



Effectiveness of Career Counseling Programs in Enhancing Career Awareness Among Students of Al-Karak University College: A Field Study

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This research investigates whether career counseling programs improve career awareness levels for students enrolled at Al-Karak University College. The research addressed the insufficiently available localized research about structured career guidance in Jordanian technical colleges because literature showed this as a missing aspect. **Methodology:** The sample comprised 250 randomly chosen students including males and females, who attended various departments at Al-Karak University College. A structured questionnaire measured their understanding of careers before and after the career counseling programs. Descriptive and inferential statistical evaluations used the SPSS to analyze the quantitative data. **Findings:** The implementation of career counseling programs produced meaningful positive effects on student career understanding statistics. After receiving career counseling sessions, students achieved better comprehension regarding their career potentials and education systems with goal-setting capabilities. **Implications for Research and Practice:** Academic and career decision-making becomes more successful when college institutions implement structured career counseling programs for their students. The study

demonstrates that institutions must invest and endorse both professional counseling services and career development programs for students.

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Introduction

The importance of professional career counseling has increased substantially because the modern job market has become more complex while higher education standards have changed. Students depend on career counseling programs to identify their aptitudes while learning about career choices so they can make purposeful academic and career choices.

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Around the globe, institutions of learning have incorporated career guidance services in their student support structures to appreciate the role played in increasing career preparedness and diminishing academic-to-work transition gaps. In all the research conducted, it has been found that students with structured career counseling have greater self-efficacy, motivation, and clarity of mind in career decision making.

Globally, there is massive push for the career guidance aspect in higher learning institutions, specifically within technical and vocational institutions. However, owing to the scarcity and inaccessibility of career planning guidance, students in institutions are likely to encounter special barriers such as low awareness on emerging career patterns and poor linkages between their educational programmes and the labor market opportunities. As a consequence, these students often drop out from academics, miss an alignment with needs of the working force, and have poor career progression after graduation. It is therefore motivated by the need to bridge this research gap and establish context specific evidence on impact of career counseling on students' awareness and development.

The worldwide appreciation of career counseling practices exists without enough empirical studies conducted in the Arab world including Jordan when evaluating their effects on college students. This is due to the insufficient access to formal career counselling services in the Arab world, including Jordan universities. There is a high level of scarcity of structured ways to evaluate aptitudes, to discover the area of career or professional advice specific for the job market of a given area. This lack of adequate career planning guidance at Jordanian universities and colleges results in students demonstrating academic failure while showing low motivation and poor matches between their education and labor market needs. Local practice requires additional context-based studies because existing research lacks sufficient evaluations of career counseling interventions.

This study is based on the premise that the educational goals of students at Al-Karak University College experience specific challenges when they aim to connect their training to available occupational pathways. The current research, therefore, fills an informational void through an assessment of career counseling programs that enhance career awareness for Al-Karak University College students. The research investigates the effects of organized career advising through the study of a select university student population to establish how well such guidance will help students comprehend their career paths. For this purpose, the study framed a few objectives: To measure the career awareness recognition of students enrolled at Al-Karak University College; to assess how well career counseling programs help students develop their career awareness abilities; and to evaluate career awareness differences that may arise from student gender along with academic year and department.

To achieve these objectives, the study was guided by these research questions: (1) What level of career awareness do the students attending Al-Karak University College demonstrate? (2) Does student career awareness rates evolve after receiving career counseling programs? (3) Do demographic factors such as gender or academic major influence career awareness levels among the student population at Al-Karak University College? This study's findings would generate new avenues for the implementation of customized career counselling programs. The instructors and government decision-makers and educational counselors would also gain useful insights about how to serve students in technical and vocational educational institutions.

