PSIKOPEDAGOGIA
JURNAL BIMBINGAN DAN KONSELING
Vol.11, No.2, December 2022
p-ISSN 2301-6167
e-ISSN 2528-7206

DOI: 10.12928/psikopedagogia.v11i2.24979

CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING FOR LEARNER WITH DISABILITIES: CAREER AWARENESS, CAREER EXPLORATION, AND CAREER PREPARATION FOR LEARNER WITH DISABILITIES IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Ahsan Romadlon Junaidi*, Muhammad Irvan, Ediyanto Ediyanto, Asep Sunandar

***Correspondent Author**

Ahsan Romadlon Junaidi
Universitas Negeri Malang
Jalan Semarang Nomor 5, Malang
Indonesia
Email: aksan.romadlon.fip@um.ac.id

Muhammad Irvan
Universitas Negeri Malang
Jalan Semarang Nomor 5, Malang
Indonesia
Email: muchamad.irvan.fip@um.ac.id

Ediyanto Ediyanto
Universitas Negeri Malang
Jalan Semarang Nomor 5, Malang
Indonesia
Email: ediyanto.fip@um.ac.id

Asep Sunandar
Universitas Negeri Malang
Jalan Semarang Nomor 5, Malang
Indonesia
asep.sunandar.fip@um.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study aims to describe the career development of students in junior and senior high schools. Participants were 84 special education teachers, recruited using a purposive sampling technique. A career development perception scale was distributed to collect data. Kruskal Wallis was applied to picture students' career development in public and private schools, while Mann-Whitney was used to find difference between schools accepting only students with intelectual disability and those accepting students with various disabilities. The results of the study showed that the career development of students with disabilities in private and public schools did not differ significantly. Viewed from types of disabilities, their career development also did not differ significantly. Interestingly, students with intellectual disabilities presented a narrower career development than those with other disabilities, primarily in the career preparation aspect. This finding could be accounted for by more significant hindrances encountered by students with intellectual disabilities with respect to their self-determination. The results of this study are useful for considerations in the developing guidance and counseling programs for children with special needs.

Keywords: career guidance and counseling, career development; learner with disabilities.

INTRODUCTION

Last decades witnessed increasingly broader career opportunities for people with disability as private and public institutions provide quota for them. Unfortunately, this opportunity has not been properly responded by optimal preparation of people with disability. For instance, during the selection of civil servant candidates, the quota for persons with disability was not been due to minimum number of applicants (Republika, 2018). At national level, participation of disabled people in workforce is still low. Data from the Indonesia Ministry of Manpower showed only 44% participation from people with disability, lower than the national target of 69% (Liputan 6, 2021).

Most disabled people work in primary sectors, and only a few of them work in formal employment. The data collected in 2020 showed that 45.9% of people with a disability worked in the agricultural and forestry sector, 15.4% were in the large trade, retail, and reparation sector, while 8.7% of them worked in the processing and manufacturing industry (Nursyamsi Fajri, 2021).

Several factors are reported to affect the success of people with disability in finding jobs, including job market availability, job accessibility, acceptance, and training and preparedness. Career education may equip disabled students with hard and soft skills required in the labor market.. It could help provisions of job opportunities for people with disability, as regulated by the laws.

Career education could be broadly viewed as a life-long self-development aiming to facilitate students with relevant skills and abilities. Thus, career education aids students in expanding their knowledge, skills, and behavior through a structured plan. It helps them acquire learning experience and training to make decisions in life, education, and the working world.

Career education for students with disability begins to draw scholars' attention and be broadly discussed back in 1970s. In the United States of America, Division on Carer Development was established in 1976 under the Council for Exceptional Children (Brolin & Loyd, 1989). Nowadays, several terms similar to career education are known, such as career development, vocational education, vocational training, life skills education, and transition program (Brolin & Loyd, 1989).

In addition, the significance of career education for students with disabilities can be attributed to three main factors. First, the students with disability encounter restraints during their career exploration. Second, they are faced with limited opportunities to develop the career decision-making skills. Third, they have a negative self-concept, promoted by their social environment (Curnow, 1989).

However, experts have different views on career development theories for students with disability. The existing theories on job development are mostly based on typically developing individuals, making them meaningless for individuals with disabilities. (O'Leary, 1980). Career development usually begins when someone has the potential to choose a career following their interest and talent. Based on their choice, he/she attends relevant training that helps them find a job. However, O'Leary explained that this phase does not exist in people with disabilities. Individuals with disability do not have ability to develop their career due to its abstract nature. (Conte, 1983).

