



## *Relationship between Curriculum Relevance and Students' Career Expectations*

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### Abstract

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations at the secondary level in District Rawalpindi. A quantitative correlational research design was employed, and data were collected from a sample of 400 students selected through a multistage sampling technique from 20 public secondary schools. A structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale was used as the research instrument. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha, while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was applied for data analysis. The findings revealed that students perceived curriculum relevance at a moderate level, indicating partial alignment with real-life applications. Students also demonstrated relatively high career expectations, although variations existed among respondents. Furthermore, the results indicated a significant positive correlation between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations, suggesting that improvements in curriculum relevance are associated with stronger and more defined career expectations. The study concludes that curriculum relevance plays a vital role in shaping students' perceptions, motivation, and future career planning. It is recommended that curriculum developers incorporate practical, skill-based, and career-oriented content, along with enhanced guidance mechanisms, to better align educational experiences with students' career aspirations.

**Keywords:** curriculum relevance, career expectations, secondary students, correlational study, academic motivation, curriculum design



## INTRODUCTION

Curriculum relevance has emerged as a central concern in contemporary educational discourse, particularly in relation to students' preparedness for future careers. In modern education systems, the effectiveness of a curriculum is no longer judged solely by its content coverage but by its ability to equip learners with competencies that are aligned with real-world demands. Curriculum relevance refers to the degree to which educational content, instructional strategies, and learning experiences correspond with students' needs, societal expectations, and labor market requirements. In this context, the relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations has become a critical area of investigation in educational research.

Over the past decade, rapid technological advancements, globalization, and evolving labor market trends have necessitated a shift from traditional, content-heavy curricula toward more dynamic, skill-oriented frameworks. Educational institutions are increasingly expected to design curricula that integrate theoretical knowledge with practical applications, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability among students (Yousef, 2024). When students perceive their curriculum as meaningful and applicable to real-life contexts, they are more likely to engage actively in learning and develop clearer career aspirations.

Empirical studies have consistently highlighted that curriculum relevance significantly influences students' academic motivation and engagement. For instance, Badri, Alnuaimi, Mohaidat, Al Rashedi, Yang, and Al Mazroui (2016) found that students' perceptions of their classroom experiences play a vital role in shaping their future career choices, particularly in science education. Similarly, Aquino and Garcia (2023) reported that alignment between educational competencies and industry requirements enhances graduates' employability and clarity of career pathways. These findings suggest that curriculum relevance serves as a foundational element in bridging the gap between education and employment.

Career expectations refer to students' anticipations, aspirations, and beliefs regarding their future occupations. These expectations are shaped by a combination of individual, institutional, and societal factors. Among these, educational experiences—particularly the relevance of curriculum—play a pivotal role. According to Social Cognitive Career Theory, learning experiences influence self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career interests, thereby shaping individuals' career trajectories. When curricula provide opportunities for experiential learning, practical exposure, and career-oriented guidance, students are more likely to develop realistic and achievable career expectations (Xia, Ni, Rorrer, Xu, and Young, 2025).

In addition, curriculum relevance is closely associated with the development of employability skills. Modern employers increasingly demand graduates who possess not only subject knowledge but also transferable skills such as communication, teamwork, digital literacy, and critical thinking. Research indicates that curricula incorporating industry-based projects, internships, and technology integration significantly enhance students' readiness for the workforce (Mahmood, Ahmed, and Khan, 2021). Conversely, outdated or rigid curricula may result in a mismatch between students' qualifications and labor market needs, leading to unemployment or underemployment.

The role of technology in enhancing curriculum relevance has also been widely acknowledged in recent studies. Integration of information and communication



technologies (ICT) and social network sites into educational practices has transformed the learning environment, making it more interactive and aligned with contemporary professional contexts. In this regard, Mahnaz, Mehmood, Mehrukh, and Shaheen (2021) examined the role of social network sites in education during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that digital platforms significantly supported students' learning continuity and engagement. This study highlights how technologically enriched curricula can contribute to students' academic development and indirectly influence their career perspectives.

