



Module Name: Professional Career Development

Module Code: BMSW4012

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AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com>) on 10th June 2026 to support planning and structuring this reflective essay.

Prompt(s) used:

- *“Help me structure a reflective essay using Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle.”
I confirm that I have not presented any AI-generated text as my own work.*

Introduction

This essay reflects on my career journey to date and explores how my learning from the Professional Career Development module will support my future professional development. Reflection is an important process that allows individuals to evaluate their experiences, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make informed decisions about their future career path (Gibbs, 1988).

This essay will be structured using Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle, which provides a clear framework for analysing experiences and applying learning in a structured way (Gibbs, 1988). The reflection will focus on my previous work experience, key challenges, and how these experiences have shaped my career thinking.

To support this reflection, three models explored in class will be applied: SWOT Analysis, Myers-Briggs personality theory, and Holland’s Career Theory. These models are widely used to support self-awareness and career development (Cottrell, 2021), and will help me better understand my skills, personality, and career preferences.

1. Description

My career journey began when I took a part-time job in retail at the age of 17 while studying. This role involved customer service, handling payments, and working as part of a team. After finishing college, I moved into a full-time role in hospitality, working as a waiter in a busy restaurant. This role required strong communication skills, time management, and the ability to work under pressure (Gallagher, 2022).

A key turning point in my career was when I decided to leave hospitality and apply for an administrative role. This was my first experience in an office environment and involved tasks such as data entry, answering emails, and supporting team members. Although I gained valuable experience, I realised that I did not enjoy sitting at a desk for long periods.

More recently, I have been focusing on my studies and considering my long-term career options. Through this module, I have started to reflect more seriously on my skills, interests, and future goals.

2. Feelings

During my early roles in retail and hospitality, I felt confident and motivated, particularly when interacting with customers. I enjoyed working in a fast-paced environment and felt a sense of achievement when I was able to help customers or solve problems.

However, when I moved into an administrative role, my feelings changed. I began to feel less motivated and found the work repetitive. I also felt uncertain about my career direction, as I was unsure what type of role would suit me best.

Based on my Myers-Briggs personality type, I tend to prefer interactive and people-focused environments (Myers et al., 1998). This helps explain why I felt more comfortable and confident in customer-facing roles compared to office-based work.

Before starting this module, I often felt unsure about my future and lacked confidence in making career decisions. However, reflective practice has helped me understand that these feelings are a normal part of career development (Cottrell, 2021).

3. Evaluation

A positive aspect of my career journey has been the development of transferable skills. For example, my experience in retail and hospitality helped me develop strong communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, which are essential for employability (Gallagher, 2022).

Another positive experience was participating in classroom activities during this module, such as group discussions and self-assessment tasks. These activities helped me reflect on my strengths and understand how my experiences have contributed to my development (Cottrell, 2021).

However, a key challenge has been a lack of clear career direction. I often made decisions based on immediate opportunities rather than long-term goals. This led to periods of uncertainty and dissatisfaction, particularly in my administrative role.

Using SWOT analysis in class helped me identify both my strengths and weaknesses. SWOT is a useful tool for evaluating personal development and career planning (Cottrell, 2021). For example, I recognised that I am strong in communication and teamwork, but I lack confidence in making long-term decisions. This awareness has helped me understand areas that need improvement.

4. Analysis

Applying SWOT Analysis allowed me to clearly identify patterns in my development. My strengths include communication, adaptability, and teamwork, which were developed through customer-facing roles. However, my weaknesses include a lack of confidence and limited long-term planning. SWOT analysis is widely used to support self-awareness and career decision-making (Cottrell, 2021), and this explains why I have sometimes felt unsure about my career direction.

Myers-Briggs theory also helped me understand my personality and how it influences my career preferences. My results suggest that I prefer social, interactive environments and enjoy working with people (Myers et al., 1998). This explains why I felt more satisfied in hospitality roles and less engaged in administrative work.

Holland's Career Theory further supports this understanding by identifying my preference for social and enterprising career types (Holland, 1997). This means I am more suited to roles that involve communication, teamwork, and leadership. It also explains why I felt dissatisfied in roles that did not match these preferences.

Overall, these models helped me see that my career experiences were not random, but followed clear patterns based on my skills and personality, supporting more informed career decisions (Robertson et al., 2020).

5. Conclusion

This reflection has helped me gain a better understanding of my career journey and my development as a professional. I have learned that my experiences have helped me build valuable transferable skills, even when I did not initially recognise their importance.

The use of SWOT Analysis, Myers-Briggs, and Holland's Career Theory has helped me understand my strengths, weaknesses, and career preferences more clearly. These models are important tools for career development and self-awareness (Cottrell, 2021). I now recognise that I am best suited to roles that involve interaction, teamwork, and problem-solving.

This reflection has also highlighted the importance of planning and self-awareness. I now feel more confident in making informed decisions about my future and understand the steps I need to take to achieve my career goals.

6. Action Plan

Goal	Specific Action	Measurable	Achievable	Relevant	Time-Bound
Improve confidence	Seek feedback from tutors	2 feedback sessions	Yes	Builds confidence	3 months
Identify suitable careers	Research roles using Holland theory	3 roles identified	Yes	Matches interests	6 weeks
Develop strengths	Use SWOT regularly	Updated SWOT	Yes	Improves awareness	Every 3 months
Gain experience	Apply for customer-facing roles	5 applications	Yes	Matches personality (Myers-Briggs)	2 months
Reflect regularly	Keep a journal	Weekly entries	Yes	Supports development	Ongoing

Reference List

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