School Counselors' Efforts in Implementing Career Guidance Services

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the roles and responsibilities of school counselors regarding student career services, as well as the form of school counselors' efforts in implementing career guidance services in SMK Al Falah Salatiga. This qualitative phenomenological study involved a school counselor and 39 11th-grade students. Primary and secondary data were collected through observation, interview, and documentation, and analyzed using data reduction, presentation, and conclusions. The study's finding demonstrates that (1) The school counselor's role in career advice services is to identify issues and address them, as well as to identify potentials as informants and career educators, facilitators, determinants, and implementers of career counseling programs. (2) The types of career advice services included: (a) orientation services; and (b) information technology services, which were delivered through websites and WhatsApp groups, power point files, pdf, eBooks, and learning videos; (c) Placement and distribution services, which were done through internship programs to direct students' skills.

Keyword: School counselor; guidance services; career

ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui tugas guru bimbingan dan konseling (BK) dalam layanan karier siswa dan upaya guru BK dalam menerapkan layanan bimbingan karier di SMK Al Falah Salatiga. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi. Subjek penelitian adalah guru BK dan siswa kelas XI yang berjumlah 39 orang. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa (1) tugas guru BK dalam layanan bimbingan karier adalah menemukan masalah sampai menyelesaikannya, fasilitator, pendidik karier, dan pelaksana program bimbingan karier, (2) bentuk layanan bimbingan karier meliputi: (a) layanan orientasi; (b) layanan teknologi informasi melalui website, membentuk grup WhatsApp, file power point, pdf, ebook, dan video pembelajaran; dan (c) layanan penempatan dan penyaluran dengan adanya prakerin sesuai dengan bidangnya agar bakat siswa tersalurkan.

Kata kunci: Konselor sekolah; layanan bimbingan; karier
INTRODUCTION

During the Covid-19 pandemic, learning activities in using information technology have increased, especially in Vocational High Schools (SMK) aimed at producing skilled workers who are ready to compete for career paths that match student competencies. It is necessary for school counsellors to understand individuals’ career decision-making process, as it varies from one individual to another. School counselors are required to have skills in technology related to online guidance and counseling services. Technology that supports optimal guidance and counseling services play an optimal role, both classically, groups and individuals can be realized with services based on the use of information technology (Budiyono, 2020).

Indonesia have not possessed a benchmark for competitions, unlike the United States with its two basic benchmarks in career competition, i.e., ASCA Standard and NOICC Middle School Competencies. These benchmarks comprise four main career competencies and 23 sub-competencies that can be improved through the media so that 23 media are centered on several sub-competencies. In Indonesian context, there have been an increase in number of studies on career guidance media at the junior high school level (Rachman, 2019). In a study involving Sundanese and Javanese parents, the result implies that parents’ expectation should be prioritized over their children’s (Kurniawan, 2019).

Individual career guidance service can support a correct decision and develop one’s sense of responsibility for the decisions, thus significantly motivating individuals to realize the decisions (Yusuf & Nurikhsan, 2016). Technological experts in counseling services advise counselors to use information technology, especially for career guidance guidance in schools. Work readiness refers to a set of behaviors related to identification, selection, planning, and work goals for each individual according to developmental age (Yustia & Auditya, 2019). For vocational students, job readiness is the ability that students have to immediately secure a job after graduating from school without taking a long time to create results or add value (Hardiyanti & Sukirno, 2018). The success of career guidance services is also influenced by parental support. It is the most important aspect of career decision-making process as parents may significantly influence their children when choosing and determining their future careers (Herin & Sawitri, 2017). Students will likely benefit from abundant useful information regarding their future careers when counselors, parents, and other school members develop a good collaboration.
The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly influenced the implementation of guidance and counseling services, especially on career-related problems. Vocational High School students are required to develop a proper career plan according to their potentials, talents, and interest. Career problems may arise as one of the problems that determine students’ future, as their decision sometimes differs from their parents’.

The observation revealed that some students in SMK Al Falah Salatiga have not understand themselves and are doubt and confused in making career decision. Some of them still like to waste their time doing activities useless for their future and fail to make a career plan according to their current abilities. This condition potentially hampers students’ career development.

