STUDENT-CENETERED LEARNING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

In 2005, upon joining the Bologna process, one of the principal challenges faced by the Georgian education system was the integration of a student-centered learning within Georgian higher education. Although a specific definition of student-centered learning is not outlined, its primary objective is to cultivate a learning environment customized to the student's interests and capabilities. The Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Ministerial Communiqué underscores that student-centered learning aids students in acquiring the skills crucial for navigating a dynamic labor market. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to develop a conceptual framework based on the narrative literature review, focusing on student-centered learning and its influence on career success. Student-centered learning comprises two core components. The first component pertains to the institutional conditions required for its introduction and implementation, while the second component encompasses innovative teaching methodologies. Through the conducted analysis, the skills acquired as a consequence of the student-centered approach, imperative for prospering in the labor market, were identified. These include problem-solving abilities, creative and critical thinking, communication skills and teamwork. In addition to the skills acquired through student-centered learning, influence on career success is exerted by various other factors. These encompass external (objective) and internal (subjective) criteria, along with variables related to human capital.

Keywords: *higher education, student-centered learning, career, success*

This research PHDF-23-7515 has been supported by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (SRNSFG).

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Introduction

In 2005 together with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Ukraine Georgia joined Bologna Process at Bergen Summit (Bologna, 2005). This year Georgia started to reform its education system. Among the goals Georgia wanted to achieve, one of the main objectives was the implementation of student-centred learning (SCL) in the Georgian higher education system (გოგსაძე, 2015).

The main idea is that in student-centered learning, the model switches from the standardized to the student-centered and individualized, even though there isn't a universal definition or set program for its implementation. This indicates that the instruction is tailored to each student's individual requirements, objectives, and interests and was created with their input (Kaput, 2018).

It can be said that student-centered learning cultures are based on constructivist findings, taking into account the activity of learners in the process of knowledge acquisition; emphasizing self-regulated and autonomous learning processes that occur in social interaction; taking into account social, emotional, and motivational aspects of the learning process in addition to cognitive factors; responsive to varying prior knowledge and experiences; and involving an active participation of students (Wulf, 2017).

Research results show that student-centred learning strategies have a positive impact on student achievement. When student-centered strategies are used, student engagement in learning and teaching processes is much higher than it is in the teacher-centered group (Gelişli, 2009). Student-centered instruction improves students' integrative motivation, attitudes, self-efficacy, autonomy, and beliefs about learning (Kassem, 2019). Active learning methods also increase student engagement (Gordon, Bolwell, Raney, & Zepke, 2022).

It must be said that, there has only been a small amount of comprehensive research on student-centred learning (SCL). However, the limited research that has been conducted has yielded promising results (Kaput, 2018). If we examine the scientific research conducted in both Georgian and international contexts regarding the influence of SCL on career success, we find a lack of comparable studies. However, it is worth noting that after two decades of the Bologna process, there is a growing need to prioritize this Issue. Especially since The Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Ministerial Communiqué confirms this (Bologna Process, 2009):“Student-centred learning and mobility will help students develop the competences they need in a changing labour market and will empower them to become active and responsible citizens.”

Literature Review

The determination of the ideal educational philosophy is a contentious matter that frequently takes the shape of a struggle between the two most common teaching philosophies: the teacher/expert approach and the student-centered approach. The primary source of knowledge, according to the first strategy, is the teacher. In order to understand content, the student is expected to adhere to the teacher's directions and information (Sablonnière, Taylor, & Sadykova, 2009). Students who use the teacher-centered approach concentrate solely on the instructor. In this system, teachers are the only participants in classroom activities. Teachers are the main sources of information in the teacher-centered approach (Kumar, 2016).

The second strategy contends that education should be based on the needs and skills of the student. Instead of imparting knowledge, the teacher's job is that of a facilitator in the learning process (Sablonnière, Taylor, & Sadykova, 2009). Students can concentrate solely on their education thanks to the student-centered approach. The learner-centered approach, often referred to as the student-centered approach, is a teaching strategy in which the emphasis of instruction is shifted from the teacher to the students. By giving students control over their own learning path, student-centered learning seeks to promote learner autonomy and independence in its original usage. Learning is not something you watch. Simply sitting in class, paying attention to the teacher, memorizing prewritten tasks, and spouting out responses does not teach students very much. They must discuss what they are learning, put it in writing, connect it to prior knowledge, and use it in their daily lives. They must integrate what they learn with who they are (Kumar, 2016).

