses like writing skills, reading skills, and grammar. Also, these courses help the student to improve their skills before moving to the major to which they belong.

**Keywords:** Career development, Students, Algonquin College, Kuwait.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Finding a job after graduation can be difficult, as it takes the average college graduate three to six months to secure employment after graduation (Park & Kim, 2020). Graduates from colleges and universities depart with a degree in hand and a passion for the career they wish to pursue (Park & Kim, 2020). However, when people begin looking for work seriously, things may not always go as expected in terms of starting their careers (Okolie et al., 2020). Most Kuwaiti high school graduates find it challenging to understand their interests, aptitudes, and values due to the entrance exam-oriented academic environments, despite the fact that college admission is a significant decision with career implications that typically require high school graduates to commit to a 4-year course of studies before seeking careers (Park & Kim, 2020). As a result, young adults frequently choose institutions and majors based on recommendations from their professors and families as well as their scores on entrance exams (Burnette et al., 2020).

Recent research has shed light on career-related decision-making processes and related challenges faced by high-school students in light of the growing importance of career education (Seals, 2021). However, there is limited study on forecasting the factors that influence high school graduates' decisions on attending college as a first step in deciding their career (Park & Kim, 2020). Depending on how many times a prospective student tries to enroll in a course at a certain university, these factors may change (Limberg et al., 2021). Therefore, the current study takes into account this dependence on Kuwait's student population. We specifically distinguish between new admissions and readmissions because it is important to recognize variations in the factors that influence students' enrollment decisions. In order to better understand how to plan for and advance your career, this study examines the variables that have an impact on both first-time enrollees and readmission students' decisions.

To improve students' career development, which includes an interest in the area as well as persistence and performance, we need empirically supported and theoretically driven solutions. In this study, we seek to explore students' opinions and perspectives regarding career development and evaluation using focus group interviews at Algonquin College of Kuwait from last semester.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Students make up stories about what they want to be when they grow up. Ideas are produced, tested, and then abandoned. We are thinking about new options. These thoughts may grow more serious as we approach adulthood and make choices about our post-secondary education, internships, and first jobs (Gülsen, Seçim, & Savickas, 2021). As a result, career growth begins when an individual enters the workforce and may not truly finish until retirement (Masduki et al., 2022). Many alternatives can be overwhelming for some people during the career development process. However, career exploration is a crucial step in the process of finding a job. Gungle (2022) asserts that there are two approaches to exploring your profession options: (1) Be flexible while seeking out chances to try new things, and (2) Keep in mind that a career path doesn't have to be straight-line. Therefore, it can be challenging to prepare for a job transition; as a result, there may be forward movement followed by backward movement. The key is to go closer to the line of work that you truly enjoy (Rice, Hooley & Crebbin, 2022).

According to Ali, Mahmood, and Mehreen (2019), career development is the ongoing process of acquiring new abilities, discovering meaning in your work, and moving forward in your career. Though it frequently does, career development is not the same as the development of particular talents. For instance, a career counselor can suggest that you attend workshops specific to your sector of interest (Thedja & Adiputra, 2023). Additionally, career development is distinct from career growth, which focuses more on your overall professional vision. You must advance your career by acquiring fresh experiences and competencies in order to meet your career growth objectives (Srimulatsih, 2021). You may find that setting one or two sensible goals for yourself will make you happier since achieving our goals activates our bodies' reward mechanisms (Utarindasari & Kumala, 2023).

On the other hand, Without the backing of trustworthy human resources, businesses cannot rely entirely on the sophistication of current infrastructure and technology (Aldoghan et al., 2022). The recruitment process, employee selection, classification, and placement based on abilities, expertise, and skills, as well as career development, are the first steps in creating trustworthy human resources for a company. Every employee expects career development to inspire them to perform well at work (Aburumman, Omar & Barhem, 2023). According to Niati, Siregar, and Prayoga (2021), career development is a continual process in which the individual uses personal initiative to achieve the objective of personalized career planning and organizational requirements. In order to obtain the desired career, career development is a process that improves an individual's employability (Niati, Siregar, & Prayoga, 2021). Career development includes giving employees additional responsibility and showing them that their efforts are valued, in addition to giving them the opportunity to further their careers (Salleh et al., 2020).

