The Effect of Counselor Role in Vocational Guidance Services on Career Orientation of Senior Secondary School...

Conference Paper - June 2018

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The Effect of Counselor Role in Vocational Guidance Services on Career Orientation of Senior Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT: The number of unemployment from both general high school (SMA) and vocational high school (SMK) graduates in Indonesia is increasing from time to time. This study was carried out to identify counselor role in providing vocational guidance services and its effects on career orientation of senior secondary school students in Jakarta. Data were collected from a survey of 278 students from two general high schools and two vocational high schools in Jakarta. Counselor Role in Career Guidance Inventory and Work Orientation Questionnaire were used as an instrument of data collection. Descriptive statistics and simple regression were conducted to analyze the data. The findings of the study reveal that there was significant effect of counselor role in vocational guidance services on students’ career orientation. Further research is needed to investigate other psychological factors of students’ career orientation.

1. INTRODUCTION
Career orientation is considered as one of the most important guidance services that school counselor should provide to senior secondary school students. In the last two decades, the importance of providing career orientation to students has been studied in numerous researches. Savickas (1999) found that career orientation explicitly fosters students’ awareness of tasks to be faced and decisions to make. Krumboltz & Worthington (1999) pointed that learning is essential not only for students to develop the basic employability skills required for the school-to-work transition, but also for the development of work habits, beliefs, interests, and values. Similarly, Lent & Worthington (1999) said that responding to national and local initiatives, the career development profession has been engaged in efforts to aid understanding and facilitation of the school-to-work (STW) transition process. A recent study by Hartinah & Eddy Wibowo (2015) and Lestari, Hidayati, & Mahardika (2017) indicated that life skills-based career information services effectively improve understanding in student career planning.

Previous studies also revealed that there are various factors affecting students’ career orientation. According to Patton & Creed (2001), career orientation is mostly affected by career maturity. It refers, broadly, to the individual’s readiness to make informed, age-appropriate career decision and cope with career development tasks. Heslin (2005) pointed certain factors that affected career orientation which included both contextual and individual factors. The potential role of two contextual factors: whether the career is
being pursued in a winner-take-all market as well as the organizational culture in which a person is working. Two individual factors are work orientation and goal orientation.

A study by Waxman & Williams (2015) identified certain problems related to vocational guidance in secondary school. The study found that there are following problems in modern system of comprehensive school and secondary vocational education: (a) between educational requirements and expectations of young people (their parents) and an insufficient readiness of the existing secondary education content that allows satisfying with these requirements; (b) between available tendencies and pupils’ abilities and inability of traditional requirements to process and content of secondary education that helps to reveal them; (c) between the necessity of solving professional and personal self-determination problems and problems of choosing a type of training in high school and absence of psychological and pedagogical help to a student while graduating at the main “step” of education; (d) there are weak links between educational fields and continuity in systems of the secondary vocational and secondary education; (e) the system of career guidance work at the educational institutions and qualified help in future professional self-determination to pupils is poorly developed; (f) the opportunities of successful cooperation with employers for development of pupils’ technological education are not enough realized; and (g) between employers’ expectations and graduates’ level of training.

According to Suryadi (2010) school counselors have responsible to address to the above mentioned problems, in order to equip students with better career orientation as so they are ready to meet the challenges in the work place. Failure to address these problems, no doubt that the existence of school counselors will be questioned as they contribute to the increased number of unemployment among senior secondary school graduates.

Regardless the factors affecting students’ career orientation, the studies mentioned above had an implication that school counselors should provide guidance services for their students. Therefore, as Sibgatova et al. (2014) suggested, it is necessary for school counselors to have professional skills and competencies to solve career guidance problems, ability to plan and introduce pupils and students' career guidance. Having these skills in hand, school counselors will be able to improve the quality of career guidance for their students. A natural question then arises, how big is the effect of counselor role in vocational guidance on students’ career orientation? Answer to this question is very important and unless a scientific study is done, we are unable to find out the answer.

This study aimed to investigate the effect of counselor role in vocational guidance services on career orientation of senior secondary school students. This study has one hypothesis: there was a significant effect of counselor role in vocational guidance services on career orientation of senior secondary school students. An implication from the findings of the study is that for secondary students to have a bright career in future, school counselors should improve the quality of vocational guidance services and well planned vocational guidance programs are required. Further research is needed to investigate other psychological factors of students’ career orientations.

2. METHOD

This study applied a descriptive survey design, which is a non-experimental design used to explain a cause-effect connection. This design was selected because this study’s goal is to
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observe the influence of counselor role in vocational guidance services on career orientation of senior secondary school students. A descriptive survey was chosen for economic reasons so that researchers can make use of a representative sample from a large population that would have been infeasible to study.

Data were collected from a survey of 278 students from two general high schools (SMA 87 and SMA 34) and two vocational high schools (SMK 57 and SMK 20) in Jakarta. In selecting the sample size, a purposive sampling technique was applied. The sample consisted of 94 (33.8%) boys and 184 (66.2%) girls, aged 14 to 18 years. In terms of study area, about 22.3% of SMA students were from natural sciences and 22.7% were from social sciences. Respondents from SMK took four types of study program, namely catering (16.9%), dance (5%), office administration (12.2%), and accounting (20.9%).

Once the sample size was obtained, the researchers distributed the survey to the subjects after obtaining written permission from the school principal. In distributing the survey, the researchers were assisted by the subjects’ teachers. To avoid interfering with the learning process, the survey was administered ten minutes before class ended. Before distributing the survey to the subjects, the researchers explained the purpose of the research and how to fill out the instrument. The researchers asked the subjects to fill out the instrument completely and objectively, without being influenced by friends or other factors. The researchers also confirmed that all information provided by the subjects would only be used for research purposes and would not affect their grades. This explanation was delivered orally and was written in the introduction of the survey.