Literature Review

Career guidance becomes a keystone of education development giving students the back up to shape their academic and professional objective in a more complex and competitive job market. In settings such as Jordan with students that more often than not struggle to make capitalist sense of vocational realities, as a result of structural and cultural obstacles in pursuit of vocational clarity, structured career counseling is invaluable in filling the gap between what students are taught and what is expected of them in the labor market (Al-Saaideh, 2016). Vocational avoidance is a serious problem as well. As Alsa'aideh (2016) mentioned, lack of career awareness pushes most students away from vocational education making it a viable option for them and therefore a gap is created between the labor needs of the nation and the outcomes of education. In professions like nursing, for example, it is noted that in order to reduce dropout and increase long-term career commitment, it is instrumental to improve professional development structures in Southern Jordan (Nawafleh, 2014). Most effective career counseling can offset this to enhance students' views of alternative educational paths and encourage broader career exploration. Career related outcomes can be affected by broader educational policy and whole system practices.

Empirical findings indicate that for career guidance interventions to be successful, there needs to be institutional structures and performance evaluation systems incorporated into the universities. For instance, Al Shobaki et al. (2018) showed that good performance measurement systems work to make institutional responsiveness to student needs, including career readiness, high. Similarly, Atoom et al. (2024) took a step further to investigate the impact of academic promotion frameworks on faculty well-being activity with the aim of determining its contribution to quality student support including career mentorship. At the global level, Chim and Lai (2024) presented a psychosocial intervention model geared towards growth-based career construction for higher education students. Their findings suggest that non-randomized but structured interventions could improve students' adaptability and long-term career prospects. These results are supported by research such as Groh et al. (2012), who studied the training and wage subsidy programs in Jordan and found that the development of soft skills does make a measurable difference in youth-female employment - showing the real-world application of career focused training.

Institutional readiness, as well as infrastructure, are also important. For example, Al Ahmad (2011) discovered that students' access to good quality library and information services had a great impact on academic & vocational orientation of the students. At the same time, Abu-Hamour (2013) demonstrated that a tendency of faculty to address student diversity, including students with disabilities, created inclusive guidance environments, which is a critical component in achieving equitable access to career support. Practical training and instructional quality have also been named as success determinants. Hammad et al. (2024) in research on evaluation of the sports coaches' knowledge level -underlined the role that state-of-the-art training plays in developing the professional side -principles that are relevant to career counseling personnel also.

Al-Jamal and Ghadi (2008) argue that high-stakes exam structures in Jordan most times prevent students from doing long term planning, including for their careers. On the other

hand, Lee et al. (2021) pointed out the need for professional development of vocational education staff in international settings with the possibility that enhancing staff capacity is a prerequisite for successful guidance. Hashish (2019) studied career awareness effects on nursing student perceived self-efficacy and career barrier beliefs through his research and discovered meaningful correlations. According to Abueita and Al-Kousheh (2017) information processing theory guided group career counseling demonstrated success at developing tenth-grade students' career decision-making capabilities within the Marka educational district. AL-hinai (2018) executed a career guidance program in South Al Batinah for ninth-grade students as their research findings demonstrated positive results regarding student career awareness development.

Literature on career counselling is much scant as there is a need to conduct research to collect decisive information about the focus it can grant to students within Jordan and across Arab nations. Researchers must carry out more studies in harmony with the distinct cultural structure and institutional features and educational systems of the particular region. Investigating career counseling results within this specific environment allows scientists to comprehend relationships more effectively and design suitable guidelines for this educational setting.

Methodology

Research Design

A quantitative description was used in this study through field surveys to examine the impact of career counseling programs on student career awareness at Al-Karak University College. The research evaluated career awareness development among students both before and after counseling sessions, to investigate any gender-based or year-based or major-based differences. Standardized answers were collected by this design to enable statistical program evaluation.

Sampling and Population

All enrolled students at Al-Karak University College became part of the study population. The research used stratified random sampling to pick 250 students in order to achieve balanced representation between first through fourth year academic levels along with science and humanities and business and technical disciplines and genders. A total of 125 male students together with 125 female students composed the final study sample. Students received equal opportunity to participate through stratified random sampling because this sampling method provided proportional representation across different demographics. The survey reached a response rate of 94% with 235 students answering out of the 250 distributed questionnaires.

Instrument and Procedure

Researchers developed an established questionnaire that served as their main research instrument for examining career awareness and counseling service perceptions among students. The questionnaire contained five sections that collected information about

demographics and career counseling programs along with awareness levels and confidence ratings and counseling service evaluations and support service barriers. Scientists created questionnaire components through both multiple-choice choices and Likert-Type ordering scales.

