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Strengthening Career Guidance Services For School Counselors In The Implementation Of Career Guidance At SLC

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Abstract

Career guidance is an essential component of school counseling that helps students recognize their potential, explore educational and occupational options, and make responsible career decisions. Its implementation requires school counselors to conduct needs assessments, design programs, use career information media and sources, facilitate self-exploration, and evaluate student development. This article describes a community-service program intended to strengthen the capacity of school counselors to provide career guidance at Sitanala Learning Center (SLC), Ambon. The program applies a participatory approach through initial assessment, workshops, practical development of service materials, simulations, mentoring, and pretest–posttest evaluation. The needs assessment identified five areas requiring attention: the absence of routine and systematic career-interest assessments; limitations in the variety of service methods and supporting instruments; the need for more current education and employment information; limited structured collaboration with parents, higher education institutions, alumni, and employers; and non-comprehensive evaluation of service outcomes. The program is expected to produce a student career-needs map, career-guidance service plans, career information media, assessment and evaluation instruments, and school follow-up plans. However, the source manuscript contains inconsistent participant counts, while numerical pretest–posttest results and the number of completed outputs have not been provided. These results therefore require verification against attendance records, assessment sheets, activity documentation, and participant products before the article is submitted as a completed activity report.

Keywords: Career Guidance; School Counselors; Competency Development; Community Service; Sitanala Learning Center

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INTRODUCTION

Changes in education and the world of work require students to recognize themselves, understand available opportunities, plan their educational pathways, and make adaptive career decisions. In schools, guidance and counseling (GC) teachers play a strategic role in facilitating this process through services that are

systematic, continuous, and centered on students' needs. The Guidance and Counseling Implementation Guide for primary and secondary education places specialization and individual planning among the components of GC services, alongside basic services, responsive services, and system support (Hidayah et al., 2022).

Career guidance cannot be limited to providing information about study programs or occupations. School counselors need to integrate needs assessment, exploration of interests and potential, information on further education and employment, decision-making, action planning, and evaluation. Career development frameworks also emphasize that career choices evolve through a process of individual construction and adaptation to experiences and life contexts (Savickas, 2005; Super, 1990).

Previous community-service activities indicate that school counselors' capacity can be strengthened through training and practice. Jamain et al. (2023), for example, involved 23 school counselors who were members of the Banjarmasin City Guidance and Counseling Teachers' Association in digital-based career-interest service training on July 27, 2022. The activity used lectures, training, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and evaluation. Aryani et al. (2021) also reported a program for vocational-school counselors that emphasized career information in the digital era and the development of service media.

A study by Hidayat, Marfu'i, and Nufus (publication metadata should be checked against the journal's official record before final citation) involved 234 teachers from various regions of Indonesia. Its abstract reports that 60.3% of respondents considered AI integration in career counseling highly necessary; 81.6% wanted automated interest and aptitude assessments, 81.2% wanted recommendations based on student data, 69.7% wanted career mapping and self-development plans, and 57.3% wanted real-time labor-market and higher-education information. These figures are cited as national research context and are not data from SLC participants.

In response to these needs, this community-service program is directed at strengthening the practical competencies of school counselors at SLC. The manuscript identifies the partner as Sitanala Learning Center, located on Jl. Dr. Kayadoe, Ambon. The objectives are to: (1) improve counselors' understanding of comprehensive career guidance; (2) improve their skills in assessing needs and planning services; (3) train them to use career information sources and media critically and ethically; and (4) develop career-guidance instruments that can be implemented in schools.

METHOD

Partner, location, and participants

The partner institution is Sitanala Learning Center (SLC), located on Jl. Dr. Kayadoe, Ambon. The participants were school counselors selected in coordination with the partner. The method section of the source manuscript reports 15 participants from three educational institutions. Other sections, however, refer to 23 participating counselors, while the needs-assessment section identifies 14 informants. These figures are retained as reported and must be reconciled using the official attendance list and field records. Participant criteria, activity dates, duration, and facilitators should likewise be confirmed against assignment letters, attendance records, and documentation.

Approach and implementation stages

Coordination and initial assessment: interviews with the SLC coordinator and school counselors, review of guidance and counseling programs, and identification of needs and barriers in career-guidance implementation.

Conceptual workshop: comprehensive career guidance, student career development, needs assessment, exploration of interests and potential, education and employment information, and decision-making.

