

Career Counselling: A Precursor of Career and Personal Empowerment- A Comparative Systematic Review of Uganda and India

Juliet Arinaitwe¹ and P. Janardhana Kumar Reddy²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Education, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

²Associate Professor & Head (Rtd), Department of Education, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India
julietarinaitwe7@gmail.com¹ and jkreddy451926@gmail.com²

Abstract: Career counselling (CC) is an essential foundation for learners in making informed career decisions and enhancing personal empowerment. In developing contexts, however, CC service provision remains uneven. This review compares Uganda and India to examine how CC is framed, delivered, and challenged in secondary schools and higher education institutions. The study employed a systematic literature review, following PRISMA guidelines, to search studies published between 2010 and 2025 across databases and institutional repositories. Studies were included if they focused on career counselling in secondary schools or higher education in Uganda or India. After screening, 20 studies were synthesised thematically under three objectives: the role of CC in supporting career and personal empowerment among learners, comparison of institutional and policy frameworks guiding delivery of CC services in both countries, and CC implementation challenges. The review revealed that CC services increase learners' awareness of career options, career maturity, improve decision-making, employability skills and build self-confidence. In Uganda, CC was discovered to be anchored in government policy, with the Ministry of Education providing structured guidelines through the Career Counselling Handbook, though implementation is insufficient. Equally, India, through the national education policy (NEP) and other government and private bodies, emphasises CC services to all learners, with a strong private sector involvement and technology-enabled platforms that expand access. Both countries face common challenges of underfunding, inadequate professional training, and a lack of timely and adequate CC services. The comparison highlights complementary strengths, with Uganda benefiting from structured policy support, whereas India leverages national, private and technological innovation. For both contexts, advancing CC requires enhanced policy backing, investment in counsellor training, inclusion of CC in the school curriculum and closer alignment with labour market demands.

Keywords: Career Counselling, Career Empowerment, Personal Empowerment, Policy Frameworks, Uganda, India, Systematic Review

I. INTRODUCTION

Career counselling (CC) has become a key strategy in addressing the multifaceted challenges individuals face in navigating the dynamic world of work and personal empowerment. The world today is undergoing significant social, economic, technological, scientific, and political transformations (Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022), prompting societies to grapple with rapid technological changes, shifting labour market demands, and rising unemployment. The dynamism in all spheres of life has made it more difficult and stressful than ever before for individuals to make informed career decisions and manage personal empowerment effectively. As such, there has been a growing interest in CC as a means of supporting individuals in creating and managing new mindsets towards successful career navigation, personal growth, and empowerment (Herath et al., 2024; Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; Saxena & Wadhvani, 2022; Anne et al., 2018). This interest renders effective CC systems essential for preparing individuals to explore options, cope with uncertainties, and make empowered career choices.



CC services usually start in schools with learners, though equally effective in the world of work, where individuals find challenges with their career choices and transitions. According to Herath et al. (2024), learners require the support of career counsellors for proper career decision-making since they often struggle with their career choices due to the lack of awareness in career planning and development. After all, in the educational settings, particularly in secondary schools and higher education institutions, CC services are offered to help learners make informed decisions about their career paths and transitions into the workforce (Anne et al., 2018). These services are often delivered by both trained and non-trained professionals, including academic staff, school counsellors, parents, and career advisors, through one-on-one guidance sessions, workshops, and group discussions (Herath et al., 2024; Otwine et al., 2022). CC helps learners navigate occupational interests, academics, set realistic goals, and manage challenges related to career uncertainty and labour market demands (Herath et al., 2024; Saxena & Wadhvani, 2022).

Popov and Spasenovic (2020) noted that school counsellors are expected to support the career, emotional, social, and academic development of learners by identifying their needs, providing accurate career information, and aligning their aspirations with available opportunities. Such services are recognised as essential components of learner support systems that go beyond academic instruction, which aligns with the global education goals (OECD, 2021). Therefore, a holistic approach to learner development, especially during critical life stages such as secondary schooling and higher education, is essential. After all, grooming a career alone without the appropriate personal development and enrichment is meaningless (Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022). Despite their importance, adequate CC services and resources are not readily available within most educational institutions (Herath et al., 2024). Furthermore, the implementation, reach, and impact of CC services differ significantly across countries, shaped by each country's unique socio-cultural values, professional and economic standards, institutional capacity, and policy frameworks (Popov and Spasenovic, 2020). It is thus important for a comparative review to examine how contextual factors influence the role and effectiveness of CC services in secondary schools and higher education institutions in different countries.

This study, therefore, focuses on a comparison of CC as a precursor for career and personal empowerment between Uganda and India, particularly in secondary schools and higher education institutions. In both countries, the importance of career guidance and counselling has grown in response to rising youth unemployment, academic pressures, psychosocial challenges, and the demands of a dynamic global labour market (Saini et al., 2023; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). While both countries may be facing almost similar challenges, their responses are shaped by differences in policy, cultural expectations, institutional capacity, and resource allocation, offering valuable opportunities for comparative learning. However, there is limited comparative research that systematically explores how CC services are structured and delivered in these two distinct contexts, particularly in career and personal empowerment. This study seeks to fill this gap by systematically examining how career counselling services are structured and implemented in both countries, and what can be learned from each context to enhance policy, practice, and cross-cultural adaptations.

Need and Significance of the Study

Career counselling is gaining recognition globally as a vital part of education that enables learners to navigate the contemporary career pathways, which are increasingly becoming complex. In many low- and middle-income countries like Uganda and India, young people face rapid labour market changes, high unemployment rates, uncertainty about future work, and transitions (Otwine et al., 2024; Saini et al., 2023; Otwine et al., 2022; Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; World Bank, 2017). Most of these young people are in or have graduated from secondary schools and higher education institutions, which makes access to effective CC services at these educational levels exclusively important. Although several studies on CC exist in both contexts, the evidence remains scattered and not synthesised. There is also a missing comprehensive comparison of how counselling is understood, implemented, and experienced in these two contexts. This gap justifies the need for a systematic review that consolidates current knowledge and identifies transferable lessons.