The questionnaire underwent a pilot test by 25 students who made up 10% of the full sampling group to verify both clarity and reliability of its content. The results from this pilot study guided minor questionnaire improvements for better comprehension along with improved content validity. The data collection process lasted four weeks. Paper questionnaire distributions occurred in classrooms and common university areas alongside an online version that connected through university mailing lists and social media networks to achieve high participant numbers. The study gained administrative approval of the college for its commencement. Each participant decided on their own whether or not to participate while all responses remained confidential through the lack of personal information collection.

The survey utilized two distribution approaches including 142 respondents from 150 paper handouts and 93 participants from the online distribution to 100 students. The analysis used these 235 responses from a database that underwent clean-up which eliminated unqualified data.

Data Analysis

The finished questionnaire data received quantitative coding before software entry into a statistical analysis tool (such as SPSS). The researchers employed descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages together with means to present the gathered responses. The use of inferential statistics enabled evaluation of the counseling programs. The study employed a paired-sample t-test to evaluate how career awareness evolved from the start of counseling until its conclusion. One-way ANOVA tests analyzed differences in the growth of awareness between different academic fields and between various educational years. A Pearson correlation assessment determined whether attendance frequency of counseling services correlated with improved career knowledge outcomes.

For the precise and unbiased analysis of data the process followed strict adherence to scientific standards. The research team established methods to prevent bias and establish ethical response management throughout the whole study.

Results

Career Awareness Levels Before and After Counseling

The research conducted at Al-Karak University College investigated career counseling program effects on career awareness development of students through this investigation. The research analysis included 235 responses from valid survey participants as shown in [table 1](#). A significant impact is evident from the comparison of awareness levels before and after the counseling sessions.

Table 1

Summary of Results – Career Counseling Impact on Career Awareness at Al-Karak University College

Category	Before Counseling	After Counseling	Key Observations
Overall Career Awareness	High/Very High: 23% (n = 54)	High/Very High: 57.9% (n = 136)	Significant increase in awareness
	Low/Very Low: 35.3% (n = 83)	Low/Very Low: 10.6% (n = 25)	Large reduction in low awareness
	Moderate: 41.7% (n = 98)	Moderate: 31.5% (n = 74)	Slight decrease in moderate awareness
Gender-Based Awareness			
Male (n = 118)	High/Very High: 22.9% (n = 27)	High/Very High: 55.1% (n = 65)	Notable improvement
Female (n = 117)	High/Very High: 23.1% (n = 27)	High/Very High: 60.7% (n = 71)	Female students showed slightly greater gain
Awareness by Academic Year	First-Year: 19.4% → 58.1%		All years showed improvements; 4th year highest (69.6%)
	Second-Year: 24.1% → 60.3%		
	Third-Year: 25.4% → 61.0%		
	Fourth-Year: 23.2% → 69.6%		
Awareness by Discipline	Business/Technical: 25.7% → 67.6%		Business/technical students had the highest improvement
	Science: 24.3% → 60.8%		
	Humanities: 19.5% → 47.1%		Lowest improvement among humanities students
Statistical Analysis	Paired t-test: t = 7.82, p < 0.001		Statistically significant impact of counseling
	ANOVA: F = 4.35, p = 0.013		Field of study significantly influenced awareness gains
	Pearson correlation: r = 0.46		Moderate positive relationship between attendance and awareness

The table makes it evident how the program effectively improved students' comprehension of career planning, as seen in the rise of student awareness from 23% to 57.9%. Furthermore, students' increased clarity and direction regarding their future paths is confirmed by the significant drop in low and very low awareness levels from 35.3% to 10.6%. Many students moved into higher awareness categories, indicating a positive cognitive shift, according to the moderate decline in the "moderate awareness" group.