Practical development of service materials: participants prepare a needs map, service objectives, service implementation plans (RPL), materials, media, career-exploration worksheets, and evaluation instruments.

Simulation and feedback: participants practice classroom/group services and individual counseling related to career exploration and planning, and receive feedback using a rubric.

Mentoring and evaluation: review of products, measurement of knowledge and skills before and after the activity, reflection, and preparation of follow-up plans.

Competency-strengthening materials

Component	**Materials / Activities**	**Evidence / Expected Output**
Needs assessment	Interviews, observations, career-needs questionnaires, and student data analysis	Summary of needs and service priorities
Self-exploration	Interests, values, abilities, experiences, and aspirations; careful	Self-profile reflection sheet

	interpretation	
Opportunity exploration	Study programs, educational pathways, occupations, competencies, and official sources	Education and employment information map
Individual planning	SMART goals, alternatives, steps, support, and barriers	Student career action plan
Implementation and evaluation	RPL, classroom/group/individual methods, rubrics, and follow-up	RPL and evaluation instruments

Data collection and analysis techniques

Process data are collected through attendance lists, observation sheets, activity documentation, and product assessments. Changes in knowledge are measured using the same or equivalent tests administered before and after the activity. Skills are assessed using a rubric covering the accuracy of needs assessment, appropriateness of objectives, completeness of the RPL, accuracy of career information sources, student engagement, ethics and confidentiality, and evaluation. Descriptive analysis includes means, percentages, score differences, and N-Gain where the instrument and scale meet the relevant requirements. The completion rate is calculated by dividing the number of participants who meet the criterion by the number who took the test and multiplying by 100%. Missing data and participants who did not complete one of the tests should be reported transparently.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation profile

Indicator	**Information reported in the manuscript**	**Verification source**
Partner name	Sitanala Learning Center (SLC)	Official partner identity
Location and date	SLC Hall, October 12, 2026 (as stated in the source)	Assignment letter and activity documentation
School counselors	15 participants in the method section; 23 in later evaluation sections	Attendance list
Educational institutions	3 institutions	Participant list

represented		
Duration and format	08:00–17:00	Schedule and documentation
Facilitator	PKM team	Assignment letter

The source manuscript contains different participant counts in different sections. The method section states 15 school counselors from three educational institutions; the evaluation sections refer to 23 counselors; the conclusion in one section states 14 participants; and the needs-assessment section lists 14 informants (three school counselors, one principal, five students, three parents, and two alumni). These categories may represent different groups, but the manuscript does not explain the distinction. The final article must clarify the number of training participants separately from the number of interview informants.

Needs-assessment findings

Career-interest and needs assessments have not been conducted routinely and systematically

The data collection was intended to identify the extent to which school counselors assess students' interests, talents, potential, needs, and career plans. Assessment is important because career services should be designed around students' individual characteristics and needs rather than relying solely on the school's annual program. Interviews indicate that counselors do not yet have dedicated assessment instruments for career services. Assessments are conducted only to a limited extent, generally when a student is perceived to need assistance.

Needs identification is sometimes conducted through interviews, but this method is not used consistently. Assessment results are included in program planning, although implementation is not always optimal; some activities listed in the program are not fully carried out. Document reviews also indicate that aptitude and interest instruments and needs questionnaires are not yet available. Interviews are used only when requested. This situation makes it difficult to identify students' further-education preferences, and assessment results are not yet used optimally as the basis for service delivery.

Annual and semester guidance and counseling programs have been prepared, but their implementation remains inconsistent. Assessment instruments, inventory results, summaries of educational-choice mapping, and individual records of students' career development are not available. Without routine assessment, counselors may find it difficult to identify specific career needs. Consequently, services tend to be general and may not fully consider differences in students'

interests, abilities, and career aspirations.

Limitations in service instruments and career-guidance implementation plans

The availability of service instruments is one factor determining the quality of career guidance. These instruments include RPLs, service materials, career-information media, evaluation instruments, and implementation guidelines. Interviews indicate that counselors are already able to prepare RPLs and align them with objectives, materials, methods, and evaluation. They also use digital media. However, the range of service methods remains limited. A lack of varied and practical instruments may make career guidance less structured and more difficult to evaluate. Therefore, service materials need to be developed in ways that are applicable, easy to use, and adaptable to the characteristics of each educational institution.