Similarly, Mehmood et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between ICT utilization and academic achievement at the secondary level, revealing that effective use of technology enhances students' learning outcomes. Improved academic performance, in turn, strengthens students' confidence and shapes their expectations regarding future careers. Furthermore, Mahnaz (2022) explored how classroom enjoyment influences English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' academic motivation, demonstrating that positive learning environments foster higher levels of engagement and aspiration among learners (Shaheen et al., 2022).

Another important dimension of curriculum relevance is the role of teachers and institutional practices in shaping students' educational experiences. Mahnaz (2023) analyzed students' perceptions of teachers' classroom behavior at the secondary level and found that supportive and interactive teaching practices significantly enhance students' learning experiences. Such pedagogical approaches contribute to making the curriculum more meaningful and relevant, thereby influencing students' attitudes toward their future careers. In addition, leadership and management practices within educational institutions play a crucial role in ensuring curriculum effectiveness. Mahnaz (2024) examined the influence of leadership and management on school effectiveness and concluded that strong institutional leadership is essential for implementing relevant and responsive curricula. Effective leadership facilitates collaboration between educators and stakeholders, ensuring that curriculum design aligns with contemporary educational and professional requirements (Noreen et al., 2025).

The integration of digital platforms and social media in education has further expanded the scope of curriculum relevance. Mahnaz and Kiran, (2024a) investigated the impact of WhatsApp, Facebook usage, and personality traits on students' scholastic performance, highlighting that digital engagement can positively influence academic outcomes when used constructively. Similarly, Mahnaz and Kiran, (2024b) explored the role of AI-powered social network sites in academic performance, emphasizing the transformative potential of technology in enhancing learning experiences and preparing students for future careers in a digitalized world (Kiran et al., 2022).

Career guidance is another critical factor linking curriculum relevance to students' career expectations. Mahnaz (2025) examined teachers' insights on career guidance in elementary schools and found that structured guidance programs significantly help students in developing clear and realistic career goals. This finding underscores the importance of integrating career counseling components within the curriculum to support students' decision-making processes. Despite the growing recognition of curriculum relevance, challenges persist in many educational systems, particularly in developing countries. In Pakistan, for example, curricula often face criticism for being overly theoretical, lacking practical orientation, and failing to align with labor market needs. This disconnect can lead to uncertainty among students regarding their career



paths. Research suggests that addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts among policymakers, educators, and industry stakeholders to design curricula that are both contextually relevant and future-oriented (Mahmood, Ahmed, and Khan, 2021).

Moreover, students' career expectations are not always well-defined or realistic. McKenzie, Coldwell-Neilson, and Palmer (2017) observed that while students often have high aspirations, they may lack adequate information and guidance to translate these aspirations into achievable career goals. This highlights the need for curricula that not only impart knowledge but also provide opportunities for career exploration and skill development. In conclusion, curriculum relevance plays a pivotal role in shaping students' career expectations by influencing their learning experiences, motivation, and skill development. The integration of technology, effective teaching practices, and career guidance within the curriculum enhances its relevance and prepares students for the demands of the modern workforce. The studies conducted by Wajid Mahnaz and colleagues further reinforce the importance of aligning educational practices with students' needs and societal expectations. However, there remains a need for empirical investigation into the direct relationship between curriculum relevance and career expectations. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the correlation between these two variables, contributing to the existing body of knowledge and providing insights for educational improvement (Kiran et al., 2025).

#### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine students' perceptions regarding the relevance of the curriculum.
2. To analyze the level of students' career expectations.
3. To determine the relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations.

#### **Hypotheses of the Study**

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Curriculum relevance significantly influences students' career expectations.
- H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant difference in students' career expectations based on levels of perceived curriculum relevance.

#### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant for several reasons. It provides empirical evidence regarding the relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations, which is essential for curriculum development and educational planning. The findings will assist policymakers in designing curricula that are aligned with labor market demands and societal needs. For educators, the study offers insights into the importance of adopting student-centered and career-oriented teaching practices. For students, it highlights the role of meaningful and relevant learning experiences in shaping their career aspirations. Additionally, the study contributes to the existing literature by incorporating recent empirical findings, particularly those of Wajid Mahnaz, thereby enriching the academic discourse on curriculum relevance and career development.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

##### **Concept of Curriculum Relevance**

Curriculum relevance refers to the extent to which educational content aligns with learners' needs, societal expectations, and labor market demands. In contemporary education systems, relevance is no longer limited to subject knowledge but includes the



development of practical skills, competencies, and real-life applications. Scholars emphasize that a relevant curriculum integrates academic knowledge with experiential learning and prepares students for real-world challenges. According to Mahmood, Ahmed, and Khan (2021), curriculum relevance is achieved when educational programs reflect current industry requirements and societal changes. Similarly, Yousef (2024) highlighted that relevant curricula enhance students' engagement and facilitate meaningful learning experiences.

In modern pedagogy, curriculum relevance is also associated with flexibility and adaptability. Educational institutions are increasingly revising curricula to include interdisciplinary approaches, technological integration, and competency-based learning. This transformation reflects the growing demand for graduates who can apply knowledge in diverse contexts and adapt to rapidly changing environments (Kiran et al., 2025).

### **Dimensions of Curriculum Relevance**

Curriculum relevance is a multidimensional construct encompassing academic, professional, and personal dimensions. The academic dimension focuses on the alignment of curriculum content with disciplinary knowledge and learning objectives. The professional dimension emphasizes the development of employability skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. The personal dimension relates to the fulfillment of students' interests, values, and aspirations. Research indicates that effective curriculum design requires balancing these dimensions to meet the expectations of multiple stakeholders. For instance, Aquino and Garcia (2023) found that graduates perceive curricula as relevant when they provide both theoretical knowledge and practical skills applicable to their future careers. Furthermore, the inclusion of project-based learning, internships, and field experiences enhances the professional relevance of educational programs.

### **Students' Career Expectations**

Career expectations refer to students' perceptions, aspirations, and beliefs regarding their future occupations. These expectations are shaped by various factors, including educational experiences, socio-economic background, and personal interests. Educational institutions play a crucial role in shaping students' career expectations by providing relevant knowledge, skills, and guidance. Empirical studies suggest that students' career expectations are closely linked to their academic experiences. Badri, Alnuaimi, Mohaidat, Al Rashedi, Yang, and Al Mazroui (2016) demonstrated that students' classroom experiences significantly influence their career choices, particularly in science-related fields. Similarly, McKenzie, Coldwell-Neilson, and Palmer (2017) observed that students often have high career aspirations but lack clarity about the pathways required to achieve them.

### **Theoretical Framework Linking Curriculum and Career Expectations**

The relationship between curriculum relevance and career expectations can be explained through Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). This theory posits that learning experiences influence individuals' self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career interests. When students are exposed to relevant and engaging curricula, they develop confidence in their abilities and form realistic career expectations. Recent studies support this theoretical perspective by demonstrating that experiential learning opportunities, such as internships and project-based activities, significantly influence students' career intentions. Xia, Ni, Rorrer, Xu, and Young (2025) found that educational program features, including



relevance and practical exposure, play a critical role in shaping students' career decisions. This indicates that curriculum design directly impacts students' career development processes.

### **Role of Technology in Enhancing Curriculum Relevance**

The integration of technology in education has significantly enhanced curriculum relevance by providing interactive and flexible learning opportunities. Digital tools, online platforms, and social network sites have transformed traditional teaching methods and made learning more accessible and engaging. Mahnaz, Mehmood, Mehrukh, and Shaheen (2022) examined the role of social network sites in education during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that these platforms facilitated communication, collaboration, and access to learning resources, thereby improving students' academic performance. The study highlights the importance of incorporating technology into the curriculum to meet the needs of modern learners. Similarly, Mahnaz, Gulzar, Salma Bibi, and Safer Ullah (2025) investigated the influence of flipped classroom pedagogy and social network sites on academic achievement and concluded that technology-mediated instruction enhances students' engagement and learning outcomes. These findings suggest that technological integration is a key component of curriculum relevance.