For people with disability, career development can be inferred through the development perspective, in which career development is a life-long process. Thus, people with disability may also experience the same career development stages as typically developing inddividuals:growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline (Super & Jordaan, 1973). Referring to this theory, there are two essential concepts in the career development of people with disability. First is an exceptional accentuation in the exploratory process, where people with disability are facilitated and intervened in selecting careers based on their potential. Second is special emphasis on the career development assessment to broaden the systematic intervention program to enhance

the development and potential of students with disability (Curnow, 1989).

According to Indonesia's recent 2013 special education curriculum, career development is begun to be enforced from the elementary education level, in the cultural art and craft course, and continued in the junior and senior high school level in the preferred skills course. The course duration is designed based on the students' career development stage, at the elementary level, the courses were 12 and 14 lesson hours per week for grades I-III and IV-VI, respectively. At junior high school level, grades VII-IX are provided with 18 lesson hours per week through the preferred skills course, while 24 and 26 lesson hours per week are provided for the grade X and grade XI-XII at senior high school levels. From grades VII to XII, students are asked to choose one vocational skill to be pursued. Following the career development theory from Super, the career development implemented in special schools can be categorized into the growth and exploration stage. The growth phase is symbolized by the development of self-concept, behavior, and potential of the students with disability. Meanwhile, the exploration stage is characterized by the exploration of interests, talents, hobbies, job selection, and vocational skills development.

The crucial element of career development for students with disability is adjusting the vocational education and training program to the job vacancy requirements (Isa et al., n.d.). Our preliminary study result showed that 70% of jobs of people with hearing impairment are not in accordance with their work training at the senior high school level.

As a consequence, school teachers bear a vital role in the career development of students with disability. They serve as the planner, developer, executor, as well as evaluator of the career development program for students with disability (Taylor, 2012). Contrastingly, the teacher education curriculum has not equipped them with the skills required in this career development program.

This preliminary study aimed to identify the career development of students with disability. In this study, career development was examined through the development perspective, emphasizing three career development components, namely career awareness, exploration, and preparation. Career awareness is a fundamental aspect of someone's career decision. For the student with a disability, career awareness emphasizes their realization regarding their disability, along with the knowledge of the jobs relevant to their disabilities and potential (Fadale, 1974; Randour, n.d.).

Career exploration subsists of activities or programs related to the introduction of self-potential, working tasks, self-management, and the procedures of job application for students with disability (Farley & Johnson, 1999; Lusk & Cook, 2009). Meanwhile, career preparation is correlated with the school programs to equip the students with skills required in the workplace, such as vocational skills training, intern program, procedures of a job interview, and means of communication in the workplace (Bellamy et al., 1985; Lombardi et al., 2018; Morningstar, 1997). Based on the problem description, it is necessary to conduct research that describes career development among students. This study aims to determine the career development in terms of school types such as public and private schools, as well as schools that only accept students with intellectual disabilities and schools that accept students with various types of disabilities.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study aims to describe the career development of students in junior and senior high schools. Participants were 84 special education teachers at junior and senior high school levels, recruited using a purposive sampling technique. Fifty-two participants were teachers in public schools, while 28 participants were in private schools. They were teachers in East Java Province, Indonesia. Most participants were female (85%).

Two instruments were used. The first instrument was used to collect the demographic data, and the second instrument generated the teachers' perception of the career development of students with disability in the special schools. The participant's

perception of career development was collected using 15 items grouped into three categories of career awareness, exploration, and preparation, with five items in each category.

The validity of each instrument was tested using the r test with SPSS. The r-value indicated that 15 items were valid, considering that the rcount was higher than the rtable. Meanwhile, the reliability test was carried out using Alpha Cronbach, showing a score of 0.904 (> 0.7). In other words, instrument used in this study was valid and reliable.

Data were analyzed using the Kruskal Wallis test to picture the career development of students with disabilities. This test was also used to examine the different career development of students with disabilities based on the disability types assisted by the teachers, consisting of students with intellectual disability, hearing impairment, and several disabilities. In recent days, many special schools have enrolled students with different disabilities, including two major disabilities, intellectual disability and hearing impairment, along with visual impairment, physical impairment, and autism spectrum disorder.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Special junior and senior high schools have facilitated the enrolment of students with quite diverse disabilities. The majority of special schools (40 or 47.6%) enroll students with intellectual disability and hearing impairment, while 23.8 and 16.7% of other schools only accept students with intellectual impairment and hearing impairment, respectively. There is only a small number of schools that facilitate the enrolment of students with other disabilities. Thus, the majority of students in these special schools have intellectual and hearing impairments, with a low number of students having a physical-motoric impairment, visual impairment, and autism.

