



**Module Name: Professional Career
Development(BMSW4012)
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Deadline: 12th June(23.59)**

Introduction

Professional career development is an ongoing process of self-awareness, reflection and learning skills required for career advancement. My personal and educational and career experiences have afforded me a number of opportunities and challenges that have helped me to grow in my personal and professional life. The Professional Career Development module has improved my knowledge of the concept of employability, career planning and self-development, as it has introduced me to various theories and models that can be used to help with my career in the long-term.

This reflective essay employs Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) to explore and critically analyse my career journey to date and how learning from this module will impact on my future career development. The reflection is based on reflection activities, self-assessment activities and three models that were studied in class during the module: SWOT Analysis, SMART Goal Setting, Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle.

1. Description

My learning opportunities have had the most impact on my career trajectory and I have wanted to build a successful career in business management. Following Secondary school education, I took a degree course related to business work for learning skills and knowledge related to the business world of today. As part of my studies, I have worked on group projects, presentations, undertaken research projects on my own and had some part-time work that has equipped me with the ability to communicate, work in groups and solve problems.

A major milestone along the way was when I started applying for jobs while in school. I knew that having a degree was not enough to find a job at a graduate level. Employers are looking for candidates who are capable of applying learned theory in the real world, are flexible and are aware of their professional positioning. This building block enabled me to be more serious about employability and professional development.

During this module, another significant experience was engaging in employability activities in the classroom which was significant. These experiences helped me to consider the personal critical thinking on my future path in school and actions needed to get to my desired future career.

2. Feelings

I felt uneasy about my less experience in the work place than other students. This concern grew when I looked at job ads which called for practical skills, work experience and good interpersonal skills.

In the Professional Career Development module, I was reluctant at first to participate in activities to reflect on myself as it involved an honest assessment of my weaknesses. Self-awareness, however, was encouraged for me as an important part of professional development through the learning activities. I have felt more confident and received encouragement from other students and completing the assessment activities on employability through career planning that career planning is a journey and not a single destination.

3. Evaluation

I have some positive elements to my work development story. I have developed my group working, communication and leadership skills through group projects.

It was very useful to have the self-assessment tasks in the module as they gave me an opportunity to critically review my own employability skills. In the activities I got to know that I was good at being adaptable, wanting to learn and had a strong organisational ability. These attributes have aided my studies and they will be beneficial to me in my future career.

But there have been some difficulties, too. Limited professional experience has been one of their drawbacks. I have learned a lot in the theory side of the class but do not have much work experience. This has made me feel not as secure about my prospects for graduate employment opportunities at times.

One of the difficulties has been managing time. Balancing schoolwork, commitments and career planning activities sometimes has been challenging. Sometimes I've had to work on other things to the detriment of my productivity and stress level.

4. Analysis

The Professional Career Development module had some good exposure to models which helped me to reflect and understand what my experiences and need for development would be for the future. Some of these models which were significant were SWOT analysis, SMART goal setting and Kolb's Experiential learning Cycle.

Additionally, I found that there are some things that need to be worked on, such as lack of work experience and sometimes a lack of confidence in new environments. Internships, networking and work seminars to enhance employability were identified as opportunities in the analysis.

The SMART framework emphasised the importance of establishing the project goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound. This is something that I used to accomplish my dreams to become goals. I can just set a goal of being more employable or I can have a goal that I want to go to an internship and get professional certification next year. This structure makes it more likely to achieve desired outcomes and is a measure to increase accountability.

In using Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle I gained insights into the process of learning and into experiential learning. Reflecting on my educational and paid experiences, I know that learning has taken place when I have engaged in hands-on tasks and experiences, not just theoretical learning. Through group projects, presentations and working in the workplace, knowledge, reflection on performance and new skills have been developed. The model developed by Kolb emphasizes the experiential learning, reflection, conceptualization and experimentation as the processes of continuous learning. This view has helped me to see difficulty as an opportunity for learning, rather than an obstacle.

Also, I have been a reflective and visual learner based on my learning profile assessment. This fact gave me a better understanding as to why it is useful and helpful for me to read information independently and why I use diagrams, notes or visual aids to help me process information. My understanding of my own learning style will assist me in setting up future learning patterns and learning strategies to be more effective.

5. Conclusion

It helped me to learn about myself, gain insight into my strengths and weaknesses, experiences and aspirations etc. through my career journey. This experience has emphasised that self-awareness plays a key role in the professional development process and in going forward promoted the practice of continual learning.

I have been strongly affected by the Professional Career Development module as it has affected my thinking in relation to employability and career planning. Being able to participate in the classroom activities, to have ideas and reflections shared throughout the course has helped me gain confidence in my career management skills. SWOT Analysis, SMART Goal Setting and Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle have been used to gain an understanding of my personal growth and further potential in my future field.

Best of all, I have learned that success in the career world is dependent on reflection, change and self-development and although there are still obstacles to overcome, I feel I have a better idea of what steps to take to realize my career goals.

6. Action Plan

I will implement some practical measures to support my future professional learning. First of all, I will be using SWOT Analysis on a regular basis to analyse my strengths and weaknesses and find ways to improve. This will help me to keep updated on the employment market and its opportunities and challenges.

Secondly, I will learn to set short-term and long-term career goals using the SMART Goal Setting technique. I plan on gaining relevant work experience over the next year by doing an internship, part time work or a volunteer with a relevant organization. I will also develop other professional qualifications that will improve my employability.

Thirdly, I will be continuing to use Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle by actively reflecting on the academic learning, workplace and personal learning experiences. Reflective Journaling will help me to reflect on my performance, problem solve and continuously improve.

Also, I will increase my professional network by attending career fairs, trade shows and online networking sites. Establishing job relationships can be a great way to gain experience and information about the job market.

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