The study is significant for enriching the growing body of comparative literature on CC by drawing insights from two distinct but comparable educational systems. Analysis of existing evidence sheds light on how CC contributes to decision-making, personal empowerment, and readiness for employment. The findings of the study will equally allow for meaningful cross-learning, with Uganda benefiting from India's structured policy framework, and India taking



lessons from Uganda's holistic, community-oriented counselling practices. This is because Uganda has yet to develop a national career counselling policy, while India, through the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), has created institutional pathways but struggles with uneven delivery. The review will also be useful for school leaders, counsellors, and teachers who are directly responsible for supporting learners. By synthesising the successes, the policy frameworks, and implementation challenges highlighted in previous studies, the findings will point to ways of strengthening service delivery, improving counsellor training, and securing institutional support, with each country drawing insights from the other.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of career counselling in preparing learners for the dynamic labour markets, many developing countries struggle to institutionalise these services effectively. For instance, in both Uganda and India, the role of CC is gaining prominence, though it remains inconsistently implemented due to limited policies, inadequate staffing, poor training, and insufficient awareness among the learners and educators alike (Giri, 2024; Kumari & Sahoo, 2022; Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). The few available counsellors are often overburdened, and others are undertrained, which limits their ability to effectively serve the learner populations (NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020; Anne et al., 2018). As a result, many students graduate without a clear career direction, contributing to increasing youth unemployment, underemployment, and dissatisfaction. Moreover, limited research has been done in the field of CC, more so in Uganda's education system (Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2017).

Similarly, there is a lack of comparative evidence between countries with shared challenges but different policy environments, which creates a gap in both literature and practice. Yet, researchers such as Popov and Spasenovic (2020) suggest that such a research study could contribute to a better understanding of common features, similarities, and differences in school counselling, support the transfer of best school counselling practices and innovations between countries, and improve school counselling training programs. Addressing this gap requires an in-depth, evidence-based comparative analysis of the CC structures in different countries, in this case Uganda and India, to uncover areas of success, deficiency, and opportunity. This study, therefore, seeks to systematically analyse the role, policy, and institutional frameworks and implementation challenges of effective CC in these two countries to inform policy, practice, and future reforms of CC as a precursor for career and personal empowerment.

Research Question

How do career counselling practices in Uganda and India compare in promoting career and personal empowerment of learners in secondary schools and higher education institutions?

Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following research objectives

- To examine the role of career counselling in supporting career and personal empowerment among learners in secondary schools and higher education institutions in Uganda and India.
- To compare the institutional and policy frameworks guiding the delivery of career counselling in Uganda and India.
- To identify the challenges in the implementation of career counselling programs in secondary schools and higher education institutions in Uganda and India.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The review of CC as a precursor to career and personal empowerment among learners in Uganda and India was grounded in the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), developed and popularised by Lent, Brown, and Hackett in 1994. SCCT draws from Albert Bandura's (1986) wider social cognitive theory (Nabawanuka, 2023; Nam & Marshall,



2022). The theory suggests that career development is influenced by the interaction of self-efficacy, institutional context, and personal and social behaviour (Nabawanuka, 2023; Wang et al., 2022; Lent and Brown, 2019). SCCT highlights how learners' beliefs about their abilities and their expectations for outcomes shape their educational and occupational goals (Nam & Marshall, 2022). According to Lent and Brown (2019), SCCT can be effectively applied in school CC since it offers a comprehensive framework for explaining and predicting career development. After all, the theory recognises the influence of environmental factors and also considers individual factors in career choices and development (Akinlolu et al., 2023; Nam & Marshall, 2022; Lent & Brown, 2013; Lent et al., 1994). Relatedly, Nabawanuka (2023) found that personal attributes such as confidence, resilience, self-motivation, determination, and self-belief enable female academics to take initiatives like setting realistic goals and making career decisions that promote their academic progress.

Also, the SCCT framework is suitable for cross-cultural comparative studies because it allows analysis of how contextual factors influence career trajectories. This aligns with Wang et al. (2022), who argued that SCCT can adapt to changing societal demands, focus on diverse population groups, and offer a systematic explanation of individual career growth, although it may lack direct intervention methods. Thus, grounding this study in SCCT provides a comprehensive comparative understanding of the role of CC as a precursor to career and personal empowerment within secondary schools and higher education institutions, comparing Uganda and India. By applying SCCT, this review examines how CC practices in Uganda and India support learners' decision-making skills, self-efficacy, career readiness, and self-confidence, which are key mechanisms of empowerment. After all, CC services can only be effective if the individual receiving them is ready for CC engagement.

Empirical Review

In both developed and developing contexts, CC services are crucial for supporting informed decision-making, building self-efficacy, and helping learners transition from education to employment and adulthood (Giri, 2024; Anne et al., 2018; Chadha et al., 2018). They are essential for assisting people of all ages and life stages in making educational, training, and career choices (Kumar, 2025; Anne et al., 2018; Chadha et al., 2018). Nabawanuka (2023) argues that social support through guidance and counselling plays a vital role in career development. Notably, CC services are particularly needed in the developing and underdeveloped regions of the world, where unemployment crises remain unresolved and conditions continue to worsen each day (Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; World Bank, 2017).

Countries such as Uganda and India, which are part of the developing world, have a high youth population (UBOS, 2024; Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, 2020; World Bank, 2017), with high unemployment rates, evolving educational systems, social-cultural complexities, and evolving labour markets (Giri, 2024; Otwine et al., 2024; Saini et al., 2023). These two countries, though geographically and culturally distinct, share several educational development challenges. They face critical challenges in terms of access, quality, outcomes, and the integration of CC into the broader education reform agenda (Otwine et al., 2025a; Otwine et al., 2024; Kumari & Sahoo, 2022). These factors render career and personal empowerment difficult to navigate for the youths, especially the secondary school and higher education graduates, as they transition from school to employment (Otwine et al., 2025a; Anne et al., 2018). This underscores the role of CC services in equipping the youth with knowledge and skills for workforce integration and personal growth.

In this review, the concept of *career empowerment* is understood as an individual's perceived sense of control over their career development and transitions. It encompasses the ability to make informed career choices and achieve occupational goals. Career empowerment involves acquiring knowledge and skills necessary for personal development, making wiser career choices aligned with suitable career frameworks (Craig, 2016; Van der Heijden and De Vos, 2015), emphasising the proactive role individuals play in shaping their career paths (Grabarski et al., 2025). This perspective offers career practitioners practical tools for guiding individuals towards better career outcomes and also provides insights for institutions seeking to enhance career support systems (Grabarski et al., 2025). On the other hand, personal empowerment relates more closely to self-efficacy and psychological well-being. It is the capacity to make intentional, confident choices that align with one's goals and personal identity (Craig, 2016). Edwards-Fapohunda (2024) crafts personal empowerment as the ability for individuals to gain confidence and belief in themselves, guiding



them towards taking charge of their lives, making informed choices, and positively participating in community activities.

Though there are several studies related to CC, career, and personal empowerment, none of them clearly explain the role played by CC in enhancing these two concepts, in comparison to Uganda and India. The review study, therefore, systematically compares the CC systems in Uganda and India, focusing on their roles in career and personal empowerment, policy and institution frameworks, and implementation challenges within secondary schools and higher education institutions.