Table 1
Activities to Increase Disabled Students' Career Awareness

No.	Statements	Highest Results
1).	Explaining the importance of jobs for people with disabilities	88% of respondents always explain it
2).	Explaining the examples of various jobs	77.1 % of respondents always describe it
3).	Explaining the types of jobs based on students' interest	66.7% of respondents always explain it
4).	Identifying students' interest in a particular job	66.7% of respondents always explain it
5).	Visit different workplaces	51.2% of respondents rarely practice it

Table 1 presents the obtained teachers' perception on the learning activities that enhance the career awareness of students with disability. Around 88% of participants admitted that they always explained the importance of jobs for students with disabilities, but only 55% of participants facilitated the students with disability to visit various workplaces.

In the aspects of career exploration, we used five items discussing the learning activities or programs allowing the students with disability to know their potential, working tasks, procedures for finding job vacancies, and procedures to apply for a job. The obtained results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Career Exploration Activities for Students with Disability

No.	Statements	Highest Results
1).	Assessment of students' potential, talent, interest, and habit	53.6% of respondents always conduct it
2).	Explanation of ethics and norms in the workplace	58.3 % of respondents always explain it
3).	Training on finding information about the job vacancy	45.2% of respondents rarely practice it
4).	Training on submitting a job application	46.4% of respondents rarely practice it
5).	Introduction of potentials of students with disabilities	65.1% of respondents always practice it

As listed in Table 2, 65% of our participants always practice activities that help students with disability identify their potential, while

53% of them always conduct an assessment of students' potentials, talents, interests, and habits. Linearly, 58.3% of participants also conducted habituation based on the ethics and norms in the workplace. Meanwhile, the activities of finding information about job vacancies and training on submitting a job application were rarely carried out by our participants.

Table 3
Career Preparation Activities for Students with Disabilities

No.	Statement	Highest Results
1).	Training on behavior management in the workplace	54.8% of respondents always conduct it
2).	Training on the workplace norms, such as coming on time, finishing work on time, and so forth	58.3 % of respondents always conduct it
3).	Training on formal communication in the workplace	59.5% of respondents always conduct it
4).	Work training or internship in an industry or workplace for at least one semester	38.1% of respondents rarely conduct it
5).	Accompaniment in the workplace for the alumni	41% of respondents always conduct it

The activities related to career preparation for students with disabilities were investigated using five items listed in table 3. The majority of respondents (60%) admitted that they always conduct the discussed activities, such as training on behavior management in the workplace, workplace norms, formal communication in the workplace, and workplace accompaniment for the alums. However, only 38.1% of our participants conducted the internship program in the workplace.

In addition, the career development differences based on the school status (private or public) on the aspects of career awareness, exploration, and preparation were analyzed using Kruskal Wallis, and the analysis results are presented in Table 4. The results suggested that the different school status (private or public) carries no effects on the career development of students with disability.

Table 4
Kruskal Wallis Test Results Based on Different School Status

	Career_ Awareness	Career_ Exploration	Career_ preparation
Kruskal-Wallis H	.021	.091	.206
df	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.884	.763	.650

The second Kruskal Wallis test was also carried out based on the different disabilities being assisted in school. The schools were groups of three, consisting of the schools which only assists students with intellectual disability, the schools which only assists students with hearing impairment, and the school enrolling students with various types of disabilities. In the school assiting different disabilities, even if the majority of students remain to be students with intellectual disability and hearing impairment, it still accomodate students with visual impairment, physical impairment, and spectrum autism.

Table 5
Test Results Based on Types of Disabilities

	Career_ Awareness	Career_ Exploration	Career_ preparation
Kruskal-Wallis H	1,050	.101	5,854
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.591	.951	.054

The test results based on students' types of disabilities are presented in Table 5. Our finding suggested that all obtained significance values were greater than 0.05, indicating no significantly different career development of students with disabilities based on the disabilities assisted in school. However, in the aspect of career preparation, we obtained almost significant results, so we conducted a further analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test.

The Mann-Whitney U test was carried out three times between (1) the schools that only enroll students with intellectual disability and hearing impairment; (2) the schools which only enroll students with intellectual disability and the schools which assist different types of disabilities; and (3) the schools which only assist students with hearing impairment and

the schools which assist different types of disabilities.