Regarding students’ career problems, Venable (2010) suggest that human relationship with today’s technology could be leveraged to fulfil students’ career development needs. Arshad (2018) believes that career services can be realized when information technology can help foster student career plans and maturity. Sodiq and Herdi (2021) research also explain that the use of information technology can improve student career planning and maturity through blogs, multimedia, or the internet. In this regard, the technology’s each of use emerges as one of the factors determining the multimedia feasibility (Malik & Agarwal, 2012).

Media is reported to be capable of visually stimulate students’ comprehension to remember, recognize, and bridge facts and concepts (Azhar, 2017). The developed interactive multimedia was proven to effectively support the services. Hidayati (2015) explains that the varied methods used by school counselors can attract students’ interest in understanding the services. Listantina & Indriana (2019) shows that career planning is made by taking various factors and opportunities into account to achieve students’ future career goals. In another study, Wibowo et al. (2021) explained that a systematic, face-to-face classical guidance service may develop certain competencies to improve students' career planning skills. Claudia (2018) reports a significant relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity. Wibowo & Yuwono (2021) also explained that the training method using "Drive Your Career" can increase students' career adaptability.

Individual career decision-making needs to be measured from three aspects: readiness to follow the decision-making process, orientation and style of career decision-making, and difficulty in obtaining information from sources. The effectiveness of individual career
decision-making can be seen from the integration of individuals during the process and final decision-making (Kulcsar et al., 2019). Career theory pays attention to various issues related to the vocational psychology literature on time, planning, recognition, involvement, and optimism in achieving future goals (Neureiter & Mattausch, 2016).

Previous studies have provided a range of information technology to help supervise teachers and provide students’ career services on aspects of competency achievement. However, to our knowledge, studies on functions of school counselors in career guidance services and the school counselors’ effort in implementing career guidance services using IT at Al Falah Vocational School Salatiga have not been reported.

Students’ career knowledge in SMK Al Falah Salatiga is still minimum, implying the needs for career guidance services to develop students’ understanding of future career-decision making. This study aims to scrutinize the role of school counselors in career services and their efforts in implementing career guidance services using various forms of services for developing career maturity.

METHODS

This descriptive qualitative study garnered field data on the phenomena and described the informants’ plans and experiences in the research environment (Emzir, 2017). School counselor and public relations were involved as the informant to depict the efforts to implement career guidance services 11th-grade students at SMK Al Falah Salatiga. Applying qualitative phenomenological approach, this study involved school counselor and 39 11th-grade students. Primary data were collected through observations and interviews about career guidance services. Secondary data were obtained from various sources, including documents, books, journals, and the internet. The data were analyzed in three stages: namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing of conclusion (Yuliani, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Role of School counselors in Career Services at SMK Al Falah Salatiga

SMK Al Falah Salatiga is located on Jl. Bima No.2, Dukuh Sidomuksi Salatiga Regency. It is a Vocational School Plus a formal educational institution under the Al Falah Islamic Boarding School foundation, whose vision is to deliver a religious graduate with a strong technical competence to face the working environment. This school offers two study programs: light automotive engineering and clothing engineering.
Interview results with an 11th-grade student revealed that he had a plan after graduation, yet he sometimes was confused and doubtful about his choice because it was related to job opportunities. Thus, he had not made a final decision regarding the study programs he would take after graduated.

School counselors at SMK Al Falah Salatiga were responsible for carrying out guidance service to ensure students’ broad knowledge. They were also required to possess the ability to understand students, and the expertise they have in implementing guidance services as expected in SK Menpa No. 84/1993 Article 3. The article states that that the main duties of school counselors are as follows: Develop guidance and counseling programs, implement various guidance and counseling programs, Evaluate the implementation of guidance and counseling, Analyze the results of the assessment in guidance and counseling services, follow-up in the implementation of the program based on the results of the analysis.

Based on the primary responsibilities described previously, this study found that school counselors in SMK Al Falah Salatiga implemented guidance service to help students develop their future career plan. The service serves as the basis to strengthen students’ understanding of career issues and orientation. The service also aimed to provide them with information related to working environment and businesses to make livelihood, and information about higher education that suits students’ future career.