Career Counselling in Uganda

Otwine et al. (2025a) point out that guidance and counselling services in Uganda are longstanding practices that have evolved into formal education systems aimed at helping learners achieve their educational goals since the 1960s. However, a 2014 report by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) indicates that the Department of Guidance & Counselling was officially established in 2008, following the restructuring of the Ministry. The department was created *to provide strategic and technical leadership, guidance, advice, and policy direction on all matters concerning guidance and counselling across the entire education and training sector. Since then, CC as a component of the broader guidance and counselling frameworks has gradually extended into various educational institutions, including secondary schools and higher education institutions, although implementation is still evolving* (Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018; Anne et al., 2018).

According to Anne et al. (2018), Uganda is steadily making progress in promoting CC, with the intention of equipping learners with skills to make informed and effective career decisions by the time they complete secondary school or transition to institutions of higher learning. As noted by Nsubuga and Kronholz (2018), CC services in Uganda are more common in secondary schools, with limited implementation in higher education institutions (Barigye, 2024). This is supported by Otwine et al. (2022), whose study revealed that although secondary school learners were generally aware of career counselling services, there remained a notable gap in transition support to higher education and employment. The MOES has acknowledged CC as essential (MOES, 2014); however, its integration remains inconsistent, particularly across secondary schools and higher education institutions (Barigye, 2024; Nsubuga and Kronholz, 2018; Okiror and Otabong, 2015). Most existing services are reactive, centred on discipline and academic guidance, rather than being proactive and developmentally focused on learners' careers and personal empowerment.

Although some formal and informal CC services exist, often delivered by administrative staff, teachers, parents, and community members, they are frequently hampered by weak policy implementation, lack of trained personnel, high student ratios, and insufficient resources (Kabunga, 2020; Knettel et al., 2019). These gaps suggest a significant disconnect between policy intentions and practical delivery, which limits the effectiveness of CC in supporting learners' transitions from secondary schools and higher institutions of learning to the world of work. This thus calls for an investigation into how CC is currently practised, perceived, and can be strengthened within Ugandan secondary schools and higher education institutions to enhance both career and personal empowerment. Understanding the Ugandan context provides a foundation for comparison with other countries, in this case, India. India is chosen for this comparative study with Uganda because its unique policy frameworks and institutional practices offer valuable insights into how career counselling is approached in a different yet comparable educational environment.

Career Counselling in India

Career counselling in India can be traced back to the ancient Gurukul education system, where students lived with their guru (teacher), who acted as a guide helping them identify their innate talents and suitable professional paths (Giri, 2024). CC was advocated by Indians way back before the western influence, although the western world was the first to recognise its importance and utilisation in educational settings (Saxena & Wadhwani, 2022). Moving forward, several government and non-governmental organisations such as National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), National Education Policy (NEP), National Association for College Admission Counselling (NACAC), and International Career and College counselling Institute (IC3 Institute), picked a growing interest towards CC in India's educational arena.



This interest has been called for, due to the large youth and student enrolments in secondary schools and higher education institutions (NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020). Such a large youth population requires timely and adequate CC to prepare them for their career and personal empowerment. Giri (2024) states that career counselling has gained significant importance in India, evolving from its early beginnings to a multifaceted landscape involving various stakeholders and contemporary approaches. More research has also shown that India's CC services have continuously evolved, leading to a more established framework for school and college counselling, though this is mainly in urban and private institutions (Giri, 2024; Saxena and Wadhvani, 2022; NACAC and IC3 Institute, 2020; Chadha et al., 2018). A report by NACAC and IC3 Institute (2020) indicated that most rural education institutions lack facilities and professional expertise, a reason for failure to dedicate personnel, space, and technology infrastructure toward college and career counselling, though better services are cited in urban schools. Yet, the NEP 2020 highlights the role of career guidance and emotional support in holistic student development, emphasising the alignment of academics with vocational studies and careers for all students. However, disparities persist across rural-urban settings and among different educational boards and institutions (NACAC and IC3 Institute, 2020). A study by Mishra and Chaudhary (2017) inferred that in India, counselling has not yet been paid proper and adequate attention; hence, CC has not yielded the desired objectives. Giri (2024), however, indicates that CC has played a significant role in India's position as one of the world's fastest-growing economies. It is against such a background that a comparative study between CC services in Uganda and India is worth exploring to understand their role towards career and personal empowerment through different yet comparable lenses of their operationalisation in the two countries.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a **systematic literature review (SLR) design** to examine the role of career counselling in ensuring career and personal empowerment among secondary school and higher education institution learners in Uganda and India. According to Lame (2019), SLR involves synthesizing published evidence on the topic of study to answer specific research questions in a transparent and reproducible manner, while appraising the quality of this evidence. It is a research design that assembles, arranges, and assesses the existing literature to answer the study's research question. In line with this, the review was conducted following the **Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines**. PRISMA provides a structured approach for identifying, screening, and synthesising relevant literature (Page et al., 2021; Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021). An extensive search was conducted across electronic databases, including **ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, ResearchGate, Google Scholar, and JSTOR**. This search was supplemented with manual searches of institutional reports and grey literature. The keywords used in the search were: "*career counselling*", "*career guidance*", "career empowerment", "personal empowerment", "*higher education*", "*secondary education*", "Uganda", and "India".

The search covered studies published between **2010 and 2025** to capture contemporary perspectives within the context of evolving education, advancing technology, and labour market dynamics. Studies were included if they: focused on career counselling, especially in secondary schools and higher education institutions in Uganda or India, focused on career or personal empowerment, addressed career development, decision-making, and employability, were peer-reviewed journal articles, books, book chapters, policy papers, dissertations, or credible grey literature. Studies were excluded if they: focused solely on psychological guidance and counselling unrelated to career issues, were opinion pieces, or lacked empirical evidence. The initial search included 140 records. After removing duplicates, titles and abstracts were screened for relevance, followed by a full-text review. A total of **20 studies** met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final synthesis. A structured data extraction sheet was used to collect key information from each study, including: author(s), year of publication, country, and key findings (Appendix 1). Data were synthesised through a **thematic analysis approach**, whereby patterns and recurring ideas across studies were identified and grouped into major themes aligned with the research objectives. This allowed for a comparative understanding of the role of CC, policy, and institutional frameworks of CC, and CC implementation challenges across the Ugandan and Indian contexts.



IV. FINDINGS

This review synthesised evidence from 20 studies related to Uganda and India's CC. Although the studies varied in design and context, they all offered valuable insights into how CC shapes individuals' careers and personal empowerment among secondary school and higher education learners. To reflect the study objectives, the findings are presented under three themes: (1) the role of CC in supporting career and personal empowerment, (2) institutional and policy frameworks guiding the delivery of CC, and (3) the challenges faced in implementing CC programs. By organising the results in this way, the review highlights both the common ground and the differences that emerged across contexts.

Theme 1: The Role of Career Counselling in Supporting Career and Personal Empowerment.