### **Curriculum Relevance and Academic Achievement**

Curriculum relevance has a significant impact on students' academic achievement. When students perceive their learning as meaningful and applicable, they are more likely to be motivated and perform better academically. Research indicates that relevant curricula enhance students' intrinsic motivation and encourage active participation in learning activities. Mahnaz (2022) explored the influence of classroom enjoyment on EFL students' academic motivation and found that positive learning environments significantly enhance students' engagement and performance. This study demonstrates that curriculum relevance is closely linked to students' emotional and psychological experiences, which in turn affect their academic outcomes. Furthermore, Mehmood et al. (2022) reported a significant relationship between ICT utilization and academic achievement, indicating that the integration of technology in the curriculum contributes to improved learning outcomes. These findings reinforce the importance of designing curricula that are both relevant and engaging.

### **Teacher Behavior and Curriculum Relevance**

Teachers play a crucial role in implementing and contextualizing the curriculum. Their instructional practices, communication styles, and classroom management strategies significantly influence students' perceptions of curriculum relevance. Effective teachers are able to connect theoretical concepts with real-life applications, thereby making learning more meaningful. Mahnaz et al. (2023) examined students' perceptions of teachers' classroom behavior and found that supportive and interactive teaching practices enhance students' engagement and academic performance. This study highlights the importance of teacher effectiveness in ensuring curriculum relevance (Sarfranz et al., 2025).

### **Leadership and Institutional Role in Curriculum Effectiveness**

Educational leadership plays a critical role in ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of the curriculum. School leaders are responsible for creating an environment that supports innovative teaching practices, professional development, and collaboration among stakeholders. Mahnaz et al. (2024) investigated the influence of leadership and management on school effectiveness and found that strong leadership is essential for



improving educational outcomes. Effective leadership facilitates the implementation of relevant curricula and promotes a culture of continuous improvement within educational institutions (Abbasi et al., 2025a).

### **Digital Engagement and Students' Academic Development**

The increasing use of digital platforms has transformed students' learning experiences and contributed to curriculum relevance. Social media platforms, such as WhatsApp and Facebook, are widely used for academic purposes, enabling students to collaborate, share information, and access learning resources. Mahnaz and Kiran (2024c) examined the impact of WhatsApp, Facebook usage, and personality traits on students' scholastic performance and found that digital engagement positively influences academic outcomes. This study underscores the importance of integrating digital tools into the curriculum to enhance students' learning experiences (Abbasi et al., 2025b).

### **Self-Regulated Learning and Career Development**

Self-regulated learning is an important factor linking curriculum relevance to students' career expectations. It refers to students' ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning processes. Relevant curricula that promote self-directed learning enable students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for career success.

Recent research by Wajid, Asim, Jamil, Shamal, Zaib, and Ullah (2025) highlighted the factors influencing self-regulated learning among students and emphasized the role of educational environments in fostering independent learning skills. These skills are crucial for adapting to the demands of the modern workforce and achieving career goals.

### **Empirical Relationship between Curriculum Relevance and Career Expectations**

Several studies have examined the relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations. Findings indicate that students who perceive their curriculum as relevant are more likely to have clear and realistic career aspirations. Relevant curricula provide students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to make informed career decisions (Haq et al., 2025).

Research suggests that the inclusion of career guidance programs, internships, and industry collaborations within the curriculum enhances students' career awareness and readiness. Moreover, experiential learning opportunities enable students to explore different career options and develop a better understanding of their interests and abilities (Batool et al., 2025).

### **Research Gap**

Despite the growing body of literature on curriculum relevance and career development, there is limited research focusing specifically on the correlation between these two variables. Most studies have examined curriculum relevance and career expectations independently, without exploring their direct relationship. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical studies in the Pakistani context that investigate this relationship.

The existing literature also highlights the need for more comprehensive studies that consider multiple factors influencing curriculum relevance, including technology integration, teacher behavior, and institutional support. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing effective educational policies and practices (Mahnaz, 2024).

### **Conclusion of Literature Review**

The review of related literature indicates that curriculum relevance is a critical factor influencing students' academic achievement, motivation, and career expectations. The



integration of technology, effective teaching practices, and strong institutional leadership enhances curriculum relevance and contributes to students' overall development. Studies conducted by Wajid Mahnaz and colleagues provide valuable insights into the role of digital tools, teacher behavior, and leadership in shaping educational outcomes (Nasir & Mahnaz, 2026).