Based on the observation of career guidance service implementation at SMK Al Falah Salatiga, several factors were found to affect the career maturity of students, including: (1) internal factors: Intelligence ability, talent, hobby, attitudes, and personality trait; and (2) external factors that influence it either directly or indirectly, including (a) The socioeconomic status of the family including, parents’ level of education, income, and employment status. Some students with good intellectual abilities failed to afford higher education due to their parents’ limited economic capacity; (b) student's academic achievement, as evidenced by the final results of study evaluation, test results, and report cards scores; (c) The environment, which has a positive relationship to changes in behavior and attitudes in their surroundings (Hartina, 2008).

Barriers to career guidance services include economic factors, family, peers, job opportunities, abilities, learning outcomes, and the physical environment. Barriers that
many students encounter in determining careers come from peers and, whereas some students also encountered family-related factors (Falentini et al., 2013).

The obstacles in carrying out career guidance service is also related to the service schedule. In other words, school counselors did not have dedicated classroom hours to carry out the services. Students’ attitude and competence also emerged as hindrances for career guidance services. Students tended to have a doubtful attitude in determining or choosing a career when they graduate from school, students did not understand their future career, and did not know their talents and interests. The competency factors dealt with limited career guidance service duration, poorly scheduled session, lack of utilization of school facilities, environmental factors, and the information obtained was still less relevant to students’ future career.

Tasks in guidance service include the implementation of career guidance program management. The planning, implementation, and evaluation stages should be carried through collaboration with parents to ensure the achievement of the goal. As such, the service could affect students’ career planning skills (Afdal et al., 2014).

Some of the counselor’s duties in career guidance process at Al Falah Vocational School Salatiga included: (1) finding problems related to career education or student needs; in this regard, the school counselor identified students’ problems by students by collecting data and involving all school elements, and students’ parents or guardian; (2) listening to students’ problems to help students’ solve them; (3) Identifying skills by determining feasible technique to collect data on students’ psychological abilities, either test or non-test-based techniques, which allows counselors to understand the students’ potential and needs more optimally; (4) As an informant and educator of student careers, the school counselors were viewed as capable and insightful individuals to provide students with career-related information they need; (5) Helping students’ self-identification. Career guidance is virtually linked to self-understanding, students are expected to have adequate self-understanding in terms of their strengths and weaknesses through the school counselors’ help; (6) Being a facilitator of human relationship. School counselors could develop students’ attitude and their career decision properly by identifying students’ and their friends’ skills; and (7) Determining and implementing proper career guidance programs. Using their knowledge and experiences, school counselor was expected to be able to develop and run a career guidance program properly.
The Efforts of School counselors in Implementing Career Guidance Services at Al Falah Vocational School Salatiga

Career guidance is known to affect students’ work readiness so that students are expected to improve work readiness, self-efficacy; understanding of their interests, which are helpful for school counselors for improving career guidance service (Kurniawati & Arief, 2016). The implementation of career guidance in schools is related to various aspects, including: (1) Information Services. Students are helped to understand working environment, social education, and problems that occur in society. Information services are provided to students, subject teachers, staffs, institutions, and the community; and (2) Schedule setting. It is necessary to schedule activities in carrying out student assignments to ensure the program’s compliance to the design. The schedule set includes the form of intracurricular, extracurricular, and career guidance activities.

School counselors have provided orientation and information services to help students direct their future, either to continue their study at university level, or provided placement services (Febriani, 2019). Career guidance and counseling services related to career guidance must be implemented as a form of providing career services for student service targets. The following are some of the efforts implemented by school counselors in providing student career services at SMK Al Falah Salatiga including: (1) Student Orientation Service; (2) Information Technology Services; and (3) Placement and Distribution Services.