The review found that CC contributes significantly to both career empowerment and personal growth of learners. In Uganda, CC services were associated with improved career decision-making around subject choices, resilience, enhanced self-awareness, attentiveness to career options, and greater readiness for the job market among the learners (Otwine et al., 2025a; Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; Otwine et al., 2022; Anne et al., 2018). CC services in secondary schools and higher education institutions were also reported to enhance personal empowerment through building confidence among the learners, by offering guidance towards their career planning and pathways, course of study in higher education, and the nature of employment (Otwine et al., 2022; Kabunga, 2020). Effective CC provides learners with the ability to cope with the social, economic, and work environment requirements, which is beneficial for career development and career empowerment (Muhwezi et al., 2023; Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; Kabunga, 2020). A strong correlation was equally identified between students' career self-concept and CC (Otwine et al., 2025b). The review also consistently discovered that functional CC systems could help students in setting realistic lifelong learning goals, social equity, and social inclusion goals (Otwine et al., 2025a; Otwine et al., 2025b; Barigye, 2024; Muhwezi et al., 2023), which are vital for career and personal empowerment.

Similarly, in India, CC programs enable learners to pursue the right career choice according to their aptitude so that they join the workforce with better skills for promoting growth and development, and also manage career challenges (Giri, 2024; NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020; Chadha et al., 2018; Jain, 2017). It helps students explore study courses, careers, and the college admission process, preparing them for entry into careers of their choice, giving them a deeper insight into questions they have, for better future planning (NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020; Mishra & Chaudhary, 2017; Jain, 2017). Through addressing educational and career development issues, CC leads to the development of career maturity among the learners at all levels of education (Kumari & Sahoo, 2022; Saxena & Wadhvani, 2022; Sharma & Ahuja, 2017). The review also revealed that CC services facilitate career decision-making, helping students navigate their career paths more effectively (Giri, 2024; Chadha et al., 2018; Sharma & Ahuja, 2017; Arulmani, 2013). Personal empowerment outcomes were equally prominent, where CC was reported to build resilience, self-confidence, and the capacity to handle social and academic pressures (Saxena & Wadhvani, 2022; NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020; Chadha et al., 2018).

CC was also discovered as an important component for supporting individual and societal well-being of the learners, and exclusive understanding of their interest profiles (Giri, 2024; Arulmani, 2013). For more career and personal empowerment, it was discovered that CC provides information about skill development courses, apprenticeships, employment, and career-related services, which is important for bridging the gap between work-oriented education and mature career choices (NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020; Chadha et al., 2018; Sharma & Ahuja, 2017). Generally, Career counsellors support students in gaining a better understanding of what really matters for them personally, how they can plan their careers, and make tough decisions, indicating a significant effect of CC services on students' career and personal development among Indian secondary school and higher education institution students (NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020; Sharma & Ahuja, 2017; Jain, 2017; Arulmani, 2013).

Theme 2: Institutional and Policy Frameworks Guiding Career Counselling

The delivery of counselling services was found to be shaped by the institutional and policy contexts of each country.



In Uganda, a study by Auf and Arinaitwe (2022) reported a fairly established guidance and counselling curriculum, from which CC is a subset. While policy frameworks acknowledge the importance of CC, as seen through the MOES emphasis for every school to have a counsellor and to offer career guidance to their students (Knettel et al., 2019; Maserejje, 2016), implementation is not enforced, and therefore, inconsistent (Otwine et al., 2022; Knettel et al., 2019; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). The review discovered that many schools in Uganda provide CC services (Otwine et al., 2025b), although these services mainly start in higher secondary, with a few services in some higher education institutions (Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). Some schools are making strides towards promoting CC to produce students who are prepared to make adequate career decisions by the time they complete secondary school and tertiary levels of education (Anne et al., 2018). The services are mainly delivered to the learners through general special careers day, careers' class day, and class meetings, as events rather than a process, and so, lack continuity (Otwine et al., 2022; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018; Anne et al., 2018).

The analysis also discovered that CC delivery relies on teachers, parents, family members, as well as self-styled career coaches, of whom the majority lack formal training as career counsellors (Otwine et al., 2022; Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018; Anne et al., 2018). Though pilot training for career masters, publication and distribution of career guidance materials, and infrastructure development have been done, and some schools actually have career teachers (Kabunga, 2020; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018; Anne et al., 2018), the utilization and implementation of these resources is not yet fully sufficient (Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). The government of Uganda has thus not taken serious steps to ensure there are enough trained people to provide career services in schools or set up permanent structures to provide and monitor CC service (Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). There are indeed no clear formal national systems and directives for CC, more so in the higher education sector, where little has been done to develop the CC services (Otwine et al., 2022; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). However, some schools have established partnerships with other universities, professionals, governmental, and non-governmental organizations to seek and provide effective CC services to their learners (Otwine et al., 2022; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). Teachers have also been encouraged to integrate CC education into curriculum delivery to assist learners in adapting career information with classroom work (Otwine et al., 2022).

Contrarily, in India, the National Education Policy (NEP) emphasizes the alignment of academics with vocational education and careers, with specialized CC services within educational institutions (Giri, 2024; NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020). CC is offered at the K-12 elementary, middle, and high school level using different approaches depending upon the kind of program organised and the personnel engaged in imparting the CC services (Chadha et al., 2018). It is presented through group discussions, role-plays, drama, orientation programs, and sensitisation workshops to students and job seekers nationwide (Giri, 2024; Chadha et al., 2018). Some government bodies, such as the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), have stressed mandatory trained school counsellors in schools, and encouraged at least twenty sessions of counselling for each learner in an academic year (Saxena & Wadhwani, 2022). Most educational institutions employ full-time career counsellors, though others have part-time and outsourced career counsellors, private players, and organizations (Giri, 2024; Saxena & Wadhwani, 2022; NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020; Chadha et al., 2018).

Other bodies and schemes such as Rashtriya Madhyamaik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), National Career Services (NCS), and Naan Mudhalvan Scheme also offer career services and skills development to the potential learners and youth of the country (Chadha et al., 2018). The review also indicated that career guidance cells are being established in some schools and colleges, shifting the focus from solely providing information about different careers to emphasizing self-exploration and personal development (Giri, 2024). Despite the positivity in policy frames, findings from Jain (2017)'s study indicated that, in the Indian educational framework, CC is not a necessary step, and that its trend in schools is not satisfactory, just as is the case in Ugandan secondary schools and higher education institutions.

Theme 3: Challenges in Implementing Career Counselling Programs

The review discovered that several recurring challenges limit the effectiveness of CC services in educational institutions.