Although there is no universally agreed-upon definition or prescribed program for implementing SCL, the core concept revolves around shifting from a standardized approach to a student-centered and individualized one (Kaput, 2018). Understanding student-centered learning requires a fundamental understanding of the constructivist approach. According to constructivist theories of effectiveness, learning is more effective when students are actively involved and in charge of what and how they learn (Schweisfurth & Elliott, 2019).

The implementation of a student-centered and individualized approach implies that the institution must establish suitable conditions for it. According to Pellert (2009), the implementation of any type of change, including the changes advocated by the Bologna Process, which encourages innovative learning approaches, necessitates organizational development. Pellert describes organizational development as a deliberate and systematic process aimed at enhancing the social system within an organization. Pellert emphasizes that organizational development centers around group and organizational processes, focusing on activities that enhance team dynamics, processes, and overall performance. This approach involves active engagement from all levels of the organization, including executives and managers, to ensure the self-organization of all groups involved (Pellert, 2009). Likewise, De La Sablonnière et al. (2009) explore a normative theory of social change to implement a student-centered learning approach in Kyrgyzstan. They highlight the necessity for both students and teachers to modify their perspectives and behaviors towards education. Drawing upon the Normative Theory of Social Change they discuss, the authors propose a practical solution aimed at facilitating the transition from a predominantly teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach, which represents a minority influence (Sablonnière, Taylor, & Sadykova, 2009).

In student-centered learning, the role of the student is closely interconnected with that of the teacher. Abel et al. (2009) demonstrate how, as the learning approach becomes less teacher-centered, teachers assume a role akin to that of a "coach" who guides the students through the learning process, fostering a culture of collaboration and cooperation. As part of student-centered learning, teachers adopt a different approach, reducing their reliance on traditional lecturing and becoming more present in the classroom rather than positioned solely at the front. This shift in power dynamics facilitates a shared teacher-student relationship, promoting mutual ownership of the education process (Abel & Campbell, 2009).

Research aim and research questions

While The Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Ministerial Communiqué clearly states that student-centered learning will assist students in developing the competencies they need in a dynamic labour market (Bologna Process, 2009), the question arise: What skills and competencies are discussed in the literature that students acquire after receiving an education through student-centered learning and that are needed for their career success? Paul Gibbs and collegeaus note in their work that there appears to be a lack of consistent and unified understanding regarding the meaning of student-centered learning within the context of higher education in Georgia (Gibbs, et al., 2022). Therefore, the question arises, what is meant by student-centered learning?

Hence, the purpose of this study is to develop a conceptual framework, rooted in the literature, that encompasses the key elements of student-centered learning, as well as the skills and abilities students cultivate through this approach, ultimately fostering their future career success.

Research Methodology

Scientific literature review articles are methodical studies that gather research findings from databases. Their main objective is to provide an objective, theoretical examination of a certain subject or theme. Systematic and narrative reviews of the literature are the two basic categories of review papers that are frequently encountered in the scientific literature. These two different categories of review articles have different traits and objectives (Rother, 2007).