Table 6
Results of Mann-Whitney U Test

	Career_ preparation
Mann-Whitney U	316,500
Wilcoxon W	526,500
Z	-2,400
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.016

The Mann-Whitney U test on the different career preparation between the schools which only enroll students with intellectual disabilities and schools that enroll students with various disabilities resulted in a significant score of 0.016. The mean rank of schools which only enrolled students with intellectual disabilities and the ones accomodating various types of disabilities were 26.33 and 39.17, respectively. Contrastingly, the Mann-Whitney U test results on schools that only assist students with intellectual disability and hearing impairment, the school that enrolls which only enroll students with hearing impairment, and schools that assist different disabilities showed no significant differences.

Discussion

The findings in this preliminary study illustrate the learning activities that promote career development for students with disability in a special school. Career development was investigated through three components of career awareness, exploration, and preparation. Our finding suggested that more than 50% of our participants have carried out the relevant career development activities. Besides, the special school status (private or public) exhibited no significant effects on the career development of students with disability.

A previous study investigating the career sophistication of students with disability in a vocational high school in Surakarta reported 40, 46.7, and 13.3% of students in the low, moderate, and high categories (Wati, 2020). In facilitating students to have proper career preparation, they are provided with vocational or skills training, job hunting training, and working experiences during the internship program. However, only a minimum number of students with disability can access those programs(Benz & Halpern, 1993).

Additionally, our analysis results also indicated significant differences in career preparation between the school that enroll students with various disabilities and the ones which only enroll students with intellectual disabilities. This finding suggests that those schools which only enroll students with intellectual disabilities present the lowest career development program than the other special schools.

Parallel to our findings, students with intellectual disabilities encounter the largest challenges during the school transition program compared to students with other disabilities (McMahon & Cuskelly, 2020). For these students, even independently completing daily tasks can be extremely difficult (Abdullah et al., 2015). These students are also reported to have the lowest participation in the workforce, with only a 13% employment rate (Roessler et al., 1990).

There are numerous predictors of job attainment for people with disability. Among those predictors, the work experience or internship during their senior high school period is the most robust predictor (Wehman et al., 2015). Sadly, only 38.1% of our participants admitted that their school provided work training for students with disability, and even then, they rarely provided the program.

Ideally, career development for students with disability should be carried out using the perspective of potential empowerment. That perspective is substantially different from the traditional perspective, which only views people with disability as unable and less human beings. Besides, people with disability have limited experience, development, and social maturity (Curnow, 1989), so they have super low and unrealistic career aspirations (Salomone & Palmer, 1978).

The view on people with disability should be refocused on their ability to be independent and make their own career decision (M.

Wehmeyer, 1997). That way, the career development for students with disability can be directed into facilitating their individual progression optimally. Through this potential development, people with disability can determine their education, skills training, and other leisure activities. In that situation, the career development for students with disabilities can be carried out in a more personal manner, following each individual's potential (Schalock & Luckasson, 2004).

In a more progressive viewpoint, career development for people with disability can be correlated with social responsibility and justice. We realize that career development for students with disability cannot stand on its own as it is associated with other variables, such as family, community, and social politic partiality (McMahon & Cuskelly, 2020). Therefore, the current career development theory allocates special attention to individuals based on their context and needs (McMahon et al., 2014).

Students with disability have distinct obstacles since they have different needs. Consequently, the career development designed for these students should consider their diverse conditions. Meanwhile, these students' top career development challenges include deficient interpersonal skills, limited career choices, a less supportive school system, and various individual needs or situations (Lindstrom et al., 2012).

In this situation, the more severe someone's disability results in lower independence and self-determination, affecting their success in the working world (M. Wehmeyer, 1997; M. L. Wehmeyer et al., 2003). Thus, this situation places the involvement of third parties, such as the parents, families, and relevant agents, to be a vital aspect. Additionally, in finding job vacancies, applying for a job, job placement, and workplace monitoring, particularly, people with intellectual disabilities need assistance from their parents or family members (Roessler et al., 1990; Vreeburg Izzo, 1987)..

CONCLUSION

This study reported that special schools provided career development programs for students with disability in the form of career awareness, exploration, and preparation activities. Our data suggested that the career development in public and private schools was not significantly different. Similarly, the career development based on the students' types of disabilities also was not significantly different. However, our data indicated that students with intellectual disabilities tend to receive lower career development than other students, primarily on the career preparation components. This finding is presumably caused by the more extensive restraints faced by students with intellectual disabilities, especially regarding their self-determination.

However, this study only gathered data from teachers' perspectives. Therefore, future studies are suggested to carry out more in-depth studies on career development in special schools. Additionally, the efficiency of career development programs related to the work field acceptance for students with disability also requires further investigation.

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