However, there remains a need for further research to explore the direct relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations. The present study aims to address this gap by investigating the correlation between these variables, thereby contributing to the existing body of knowledge and informing educational practice.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative research approach using a correlational research design. This design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to examine the relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations without manipulating any variables. Correlational research allows the researcher to measure the degree and direction of association between variables using statistical techniques. It is widely used in educational research to explore naturally occurring relationships among variables in real-life settings.

### Research Philosophy

The study was based on the positivist research philosophy. Positivism emphasizes objectivity, measurement, and empirical observation. It assumes that reality is quantifiable and can be understood through statistical analysis. This philosophical approach supports the use of structured instruments, hypothesis testing, and numerical data. In the present study, positivism guided the collection of measurable data related to curriculum relevance and career expectations and facilitated objective analysis.

### Population

The population of the study consisted of all students enrolled at the secondary level in public sector schools of District Rawalpindi. Based on available educational records, the population included:

- Total number of public secondary schools: 220
- Total number of students: approximately 11,000

These students represented diverse backgrounds, making the population suitable for investigating the relationship between curriculum relevance and career expectations.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 400 students was selected from the population. The sample size was considered adequate for conducting correlational analysis.

A multistage sampling technique was used:

1. At the first stage, stratified sampling was applied to divide schools into male and female categories.
2. At the second stage, 20 schools (10 male and 10 female) were randomly selected.
3. At the third stage, 20 students from each selected school were chosen using simple random sampling.

Thus, the total sample consisted of 20 schools and 400 students.



### Research Tool

Data were collected through a self-developed structured questionnaire. The instrument consisted of three sections:

Section A included demographic information such as gender and class.

Section B measured curriculum relevance, including items related to practical applicability, skill development, and real-life connection.

Section C measured students' career expectations, including clarity of goals, alignment with studies, and future aspirations.

The questionnaire was based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

### Validity and Reliability of Research Tool

#### Validity

Content validity was ensured through expert evaluation. The instrument was reviewed by three experts in education and research methodology. Their feedback helped refine the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the items.

#### Reliability

Reliability was determined through a pilot study conducted on 50 students who were not part of the final sample. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated as follows:

- Curriculum relevance scale: 0.84
- Career expectations scale: 0.81
- Overall reliability: 0.86

These values indicate that the instrument was reliable for data collection.

### Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was carried out systematically. Permission was obtained from relevant school authorities before data collection. The researcher personally visited the selected schools to administer the questionnaire. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality. The questionnaires were distributed and collected on the same day to ensure a high response rate. A response rate of approximately 95 percent was achieved.

### Data Analysis (Coefficient Correlation)

The collected data were analyzed using statistical techniques. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly followed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. The data were used solely for academic purposes, and no harm was caused to the participants.

### DATA ANALYSIS

**Demographic Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	200	50%
Female	200	50%
Total	400	100%

Demographic Table 2: *Distribution of Respondents by Class*

Class	Frequency	Percentage
9 <sup>th</sup>	180	45%
10 <sup>th</sup>	220	55%
Total	400	100%

**Objective 1: To examine students' perceptions regarding the relevance of the curriculum**

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics of Curriculum Relevance*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Curriculum Relevance	400	3.68	0.74

The above table presents the descriptive statistics of curriculum relevance as perceived by the students. The mean score of 3.68 indicates that students generally perceive the curriculum as moderately relevant to their academic and real-life needs. The standard deviation of 0.74 shows a moderate level of variation in responses, suggesting some differences in perceptions among students. The findings imply that while the curriculum is somewhat aligned with students' expectations, there is still room for improvement in making it more practical and career-oriented. The responses also reflect that not all students equally experience curriculum relevance, which may be influenced by teaching methods or subject areas. Overall, the results highlight the need to enhance curriculum content to better meet students' needs.

**Objective 2: To analyze the level of students' career expectations**

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics of Career Expectations*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Career Expectations	400	3.75	0.69

The table shows the descriptive statistics related to students' career expectations. The mean value of 3.75 indicates that students possess relatively high career expectations regarding their future. The standard deviation of 0.69 suggests a moderate consistency in students' responses. This implies that most students have a clear sense of their future goals, although some variation exists. The results further indicate that students are generally motivated and have positive aspirations about their careers. However, the variation in responses suggests that not all students have equally defined expectations, which may be due to differences in exposure and guidance. These findings emphasize the importance of aligning curriculum content with career planning.

