

The Role Of Guidance And Counseling Teachers In Students' Career Planning Using Career Trees At Santo Aloysius Turi Middle School

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Abstract

This study examines the role of Guidance and Counseling (GC) teachers in supporting students' career planning through the use of the Career Tree as a guidance medium at Santo Aloysius Turi Middle School. The research aims to explore how GC teachers facilitate students in recognizing their interests, talents, abilities, and future career aspirations while enhancing their career decision-making skills. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving Guidance and Counseling teachers and students. The findings indicate that the Career Tree serves as an interactive and student-centered guidance tool that encourages self-reflection, career exploration, and active participation in career planning activities. GC teachers play a significant role as facilitators, motivators, and counselors by providing career information, guiding self-assessment, and helping students connect their personal potential with educational and occupational opportunities. Furthermore, the implementation of the Career Tree improves students' career awareness, confidence, and readiness to make informed educational and career decisions. Despite challenges such as limited guidance time and varying levels of student engagement, the innovative use of the Career Tree contributes positively to the effectiveness of career guidance services. Therefore, integrating creative guidance media into school counseling programs is recommended to strengthen students' career planning competencies and support their long-term personal and professional development.

Keywords

The Role Of Guidance; Counseling Teacher; Students' Career Planning ; Career Trees ; Santo Aloysius Turi Middle School



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INTRODUCTION

Career planning has become an increasingly important aspect of students' educational development, particularly at the junior secondary school level where adolescents begin to recognize their interests, talents, and future aspirations. During this developmental stage, students face significant psychological, social, and academic transitions that influence their educational and career decisions. Without proper guidance, many students experience

uncertainty regarding their future educational pathways and occupational goals. Consequently, schools play a strategic role in facilitating students' career development through comprehensive guidance and counseling services. Guidance and counseling teachers are expected not only to provide academic assistance but also to empower students to understand themselves, explore career opportunities, and formulate realistic career plans aligned with their personal potential and labor market demands (Gysbers & Henderson, 2020; Brown & Lent, 2021).

Career planning is a lifelong developmental process involving self-assessment, career exploration, decision-making, goal setting, and action planning. According to career development theory, students who receive structured career guidance demonstrate higher career maturity, stronger self-efficacy, and greater confidence in making educational and occupational decisions. The rapid advancement of technology, globalization, and changes in workforce demands have made career planning increasingly complex, requiring students to develop adaptability, critical thinking, and career management skills from an early age. Therefore, career guidance programs implemented in schools should move beyond conventional counseling approaches by utilizing innovative and student-centered learning media capable of stimulating students' active participation and reflective thinking (Savickas, 2021; Hirschi, 2022).

One innovative strategy that has gained attention in career guidance practice is the use of Career Trees as a counseling medium. Career Trees provide a visual representation of students' personal growth, beginning with their roots representing values, interests, and family support; the trunk symbolizing personal competencies and character; the branches reflecting educational aspirations; and the fruits illustrating future career goals. This visualization encourages students to identify their strengths and weaknesses while connecting their present learning experiences with future career aspirations. Visual and participatory media such as Career Trees are considered highly effective because they simplify abstract career concepts into concrete representations that are easier for adolescents to understand. Through reflective activities integrated into Career Trees, students become more motivated to explore their potential and establish realistic career objectives (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2021; Maree, 2020).

The effectiveness of Career Trees, however, largely depends on the competence and professional role of guidance and counseling teachers. These educators serve as facilitators, mentors, motivators, and counselors who assist students throughout the career planning process. Their responsibilities include administering career assessments, interpreting students' interests and abilities, providing career information, organizing counseling sessions, and evaluating students' career development outcomes. Effective counseling teachers create supportive learning environments where students feel comfortable discussing their aspirations and concerns. They also collaborate with parents, subject teachers, and school administrators to ensure that career guidance programs align with students' developmental needs and educational objectives. Consequently, the professional competence of guidance and counseling teachers significantly influences students' career readiness and decision-making abilities (American School Counselor Association, 2022; OECD, 2021).