Student Orientation Service

Orientation service is the first career guidance in schools related to career maturity as a form of individual success in completing career development tasks, especially in the developmental stages that students have. Huda et al. (2016) show that school counselors have performed a good orientation service by introducing students to the school environment. This orientation service aims to determine the maturity level of students when choosing the desired major. Orientation services at SMK Al Falah Salatiga have been carried out since the beginning so that students do not feel confused about the major they will choose. Students’ career maturity could be seen in their responses to questionnaires, extracurricular activities they participate in, and observation results. One of the class XI students also said that: “I have understood from the first time what majors are available at this school from a brochure explaining majors and job opportunities.”
Career guidance services have been carried out since the beginning of entry through student orientation by introducing the majors at SMK Al Falah Salatiga (i.e., light automotive engineering and fashion engineering) and organizing e-learning collaborations as their opportunity to continue their studies or enter the working environment. In other words, students can choose majors that suit their abilities. Students’ career maturity can be seen through data sheets on self-development that have been filled out by students and extracurricular activities related to the majors they take to further improve their readiness in selecting majors. Extracurricular activities and observations for further follow-up can be seen from the attitude of the respondents, some students are still involved and confused about the majors to be taken. Students’ career maturity can also be seen from the teaching and learning process and students' academic achievements, which represents their academic skills and behaviors.

Orientation services at Al Falah Vocational High School had been properly carried out to identify students’ career maturity. During the new student registration program, the school introduced majors they offered, allowing students to imagine the major that suits them. This service was performed by the school counselors, supported by school principal, vice principal on curriculum, and other teachers.

**Information Technology Services**

Information services are helpful to provide students with knowledge and understanding of technological development. Triyono and Febriani (2018) suggest that knowledgeable and skillful counselors will likely leverage IT to support their services. One of the teachers in this study stated: "The first step in career guidance is introducing students to study programs, providing them with relevant information through collaborations with partner. Through this collaboration, students would be able to analyze their chances when selecting a study program.

The student career maturity can be seen from two aspects: self-knowledge, and attitude. First, the aspect of self-knowledge can be seen in most students who feel confused whether to continue to college or going to work after graduating from vocational school. Students who choose to continue their studies also were confused in selecting the university. Meanwhile, students who choose to work were confused about finding jobs that match their majors. To address this issue, so information is needed from the special job market (BKK) at Al Falah Vocational School in collaboration with other schools and companies. The stage
of finding information and determining universities is obtained from university visits, social media, and information from their seniors. Regarding students’ career maturity, school counselors play an important role in helping them determine careers after graduating from vocational high school by providing information and guidance through WhatsApp groups. The second is the attitude aspect. In this aspect, students have decided whether to continue studying or to find a job, yet they lack information. In this regard, they must focus on learning, discipline, and being active and honest to realize their goals.

Based on the results of the research that students' knowledge and understanding related to careers before getting career guidance services are still not effective, this is evidenced by the existence of students who are still hesitant in choosing a career and are afraid of not being matched by their talents, dependence on others, and not daring in expressing an opinion. Students need solutions to the problems they face and need an improvement in meeting their needs by believing in their abilities.

Career guidance services are first held with an observation followed by giving questionnaires to know the needs of students after career information services related to universities and employment opportunities are carried out. The method provided in this service is still flexible, meaning that you do not enter the classroom, but take advantage of free hours and gather in front of the class so that there is an opportunity to provide career information services. Information services implemented by school counselors or other school counselors have been going well at SMK Al Falah Salatiga.

Career guidance services are run starting from class XI (eleven) which is more focused on the career maturity of students after finishing school. The following are some of the stages used in information technology guidance services including:

The initial stage is planning, namely with Whatsapp group media previously made a link to the WA group link then distributed to students to enter the group so that it can provide convenience in conveying information about student careers because this media is considered quota-friendly or economical for students and teachers. Career guidance services are one of the activities that become an annual routine program at SMK Al Falah Salatiga even though it has not been included in the lesson schedule.

The second stage is the implementation stage, before the school counselor gives the material, the steps taken are by apperception to recall the previous material as a warm-up, the purpose of career guidance services is delivered by making media such as videos,
materials in the form of PDF, power points, ebooks, sharing links web and hold discussion forums for students.

Based on the results of interviews with school counselors, namely the public relations department which doubles as public relations, the information provided uses various technological media adapted to the situation and conditions of students, including using learning videos related to the key to success in achieving a career-related future, in PDF form, PowerPoint, Ebook that is given to students to be downloaded so that they can be studied on their own due to time constraints.

