

Career Guidance For Students: Awareness Towards Course Selection and Career Planning among Secondary Students

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i3/17487>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i3/17487

Published Online: 17 July 2024

Abstract

This study was conducted to identify the problems experienced by students in making career choices and to determine students' awareness of the career and the students' level of understanding of the importance of career guidance especially to for 4 and 5 students in Labuan. This study was conducted in ten (10) secondary schools in the Federal Territory of Labuan. The study population is specific to Form 4 and 5 students only. A total of 200 students were involved in this study. Based on the findings of a study found the level of awareness and understanding of form 4 and form 5 students in Labuan about the function and role of counselling guidance in selecting appropriate majors that are relevant to the interests and abilities of the students is at a high level. Students realize that choosing a career that suits their interests and abilities is important to ensure the quality and credibility of individuals in the chosen career and recognized the importance of obtaining career information, an adequate career information can assist them in planning a career of interest and suit the personality and demands of the job market. The purpose is to achieve the desired career path by helping to make career exploration, career planning and subsequently career decision making. The results of interviews with principles found a variety of program initiatives or activities were carried out by the school while the students were in form 3 as guidance and early exposure to the secondary school students about career field and option. The implications of this study are expected to provide early exposure to secondary school students in career choice by knowing the advantages and challenges working in a particular career field not only for Labuan but for all schools in Malaysia.

Keyword: Counselling and Guidance, Career Exploration, Career Planning, Decision Making, Exposure

Introduction

The rapid economic development of the country affects the career development of individuals. Due to the advancement of science and information technology, students now must face new situations and more complex challenges to enable the country to compete with other developing countries. Student career planning should be appropriate and in line

with the 12th Malaysia Plan which should focus on improving the country's education system, as well as addressing the issue of mismatch in the job market. The education system in the country needs to have the capacity to produce quality human capital, as well as highly skilled, to meet the needs of the industry. Talent development is an important element in making Malaysia a high-income country (Malaysia, 2021). According to the Graduates Statistics 2019 by the Department of Statistic Malaysia, the unemployment rate stayed at 3.9% from 2018 to 2019. In terms of numbers, unemployed graduates in Malaysia increased 5.5% in 2019, totalled 170.3 thousand compared to 161.3 thousand reported in 2018. This situation can make students more concern about their career opportunities after graduation.

Participation in career guidance enables students to achieve social modelling which Bandura (1995) described as the second domain through which individuals develop self-efficacy. Students need career guidance to explore and plan for future career endeavours based on their individual interests, skills and values. Career guidance enhances linkage of academic and career opportunity and thus, improves career preparation and management. Awareness and career planning need to be identified to build students "career paths. The initial preparation of students to consider career options, self-potential can be developed in line with current market and industrial demands.

The research will focus on the following:

1. What is the level of students' awareness of course selection and career planning?
 - Are students aware of career planning and guidance are important to ensure they will be able to enter the field of work that they are interested in the future.
2. To what extent is the effectiveness of existing career counselling in schools in guiding students "careers?
 - Have students been given adequate guidance on career selection appropriate to their interests and skills.

Literature Review

Awareness of Course Selection and Career Planning

In making career decisions, students need to go through a process of understanding by determining appropriate subjects, identifying their potential and abilities, interests and exploring various career options with the help of guidance and planning. When a student has a dream to be a successful person in a career, it will motivate students to pursue academic excellence more diligently. This is because he sees the connection of career with daily life. Students will realize the importance of building academic achievement in preparation for the increasingly challenging world. According to Nguyen.T.V. et al, when students see that there is a connection between their studies and future career aspirations, they tend to exhibit more engagement and motivation in school 2016.

Recent studies conducted by Rami et al (2021) found that academic self-concept knowledge and understanding help a graduating student prepared to face any challenges ahead, such as making a career decision. Learning behaviour is beneficial to students and the university, to get a clearer view of the student's 34 future following graduation. Making a career decision is a critical stage of a student's life in which a variety of considerations must be assessed before a decision is made. Students who are concern about their future career path will improve their academic performance to look for a wide range of career opportunities even though

there is uncertainty about the career chosen. Thus, the interrelationships between academic achievement and career choice among the students examined in this study will offer useful information to a better understanding of their career decision-making.

According to Leuwerke, Robbins, Sawyer, & Hovland (2004), the research suggests that it is important for students to have interests that are consistent with their college major and, ultimately, their career choice. Students who have interests that are consistent with their choice of college major are more likely to remain in college. Further, individuals who are interested in their work are more satisfied with that work.

Student Needs and Participation in Career Guidance

Career Guidance is a counselling programme designed to help students choose the right career path based on their educational and professional choices. It is a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the knowledge, skills, information, and experience to identify career options available. According to Vanessa et al (2021) career guidance in this sense describes a range of school-based interventions which seek to prepare young people for their transition to their postsecondary school lives and to empower them to be successful in their lives and careers. In other words, it based on the premise that an increase in the quantity and quality of career guidance will lead to an increase in young people's career readiness.