At Santo Aloysius Turi Middle School, guidance and counseling services have sought to strengthen students' career awareness by integrating Career Trees into career planning activities. This approach reflects the school's commitment to developing students holistically by emphasizing self-understanding, educational planning, and career readiness. Through Career Tree activities, students are encouraged to reflect upon their interests, talents, achievements, family influences, and future ambitions while receiving continuous guidance from counseling teachers. Such practices are expected to increase students' motivation to pursue higher education and suitable career pathways. Nevertheless, variations in students' backgrounds, levels of career awareness, and counseling participation suggest that the effectiveness of Career Trees may differ among individuals, highlighting the importance of examining how guidance and counseling teachers facilitate this process within the school context (UNESCO, 2021; Patton & McMahon, 2021).

Despite growing recognition of innovative career guidance methods, empirical studies examining the implementation of Career Trees in Indonesian junior high schools remain limited. Much of the existing literature emphasizes career counseling at the senior secondary or university level, leaving a gap in understanding how career planning interventions can effectively support younger adolescents during their formative educational years. Furthermore, limited research has specifically explored the practical role of guidance and counseling teachers in facilitating Career Tree-based interventions within Catholic junior high schools. Investigating this topic is important because effective career planning during adolescence contributes to improved educational decision-making, stronger career adaptability, and better long-term employment outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of guidance and counseling teachers in students' career planning using Career Trees at Santo Aloysius Turi Middle School. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on career guidance practices, provide practical recommendations for counseling teachers, and support schools in developing innovative, student-centered career guidance programs that enhance students' readiness for future educational and occupational challenges (Super, 2020; Lent & Brown, 2020)..

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a descriptive case study design to explore the role of guidance and counseling teachers in students' career planning through the use of Career Trees at Santo Aloysius Turi Middle School. The research participants consisted of the guidance and counseling teacher, the school principal, and selected students who were purposively chosen based on their involvement in career guidance activities. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom and counseling observations, and document analysis, including students' Career Tree worksheets, counseling program documents, and school records related to career guidance. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking were conducted. This

methodological approach enabled an in-depth understanding of how guidance and counseling teachers facilitate students' career planning, the implementation of Career Trees as a career guidance medium, and the factors that support or hinder its effectiveness within the school context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.3.1 The Role of Guidance and Counseling Teachers in Career Guidance from a Theoretical Perspective

The findings of this study indicate that guidance and counseling teachers at Santo Aloysius Turi Middle School play a crucial role in helping students understand and plan their future careers through career guidance activities using the Career Tree as an instructional medium. This role is reflected in their active involvement in providing guidance, direction, motivation, and career information related to further education and future planning. Interview results revealed that guidance and counseling teachers act primarily as facilitators by assisting students in identifying their interests, talents, and abilities before determining their career aspirations and educational pathways. The teachers explained that students must first develop a clear understanding of themselves before they can effectively consider future career choices. Furthermore, Career Trees are utilized as a visual learning medium to help students recognize the relationship between their personal potential and future goals in a more systematic and meaningful way. This finding supports career development theory, which emphasizes that self-awareness and self-understanding are fundamental prerequisites for effective career planning and decision-making (Brown & Lent, 2021; Gysbers & Henderson, 2020).

In addition to serving as facilitators, guidance and counseling teachers also function as motivators throughout the career guidance process. Based on interviews with students, teachers consistently encouraged them to believe in their own abilities and to pursue ambitious career aspirations without fear of failure. Through continuous encouragement, counseling sessions, and emotional support, teachers helped students overcome uncertainty when making educational and career decisions. The motivational role of guidance and counseling teachers contributed to increased self-confidence, enabling students to think more positively about their future and make career choices more realistically. Moreover, teachers provided comprehensive information regarding educational opportunities after junior high school, including senior high schools, vocational schools, and available academic programs. Students acknowledged that this information broadened their understanding of educational alternatives and prevented them from making uninformed decisions. These findings are consistent with contemporary research highlighting that career guidance teachers significantly influence students' career confidence, career adaptability, and educational aspirations through motivational support and accurate career information (Whiston & Rahardja, 2021; OECD, 2023).