Information on further education and employment is not updated optimally

Career information needs to keep pace with developments in education, labor-market needs, technology, and changing competencies across occupations. Interviews indicate that information about universities and employment is generally obtained from the internet or from information shared by other parties. Counselors expressed a need for more directed and up-to-date sources. A career-information board was not available, and the use of digital platforms for exploring education and employment was not evident. Information about university admission pathways was considered relatively adequate, and information spaces for scholarships, study programs, and vocational education opportunities were available. However, information about emerging professions and employment opportunities remained unclear. Outdated information may give students an inaccurate picture of educational and occupational options. Strengthening counselors' career-information literacy and use of digital sources is therefore important.

Collaboration with parents, higher education institutions, alumni, and the world of work is not yet optimal

Career guidance cannot be the sole responsibility of school counselors. Support from multiple parties is needed so that students can gain authentic career-exploration experiences that reflect developments in education and employment. Interviews with counselors indicate that higher-education institutions are usually introduced through outreach or socialization activities, while collaboration with alumni and employers is not yet part of a scheduled program. The principal's account similarly indicates that university introductions mainly take the form of presentations by higher-education institutions. Meetings with parents about career

planning have not been conducted, alumni involvement in sharing educational and work experiences is limited, and industrial visits or workplace familiarization activities are not clearly established. Activities therefore remain focused primarily on higher-education socialization.

Unstructured collaboration may limit students' access to first-hand information about education and employment. School counselors need to develop sustainable partnerships with parents, universities, alumni, training institutions, businesses, and industries.

Evaluation of career-guidance outcomes is not comprehensive

Evaluation is essential for determining whether career services have achieved their intended objectives. It should not be limited to student attendance or whether an activity took place; it should also examine changes in self-understanding, career knowledge, decision-making readiness, and career-planning skills. Counselors reported that evaluation is usually based on students' responses after an activity. However, changes in understanding and readiness to plan careers are not measured systematically. Reports containing process and outcome evaluation instruments are not evident, post-activity reflection is unclear, and service documentation is not routinely maintained by counselors. Without comprehensive evaluation, counselors have difficulty determining service effectiveness. An evaluation system is therefore needed to measure changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, exploration skills, and readiness to make career decisions.

Triangulation matrix and informants

To strengthen the credibility of the community-service findings, interview results should be compared with observation notes and documentary evidence. The source manuscript identifies 14 informants: three school counselors, one principal, five students, three parents, and two alumni.

Finding area	**Interview evidence**	**Observation evidence**	**Documentary evidence**
Interests and needs assessment	Number of informants and anonymized statements; counselors' experiences	Availability and use of instruments	Questionnaires, inventories, and assessment results
Service instruments / RPL	Counselors' experiences in	Availability and use of service	RPLs, modules, and media

	preparing RPLs	materials	
Career information	Sources used by counselors	Available career-information media	Brochures, materials, and information links
Collaboration	Experiences of working with partners	Collaborative activities conducted	Memoranda, invitations, and reports
Outcome evaluation	Counselors' explanations of evaluation	Implementation of service evaluation	Instruments, summaries, and reports

Discussion of findings in relation to the literature

The five findings indicate that strengthening career guidance requires a comprehensive approach, beginning with needs assessment and program planning and extending to information provision, partnership development, and evaluation. First, interest and career-needs assessment provides the basis for determining the direction and type of career guidance. Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 111 of 2014 explains that career guidance helps students develop self-understanding, explore career options, and make rational career decisions based on their potential and environmental information. The national implementation guide also explains that student data may be collected through observation, interviews, questionnaires, inventories, and documentation.

Second, counselors' competence in developing service instruments needs to be strengthened. Counselors should be able to develop structured programs, from setting objectives and selecting materials to choosing implementation strategies, media, and evaluation methods. Service instruments should be adapted to students' needs and the conditions of each educational institution. Third, career-information literacy needs to be developed. Career information should be current, relevant, and accessible. The International Labour Organization's (2024) Handbook for Career Development emphasizes the importance of a career-development service framework that can be integrated into educational activities and delivered online or offline.

Fourth, cross-sector collaboration needs to be strengthened. The Guidance and Counseling Implementation Guide (Hidayah et al., 2022) emphasizes coordination between counselors, schools, families, and communities to support students' academic and career development. Fifth, career-service evaluation should be developed continuously to measure the achievement of service objectives. Relevant

indicators include improved understanding of personal potential, knowledge of further education, understanding of the world of work, decision-making skills, and readiness to prepare a career plan.