Table 1 summarizes results of the career counseling impact on career awareness at Al-Karak University College. These findings show that career awareness significantly increased through counseling as indicated by a paired t-test analysis with $t = 7.82$ and $p < 0.001$. The ANOVA analysis revealed business and technical students achieved the highest score increment as indicated by a significant F value of 4.35 and a p value of 0.013. The strength of relationship between counseling attendance and better career knowledge was rated at $r = 0.46$ according to Pearson correlation analysis. The statistical data confirm the reliability and effectiveness of the counselling intervention. The highly significant t-test outcome ($t = 7.82, p < 0.001$) confirms that the changes in awareness are not due to chance. The significant ANOVA result ($F = 4.35, p = 0.013$) means that the effect is not the same for all disciplines and reinforces the position that counselling programs should be developed contextually in academic settings. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.46$) suggests a moderately positive association between attendance to the program and career awareness; that is, students who actively participated in the program, had substantial benefits from attending the sessions.

Only 23% of 230 students ($n = 54$) showed high or very high career awareness levels before starting with career counseling. Career counseling programs increased the number of students with high or very high career awareness levels to 57.9% from 23% ($n = 136$ and $n = 54$ respectively). **Figure 1** further emphasizes this variance in the career awareness levels. The total number of students with low and very low career awareness diminished from 35.3% of 83 students to only 10.6% of 25 students following the career counseling sessions. After counseling, fewer students showed moderate career awareness because the number decreased from 41.7% ($n = 98$) to 31.5% ($n = 74$).

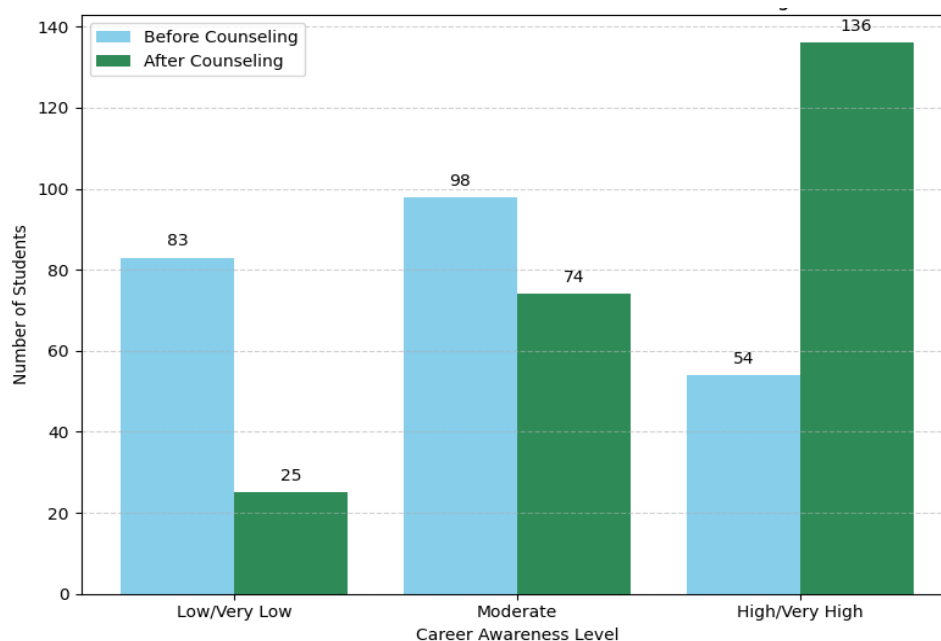


Figure 1: Career awareness levels before and after counselling

Gender-Based Differences in Career Awareness

Among male participants (n= 118), the initial career awareness score was high or very high for 22.9% (n = 27) students. Figure 2 illustrates how counseling sessions helped boost career awareness levels among the participants up to 55.1% (n = 65). For the 117 female students, the proportion rose from 23.1% (n = 27) to 60.7% (n = 71) post-counseling.

