



EXPLORING CAREER PLANNING EXPERIENCES OF
INDONESIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

BY

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the degree of Master of Education

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study explored experiences of Indonesian high school students in career planning. The researcher was interested in the strategies used by the Indonesian high school students in career planning and the challenges they have experienced within the process. Based on previous studies, students' active engagement in career planning are influenced by personal, contextual, and experiential factors. Those factors which appeared in many forms determined their performance in career exploration and career decision making. Five students from three public high schools in Indonesia participated in this study. Qualitative data was collected from individual interviews and analyzed using thematic approach. The result showed that students engaged in independent explorations and formulated tentative academic and career choices as the main processes in career planning. In addition, lack of career guidance and information were identified as the challenges in career planning. Finally, the findings were discussed in terms of recommendations for educational policy in the context of Indonesia, implications for practice, and for future study.

خلاصة البحث

تقوم هذه الدراسة النوعية باستكشاف تجارب طلاب المدارس الثانوية الاندونيسية في التخطيط الوظيفي. اهتم الباحث بالاستراتيجيات التي استخدمها طلاب المدارس الثانوية الإندونيسية في التخطيط الوظيفي والتحديات التي واجهوها خلال هذه العملية. استناداً إلى الدراسات السابقة، تتأثر مشاركة الطلاب الفعالة في التخطيط الوظيفي بالعوامل الشخصية والسياقية والتجريبية. تلك العوامل التي ظهرت في عدة أشكال تحدد نجاحها في الاستكشاف الوظيفي وصنع القرار الوظيفي. شارك في هذه الدراسة خمسة طلاب من ثلاث مدارس ثانوية عامة في إندونيسيا. تمّ جمع البيانات النوعية من المقابلات الفردية وتحليلها باستخدام النهج الموضوعي. وأظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب شاركوا في الاستكشافات المستقلة وصياغة الخيارات الأكاديمية والمهنية المبدئية باعتبارها عمليات رئيسية في التخطيط الوظيفي. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، تم تحديد الإفتقار إلى التوجيه المهني والمعلومات باعتبارها تحديات في التخطيط الوظيفي. وأخيراً، تمت مناقشة النتائج من حيث التوصيات للسياسة التعليمية في سياق إندونيسيا، وتضمينها للتدريب عليها، ولإجراء دراسة مستقبلية.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion; it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Education.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Ragwan Mohsen Alaydrus

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Alhamdulillah.

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved husband, my supportive parents and family for their supports and sacrifices to ensure my success in all my endeavours.

This is also presented to all teachers and parents who dedicated their time to help adolescents planning their future.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

During the transition from school to university, students need intense explorations before they arrive at a decision about their educational and career plans. Lack of exploration lead to a confusion which may impede individual career development. There are stories shared by university students who admitted that they have chosen a wrong major which is not in line with their initial interests. Researchers have tried to address this issue, and comprehend the reason behind the failure of this academic decision making. Intani and Surjaningrum (2012) for instance, studied the coping strategy of Indonesian students who claimed they were misplaced in wrong majors. The researchers argued that the phenomenon occurred due to: 1) The students only considered majors with low passing grade, 2) Lack of needed information regarding major alternatives, and 3) Influence of significant person such as parents, sibling, friend, and so on. The phenomenon further generates an implication in the career guidance policy, whereby schools are ordered to provide comprehensive career guidance to address students' career development, including helping them in overcoming career related issues.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

In 2012, the government of Indonesia announced a new curriculum to be implemented in 2013 which was called as Kurikulum 2013 (K13). There was a long debate among society about the importance of this curriculum which is now implemented at all

school levels. In essence, K13 was formulated as a guideline for building students' competencies to face life challenges in the 21st century.

Ismail (2017) highlighted the phenomena in the 21st century such as fundamental change where the improvements in human life expects people to always upgrading themselves. Digital revolution is another phenomenon as a result of the rapid development in technology. Consequently, it leads to the growth of new occupations but at the same time diminishes others. Unfortunately, the current education system in some cases fail to fulfil workplace requirements. To improve the quality of Indonesian graduates, Ir Joko Widodo, the President of Indonesia, in one occasion suggested to universities to provide new majors that are relevant to the demand of 21st century society (Damarjati, 2017). Other than that, the government through the newest policy has stressed the vital role of career education in every level of school. To present the revised policy, the following table shows comparison between Kurikulum 2013 (K13) and the previous curriculum, Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP), regarding guidance and counseling in high school level (SMA/SMK).