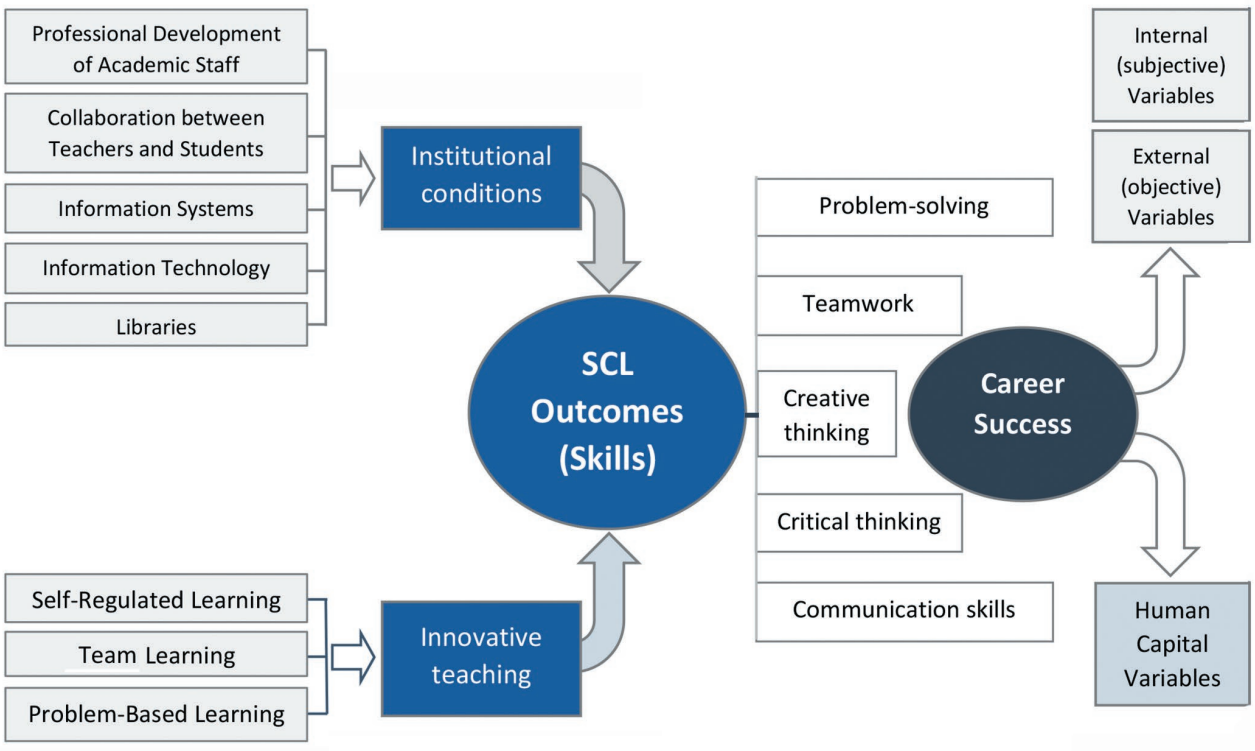
A systematic literature review is a well-planned review that uses a systematic and explicit process to find, choose, and critically assess the results of the studies included in the literature review to address specified research objectives. Articles that undertake systematic literature reviews are regarded as original work since they adhere to strict methodological standards. The state of science related to a particular topic or issue is described and discussed in narrative literature review articles from a theoretical and contextual perspective. These review articles don't specify the kinds of databases, analytical methodologies, or inclusion standards for retrieved articles from database searches that were used to conduct the review. Critical evaluation of the literature found in books and online or print journal articles makes up a narrative review. Narrative literature review articles have an important role in continuing education because they provide readers with up-to-date knowledge about a specific topic or theme. However, this type of review does not describe the methodological approach that would permit reproduction of data nor answer to specific quantitative research questions. These review articles normally use a qualitative approach using the following headings: Introduction, Development (using necessary sub-headings to divide and discuss appropriately the topic), Discussion, and References (Rother, 2007).

In order to develop a conceptual framework, a narrative literature analysis was conducted. Both scientific literature and documents related to the Bologna process and student-centered learning were analyzed.

Research results: Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature analysis, 2 main elements of student-centered teaching were investigated. These are, institutional conditions for student-centered learning and Innovative Teaching. These 2 elements are also broken down into punts on what each of them means.

Figure 1: ***Conceptual Framework***



Institutional conditions for student-centered learning: While the implementation of the student-centered learning approach is primarily a pedagogical concern that can and should be undertaken by individual teachers in their classrooms, the transition towards SCL at the institutional level requires organization, consistency, and transparency (Attard, Ioio, Geven, & Santa, 2010). Consequently, the cultural transformation towards the student-centered learning (SCL) approach should be fostered throughout all levels and areas of a higher education institution (HEI), as emphasized by Kember (2009) in his examination of strategies to promote SCL university-wide (Kember, 2009).