Counselor Role in Career Guidance Inventory (CGI) and Career Orientation Inventory (COI) were used as an instrument of data collection. The questionnaires were written in the form of a Likert scale. The first instrument had 9 items and the second instrument had 40 items. Each scale had six answer choices, ranging from Very Not Important to Very Important for CGI and from Very Not Appropriate to Very Appropriate for COI.

The data were analyzed using simple regression analysis while the construct validity testing was performed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with the help of LISREL software version 8.7.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

This part provides data analysis for research hypothesis stated earlier in the introduction using simple regression analysis with the following procedures. First of all, simple regression was run to find out the percentage of dependent variable variance (career orientation) determined by independent variable (counselor role) as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.363(a)</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>8.85527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Counselor Role

Data on Table 1 show that the value of R-square is .363 or 36.3%. This means that about 36.3% of students’ career orientation is determined by counselor role in providing guidance services, while the rest (63.7%) is determined by other factors not identified in this study.

Next, in order to examine whether this effect is significant, analysis of
variance (ANOVA) was run as shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>3290.139</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3290.139</td>
<td>41.958</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>21642.785</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>78.416</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24932.924</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>277</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Result of Analysis of Variance

Data on Table 2 indicate that using the significance level of <0.005, the counselor role significantly affected students’ career orientation. This means that the better the career guidance services given by school counselor, the better the students’ career orientation.

Finally, analysis was done to find out the value of coefficient regression of independent variable as shown in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>31.526</td>
<td>2.901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor role</td>
<td>.369</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: The value of coefficient regression for counselor role

Data on Table 3 indicate that the value of coefficient regression for counselor role in providing vocational guidance services on students’ career orientation is 0.363 with level of significance at .000 (Sig. < 0.05). This means that the hypothesis which said that there is a significant effect of counselor role on students’ career orientation was accepted.

In short, given the above mentioned data analysis it can be concluded that counselor role in providing vocational guidance services for students significantly effected students’ career orientation. This mean that school counselors play very important role in determining students’ career orientation.

3.2. Discussion

As mentioned above, the findings of this study indicate that counselor role in providing vocational guidance services contributed about 36.3% for students’ career orientation, while the rest (63.7%) is determined by other factors not identified in this study. This shows that school counselors play very important role in determining students’ career orientation through vocational guidance services. In secondary education, as stated by Lim & Patton (2006) school counselors are expected to facilitate the choice process by creating an environment in which all students set goals and priorities that increase the prospects of employment and success in the labour market. In addition to their work with students, career counselors are expected to work with, and support, parents, other teachers and head teachers.

The importance of vocational guidance services in SMA and SMK is mentioned in the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 111 year 2014 regarding guidance and counseling for primary and secondary schools (Kemdikbud, 2014). According to this regulation the main purpose of vocational guidance services is to facilitate students in order to develop, explore, and make career decisions along their life span. The findings of this study, however, is contradictory with the findings of a study done by Menon (2010) which showed that students consider counselors to be of little or no importance as source of guidance and information in the decision-making process which precedes the choice between higher education and employment.

The findings of this study also support a previous study by Wikto et al. (2005) which indicated that career
planning is important to high school students and they are likely to approach their parents first for help with career planning. Thus, school counselors are expected to make a smart partnership with parents in discussing students’ career orientation. A study by Bloxom et al. (2008) pointed that high school students engaging in career decision making encounter significant challenges due to changing social and economic conditions. Similarly, Epstein & Van Voorhis (2010) found that school counselors' roles in developing partnerships with families and communities determine student success in future career.

The present findings are limited in a number of ways and suggest that further research in this area is needed. Obviously, the sample of this study was relatively small, not representative of SMA and SMK students in general, and drawn from small geographical area in Jakarta. Thus, further research should address other provinces in Indonesia with a larger and more diverse sample. An important issue yet to be explored appears to be the psychological factors that affect students’ career orientation, such as career maturity, self-concept, self-belief, self-confidence, parenting styles, school climate and so on.

The findings of this study suggest several implications for policy makers, subsequently, the following recommendations are made. For policy makers, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture and the District Education Officers to have road map and framework of developing vocational guidance services standards for senior secondary schools. In designing the road map and framework, it must collaborate with Indonesian Association for Guidance and Counseling (ABKIN). Once the road map and framework done, the policy makers have to provide professional development training for school counselors in order to improve their competences and skills.

Specifically, school counselors may implement intervention strategies at various levels as described below. According to Tang et al. (2008) at the school-wide level, a systematic and comprehensive school counseling program with a career development component that aligns with the career domains in national standards should be implemented. An example is a school-wide career fair that allows students to meet professionals in a variety of work fields. A career fair could increase students’ awareness and basic understanding of a variety of occupations. Professionals invited to the career fair should be encouraged to come in their professional attire and speak about their duties and responsibilities on a typical workday. Along the same line, school counselors can coordinate field practice projects for students to actually learn specific aspects of a particular occupation. School counselors also should work with community agencies to identify resources that may supply speakers or serve as field-trip sites.

4. CONCLUSION

In this study it was highlighted that school counselors play a very important role in providing vocational guidance services for senior secondary students. Schools counselors were empirically proven to have significant effect on students’ career orientation. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that since the independent variable of this study is limited to one variable, that is counselor role, further research is needed to investigate other independent variables, such as students’ self-concept and career maturity.

REFERENCES

career needs and perceptions of the effectiveness of career development services within high schools. Canadian Journal of Counselling, 42(2), 79.