Table 1.1. A Comparison between the Implementation of Career Guidance in K13 and in KTSP

Dimension	KTSP	K13
The Role of guidance and counseling teacher/counselor related to career guidance.	To help the students in choosing school majors and career choice through counseling session and other supportive programs.	To help the students in choosing their specialization through comprehensive process, prepare their career, and monitor the learning process throughout the school years.
The Implementation for career guidance	Given when the students are moving to grade XI through counseling sessions and four guidance and counseling services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orientation - Information - Placement - Content mastery 	Starts from the school enrollment day. Given through gradual implementation steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data collection 2. Information about subject specialization 3. Identification of specialization decision-making. 4. Adjustment 5. Monitoring and follow up
Continuation of Career Guidance	Does not emphasize the significance of academic record from previous level of schools (elementary and junior high school)	Emphasize the importance of academic performance from elementary and junior high school.
The person in charge for career guidance monitoring	Guidance and counseling teachers/counselors in collaboration with other elements.	Guidance and counseling teachers/counselors and homeroom teachers supported with other elements.

In the manuscript of K13 (ABKIN, 2013), it was stated that guidance and counseling service in school is aimed at facilitating development, exploration, and career decision making of a student. This service is expected to guide students in: 1) developing self-awareness regarding their abilities, interests, and personalities which relates to career and occupation. 2) constructing knowledge about work and career information that supports career maturity, 3) building positive attitude towards the

world of work, 4) understanding the relationship between subject mastery and the future skill or career requirement, 5) developing ability in shaping career identity by identifying occupation characteristics and other things related to future career (Azam, 2016). In addition, counseling teachers have a crucial role to ensure that career program benefit the students in preparing themselves for the post-school transition. This particular role was mentioned in the Reviews of National Policies for Education in Indonesia in 2015 (OECD,2015). In that report, however, Indonesia was known as a country with high rate of unemployment among tertiary graduates. The report further addressed the problem that “inadequate outcomes from schooling reduce an individual’s future acquisition of knowledge and skills. People leaving education without a sufficient base for further learning have a diminished ability to adapt to change” (p.234). One of the strategies to improve the transition from education to work is through well-managed career guidance. Furthermore, it was stated in the report that “career guidance can help to reduce dropout rates from school, and help students make informed and considered study choices. Career advice is particularly useful for those young people who are most vulnerable when making the transition from school” (p.237). Career guidance may be given through various programs such as group and individual counseling, career week, company visitation, and so on. Hence, clear career information gained from those programs help students in creating their career aspirations and guide them to make their career plan.

1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Mungin Eddy Wibowo, in a seminar about guidance and counseling in 2013 asserted that the role of counseling teacher in implementing of Kurikulum 2013 is more crucial since there was no more subject specialization in high school (Sekolah Menengah

Atas (SMA). Therefore, students will be directed by teachers according to their aptitudes and interests toward specific fields. In addition, Wibowo stated that Guidance and Counseling (*Bimbingan dan Konseling*) teachers are expected to observe students from the early days of school to identify their interests in particular subjects (Dwi, 2013). However, in a different occasion, Wibowo noted that despite its critical role, guidance and counseling service at school is facing a problem regarding teacher quantity. It was recorded that the number of guidance and counseling teachers in Indonesia in 2013 is only 33.000, while the number of students in junior high school (SMP) and senior high school (SMA) is 18.8 million which means it needs at least 125.572 guidance and counseling teachers (Damanik, 2013) to fulfil the ideal number of teacher. There was a huge gap between the quantities of teachers, where schools still need 92.572 teachers to reach normal ratio of one counseling teacher for 150 students. This fact may have direct consequences to the effectiveness of counseling service at school. Some studies found that limited numbers of counseling teachers influence the implementation of guidance and counseling program. Aliyah and Sutoyo (2016) for instance, identified that this shortage of teachers has caused some obstacles in managing disciplinary problem of students at school. Specifically, Arsyad (2015) mentioned the possible impacts of limited career guidance services provided by a selected school in Indonesia to the students, which are: 1) students face difficulty to develop self-awareness regarding their talents, interests, and life targets, 2) students are in confusion to make career decision that align with their talents and interests, 3) students are not aware of the importance of early career planning, 4) students are likely to be influenced and misled by their friends in choosing major for university. 5) many school graduates study in unfavorable specialization and think that they have chosen the wrong majors. As another evidence, Lieam and Prast

(Meirina, 2013) reported more than 50 percent of 50 students admitted that they have taken wrong decision in choosing a decision in choosing a major in University. The students stated that they did not take into account their interests and talents in decision making, whereby at the end it caused demotivation in studying.

This phenomenon, according to an education consultant who conducted the survey, is a result of lack of information students gain from the school regarding majoring and future work prospect. In fact, the youth's perception of working life is shaped by educational institutions and influenced by media, parents, and older peers rather than their own experiences (Lechner, Tomasik & Silbereisen, 2016). Paa and McWhirter (2000) also pointed that some students had begun their process of self and career exploration, they also have known that their career expectations are mainly based on their interest, values, and personalities. However, the students cannot figure out how their attributes might have corresponded with specific occupations. With those constraints, it may be challenging for high school students to make a career decision that needs to become a cause for concern of parents and educators.