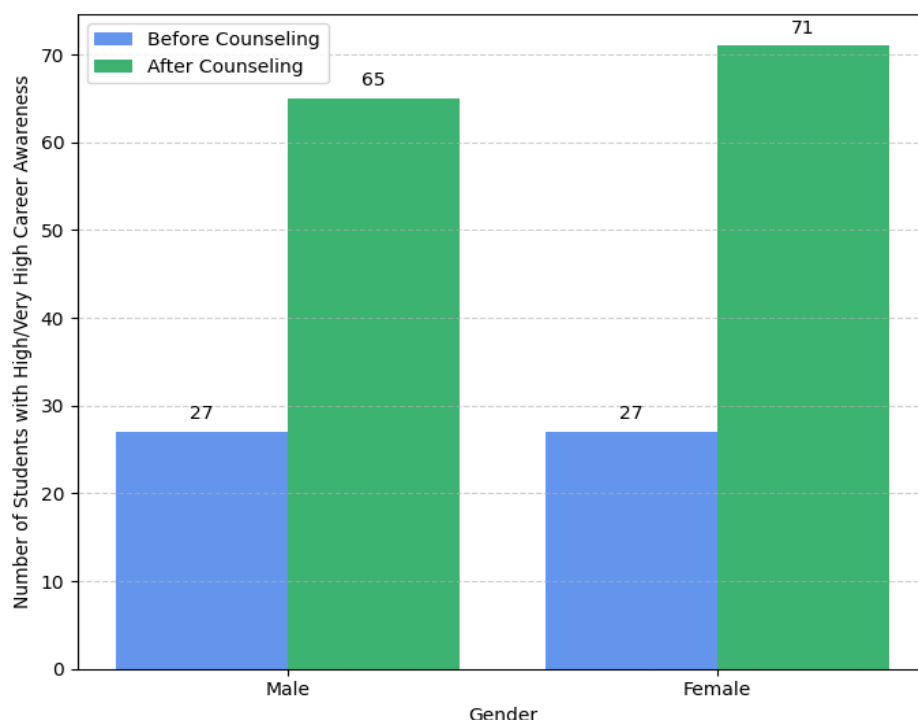


Figure 2: Gender-Based Differences in Career Awareness before and after counselling

Although the counseling sessions were beneficial to both male and female students, the improvement in career awareness levels was marginally higher for female participants (from 23.1% to 60.7%) than for male participants (from 22.9% to 55.1%). This could be explained by female students' greater interest in or receptivity to the counseling material. These findings might also be the result of prior access to informal guidance or gender-related variations in educational motivation.

Career Awareness by Academic Year

The improvement rate for career awareness by academic year showed different results depending on the academic level as evident in Figure 3. The First-year students showed high awareness rising from 19.4% to 58.1%; the Second-year students awareness increased from 24.1% to 60.3%; the Third-year students' awareness rose from 25.4% to 61%; and the Fourth-year students' awareness increased from 23.2% to 69.6%.