The shortage of trained professionals was a dominant issue in Uganda, with many schools lacking trained and specialised career counsellors (Barigye, 2024; Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; Kabunga, 2020; Knettel et al., 2019; Anne et al., 2018; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). Resource limitations, including inadequate facilities, lack of documentation, and limited access to career information, further constrain delivery of CC services to the learners (Barigye, 2024; Otwine et al., 2022; Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018; Anne et al., 2018; Okiror & Otabong, 2015). Lack of information culminates in low self-confidence among the career counsellors and even the learners receiving the counselling (Barigye, 2024). High learner and career counsellor ratio, general lack of school counsellor education, supervision, and certification at the national level were equally identified as obstacles towards effective CC implementation and delivery (Barigye, 2024; Kabunga, 2020; Anne et al., 2018; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). The study also discovered the tendency of overemphasis on curricular activities for acquiring the best grades, and using that as a basis for future career decisions, neglecting research on other aspects of learners' career development (Kabunga, 2020; Anne et al., 2018; Okiror & Otabong, 2015). This consequently pushes learners into careers that they do not have interest in, affecting their eventual productivity (Otwine et al., 2025b; Barigye, 2024; Okiror & Otabong, 2015).

It was also discovered that CC services are weighed down by limited funding, lack of adequate time due to tight school schedules, and additional responsibilities given to the teachers in charge of CC, poor attitude towards CC, lack of awareness about career self-awareness and academic achievement (Barigye, 2024; Otwine et al., 2022; Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; Knettel et al., 2019; Anne et al., 2018; Okiror & Otabong, 2015). Absence of well-developed, monitored, and guided CC policy frameworks by educational bodies such as MOES in the country makes it more challenging for effective implementation of these important services, leaving a wide gap between learners' career journey and the world of work (Barigye, 2024; Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; Otwine et al., 2022; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). Important to note also is the fact that CC services are more dominant in secondary schools and almost missing in higher education institutions, which poses another big challenge towards labour market preparations of Ugandan youth population (Barigye, 2024; Kabunga, 2020; Okiror & Otabong, 2015).

The same pattern was equally identified in India, though with some contradictions. Issues such as limited resources, mainly space, and technology infrastructure were identified as some of the major challenges towards CC implementation (Giri, 2024; NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020), although Saxena and Wadhwani (2022) indicated underutilization of counselling facilities in some schools. It is also difficult for CC services to reach the intended population, more so for learners in rural areas and disadvantaged communities (Giri, 2024; Kumari & Sahoo, 2022; NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020). Similarly, cultural pressures and parental influence, coupled with the country's diverse socioeconomic landscape, shape learners' decisions, sometimes undermining the gains of CC (Giri, 2024). The review also revealed that in some cases, CC is perceived as a luxury rather than a necessary factor for human empowerment and development, and so, has not yet received proper and adequate attention, which limits the realisation of the desired outcomes (Giri, 2024; Mishra & Chaudhary, 2017). Lack of timely and adequate CC services, shortage of trained professionals, and inadequate intensity of CC by grade level were equally revealed as challenges towards effective CC implementation (Giri, 2024; Kumari & Sahoo, 2022; NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020; Mishra & Chaudhary, 2017). A mismatch between individuals' expressed career preferences and career interest was likewise observed during CC practices (Giri, 2024; Saxena & Wadhwani, 2022; NACAC & IC3 Institute, 2020).

V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this review highlight the key role of CC in enhancing career and personal empowerment among learners in secondary schools and higher education institutions in Uganda and India. Consistent with SCCT, which provides a basis for envisaging career development (Lent and Brown, 2019), the review findings indicate that CC positively influences learners' career decision-making abilities, self-efficacy, and career maturity, and nurture employability skills (Otwine et al., 2025a; Giri, 2024; Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; Chadha et al., 2018; Sharma & Ahuja, 2017). Such skills and abilities prepare learners for the contemporary educational systems and the world of work, which is characterized by shifting societal and market demands (Auf & Arinaitwe, 2022; Sharma & Ahuja, 2017). However, the role of CC in career and personal empowerment was discovered to be more significant in India, where it has become more sophisticated, incorporating personalized guidance and creating industrial exposure (Giri, 2024).



Conversely, most Ugandan learners lack CC services and so make career choices based on grades and family influence (Kabunga, 2020; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). However, some urban secondary schools and higher education institutions have made it a point to provide CC services to the learners through annual career days and job shadowing, though not consistently (Barigye, 2024; Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018). No wonder Otwine et al. (2022) recommended increased CC space in the school curriculum to empower students towards making better career decisions in the future. Nevertheless, CC services are a key precursor for career and personal empowerment for learners in both Uganda and India. Institutional and policy frameworks for CC services exist in both Uganda and India, although the depth of integration into school systems differs. After all, translating CC into career and personal empowerment depends heavily on institutional support and policy environments.

In India, for instance, the stronger policy push through national initiatives and growing incorporation of CC into education programs provides schools and colleges with explicit mandates and, in some cases, resources to run CC services (Goswami et al., 2023; Sharma & Ahuja, 2017). Structured CC programs are also increasingly available, especially in urban and private schools and higher education institutions (Sharma & Ahuja, 2017). There are better-developed national policies through national organizations such as NEP, CBSE, and partnerships with private organizations to deliver CC services across schools, though accessibility remains uneven, especially in rural settings (Das & Sharma, 2023; Saxena & Wadhvani, 2022; Sharma & Ahuja, 2017). In fact, NCS is emphasizing the implementation of ICT in CC programs for even accessibility by all learners (Chadha et al., 2018). Uganda, in contrast, has policy documents such as the *Career Guidance Handbook* (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2014), but implementation is inconsistent (Masereje, 2016). This contrast indicates that policy presence and documentation alone are not enough without essential enforcement and monitoring. Thus, the role of CC is still emerging, often relying on efforts by ill-prepared career teachers rather than systematic programs (Nsubuga & Kronholz, 2018; Masereje, 2016). This suggests that while CC contributes to empowerment in both contexts, the institutional support systems vary in strength.

Study Implications

Based on the study findings, there is a need for policy strengthening and resources in both contexts, though much more is needed in Uganda. Investing in human capital through training, certification, and employing full-time career counsellors in schools where specialist resources are scarce is equally important. Incorporating ICT in both contexts would be an added advantage for the even provision of CC services to all learners, despite their location, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds.