Implications for the community-service program

Identified issue	**Strengthening activity**	**Expected output**
Assessment is not routine	Training in assessing interests, talents, and career needs	Assessment instruments
Limited RPL/service materials	Workshop on developing career-guidance service materials	RPLs and modules
Information is not up to date	Training in digital career-information literacy	Career-information bank
Limited collaboration	Development of partnership networks	Partner map and cooperation plan
Evaluation is not optimal	Training in process and outcome evaluation	Evaluation instruments and reports

Accordingly, the community-service program should not focus solely on increasing counselors' knowledge; it should also produce practical instruments that can be directly applied in career-guidance services at SLC.

Changes in knowledge and skills

The source manuscript describes an evaluation of changes in knowledge and skills using pretest and posttest instruments with a maximum score of 100. It identifies four competency areas: knowledge of career guidance, skills in preparing RPLs, skills in selecting career media and information sources, and skills in evaluating career services. However, the numerical pretest and posttest means have not been supplied.

Indicator	**N reported in evaluation section**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Difference**
Knowledge of career guidance	23	Not available	Not available	Not available
Skills in preparing RPLs	23	Not available	Not available	Not available

Selection of career media / sources	23	Not available	Not available	Not available
Career-service evaluation	23	Not available	Not available	Not available

The mean change is calculated as: $\Delta X = X_{posttest} - X_{pretest}$. N-Gain may also be used to determine the relative improvement against the maximum score: g = (Posttest − Pretest) / (100 − Pretest). Numerical results should be reported only after the original pretest and posttest data are available. Consequently, the extent of competency improvement cannot yet be determined.

Outputs and sustainability

The program is intended to produce supporting instruments for career guidance that can be used by counselors at SLC partner schools. The source manuscript does not yet report the number of completed products.

No.	Program output	Reported status
1	Career-guidance service plans (RPLs)	Not yet reported
2	Career-information media	Not yet reported
3	Assessment and evaluation instruments	Not yet reported
4	School follow-up plans	Not yet reported

Program sustainability is planned through four main strategies: (1) strengthening SLC coordination as a forum for communication among school counselors; (2) mentoring implementation through the use of developed RPLs and career-guidance media; (3) updating information on higher education, vocational pathways, skills training, and employment opportunities; and (4) monitoring and evaluation within one to three months after training to identify implementation, barriers, and further development needs.

General discussion

Strengthening career guidance for school counselors at SLC is a strategic effort to improve the quality of school guidance and counseling. Counselors play an important role in helping students understand their potential, recognize educational and occupational opportunities, and develop career decision-making skills. The program is designed to strengthen both knowledge and practical skills through presentations, discussions, development of service instruments, simulations, and evaluation. The participant count, however, needs to be verified because different

sections of the source manuscript report 14, 15, and 23 participants.

Jamain et al. (2023), who reported digital-based career-interest service training for 23 school counselors, provide a point of comparison for participatory training methods. The need to use technology for interest and aptitude assessment, career mapping, and the provision of educational and employment information also highlights the importance of counselors' digital competencies. In practice, the use of technology and artificial intelligence must consider instrument validity, student-data confidentiality, accessibility, and counselors' professional responsibilities. Technology should support, not replace, professional judgment.

Another important aspect is service sustainability. Strengthening career guidance cannot be achieved through a single training session alone; it needs to become a program integrated with school needs. Collaboration among counselors, parents, homeroom teachers, universities, alumni, and employers is necessary to provide students with broader career-exploration experiences. In this way, the SLC program is expected to contribute to counselors' professional development and improve the planning and implementation of school career-guidance services.

CONCLUSION

The community-service program on strengthening career guidance for school counselors at SLC is intended to improve counselors' competence in understanding career-guidance concepts, assessing students' needs, preparing RPLs, selecting career media and information sources, and evaluating services. The program uses a participatory training approach involving workshops, discussions, practical development of service materials, simulations, and evaluation. It is also intended to generate career-guidance instruments that can be applied in schools.

Program sustainability requires SLC coordination, implementation mentoring, updated career information, peer supervision, and periodic monitoring and evaluation. The magnitude of improvement in participants' competencies and the achievement of program outputs cannot yet be established because the numerical pretest–posttest results and verified product records have not been provided. Before submission, the participant figures reported as 15, 23, and 14 must be reconciled against the attendance list and informant records.

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