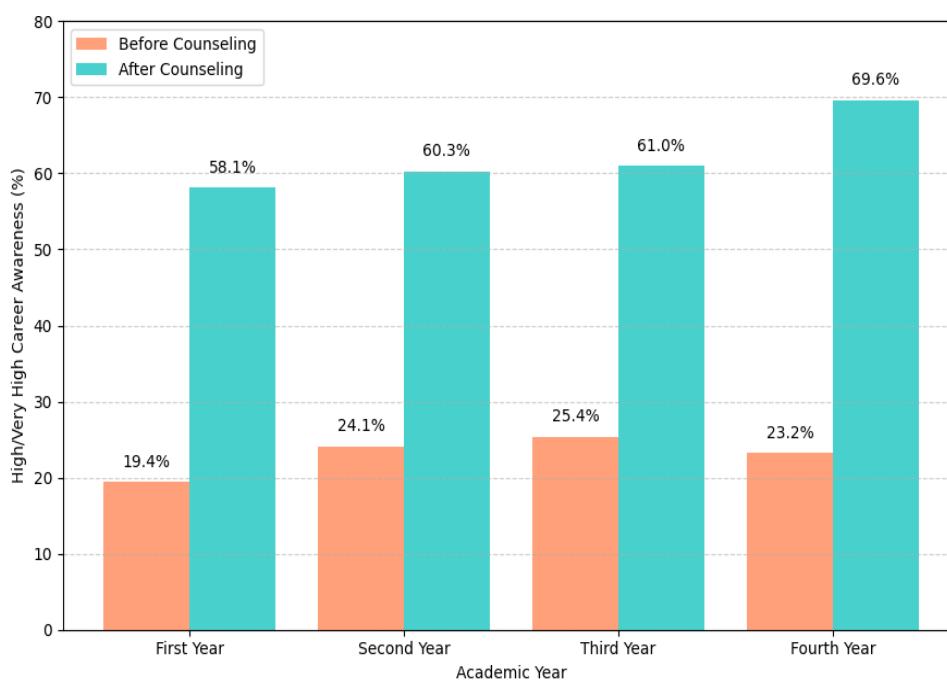


Figure 3: Career Awareness by academic year before and after counselling

The data further reveals that students from all academic years showed marked improvements after counseling in career awareness. There was more significant awareness after counseling for fourth-year students (69.6%), who seemed to have grasped the practical role counseling could play in real-life career decisions, possibly being more motivated toward this from the near end of their academic journey. First-year students, starting at a somewhat lower baseline (19.4%), demonstrated strong gains (up to 58.1%), showing an early positive effect of the program on new enterers to the university.

Career Awareness by Academic Discipline

The enhancement of career awareness materialized differently depending on major field among students as shown in Figure 4. The career awareness in Business and Technical fields increased from 25.7% to 67.6% after counselling. For Science students, this increased from 24.3% to 60.8%. For Humanities students, it increased from 19.5% to 47.1%.

Figure 4 further reveals that highest increase in the awareness level occurred among business and technical students, which rose from 25.7% to 67.6%. This may be explicated by the direct linkage of these disciplines to practical career pathways and job markets, together possibly making counseling content more relatable and actionable. Humanities students posted the lowest increase, although this could be because of less structured career trajectories or lesser exposure to job-oriented subjects.

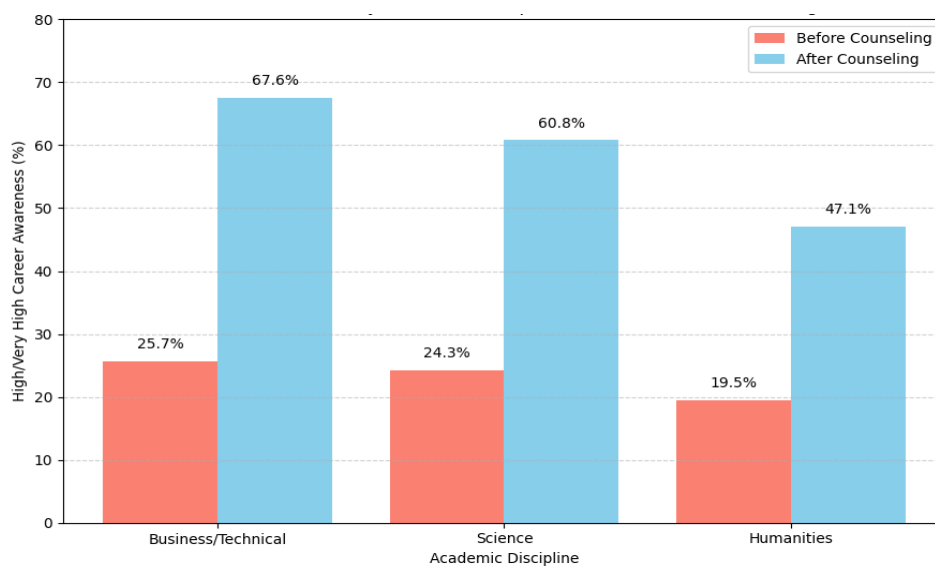


Figure 4: Career Awareness by academic discipline before and after counselling

Discussion

The results of this study show that the organized career guidance program has a strong effect on career awareness of students in Al-Karak University College. It was observed that the percentage of students that answered high or very high in career awareness went from 23% before the sessions to 57.9% after the counseling. It suggests that the intervention had a clear and significant positive impact. This is consistent with international and regional literature that identifies the contributions of career guidance programmes in relation to student motivation and career decision-making. For instance, [Abdelhadi et al. \(2025\)](#) reported that gender differences of motivation was linked with the satisfaction of pharmacy students and their future career plans, which speaks for our results of female students who slightly improved their career awareness than their male counterparts.