For educators in higher education, transitioning to a student-centered learning approach and sustaining it can be a complex endeavor. Particularly for teachers accustomed to a teacher-centered environment, the initial stage presents challenges as both educators and students grapple with questioning their deeply ingrained assumptions (Deikelmann & Lampe, 2004). Lavoie (2007) demonstrates the significant role of professional development in driving the transition to a student-centered approach and its continuous development within higher education institutions. He highlights the importance of motivated and supported faculty in achieving teaching excellence. However, many educators lack the necessary guidance to effectively incorporate the concepts of active student-centered learning and information literacy into their own professional development and course design, which could further enhance their teaching practice (Lavoie, 2007).

According to Arko-Cobbah (2004), the presence of suitable infrastructure plays a crucial role in the development of student-centered learning. The researcher highlights the importance of having an infrastructure that is capable of supporting students and facilitating their construction of knowledge. This infrastructure encompasses various forms of media, including digital, print, and multimedia. He emphasizes the significance of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) as a central component in the learning process, particularly in the context of student-centered learning (Arko-Cobbah, 2004).

In order to enhance the effectiveness of professional development for teachers, it is essential to integrate three key areas of knowledge: Content, Pedagogy, and Technology. Specifically, the pedagogical and technological Knowledge domains are of utmost importance when designing training programs that aim to leverage the transformative potential of information and communication technologies (ICT) in transitioning to student-centered learning (SCL). The amalgamation of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge is crucial for teachers to grasp the pedagogical implications and recognize the potential of utilizing ICT and SCL in their instructional practices (Muianga, Barbutiu, & Hansson, 2019).

The aforementioned points prompt us to acknowledge the vital significance of libraries in the context of student-centered learning (SCL), serving as the primary hub for storing, accessing, and distributing information (Attard, Ioio, Geven, & Santa, 2010).

Innovative teaching: Innovative teaching is a core aspect that has been widely acknowledged in the literature, referred to as a significant parameter of SCL (Attard, Ioio, Geven, & Santa, 2010). Its primary objective is to enhance students' critical thinking abilities (Tsui, 2002). In its application, innovative teaching can take different forms (Attard, Ioio, Geven, & Santa, 2010): Team Learning, Problem-Based Learning, Student Self-Regulated Learning.

SCL Learning outcomes required for career success: In the modern world, the following factors are recognised as fundamental to professional success: Problem-solving abilities, creative and critical thinking, communication skills, and teamwork (Gordon, Bolwell, Raney, & Zepke, 2022).

Other factors affecting career success: In addition to the skills gained through student-centered learning, there are other factors that influence career success. From here it is necessary to study the influence of various factors affecting career success. In general, career success is measured by external (objective) and internal (subjective) criteria. Objective criteria encompass tangible and observable aspects such as salary and career advancement (Jaskolka, Beyer, & Trice, 1985) (Dries, Pepermans, & Carlier, 2008). On the other hand, subjective criteria are influenced by individual personality traits, including the sense of satisfaction derived from career accomplishments (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Aspiring to secure employment with a reputable company (Spangler, 1992) and attaining a satisfactory income (Kirchmeyer, 1998) are common aspirations for individuals seeking professional success. However, some professionals who meet these goals do not consider themselves successful because the economic aspect does not necessarily influence their perception of ca-

reer success (Kirchmeyer, 1998) (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). Research demonstrates that human capital variables also significantly contribute to career success as they directly impact salary growth and professional status (Erdogan, Kraimer, & Liden, 2004) (Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk, & Beutell, 1996).

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of narrative literature conducted within the framework of the described research, a conceptual framework was developed to illustrate the impact of skills acquired through student-centered learning on career success. Student-centered learning, in turn, is divided into two parts: the first part is related to the institutional conditions necessary for its introduction and implementation, and the second part encompasses innovative teaching. Through the conducted analysis, the skills acquired as a result of the student-centered approach, which are essential for success in the labor market, were identified (see Figure 1). However, it is worth noting that during the implementation of empirical research, other factors influencing an individual's career success should be taken into account. This consideration is reflected in the conceptual framework developed within the scope of this study.

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