The research by Zehra and Saeeda (2021) explored undergraduates' career needs and the services available to meet their needs. Two main themes were explored which included some Career Guidance and Counselling (CGC) services and seven major CGC needs namely need for information, self-awareness, decision making, practical exposure, direction, managing emotional challenges, and academic needs. The identified career needs are interconnected to a huge extent. When students are unaware of their interests, aspirations, strengths, and have insufficient information regarding available opportunities, then it becomes hard to choose a direction for their education and career. This, among others, further gives rise to problems like emotional disturbances and inappropriate decisions.

Research Methodology

The data in this study is a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data is from the results of tests and questionnaires as well as qualitative data from the results of interviews. The approach to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods in this study is to obtain more accurate information about the study conducted. This combined method can also combine or link two types of data simultaneously by combining sequentially or applying one into the other to allow data analysis to be carried out thoroughly and convincingly. This method can also give importance to one or both forms of data based from the emphasis on research results.

Qualitative studies are studies that cannot be explained by data numeric, for which there are certain things that require observation which are primarily emotional, motivational, and empathetic (understanding people other) relating to humans, certain groups or natural conditions (Chua, 2006). Therefore, interviews were conducted informally to identify in more detail the opinions on the need for students to be given early guidance on career selection based on interests and academic achievement as well as the selection of relevant subjects about the chosen career. Questions on the need to improve the existing school curriculum to better suit the needs of the industry were also included in the interviews conducted to obtain additional data to further strengthen and convince the findings of the study.

This study was conducted in ten (10) secondary schools including one (1) Sekolah Agama (MAIWP) in the Federal Territory of Labuan. The study population is specific to Form 4 and 5 students only. A total of 200 students were involved in this study. Questionnaires (google form) were distributed to respondents through the principals of each school through the WhatsApp application to selected students. Each school will randomly select 10 form 4 students and 10 form 5 students to answer the survey conducted regardless of gender.

Findings

A total of 200 students from 10 schools in the Federal Territory of Labuan were involved in this study with 100 of them male and 100 females. The number of students involved was 100 students were from Form 4, 100 students were from Form 5. Matters related to the background of the respondents in this study are only gender and level of education.

Level of Students' Awareness of Course Selection and Future Career Planning

Research data on Students' level of knowledge of the function and role of counseling guidance in selecting appropriate majors that are relevant to the interests and abilities of the students are as follows:

Table 4.2.1

Frequency, percentage and mean analysis of awareness of course selection and future career planning

Item	Question	Likert Scale Frequency					Mean
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	The need of career guidance and counseling in schools	0 0%	0 0%	9 4.5%	97 48.5%	94 47%	4.425
2	The role of the counseling teacher is to provide career path guidance	0 0%	0 0%	5 2.5%	106 53%	89 44.5%	4.42
3	Students have been given adequate career guidance	1 0.5%	6 3%	52 26%	83 41.5%	58 29%	3.955
4	Understand the importance of choosing a subject that is relevant to the chosen career	1 0.5%	3 1.5%	21 10.5%	100 50%	75 37.5%	4.225

Item 1: The data obtained are on the need for career guidance and counseling in schools. The Mean score obtained was 4.425. This shows students agree that they need to be given knowledge about career choice guidance in school. 95.5% of the 191 respondents strongly agreed and agreed with this statement while only 9 people of 4.5% were in the moderate level, and for the remaining categories could not be stated because no respondents chose those categories.

Item 2: For the statement that the role of counseling teachers is to provide career path guidance that suits the interests and skills of a student, there are 195 respondents who chose the category of strongly agree and agree which is equivalent to 97.5% while only 5 respondents are in the moderate level equivalent to 2.5% and no percentage record for categories strongly disagree and disagree. Students understand the job of a counsellor teacher is to provide career path guidance that suits a student's interests and skills.

Item 3. Despite being in a high mean score of 3.955, the percentage breakdown is still unconvincing and students still need guidance from the counseling teacher. Only 28% of the respondents, namely 58 people out of 200 students strongly agreed with the statement that students have been given adequate career guidance. 52 respondents representing 26 % of students are still at the moderate level, 7 respondents equivalent to 3.5 % stated that they have not been given adequate career guidance. And the highest percentage of 41.5% of respondents who agreed with this statement only represented 83 students out of 200 students in total.

