

Analysis of Student Needs Regarding a Career Guidance Model Based on the “Kurikulum Merdeka”: A Study at SMAN 11 Gowa

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Abstract

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Careers and career paths play a significant role in life, not only determining the future but also influencing the quality of human life. In terms of career development, the school environment and education system have a strategic role in supporting the academic, personal, and social development of students. However, until now many students are still confused about determining their careers due to various factors, so the development of a career guidance model is needed to produce innovations in supporting students' careers. This study aims to analyze the level of students' needs for the development of a career guidance model, with the long-term impact of responding to these needs being that students are expected to be able to determine their career direction and make mature career decisions. Based on the results of the analysis conducted at SMA Negeri 11 Gowa, the results show that in each aspect measured, students demonstrate a great need and willingness to support the implementation of a career guidance model in schools. Support from schools plays a very important role in this finding, because it can realize good career guidance in the school environment.

Abstrak.

Karir dan jenjangnya berperan signifikan dalam kehidupan tidak hanya menentukan masa depan tetapi turut serta memengaruhi kualitas hidup manusia. Dalam hal pengembangan karir, lingkungan sekolah serta sistem pendidikan memiliki peran strategis disamping mendukung perkembangan akademik, pribadi serta sosial peserta didik. Namun, hingga saat ini masih banyak peserta didik yang kebingungan menentukan karir dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor sehingga pengembangan model bimbingan karir diperlukan untuk menghasilkan pembaruan dalam mendukung karir siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana tingkat kebutuhan siswa terhadap pengembangan model bimbingan karir, yang dampak jangka panjang dari jawaban atas kebutuhan tersebut adalah siswa diharapkan mampu menentukan arah karir serta mengambil keputusan karir secara matang. Berdasarkan hasil analisis yang telah dilakukan di SMA Negeri 11 Gowa, hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa pada tiap aspek yang diukur, peserta didik menunjukkan kebutuhan yang besar serta kesediaan untuk mendukung pengimplementasian model bimbingan karir di sekolah. Dukungan dari sekolah sangat berperan penting atas temuan ini, sebab dengan demikian dapat mewujudkan tercapainya pendampingan karir yang baik di lingkungan sekolah.

PENDAHULUAN

The “Kurikulum Merdeka” (Independent Curriculum) is the curriculum currently in effect in Indonesia, having been implemented since March 2024. It is a framework that offers greater flexibility than previous curricula, allowing students the space to develop their character and competencies. This curriculum features diverse in-class learning activities and optimized content, ensuring students have sufficient time to delve deeply into concepts and strengthen their competencies (Kurikulum Merdeka Q&A Handbook, 2021).

For every student, a brilliant career is a major dream and a primary goal to strive for. Career paths play a significant role in a person's life, not only determining their future direction but also influencing their quality of life. Consequently, individuals require thorough preparation and planning facilitated by career guidance to make informed career decisions. Career guidance aims to assist individuals in making choices regarding their own career development (Popescu, 2021). Within the education system, guidance and counseling play a strategic role in students' academic, personal, social, and career development (Nabila Rezky Palenza et al., 2025). In this context, the role of guidance and counseling teachers is crucial, as they help students navigate psychological changes, technological advancements, social issues, and the challenges of making career decisions (Wulandari et al., 2024).

The presence of guidance and counseling teachers is essential for empowering student potential. School-based guidance and counseling services play a vital role in maximizing students' potential by helping them explore their interests, talents, and abilities, as well as develop the skills and attitudes needed to achieve their personal and academic goals (Azwar, 2021). Previous studies have indicated that guidance and counseling teachers play a role in developing students' interests and talents by applying cognitive theory (Lengkey, 2020) and effectively managing the planning, implementation, and evaluation of guidance services (Apriyanti et al., 2023). Such support is also essential for high school students, as this period marks a transition toward adulthood; for them, securing employment serves as a means to meet their needs and foster a sense of belonging and significance within society (Eliza et al., 2023).

However, in reality, many students remain confused about their career choices due to various factors. These include guidance counselors providing insufficient information regarding future career planning (Selan et al., 2024), the highly competitive nature of the job market (Rohmah, 2018), and a lack of well-developed career maturity despite having received school-based career guidance (Kamil & Daniati, 2016). Furthermore, there is a need for career guidance media to help students improve their understanding and interpretation of the information they

receive (Istikowati, 2025). These findings align with research by Fatimah et al. (2024), which concluded that obstacles in school career guidance services stem from various factors, such as a lack of resources, counselor skills, and coordination, as well as monotonous service methods and limited student access to information about the world of work. Consequently, career guidance models require updating and further development.

The need to develop a career guidance model for students is also evident at SMA Negeri 11 Gowa the only public secondary school in the Tombolo Pao District of South Sulawesi Province where the number of available educators remains vastly disproportionate to the student population. Specifically, several teaching positions including both subject-specific roles and guidance and counseling roles remain vacant; consequently, teachers whose backgrounds do not align with these roles are compelled to step in and handle duties that fall outside their areas of expertise. Furthermore, interviews with students revealed a preference for offline, tangible career guidance models, as current school regulations still prohibit students from using mobile phones or other personal devices on school premises.