Another important finding is that guidance and counseling teachers acted as mentors who guided students through the career planning process without directly determining their educational or occupational choices. Instead, they encouraged students to reflect on their interests, abilities, values, and future aspirations before making independent decisions. By facilitating reflective discussions and utilizing the Career Tree as a structured counseling medium, teachers promoted students' critical thinking and self-reflection, enabling them to establish realistic career goals based on their individual potential. Therefore, the role of guidance and counseling teachers in Career Tree-based career guidance extends beyond simply providing career information; they function simultaneously as facilitators, motivators, information providers, and mentors who empower students to understand themselves, strengthen their career awareness, and develop well-informed plans for their future education and careers. These findings reinforce the principles of developmental career counseling, which emphasize that effective career guidance should foster students' autonomy, self-efficacy, and lifelong career management competencies (Savickas, 2021).

. 4.3.2 Implementation of Career Guidance Using the Career Tree Media

The findings of this study reveal that the implementation of career guidance at Santo Aloysius Turi Middle School is carried out systematically according to students' developmental stages. Guidance and counseling teachers explained that Grade VII students are primarily encouraged to develop self-awareness by identifying their interests, talents, and personal abilities. In Grade VIII, students begin to receive information regarding educational opportunities after junior high school, while Grade IX students are guided toward strengthening their educational decisions and preparing for the transition to higher levels of education. Career guidance activities are conducted through various methods, including group discussions, self-reflection worksheets, and simple career interest assessments. In addition, guidance and counseling teachers employ the Career Tree as a visual learning medium to help students understand the relationship between their interests, competencies, and future career goals. This developmental approach reflects the principle that career guidance should be delivered progressively according to students' cognitive and psychological readiness, allowing them to gradually develop career awareness and decision-making skills (Super et al., 2020; Patton & McMahon, 2021).

During the implementation process, guidance and counseling teachers first introduced the concept and components of the Career Tree before asking students to complete each section based on their personal characteristics and aspirations. Students filled in the roots, trunk, branches, leaves, and fruits of the tree to represent their interests, abilities, personal strengths, educational goals, and desired careers. The roots symbolized students' interests and competencies, while the upper parts of the tree represented future educational and occupational aspirations. The findings indicate that the Career Tree significantly increased students' engagement during career guidance sessions. Rather than passively listening to explanations, students actively participated in reflective activities that enabled them to connect their present abilities with future ambitions. Many students reported that the visual

representation made career planning easier to understand because they could clearly see the relationship between what they enjoy, what they are capable of doing, and the careers they wished to pursue. These findings are consistent with research demonstrating that visual and experiential learning strategies enhance students' career exploration, self-reflection, and career decision-making by transforming abstract concepts into meaningful learning experiences (Maree, 2020; Kettunen & Sampson, 2022).

Furthermore, the implementation of Career Tree-based career guidance is consistent with Donald Super's Career Development Theory, which explains that junior high school students are generally in the growth stage, particularly the development of interests and capacities. At this stage, adolescents begin to recognize their personal abilities, explore educational opportunities, and develop preliminary career aspirations. The Career Tree effectively supports this developmental process by encouraging students to reflect on their self-concept while establishing meaningful connections between their personal potential and future educational and occupational choices. Consequently, the implementation of career guidance using the Career Tree at Santo Aloysius Turi Middle School not only enhances students' understanding of themselves but also helps them identify appropriate educational pathways, strengthen career awareness, and formulate more realistic and well-directed plans for their future. These findings reinforce the importance of integrating innovative, student-centered learning media into school career guidance programs to improve students' career readiness and long-term educational planning (Savickas, 2021).