Item 4. Next, for the statement on understand the importance of choosing a subject that is relevant to the chosen career, there are 75 respondents who chose the category strongly agree equivalent to 37.5% while half of the respondents (50%) have chosen the category agree, 10.5% (21 respondents) felt the statement is moderate, and 1.5 % (3 respondents) do not agree and only 0.5 % which represents 1 respondent who does not agree with this statement. However, the mean score obtained is at a high level of 4.225 which students understand about the importance of choosing a subject and stream that is relevant to the chosen career. Yet a more important factor in determining career success is an individual's basic abilities and capabilities in academics. Without knowing the right personality tendencies and interests, students find it difficult to choose majors related to future career choices.

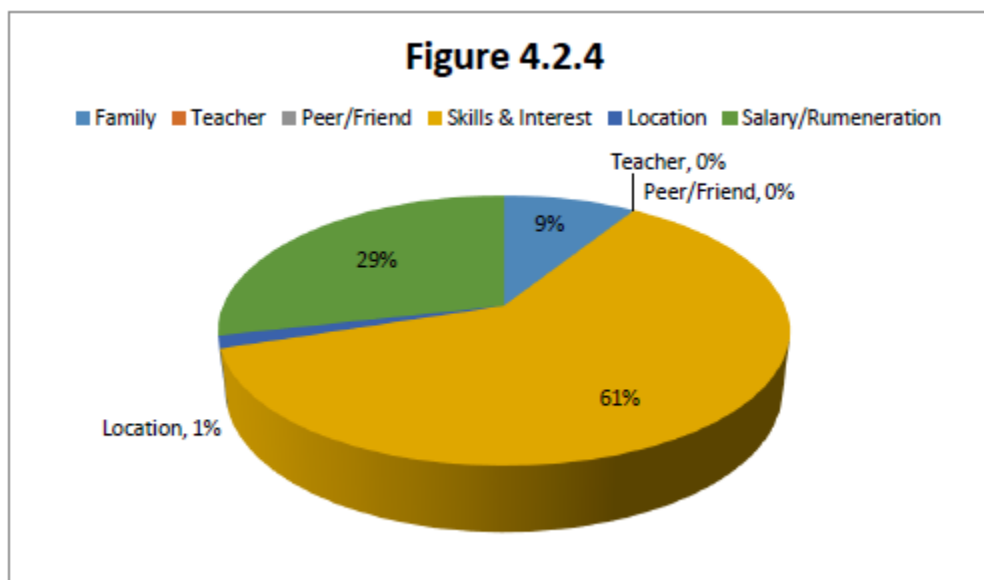
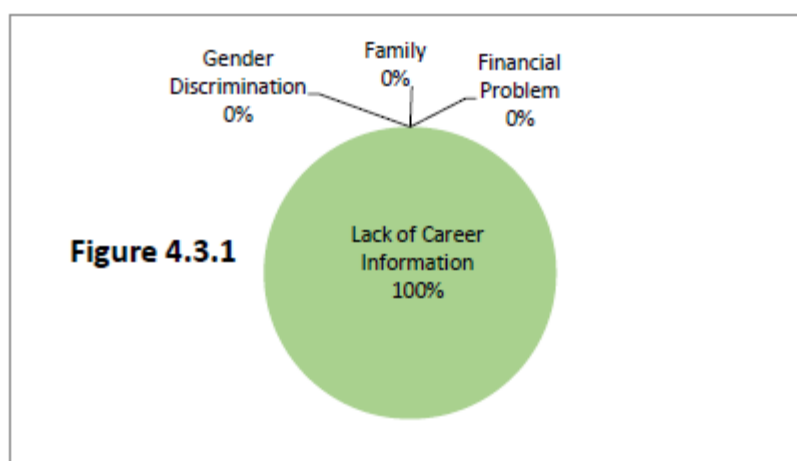


Figure 4.2.3 shows the findings of the study found that the factor "Skills and Interests" gave the highest impact to the respondents which is 61%, clearly shows that this factor greatly influences students in making career choices after graduation. Followed by the second highest factor which is "Salary or Remuneration" of 29%, followed by the factor of influence from the family which is only 9%. While the lowest percentage and giving the least impact is "Location"

which only represents 1%. Peer and teacher influence factors were not recorded. Based on this table, the findings of the study show that the majority of students agree that the „Skills and Interests“ factor is very important in their career choice, and this indicates that students have been given full trust and freedom by parents to choose the desired job. This shows that career choice among students is not controlled by parents only but parents give them the option to make their own career choices.

The second most important factor in a student’s career choice is „Salary and Remuneration“. In the current uncertain economic situation, the awareness of students to choose towards career fields that can offer lucrative salaries is a priority, to secure their future. Students agree a high level of education and salary can stabilize the economy and realize everyone’s dreams. However, to ensure the marketability of students to get the career they want to pursue, this requires the disclosure of knowledge and clear information from various parties including families, teachers and the industry. Parents, guardians and even teachers should be more sensitive and sensitive to the latest developments related to current employment opportunities and should take the time to share and discuss this information with their children or students. Therefore, various measures need to be taken to increase awareness in a particular field to make it easier for the student to make a choice to determine the field of education or career that will be pursued in the future.