VI. CONCLUSION

The review shows that career counselling is a strong foundation for both career and personal empowerment in both Uganda and India, though each country's approach towards CC is different. Uganda's strength lies in its national policy framework that provides structure, while India benefits from diverse national and private sectors and technology-driven initiatives. Both contexts, however, face challenges such as limited trained counsellors and unequal access, which require clear embedment in supportive policy structures, trained personnel, constant monitoring and supervision, closer alignment with labour market demands, and inclusion in the school curriculum and space. Overall, CC can only achieve its full potential if supported by stronger institutional frameworks, adequate resources, and strategies that ensure equitable access for all learners.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Akinlolu, M., Omotayo, T., Ebohon, O. J., & Ekundayo, D. (2023). An Analysis of the Mediation Effect of Socio-Cultural Factors on Students' Career Choice Outcomes in the Built Environment: Applying the Socio-Cognitive Career Theory. *Education Sciences*, 13(10), 1035. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13101035>
- [2]. Anne, O., Joseph, O., Kiweewa, J. M., & Nsamba, S. (2018). Career guidance and counselling in Uganda: current developments and challenges. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 7(11), 107-113. <https://www.academia.edu/download/67160512/98914.pdf>



- [3]. Arulmani, G. (2013). Career psychology: A cultural approach for India. *Psychological studies*, 58(4), 395-405.
- [4]. Auf, T. A. and Arinaitwe, J. (2022). Guidelines, Frameworks, and Practices of School Guidance and Counselling: A Comparison between Uganda and Germany. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences* 3(2), 58-63. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.46606/eajess2022v03i02.0159>.
- [5]. Barigye, D. (2024). Technical vocational education and training in Uganda: Career guidance and practices. *African Journal of Career Development*, 6(1), 100. <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.4102/ajcd.v6i1.100>
- [6]. Chadha, N. K., Gambhir, V., & Mahavidyalya, C. (2018). The state of career services and career professionals in India. *International practices of career services, credentials, and training içinde*, 112-127.
- [7]. Craig, D. (2016). Transforming culture through personal and career empowerment. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 48(2), 67-73. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ICT-08-2015-0054>
- [8]. Das, S., & Sharma, S. (2023). Integrating Career Counselling in the Framework of NEP 2020: Opportunities and Challenges. *Journal-of-Survey-in-Fisheries-Sciences-2368-7487* <https://doi.org/10.53555/sfs.v10i1.3393>
- [9]. Edwards-Fapohunda, D. M. O. (2024). The role of adult learning and education in community development: A case study of New York. *Iconic Research and Engineering Journals*, 8(1), 437-454.
- [10]. Giri, P. (2024). The Evolving Landscape of Career Counselling in India: Stakeholders and Contemporary Approaches. Atharv Prakashan, Bhopal (M.P.). <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388556859>
- [11]. Goswami, R., Mukherjee, S., PCI India, Chaudhuri, I., Chaudhary, P., Wadia, L., Shanker, R., Gupta, A., Saxena, S., Prakash, K., & Misra, P. (2023). Counselling and guidance in school education. PCI India. <https://www.pciglobal.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/NEP-Policy-Review-Counselling.pdf>
- [12]. Grabarski, M. K., Kalyal, H., Konrad, A. M., Mouratidou, M., Shin, D., & Sullivan, S. E. (2025). Career empowerment: a qualitative exploratory investigation of perceived career control. *Career Development International*, 30(3), 255-271. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/cdi-09-2023-0312/full/html>
- [13]. Herath, G., Kumara, B., Ishanka, U., & Rathnayaka, R. (2024). Computer-Assisted Career Guidance Tools for Students' Career Path Planning: A review on Enabling technologies and applications. *Journal of Information Technology Education Research*, 23, 006. <https://doi.org/10.28945/5265>
- [14]. Jain P. (2017). Impact of career guidance and counselling on students' career development. *International Journal of Research - Granthaalayah*, 5(6), 49-52 <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.805895>
- [15]. Kabunga, A. (2020). Career info, counselling, and occupational choices among learners in secondary schools in Mbarara district, Uganda. *Research Journal's Journal of Economics*, 8, 1-7. <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=8i4rsfgAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=sra>
- [16]. Knettel, B. A., Luke, M. M., Kiweewa, J. M., Nsubuga, H., Darkis, J. T., Afriyie, O., & Ojiambo, D. (2019). Stakeholder Perspectives on School-Based Guidance and Counselling in Uganda: Emerging priorities for student support and teacher training. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 42(1), 81-96. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10447-019-09390-w>
- [17]. Kumar, S. (2025). Career Guidance for Empowering Girls and Women in India: Cultural Preparedness Perspective. In *Women and Empowerment: Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5* (pp. 1-13). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- [18]. Kumari, S., & Sahoo, M. (2022). Role of Career Counselling in Fostering Career Maturity among Higher Secondary School Students in India. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies*, 4(1), 170-175. <https://mitanjalisahoo.github.io/publications/publication8.html>
- [19]. Lame, G. (2019, July). Systematic literature reviews: An introduction. In *Proceedings of the design society: international conference on engineering design* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 1633-1642). Cambridge University Press. <http://doi.org/10.1017/dsi.2019.169>



- [20]. Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., and Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *J. Vocat. Behav.* 45, 79–122.
<http://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027>
- [21]. Lent, R. W., and Brown, S. D. (2013). Social cognitive model of career self-management: Toward a unifying view of adaptive career behaviour across the life span. *J. Counsel. Psychol.* 60, 557–568.
<http://doi.org/10.1037/a0033446>
- [22]. Lent, R. W., and Brown, S. D. (2019). Social cognitive career theory at 25: Empirical status of the interest, choice, and performance models. *J. Vocat. Behav.* 115, 103316.
<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.06.004>
- [23]. Maserejje, J. (2016, February 22). Uganda: What's the schools' role in career guidance? The Observer (Kampala). <http://allafrica.com/stories/201602230528.html>
- [24]. Ministry of Education and Sports. (2014). Career guidance handbook. Ministry of Education and Sports.
https://kawa.ac.ug/careerguidance_ebook/
- [25]. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. (2020). Population Statistics of India (pp. 28–32) [Report].
https://mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Youth_in_India_2022/Statistical_Profile.pdf
- [26]. Mishra, R., & Chaudhary, P. (2017). Guidance and counselling at secondary school: a review of literature. *BPAS Journal of Education*, 1(1and2), 71-90.
- [27]. Muhwezi, M. R. L; Aseey, A; Ondicho, T & Otieno, CMA (2023). Examination of The Impact of Vocational Education and Training on Women's Career Development in Uganda. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(6), 91-109.
- [28]. Nabawanuka, P. (2023). Female lecturers' initiatives in support of their academic career progression. A case of selected universities in Uganda. *African Journal of Education, Science and Technology*, 7(3), 799-813.
- [29]. NACAC & IC3 Institute. (2020). Paving the Path to Success: A Snapshot of Career and College Counselling in India. In NACAC.
<https://ic3institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/IC3-Institute-NACAC-Survey-Report.pdf>
- [30]. Nam, B. H., & Marshall, R. C. (2022). Social cognitive career theory: The experiences of Korean college student-athletes on dropping out of male team sports and creating pathways to empowerment. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 937188.
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.937188/full>
- [31]. Nsubuga, H., & Kronholz, J. (2018). The state of career services in Uganda. *International practices of career services, credentials, and training*, 185-194.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322274830>
- [32]. Okiror, J.J., & Otabong, D. (2015). Factors influencing career choice among undergraduate students in an African university context: The case of agriculture students at Makerere University. Uganda. *Journal of Dynamics in Agricultural Research*, 2(2), 12-20.
- [33]. Otwine, A. T., Matagi, L., Kiweewa, J. M., & Ainamaani, H. E. (2022). Efficacy of career guidance and counselling among secondary schools in Uganda. *African Journal of Career Development*, 4(1).
<https://doi.org/10.4102/ajcd.v4i1.55>
- [34]. Otwine, A., Mukyawe, S. N., Tweheyo, M., & Matagi, L. (2025a). Historical Development of Guidance and Counselling in Uganda. In *Careers in Africa: Trends, Opportunities and Challenges* (pp. 17-37). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- [35]. Otwine, A., Matagi, L., & Baguma, P. (2025b). Career self-concept of students and school-based career guidance and counselling. A case study of secondary schools in the Ankole sub-region, Southwestern Uganda. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 53(2), 262-286.
- [36]. Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., & Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *bmj*, 372.
<https://www.bmj.com/content/372/bmj.n71.short>