The implementation of career guidance services at SMK Al Falah Salatiga using WhatsApp during the COVID-19 pandemic is an easy solution in conveying information to students that causes doubts that arise when choosing a career when graduating from SMK. Career guidance services by school counselors are carried out with various interrelated advanced programs. Career information provided at SMK Al Falah Salatiga also uses a website that is used as material for providing guidance services to meet student needs, help provide an understanding of talents, interests, and academic abilities, determine continuation in developing career information services for class XI students of SMK Al Falah Salatiga.

The website-based career information service at SMK Al Falah Salatiga is feasible to use to develop information and improve students' career exploration. One of the advantages obtained by school counselors is that conveying material can save time and energy. In addition, it makes it easier for students to access information about further studies and employment.

The third stage is conducting an evaluation, concluding the material that has been discussed, the discussion is held privately because the majority of students want more centered and has a sense of shame when it comes to career development known by other friends. Career information services have been carried out by school counselors and assisted by school counselors through the use of information technology, which has been going well even though it is not completely perfect because it only asks general questions about work and continuing to study at the tertiary level. School counselors at SMK Al Falah Salatiga conduct socialization to introduce students’ majors and career opportunities, universities, and employment related to the study program taken so that students can be
directed and imagine that they will work or continue to study at a higher level so that students can pursue the course he took.

**Placement and Distribution Services**

The contribution of providing distribution placement services to interest in further study and the contribution of career guidance to interest in further study, as well as the contribution of providing placement services and career guidance together to interest in the further study is classified as moderate (Rachmayanie & Rusandi, 2018). The implementation of career guidance at SMK Al Falah Salatiga also uses placement and distribution services as a form of effort to assist students in planning for the future while still in school or after graduation and determine an advanced study program to prepare for the position. This is done during internship activities or fieldwork practices (PKL) for class XI (eleven) students. The results of student placement will be directed to what fields are appropriate. These services can produce students who have career maturity according to their talents and interests.

The placement and distribution services related to career guidance at SMK Al Falah Salatiga have been carried out well so that students get internships or internships according to their majors, which causes students' talents and abilities to be channeled. Class XI students who will be doing internships when they get an internship can be seen from their abilities and compatibility.

Based on several efforts made by school counselors in implementing career guidance services for class XI (eleven) students at SMK Al Falah Salatiga, it is included in the aspect of self-knowledge and attitude to decide careers between working or continuing college after graduation so that it raises the skills that must be done. If career guidance services are not implemented and career maturity is not well prepared, students will feel confused and hesitate to choose the next level.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Following the analysis result of school counselors’ career guidance service at SMK Al Falah Salatiga, several conclusions were drawn. First, school counselors have carried out their duties in career guidance services properly, indicated by the development of students’ affective, cognitive, and skills in realizing a positive self-concept. They also paid attention to several supporting external and internal factors and inhibiting factors in implementing
career guidance services. Second, the career guidance services at SMK Al Falah Salatiga took three forms: (a) Orientation services, which were carried out properly during PPDB (new student registration) by introducing study programs they could take. This service aimed to develop students’ career maturity in choosing a study program; (b) Information technology services, which was carried out when students were in 11th-grade, involving planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. Since it was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, the service leveraged available media including WhatsApp application, learning videos, PDF and power point materials, and websites. School counselors provided good information technology services by introducing them to study programs to direct their career; (c) Placement and distribution services, which was performed by placing and distributing 11th-grade students to the internship programs, and held job fairs by collaborating with companies. This service provided students with opportunities to show off their skills to enter the working environment, in addition to continuing their study to university levels. Third, school counselors should be able to take advantage of technology that does not burden students. In other words, they should be able to adapt to situations and conditions to facilitate student career guidance services. The application of technology can provide benefits for school counselors and students, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic that prevented them from conducting face-to-face interactions; and (4) This study contribute to the education sector by improving students autonomy through career learning process, allowing them to understand the information provided during the career guidance service. Autonomous students will likely be able to exhibit normative matters, find it easier to plan their career, and be able to understand their environment more objectively.

REFERENCES