Based on interviews conducted by the researchers, the development of a career guidance model was necessitated by the absence of professional guidance and counseling staff at the school since its inception; consequently, these duties were assigned to individuals lacking the relevant background and skills. These responsibilities were assumed by the vice-principal for student affairs, the vice-principal for curriculum affairs, and a religious studies teacher. As a result, the guidance and counseling services available to students were limited. Furthermore, the preferred guidance model required a tangible format to facilitate its use and implementation within the school environment.

Research by Sari, Arlizon, and Donal (2023) indicates that analyzing student career planning within the “Kurikulum Merdeka” (Independent Curriculum) framework serves as a crucial foundation for developing guidance and counseling programs that meet learners' needs (Sari et al., 2023). Additionally, Nur, Saman, and Buchori (2024) found that students require career guidance services tailored to the characteristics of the “Kurikulum Merdeka”, specifically utilizing media and strategies relevant to their interests and career readiness (Nur et al., 2024). Research by Mustikaningrum and Herdi (2025) also emphasizes that analyzing student needs is a vital initial step in designing data-driven guidance and counseling programs, thereby ensuring services are more effective and targeted. These three studies share a commonality with the present research by highlighting the importance of identifying student needs as the basis for developing school-based career guidance services. The distinction lies in the fact that this study

specifically analyzes student needs regarding a “Kurikulum Merdeka”-based career guidance model within the context of SMAN 11 Gowa (Mustikaningrum & Herdi, 2025).

A lack of information and structured career guidance, combined with environmental influences, often leads to hasty career decisions that do not align with an individual's true potential. This situation underscores the importance of developing a career guidance model that is systematic, contextual, and relevant to students' needs. The development of this career guidance model will involve creating a guidebook based on the PIC model, originally developed by Gati and Asher in 2001. Gati, Levin, and Landman-Tal (2019) described the PIC model—comprising Pre-screening, In-Depth Exploration, and Choice—as a career guidance framework grounded in career decision-making theory. Furthermore, the researchers will integrate the PIC model with Holland's personality type theory, which identifies six personality types (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional) as a framework for individual career development. Consequently, this study aims to analyze the extent of the need for such a career guidance model among students at SMA Negeri 11 Gowa, South Sulawesi.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a simple mixed-methods approach, with data collected through the distribution of questionnaires to teachers and students, interviews with teachers and students, and a literature review. Research utilizing a quantitative approach is characterized by the use of standardized and structured instruments, numerical data, and statistical analysis to test hypotheses (Jailani, 2023). Interviews were conducted to gather sufficient information to address the research objectives. The study involved students from SMAN 11 Gowa, specifically, the participants consisted of 12 Grade XII students and one Foreign Language (German) teacher who also serves as the Deputy Principal for Curriculum Affairs and the Guidance and Counseling teacher. Data collection was carried out via the offline distribution of questionnaires, and data analysis was performed by examining the responses provided.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Regarding the needs analysis for students at SMAN 11 Gowa, the researcher administered a questionnaire to 12 students. The following are the results of the assessment of student needs—specifically concerning a career guidance model—conducted with these 12 students from SMAN 11 Gowa.

Table 1. Summary of Student Needs Analysis Questionnaire Results Regarding the Development of a Career Guidance Model

No.	Aspect	Number of Indicators	Dominant Response	Description
1	Analysis of the Current Implementation of Career Guidance Services	5	4 (55%)	Strongly Needed
2	Analysis of the Guidance and Counseling Service Model	5	4 (63.34%)	Strongly Needed
3	Analysis of the Availability of Human Resources (Guidance and Counseling Teachers)	4	4 (85.42%)	Strongly Needed
4	Analysis of Career Guidance Services	5	4 (80%)	Strongly Needed

(Source: Processed by the researcher.)

Based on the questionnaire results presented in Table 1, an analysis of the need for a career guidance model among students at SMAN 11 Gowa—viewed in the context of current service provision—reveals the following:

1. Regarding the first five points, there is a significant distinction in student responses between "strongly need" and "moderately need," with occasional selections of other options. This indicates that students perceive the provision of career guidance services as a high priority requiring substantial attention from the school.
2. The next five points show a consistent trend where students lean toward "strongly need" regarding the career guidance service model. However, there is one exception—knowledge of local community career trends—where students tend to select "moderately need"; otherwise, the "strongly need" option remains dominant.
3. Regarding the aspect of prospective service users' willingness, students predominantly selected "strongly need" across the four included points. Notably, for the fourth point in this category, there was unanimous agreement on "strongly need" regarding the statement that students are ready to cooperate to facilitate the career guidance process.
4. In the final aspect, four of the five included points show a strong preference for "strongly need" over other options; however, the point concerning expected outcomes from the career guidance process yielded less distinct results, as student opinions were fairly evenly split between "strongly need" and "moderately need."