- [37]. Popov, N., & Spasenovic, V. (2020). School Counselling: A Comparative Study in 12 Countries. Bulgarian Comparative Education Society. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED608402>
- [38]. Saini, N., Kaur, D., & Mir, S. A. (2023). Youth Unemployment in India: A Multifaceted and Tenacious Challenge. *Journal of Survey in Fisheries Sciences* (ISSN: 2368-7487), 10(1), 3637-3643.
- [39]. Sarkis-Onofre, R., Catalá-López, F., Aromataris, E., & Lockwood, C. (2021). How to properly use the PRISMA Statement. *Systematic reviews*, 10(1), 117.
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s13643-021-01671-z>
- [40]. Saxena, S., & Wadhvani, I. (2022). Indian Students' Attitude towards Guidance and Counselling. *International Journal for Innovative Research in Multidisciplinary Field*, 8(6).
- [41]. Sharma, P., & Ahuja, A. (2017). A study on the career maturity of Indian adolescents with respect to their educational settings. *International Journal of Home Science*, 3(1), 242–245.
<http://www.homesciencejournal.com/archives/2017/vol3issue1/PartD/3-1-32.pdf>
- [42]. Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2024: The National Population and Housing Census 2024 – Final Report - Volume 1 (Main), Kampala, Uganda.
<https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/National-Population-and-Housing-Census-2024-Final-Report-Volume-1-Main.pdf>
- [43]. Van der Heijden, B. I. J. M., & De Vos, A. (2015). Sustainable careers: Introductory chapter. In A. De Vos & B. I. J. M. van der Heijden (Eds.), *Handbook of research on sustainable careers* (pp. 1–19). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781782547037.00006>
- [44]. Wang, D., Liu, X., & Deng, H. (2022). The perspectives of the social cognitive career theory approach in current times. *Frontiers in psychology*, 13, 1023994.
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1023994/full>
- [45]. World Bank. (2017). Uganda Economic Update, December 2017: Accelerating Uganda's Development, Ending Child Marriage, Educating Girls. World Bank
<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/professional-counselling-and-career-guidance-holistic-education>

APPENDIX 1

Extraction and Synthesis Table

The extraction and synthesis table was organised in accordance with the objectives of the study to generate the themes for the study findings.

To examine the role of career counselling services in supporting career and personal empowerment among learners in secondary schools and higher education institutions in Uganda and India.

Author	Year	Country	Population	Key Findings
Giri	2024	India		-CC is important in supporting individual and societal well-being. -Helps students navigate their career paths more effectively -Empowers individuals to make informed choices aligned with their interests, aptitudes, and market demands for a fulfilling career journey.
Saxena and Wadhvani	2022	India	Students	-CC addresses educational and career development issues and gives guidance on courses.
Kumari and Sahoo	2022	India	Higher Secondary School Students	-CC helps in developing career maturity.
NACAC and	2020	India	High School	-CC and guidance are valuable



IC3 Institute.			Counsellors and Teachers	-Helps students explore careers, course selection, and the college admission process
Chadha et al.,	2018	India	Youth	-Counselling services can effectively facilitate career decision-making in the young, assuming a special urgency in the Indian situation. -Provides information about skill development courses, apprenticeship, and CC, along with all employment and career-related services
Mishra and Chaudhary	2017	India	Secondary School Learners	-Guides learners in preparing themselves for entry into the careers of their choice, and to get a suitable job.
Sharma and Ahuja	2017	India	Secondary school Students	-Career education is very important, especially in the context of recent changes in the education system, which aims to bridge the gap between work-oriented education and mature career choices.
Jain	2017	India		-Effective career counselling gives students a deeper insight into questions they have, to help them better plan their future and to actually use their attributes well. -It supports people to face career-related challenges. -Career counsellors support people in gaining a better understanding of what really matters for them personally, how they can plan their careers autonomously, and help them make tough decisions. -There is a significant effect of career guidance and counselling on students' career development is accepted
Arulmani	2013	India		-Career guidance and counselling are based almost exclusively on understanding the individual's interest profile
Otwine et al.,	2025a	Uganda	Schools	-CC improved their career decisions based on knowledge of occupations and career self-concept
Otwine, et al.,	2025b	Uganda	Secondary School	-CC creates a correlation between students' career self-concept and career counselling and guidance
Barigye	2024	Uganda	Technical Vocational Education and Training	-Functional career guidance systems could help students in three holistic ways: lifelong learning goals, labour market outcomes, and social equity and social inclusion goals
Muhwezi et al.,	2023	Uganda	Women with Technical and	-CC is beneficial for women's career development



			Vocational Education and Training	
Auf and Arinaitwe	2022	Uganda		-Effective CC provides learners with the ability to cope with the social, economic, and work environment requirements -CC programs are effective in empowering students in career-related decisions
Otwine et al.,	2022	Uganda	Secondary School Learners	-CC helps to deal with anxieties related to career indecision, decisions on subject combination and career path, course of study in higher education, and the nature of employment
Kabunga	2020	Uganda	Secondary Schools	-CC provides career info that helps the learners to make better choices regarding careers
Anne et al.,	2018	Uganda	Secondary School	-Career decision-making is perceived to be a key output of career guidance and counselling among students at all levels

To compare the institutional and policy frameworks guiding the delivery of career counselling services in Uganda and India.