Training influences career advancement in addition to organizational elements such as prizes granted by the organization itself (Niati, Siregar & Prayoga, 2021). Employee training is a procedure that imparts specific knowledge, abilities, and attitudes to help workers perform their duties more competently and in compliance with workplace standards (Zamanan et al., 2020). Holding a training program in which the implemented program is developed in accordance with the needs of the firm is one technique to improve the performance possessed by personnel in the company (Karim et al., 2021). One of the most crucial elements of an employee's professional development is training. The results of earlier research by Saranani (2015), who discovered that training has an effect that is directly proportional to career advancement, provide proof for this. This is consistent with Candra (2016) study, which discovered that training had a favorable and significant impact on career advancement.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore students' opinions and perspectives regarding career development and evaluation using focus group interviews at Algonquin College of Kuwait from last semester. 13 students were willing to participate in the focus group interview but from the 13 only 5 were interviewed because (Salleh et al. (2020) recommended that the focus group interviews should only consist between 4 to 6 respondents. The focus group interview was conducted outside campus

hours and was conducted in a meeting room in a classroom. The interview consisted of open-ended questions that allowed a discussion for clarification. The interview was 1 hour and 35 minutes long. The students that were part of this focus group interview gave their permission for the interview to be recorded and field notes were also taken.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

Braun and Clarke (2006) described this method of thematic analysis as a focus group interview analysis since no structure has been given that describes the types of qualitative analysis techniques for a focus group interview. Encoding qualitative information is a process in thematic analysis. Thematic analysis touches on a method that includes identification, analysis, and reporting patterns inside the data. (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data collected from the focus group interview was recorded and then reread for familiarization. For a better understanding of the data given in the interview, the recording of the interview was played out before typing it out. Afterward, the data was coded using NVivo software. Nodes based on these initial themes were created using the data collected. Afterward, using the nodes created, data was coded based on them. The codes, nodes, and themes were reviewed efficiently and refined to make sure that they mirror that study. Afterward, with the objective of the study in mind, analysis and interpretation were made. Making sure that a focus group is a single unit of analysis, instead of seeing them as individuals in a group. The points below are interpretation and analysis of the focus group interview based on their responses in line with the objective of the study.

##### **Q1. Please explain what cognition (e.g., Knowledge and information) teachers provide in supporting your career development?**

The interview results show that these items were provided by the instructors and give their personal experiences in the matter and there were organized events by the College given by an organization to help secure knowledge and information. Outside entrepreneurs have also been invited to share their experiences. Some existing programs were given by the instructors that already existed.

##### **Q2. Why did you choose BME (Business – Management and Entrepreneurship) as a major? What are your career goals?**

The interview findings show that each of these factors is quite important. Each student's goal has their own agenda, for example, business management. On the other hand, some students were interested in entrepreneurship only. Some of the student's career goals are opening their own business, while others want to focus on getting their degree.

##### **Q3. What was your least favorite BME class? Why?**

The result of the interview indicated that the students were least interested in "Project Management", because the subject is too complicated and has a lot of information to cover and it overwhelms them. The other subject that was their least favorite is "Skills Transmittable to Business", they said that the information gathered from this subject was irrelevant to the career they chose.

##### **Q4. What was the most useful piece of career information you received about career development?**

The results of the interview show that there are so many problems to solve. There are debates and competitions on developing new ideas and projects, and studies show that these competitions and projects help to evolve and teach students new techniques and also develop any skills that they have or lack.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore students' opinions and perspectives regarding career development and evaluation using focus group interviews at Algonquin College of Kuwait from last semester. The focus group interview was conducted with five students. Generally, a person's employability is increased through career development, which also aids in the pursuit of their dream career. To provide each of them with a position they are happy with and enable them to perform better, employers must ensure that their employees have an appropriate amount of work experience. As a result, every employee needs to have the opportunity to progress their careers and abilities while also being held responsible for generating the greatest results for the company. Career development is a workplace activity that assists employees in making plans for their future careers within the company. Employers can use career development to maintain and boost employee productivity as well as to recruit employees and help them reach their full potential.

The results of the interviews reveal that the teachers provided Knowledge and information in supporting the career development of students, shared their personal experiences with the subject, and planned activities at the College to assist and secure knowledge and information. Additionally, outside business owners were invited to discuss their experiences. The teachers that already existed taught some of the programs that were already in place. Also, the results of the interviews demonstrate how significant each of these elements is. Each student has their own objectives, such as business management. However, some students were exclusively interested in entrepreneurship. While some students want to focus on completing their degree, others want to start their own businesses as their professional objective.

The least favorite BME class, with results we have from the interview we did in the past few days, shows that the least favorite BME class is "Project Management". Why is that?? Because project management is way more complicated for most of the students here and the information that has been presented and has to be covered is way too much for them to understand. The second least favorite subject is "Skills Transmittable to Business" their response was that the information that has been presented to them was not connected with the career they chose. the most useful piece of career information you received about career development, The results from the interview that we did shows that there are a lot of problems that need to be solved as soon as possible. There are opposing arguments and competition about developing new ideas and projects. There are studies that show that these projects and competitions help to teach students new techniques and develop their skills.

Finally, In order for the student to gain career experience, the students are taught at the university some subjects that help them gain knowledge in their future job for example, when the students in the foundation they learn some of the courses like writing skills, reading skills, and grammar. Also, these courses help the students to improve their skills before moving to the major to which they belong. After the students finish the foundation stage, they will be moved to their major like BME. BME students are taught by the university some courses that help them develop their skills for their future job and how they will run their business in the job.

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