DISCUSSION

Based on data from the needs analysis questionnaire, it is evident that students at SMAN 11 Gowa have a significant need for career preparation and require full support from the school in general, and from Guidance and Counseling teachers in particular. A detailed explanation of each aspect and indicator is provided below. The aspects examined in the needs analysis questionnaire included:

an analysis of the conditions under which career guidance services are provided; an analysis of the guidance and counseling service model; an analysis of available personnel (specifically Guidance and Counseling teachers), and an analysis of the career guidance services themselves. Regarding the first aspect, student responses collectively indicate a strong need for career guidance services to be available at the school. The researcher reached this conclusion because, out of the five indicators within this aspect, four received responses exceeding 50% for the "strongly needed" option. A similar pattern emerged in the second aspect, though the percentages were even more pronounced than in the first; for instance, regarding the indicator concerning career trends in the local community, approximately 50% of students indicated a moderate need, suggesting that students are not significantly influenced by the career paths prevalent in their social environment. Instead, they tend to focus on their own abilities and desired career trajectories.

In this needs analysis questionnaire, the third aspect recorded the highest percentage of responses indicating a "critical need" compared to the other aspects. One specific indicator—students' willingness to dedicate time and cooperate to facilitate the guidance and counseling process—received unanimous support from all 12 subjects, whereas the indicator with the lowest level of perceived need within this aspect was the availability of personnel to provide career guidance. This situation presents a stark contrast: while students are eager for opportunities to receive full support regarding their careers, the current absence of dedicated Guidance and Counseling staff compels students and the teachers in charge to strive for better outcomes despite limitations in the knowledge and skills required to implement the necessary support tools.

The need for career guidance arises because high school students are at a developmental stage where they face various choices regarding further education, the workforce, and competence development aligned with their interests and talents. However, many students remain confused about identifying their own potential, understanding career information, and making choices that align with their abilities and future goals. Changes in educational policy—

specifically the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Independent Curriculum)—also require students to be more independent in planning their careers from an early stage, thereby necessitating systematic support through career guidance services. Consequently, students desire career guidance services that go beyond mere information provision; they seek follow-up support in the form of mentoring, consultation, and the development of career plans that align with both individual needs and school support. These expectations align with findings by Gulsen, Secim, and Savickas (2021), which demonstrate that career psychoeducation can enhance students' career planning abilities, life satisfaction, and confidence in achieving their aspirations.

RESULTS

A career guidance model will be designed to align with the needs of both students and Guidance and Counseling teachers, enabling the latter to independently support students throughout the career guidance process. The involvement of Guidance and Counseling teachers in this process must be balanced by providing students with the scope to actively explore and plan their careers in greater depth. The high level of student readiness to engage with school-provided career support reflects immense enthusiasm and an expectation that the school will create an environment conducive to a smooth guidance process. By "active space," the author refers to a setting or platform that allows students to participate directly in the career guidance process. This space enables students to explore their interests, talents, potential, and career options through discussions, consultations, self-reflection, and various activities that facilitate career decision-making. Consequently, students do not merely receive career information passively; instead, they play an active role in planning and determining their career paths, in line with the learner-centered spirit of the “Kurikulum Merdeka” (Independent Curriculum).

The selection of content for the career guidance model was based on the results of questionnaires and interviews with students and Guidance and Counseling teachers. Regarding content, the topics included in the model are: an in-depth explanation of career guidance; the objectives and functions of career guidance programs; guidance models and career trends tailored to the local environment; a detailed discussion on career decision-making skills, including their aspects and benefits; an introduction to the educational paths students will face after high school graduation; and career theories, specifically Holland's six personality types.

In terms of criteria and presentation, the career guidance model will be provided in print format, aligning with the interview results and the needs analysis of both students and Guidance and Counseling teachers. Print media was selected because students interviewed expressed a preference for this format, noting that it facilitates shared access—allowing students to use the materials together, thereby fostering closer peer relationships. Guidance and Counseling teachers

noted that, given the school's limitations, print media would better facilitate student mobility as they navigate the various stages and steps of career guidance. This print material serves as an easily accessible information source regarding further education options, job types, required skills, and steps to achieve career goals. The use of print media also supports the principles of the “Kurikulum Merdeka” (Independent Curriculum) by allowing students to learn according to their individual needs and characteristics, thereby encouraging them to be more active in exploring and making appropriate career choices.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to gather up-to-date information regarding the needs of students at SMAN 11 Gowa for a career guidance model that supports them in making sound career decisions. The findings indicate a clear need for guidance and a career guidance model tailored to both the students' characteristics and the school environment. Developing such a model requires support through print materials that comply with school regulations, thereby facilitating interaction between service providers and students while boosting student engagement. Furthermore, the students' significant need for a career guidance model reflects a strong desire to collaborate and contribute to planning their future careers. Consequently, support from the school administration, guidance and counseling teachers, career service facilitators, and educational institutions is crucial in motivating students to take an active role in planning and determining their career paths.

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