4.3.3 Students' Experiences in Using the Career Tree Based on Donald Super's Career Development Theory

The findings of this study indicate that students' experiences in participating in career guidance through the Career Tree media reflect a gradual process of self-understanding and career awareness development. Most students initially reported feeling confused and uncertain about their future career aspirations and educational pathways. They expressed hesitation when making career-related decisions because they feared choosing the wrong educational direction or doubted their ability to achieve their desired goals. These findings suggest that junior high school students are still in the early stages of career development, where they are beginning to explore their interests, abilities, and future aspirations. According to Donald Super's Career Development Theory, adolescents at the junior high school level are in the growth stage, particularly the development of interests and capacities, during which individuals begin to recognize their personal potential and relate it to future educational and occupational opportunities. In this study, students reported becoming more concerned about their future careers when they reached Grade VIII, as they began preparing for decisions regarding further education after graduating from junior high school (Super et al., 2020; Savickas, 2021).

Through career guidance activities utilizing the Career Tree, students gained meaningful experiences that enhanced their self-understanding and career planning abilities. They stated that the Career Tree enabled them to visualize their future more clearly and understand the

necessary steps required to achieve their career aspirations. Furthermore, students found it easier to connect their interests, talents, and personal abilities with the occupations they wished to pursue. These findings indicate that the Career Tree serves as an effective reflective learning tool, encouraging students to evaluate their strengths, identify their goals, and develop strategies for achieving them. While completing each component of the Career Tree, students actively reflected on their interests, competencies, educational aspirations, and future careers. One participant explained that the activity made them realize they were still uncertain about their career choice, motivating them to explore their personal characteristics more deeply before making important educational decisions. This reflective learning process is consistent with career construction theory, which emphasizes that career development is strengthened through continuous self-reflection and the construction of personal meaning regarding one's future career path (Maree, 2020; Nota et al., 2020).

The study further revealed that the Career Tree functioned not only as a visual instructional medium but also as an effective instrument for promoting self-reflection and career awareness among students. In addition to the learning media itself, students highlighted the importance of continuous support from guidance and counseling teachers throughout the career guidance process. Teachers provided explanations, guidance, constructive feedback, and opportunities for discussion, enabling students to gain a better understanding of educational opportunities, academic majors, and future career alternatives after completing junior high school. Consequently, students no longer selected educational pathways based solely on external influences or personal uncertainty but instead considered their interests, abilities, values, and long-term goals. Overall, the findings demonstrate that students' experiences with the Career Tree significantly contributed to improved self-understanding, enhanced career awareness, greater confidence in career decision-making, and the development of clearer and more realistic educational and career plans. These results reinforce the importance of integrating reflective and student-centered career guidance strategies to prepare adolescents for successful educational transitions and lifelong career development (Patton & McMahon, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research and discussion on the role of guidance and counseling teachers in student career planning using the career tree model at Santo Aloysius Turi Junior High School, it can be concluded that guidance and counseling teachers play a crucial role in helping students plan their future careers. This role is evident through the provision of gradual career guidance according to grade level, starting with self-introduction, introducing further education options, and consolidating career choices.

Guidance and counseling teachers act as facilitators by providing a career tree model that helps students understand the relationship between interests, talents, abilities, and aspirations in a visual and concrete way. Furthermore, guidance and counseling teachers also act as motivators, encouraging students to boldly think about and plan for their futures in a

more focused manner. Through this approach, students become more active, understand themselves better, and are better prepared to make decisions regarding further education and future career directions. The use of the career tree model has been proven to assist students in the process of self-reflection and visualization of future plans. This model facilitates students' recognition of their potential and the development of a more systematic and meaningful career outlook. Thus, career tree media can be an effective strategy in supporting career guidance in schools..

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