Some studies had addressed students' career exploration strategies as a part of career planning process. For instance, a descriptive study conducted by Falentini, Taufik, and Mudjiran (2013) mentioned the information search as a strategy used by students to reach the career decision. However, studies specifically investigating the process of career planning were limited and mostly conducted in quantitative approach in which they only presented information at a surface level. In the current study, the researcher used a qualitative approach to gather the data, particularly focused on students' experiences in career planning in order to reach academic and career decisions. The information gained from this study is expected to present an in-depth understanding about Indonesian students' career planning process, including the

significance of career exploration to the success of the students' academic and career decision making.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the strategies of academic and career planning of Indonesian high school students and challenges that might be perceived as barriers within the process.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following specific questions guided this study:

1. What strategies do Indonesian high school students use in their academic and career planning?
2. What challenges do students perceive that can influence their educational and career plan?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research was based on the proposition that there is a need to understand the dynamic process within students' academic and career decision making. From a practical standpoint, findings from this study were expected to present a more in-depth understanding of the strategies student used in career planning, starting from the process of career exploration until they reach an informed decision. This includes the challenges students found during the process. The result of this study can inform the public specially teachers and parents about the issue and promote an awareness to provide support and sufficient guidance to high school students who are in transition to university. In addition, schools can consider the findings as evaluation for guidance

and counseling services. Using findings and recommendation from this study, they can adjust and improve the career guidance to bridge students' needs and the current counseling programs. The career practitioners and start-ups might also use the findings as valuable data to provide attractive features for supporting students' need for career planning. Finally, the findings of this study can be used as additional information for the government to evaluate the career education within the school curriculum as well as the function of guidance and counseling at schools since the career guidance program is a vital element of the implementation of K13.

1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was limited in the subject selection which is high school students in three selected high schools in Indonesia. The criteria of participants involved in this study was expected to produce good quality result since it is in accordance with the objective of this research.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Career:

Career refers to the activities and positions involved in vocations, occupations, and jobs as well as related activities associated with an individual's lifetime of work.

Career development:

Career development is the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and change factors that can influence the nature and significance of work in the total life span of any given individual.

Career planning:

Career planning is the process by which students select their career goals and the paths to these goals. It refers to how much thoughts individual have given to a variety information-seeking activities and how much they feel they know about various aspect of work.

Career exploration:

Career exploration refers to activities which employ dynamic form of self-exploration and exploration of the world of work that yield a stable sense of the occupational identity and satisfying occupational choice.

Career decision making:

Career decision making is the ability of students to use knowledge and thoughts they have gained from self and career exploration to make their career decision.

Career guidance:

Career guidance refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their career. The activities may take place on an individual or group basis, it may also be face-to-face or at a distance (including help lines and web-based services) (OECD, 2015).

Guidance and counseling service:

Guidance and counseling service is a systematic, objective, and logical effort conducted by a counselor or a guidance and counseling teacher to facilitate the

development of students to reach independence in ability of understanding, accepting, directing, decision making, and self-realization with responsibility in order to achieve well-being in their lives.

Guidance and counseling teacher:

Guidance and counseling teacher is a qualified teacher who has bachelor's degree and expertise in the area of guidance and counseling.

Counselor:

Counselor is a professional educator who has academic qualification of bachelor degree in the area of guidance and counseling and has certified of profession to be a counselor.

1.9 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

There are five elements in this study which will be divided into five chapters. Chapter one includes background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms, organization of the study, and conclusion. Chapter Two presents the literature review that contain the underpinning theories of career development. Chapter Three explains the research methodology which includes the research design, participant, data collection procedure, instrumentation, and data analysis. Chapter Four will elaborate the results of the study. Lastly, chapter five will discuss and conclude the findings of the study, implication to education, and propose the recommendation for future research.

1.10 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

The above-mentioned background of the study highlights the importance of career guidance to facilitate students' career development and schoolwork transition, while at the same time to prevent unemployment among tertiary graduates. However, as explained in the statement of problem, students are facing inadequate career guidance from school due to lack of counseling teachers or unimplemented counseling services. This reality then yeilds to a number of students who experienced difficulties in career decision making. Hence, the objective of this study was to investigate the strategy of students' academic and career decision making, as well as challenges that they perceive can influence their career planning.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a review from literatures related to this study. The theoretical framework in this study was derived from Super's theory about career development (1980). After presenting a general overview from his theory, a social cognitive career theory (SCCT) by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) will be also presented to describe the social cognitive mechanism behind students' engagement in career planning. In a different section, career exploration and its barriers will be elaborated. A section about career decision making is included to provide a clear picture about psychological factors behind individual's ability to make a career decision. In the last section, the roles of career guidance are discussed.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Inkson, Dries, and Arnold (2014) emphasized the definition of career as a sequence of one's work experiences overtime. They highlighted that each person possibly has only one career in his lifetime. According to them, not only multiple occupations that a person has, relevant activities outside the employment are also contributing to his career development. Most of the theories explained about career development in various stages from exploration to the retirement. Super's model of career development (1980) is a theory that has widely been used to explain the career development across life span. The model describes vocational development as the process of developing and implementing a self-concept, which refers to how