The "location" meant in this study is the selection of the place where the student will work after graduation. Would they prefer to choose a place close to their family or be willing to move to another place that offers more job opportunities. Although this factor only records 1% in influencing students in students “career choices, it is likely that this value will change if the study sample increases. If students are given career guidance, chances are this data will change, this is because through guidance students will be assessed through their qualifications, experience, strengths and weaknesses in the context of applying their knowledge of career development and the labour market, while taking into account desired salary, personal hobbies and interests, geography, job market and educational options.



Based on the findings of a study of 200 secondary school students in the Federal Territory of Labuan, it can be concluded that the students recognized the importance of obtaining career information. Adequate career information can assist them in planning a career of interest and suit the personality and demands of the job market. Even so the reality shows that they are

still lacking in acquiring career information. They are also not exposed to psychological tests such as career tests and personality tests in the process of helping to obtain self-appropriate career information. Without sufficient information, will cause students to still be hesitant in making decisions about their chosen career. Career information is an important element in career planning and selection. Adequate career guidance information helps students make accurate and consistent decisions.

However, the results of the study show that there are some obstacles in achieving career information. Among them is the lack of information available in schools as well as incomplete career disclosure programs. These findings have been further confirmed by the results of the study data obtained, in which 100% of respondents agreed that the lack of career information is the main cause that prevents them from achieving their desired career goals. The outcome was consistent with previous research by Josephine (2016), who reported individuals who were not interested in their careers were those who lacked knowledge and information about careers.

There were students who stated they had never attended and were unaware that there were career fairs to help them get career information. Although there are a number of students who obtain career information from school guidance & counseling teachers, only a small amount of career exposure is obtained, and most students obtain information through internet access. Guidance and counseling are factors that need to be taken into account and immediate action needs to be taken to address this problem. This is intended to help students plan for the future more systematically based on the goals and careers they want to pursue. By providing adequate information and guidance on the field to be pursued based on the interests of students, this will facilitate in planning their learning starting in secondary school.

Discussions and Conclusion

In this era of globalization, many challenges have to be faced and globalization itself refers to a world without borders. The main challenge is to produce human capital that meets the needs of the market by meeting the development of education in line with the country's educational goals to achieve balance and personal well-being. Nowadays the job market for graduates no longer depends solely on academic excellence, but the quality of an individual's self can influence their marketability. This is because the level of readiness is an important element to be an encouragement to the students because of the readiness of the students which will help in career choice.

The Malaysian education system needs to be changed according to a new approach by replacing the curriculum or syllabus of learning that still follows the old system that was the practice 100 years ago. The national education system needs to keep pace with the changing era so that students can be equipped with new knowledge that better meets the job market and is ready to face the Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR). The new curriculum needs to be designed to have a specific focus on a futuristic nature in addition to the emphasis on Technical Education and Vocational Training (TVET) which places more emphasis on students' intelligence through skills. Closer partnerships with industry is needed to understand what the required jobs and skills will be, to ensure that no part of society is left behind.

The Guidance and Counseling Unit is a very effective approach in imparting career knowledge to students. Shima et al (2019), Counseling helps students build competencies, make decisions and plan for the future while guidance is part of education and not limited to guidance in terms of knowledge sharing only. Career counseling can help individuals to overcome anxiety by helping them focus on positive outcomes. Therefore, schools and other

educational institutions should provide the services of the Guidance and Counseling Unit in helping students make decisions about their future career choices. Shima et al (2019) in his study on the Needs of Student Career Counseling Guidance Services said, students who have sufficient career readiness are students who are proactive, resilient, and have the communication skills to achieve their chosen career and subsequently receive satisfaction in life. They have the knowledge, skills and desire to shape their future.

In conclusion, this study shows that career choice is a complex process, and students need to make early decisions and preparation before entering the field of work. Career selection factors are very important as they will affect the way a person works while working. Therefore, all parties need to work together in addressing the problem of career choice among graduates so as not to burden the country because it involves high costs while meeting the needs of current industry. Through the information and data obtained from the research instruments conducted, a summary of the findings of this study has been presented with a detailed description that is also displayed through tables as well as pie charts and histogram charts so that it can be easily understood. These findings were analysed from the respondents' feedback information through the instruments conducted. The analysis of these findings is to answer the research questions as well as the objectives of the study outlined at the beginning of this study. However, this conclusion is the result of a limited study conducted on a group of respondents from among secondary school students in the Federal Territory of Labuan using random sampling and interviews only and does not reflect the actual situation of secondary school students overall in Malaysia. However, the findings from this study are relevant and can be applied in further studies that have the relevance and appropriateness of the information for reference

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