**Objective 3: To determine the relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations**

Table 3: *Correlations*

	Curriculum Relevance	Career Expectations
Pearson Correlation	1	.582**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	400	400
Pearson Correlation	.582**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	400	400

The correlation table shows the relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations. The Pearson correlation coefficient value of 0.582 indicates a



moderate positive relationship between the two variables. This suggests that as the perceived relevance of the curriculum increases, students' career expectations also tend to improve. The significance value of 0.000 indicates that the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This means that the likelihood of this relationship occurring by chance is very low. The findings imply that curriculum plays an important role in shaping students' future aspirations. Therefore, improving curriculum relevance can positively influence students' career expectations and planning.

### Discussion

The results of the study indicate that students perceive curriculum relevance at a moderate level. This suggests that while the curriculum provides a certain degree of alignment with academic content and real-life applications, it does not fully meet students' expectations regarding practical applicability and skill development. Such a level of perception implies that improvements are needed to strengthen the connection between theoretical knowledge and its practical use in real-world contexts. Mahmood, Ahmed, and Khan (2021) emphasized that curriculum relevance improves when educational content is aligned with labor market requirements and includes practical competencies. Aquino and Garcia (2023) also found that students report higher satisfaction with curricula that incorporate applied learning experiences and competency-based approaches. Similarly, Badri, Alnuaimi, Mohaidat, Al Rashedi, Yang, and Al Mazroui (2016) highlighted that meaningful and engaging classroom experiences significantly enhance students' perception of subject relevance. These studies collectively support the present findings by indicating that curriculum relevance is strengthened when teaching and learning are connected with practical and experiential elements.

The findings further reveal that students exhibit relatively high career expectations, indicating that they possess aspirations and goals regarding their future professional lives. This reflects a positive orientation toward career development, although variations among students suggest that not all have equally well-defined or realistic expectations. McKenzie, Coldwell-Neilson, and Palmer (2017) observed that students often have ambitious career aspirations but lack sufficient guidance to translate these aspirations into achievable plans. Xia, Ni, Rorrer, Xu, and Young (2025) reported that structured educational programs, including experiential learning opportunities, significantly influence students' career intentions and clarity. Yousef (2024) further emphasized that students' career readiness improves when they are exposed to meaningful and practical learning experiences. These studies align with the current findings by suggesting that although students demonstrate strong aspirations, additional institutional support and guidance are necessary to help them refine and achieve their career goals (Nazir et al., 2025).

The correlation analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations. This indicates that as students perceive their curriculum to be more relevant, their career expectations become clearer and more defined. Mahmood, Ahmed, and Khan (2021) found that curriculum alignment with industry needs enhances students' employability and career preparedness. Mehmood et al. (2022) demonstrated that the integration of ICT in education positively influences academic achievement, which contributes to shaping students' future career perspectives. Furthermore, Mahnaz et al. (2023) reported that effective classroom practices improve student engagement and perception of learning, thereby influencing their academic and career development. These studies collectively support the present finding that curriculum



relevance plays a significant role in shaping students' career expectations by enhancing their learning experiences and perceived preparedness for future opportunities.

### Findings

1. The level of curriculum relevance perceived by students is moderate, indicating partial alignment between curriculum content and real-life application.
2. Students demonstrate relatively high career expectations, although variations exist in the clarity and realism of their career goals.
3. There is a significant positive relationship between curriculum relevance and students' career expectations, showing that higher curriculum relevance is associated with stronger career expectations.

### Recommendations

1. Curriculum developers should revise and enhance curriculum content by incorporating practical activities, real-life applications, and skill-based learning to improve students' perception of relevance.
2. Educational institutions should strengthen career guidance services by introducing counseling sessions, mentorship programs, and structured career awareness activities to help students develop clear and realistic career expectations.
3. Policy makers and school administrators should promote experiential learning opportunities such as internships, industry linkages, and project-based learning to ensure that curriculum relevance positively contributes to students' career expectations.

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