Author	Year	Country	Population	Key Findings
Giri	2024	India		-Specialized career counselling services within educational institutions -Career guidance cells were established in schools and colleges -There is a shift in the focus of CC from solely providing information about different careers to emphasizing self-exploration and personal development -CC has become more sophisticated, incorporating psychometric assessments, personalized guidance, and exposure to industry professionals -Initiated government programs for career counselling and guidance for students and job seekers nationwide. -There are also private players and organizations
Saxena and Wadhwani.	2022	India	Learners	-The CBSE made it mandatory to have a trained school counsellor in all its schools. -Laid out that every student has at least twenty sessions of counselling in an academic year
NACAC and	2020	India	High School Counsellors	-National Education Policy emphasizes



IC3 Institute.			and Teachers	the alignment of academics with vocational education and careers -Most counsellors work in-house as part of the school staff, while a few are in-house but employed part-time -Others are outsourced career counsellors
Chadha et al.,	2018	India		-National Career Service (NCS), a portal to meet the growing demand of comprehensive career services for its aspiring population. -There is widespread access to services through multiple access channels such as a web portal, mobile devices, Common Services Centres (CSCs), and career centres. -Rashtriya Madhyamaik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) offers education and career services to the potential youth of the country -Use of ICT in CC programs
Jain	2017	India		-In Indian educational frame work, career counselling is not a necessary step. -The trend of career guidance in India is not satisfactory
Otwine, et al.,	2025b	Uganda	Secondary School	-Most secondary schools in Uganda provide career guidance and counselling.
Auf and Arinaitwe	2022	Uganda		-Well-established guidance and counselling curriculum
Otwine et al.,	2022	Uganda	Secondary School Learners	-Three main ways CC information is shared with students: general special careers day, careers' class day and class meetings. -Teachers are encouraged to integrate career education into curriculum delivery to assist students in naturalising career information into classroom learning -Increasing CC space in the school curriculum may empower students to make better career decisions in the future.
Kabunga	2020	Uganda	Secondary Schools	-There are physical structures to strengthen and provide counselling and



				information among learners. -The government, through the Ministry of Education and Sports, provides training, training manuals and the required information.
Nsubuga and Kronholz	2018	Uganda		-CC starts in high secondary, with a few services in some higher education institutions. -Informal CC services provided by teachers, parents, and family -There are also many “self-styled” career coaches, who serve as career coaches, though without training -CC services are provided as an event and not a process -No formal system -Not yet much has been done to develop career services in the higher education sector. -Some schools established partnerships with other universities and organisations within and outside Uganda -The government has not taken serious steps to ensure there are trained people to provide career services in schools or set up structures to provide and monitor the service -Pilot training for career masters has been done.
Anne et al.,	2018	Uganda	Secondary School	-Uganda has made strides towards promoting CC to produce students who are prepared to make adequate career decisions -CC is provided by teachers, counsellors, professionals, the private sector, old students, and other government officials. -The government of Uganda has made an effort to invest in career guidance and counselling at all levels of education through infrastructure development, human resources, capacity building, publication and distribution of career guidance materials



To identify the challenges in the implementation of career counselling programs in secondary schools and higher education institutions in Uganda and India.

Author	Year	Country	Population	Key Findings
Giri	2024	India		-The country's diverse socioeconomic and cultural landscape is a challenge to effective CC implementation -CC was often perceived as a luxury rather than a necessary component of human development. -Limited resources, accessibility barriers, and the need for counsellors' comprehensive training and professional development. -The lack of correspondence between an individual's stated occupational preference and his/her responses on a measure of career interest
Saxena and Wadhwani	2022	India	Learners	-Underutilization of counselling facilities
Kumari and Sahoo	2022	India	Higher Secondary School Learners	-Difficult for CC to reach most of the youth, and so suggested incorporating an online-based platform in CC services
NACAC and IC3 Institute.	2020	India	High School Counsellors and Teachers	-Lack of resources, such as space and technology infrastructure -Lack of timely and adequate CC services -Lack of trained professionals -Inadequate amount of intensity of counselling by grade level
Mishra and Chaudhary	2017	India	Secondary School Learners	-Guidance has not yet been paid proper and adequate attention; hence, career guidance has not yielded the desired objectives
Otwine, et al.,	2025b	Uganda	Secondary School	-The students' self-concept revealed a bias in favour of conventional domains regarding career choices, school subject combinations, and career interests.
Barigye	2024	Uganda	Technical Vocational Education and Training	-The current career guidance practice is weighed down by a lack of funds, trained personnel, and policy. -Many studies explore career practices in secondary schools, thus examining CC approaches in TVET as an entity is new. -Poor self-confidence resulting from a lack of career information, counselling and professional guidance remains unresolved
Otwine et	2022	Uganda	Secondary School	-Little has been documented about



al.,			Learners	students' levels of awareness, utilisation and extent of implementation of career guidance and counselling services within secondary schools in Uganda - challenges to implementation were cited, -Lack of time for related activities -Limited information about the teacher-in-training CC -Lack of awareness about the relationship between career self-awareness and academic achievement -Lack of career information materials
Auf and Arinaitwe	2022	Uganda		-A lot of information for guiding learners towards making informed career decisions is missing. -Uganda lacks a well-established CC program for immigrants. -Lack of CC resources -Shortage of professionals -Lack of research and funding for CC services -The activeness of the CC department was lacking, given the unavailability of documents on the ministry website and the lack of enforcement.
Kabunga	2020	Uganda	Secondary Schools and Colleges	-Modern CC facilities are lacking in most secondary schools in Uganda, and Mbarara in particular. -Most professional counsellors and, more so, teacher counsellors in Uganda lack the skills to use standardised assessment instruments -There has tended to be an overemphasis on studying career aspirations, and a lack of research on other important aspects of learners' career development. -Sadly, the pressure for getting the best grades, which are also a basis for determining what learners can do, forces the learners to make ill-advised decisions, thus affecting their future careers.
Knettel et al.,	2019	Uganda	Secondary Schools	-Lack of training for CC practitioners. -Lack of time, resources
Nsubuga and Kronholz	2018	Uganda		-No formalised training of CC service providers -No system of providing CC services at different stages of an individual's growth



				or level of study in Uganda -Lack of standardisation of CC services and oversight from the Ministry of Education -CC services are lacking due to budget constraints and a shortage of trained professionals. -No follow-up to determine the effectiveness of the CC service by the service providers. - No current indication that current career services are effective - There is almost no research done in the career services field within a Ugandan context
Anne et al.,	2018	Uganda	Secondary School	-There are glaring gaps in human resources, capacity building, inadequate training manuals, lack of career information and standardized assessment tools, high student and career masters/ counsellor ratio, and the general lack of school counsellor education, supervision, and certification at national level. -Overconcentration on curricular activities, role conflict on the part of career masters, poor funding, and general attitude towards career guidance and counselling
Okiror and Otabong	2015	Uganda	University Students	-Choices are often made with little information and awareness, due to lack of adequate career guidance -Students end up in wrong courses that were not their first choices.