The study also found that there was a difference in awareness between academic years and disciplines, with the greatest increase in fourth year and business/technical students. These results indicate that students who are about to graduate or who are studying in more applied areas of focus, may be more open to career information. Similar findings were presented by [El Hanbali and Kaylani \(2020\)](#), who highlighted the need for career guidance in Jordanian schools and [Khloud and Basil \(2020\)](#) who talked about structural obstacles of education system impacting students' professional planning and vocational preparation.

Another significant contribution of this research is that it focused on counseling frequency. Students' increasing awareness was related to the number of sessions attended which is consistent with the role of mentorship and supervision in professional development. [Aldahadha and Karaki \(2022\)](#) demonstrated comparable patterns regarding clinical peer supervision through their study which revealed that systematic supervision with ongoing support produces measurable effects on practicum students' learning

outcomes and skill growth. The research findings demonstrate that continuous engagement with guidance programs produces better results than sporadic or one-time interventions.

Our findings align with current research that demonstrates leadership along with data-driven decisions and technological applications support student progress at the institutional level. A recent study (Bataneh et al., 2025) asserted that successful academic leadership could improve the abilities of faculty members to maintain their self-management in order to indirectly influence the mentoring conditions for students. Similarly, Al-maaitah and Al-maaitah (2025) highlighted the positive impact of business intelligence tools on the performance of employees and suggested that using data analytics could assist universities in providing more personalized career guidance services to students. However, Beirat et al. (2025) pointed out how artificial intelligence is proving to be a transformative force in reducing student anxiety and improving higher education quality, and hinted towards the potential future applications of AI-assisted counseling systems within the Jordanian higher education setting.

There have already been positive outcomes of technology integration in the field of career counselling. According to Al-Masoud (2024), Jordanian educational counselors considered the ICT to be a very useful tool in career guidance for broadening the access to the counseling service. This supports our finding that being given the opportunity to participate in more of the counseling programs led to increased levels of career awareness. The research conducted by Al-Momani and Rababa (2023) revealed that counseling practices in Jordanian higher education institutions operate positively but face effectiveness challenges because of insufficient resources and lack of empowerment for counselors. The observation reveals key systemic obstacles that require resolution to enable the studied programs to achieve their complete potential.

Overall, the discussion is consistent with the conclusion that planned and ongoing career counseling programs will be very effective in increasing the awareness of the students about their career choices, and the impact will depend on demographic and situational factors. Counseling interventions in Jordanian higher education will be most effective when technology is successfully integrated, counselors are empowered, and leadership-driven strategies are supported.

Conclusion, Recommendations, and Implications

The research checked how well career counseling programs increased career awareness knowledge for students at Al-Karak University College. The designed career counseling sessions produced substantial learning benefits regarding career possibilities among students and raised their decision-making self-assurance along with their readiness to join the job market. The achieved outcomes verify that professional guidance provided within institutions helps students develop their careers.

Different groups of students achieved varying levels of career awareness progress according to their gender makeup and academic levels and field of specialization. Among the students surveyed female students and the higher academic levels and those focused on Business and technical programs demonstrated a high increase in career awareness. The

research showed that how often students attended counseling sessions directly influenced their career awareness improvement.

The study managed to make valuable contributions yet it encountered multiple shortcomings. First, the research findings might lack broad applicability because researchers studied only one college. This restricted institution sample reduced the capability of generalizing the research outcome. Future research should expand to different academic institutions to study the enduring outcomes of these programs. Second, students could provide biased responses on their awareness levels through self-reported questionnaires because they evaluate their understanding subjectively. Future investigations should be conducted to evaluate the impact that digital and personalized counseling approaches have on student career awareness development. Last, but not the least, this study did not monitor what became of students once they finished their studies except for career and employment results.

Additional research needs to encompass various educational institutions while adopting combination research methods which combine interviews and extended data follow-ups for investigating enduring career changes. Research should study the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) together with digital platforms to establish their role as personal supporters for students. This study also emphasizes that universities need to make substantial investment in hiring career counseling professionals together with creating discipline-specific programs for their students. Universities need to establish psychological counseling services which help students manage their career-related uncertainties and workplace anxiety. A more interactive and approachable method of counselling is created by combining AI-based guiding systems and technologies.

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