

# Need of Standard Materials for Career Education for Primary School: Teachers' Perspectives

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**Abstract:** Career education at an early stage of a young adult plays an important role in linking academic knowledge and an individual purpose of life, as well their self-development and motivation. This study aims to examine the need of standard materials for career education for primary school from the views of guidance and counselling teachers. The design of this study is a quantitative study. The sample consist of 131 guidance and counselling teachers working in Klang, Valley. Data was collected through a questionnaires and distributed to respondents. The data has been analysed using the Social Science Statistic Package (SPSS). The results found that 92.4% majority of respondents agreed for standard materials regarding career education to be distributed to counsellors in schools, and they chose modules, reference books and career dictionaries as the required career education materials. The discussion and implication for future research are provided.

**Keywords:** career education, career development, standard materials, primary/elementary school, need

## 1. Introduction

Career education is very important in schools as it creates a clear roadmap to obtaining future success in careers. If the process is introduced at an earlier age, it has the ability to strengthen students' belief on the importance of linking their academic aspirations with their career expectations, therefore becoming a driving factor that that motivates students toward academic excellence. With career education, it also aids the formation of students' identity on top of providing career awareness. Rohany and Lee (2013) stated that career awareness not only influence students' self-concept but also motivates students to set clearer career goals.

Furthermore, career education is also one of comprehensible alternative for career development in various setting especially in school. Through career education intervention in elementary school, the student will develop career development competencies including assisting students to appreciate the link of work and workers, to understand how personal preferences influence job preferences, to appreciate the importance of personal qualities to keeping jobs, to become aware of gender-role stereotyping, and to develop an awareness of community workers (Beale, 2003). According to Dimakakou, Mylonas, Argyropoulou, and Drosos (2013), stated that even though there may be little urgency for children to make immediate decision in career choices, it is crucial for them to develop an understanding of the relevance of school-based learning to their future career decision making later on.

Early exposure towards career information is also important in enabling a person to improve themselves to higher levels. In the study conducted by Kuh, LeeKeenan, Given and Beneke (2016), students make their own observations, learn and draw conclusions on their

own conception of the working world, based on their biases and career stereotypes they derive from their social environment. Consciously or unconsciously, the growth and development of an individual, especially children, is believed to be influenced by the interactions within their social environment, as well as the influences of technology, which is within the fingertips today. Therefore, the role of family members, friends and educators at school are crucial in reshaping or correcting the biases and stereotypes about a job that has long been a shadow to society and to give more space for students to determine their own future.

In this study, the researchers will focus on the role of educators in schools, especially for guidance & counselling teachers as well as counsellors in delivering career education to students. The matter is further emphasised by the direction set by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) which directs to the MOE's release letter in 2012 and 2014 which has stipulated that the focus of Guidance and Counselling Services in schools including primary schools to be based on (a) personality development of students; (b) improvement of student self-discipline; (c) students' career education; and (d) psychosocial and mental well-being of students (Ministry of Education, June 24, 2014).

Nonetheless, the results for the inspectors' visit to schools depicts that the compliance with the execution of tasks focusing on the guidance and counselling guidelines was at an unsatisfactory level and was reprimanded on the directions stipulated by MOE regarding the focus of guidance and counselling teachers as well as school counsellors and on the full implementation of the instructions (Ministry of Education, June 24, 2014). This is likely due to the lack of support and reference materials for guidance and counselling teacher as well as counsellors to implement the four focused tasks of counsellors as outlined by MOE.

There are several studies in Malaysia that show many programs were conducted and built to increase career awareness, exploration and career choice to students especially at the secondary school, college and higher education levels in Malaysia (Mohd Ali, 2010; Lau, 2011; Rohany Nasir & Lee Shiang Lin, 2013; Talib, Salleh, Amat, Ghavifekr, & Ariff, 2014). However, standard materials that emphasize on the exposure of career information for primary school students are still scarce and limited. So, this raises the question of how do guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors in primary schools implement the guideline task of counsellors that were distributed by Ministry of Education Malaysia?

Therefore, this has raised a few research questions in this study regarding career education from the point of view of guidance and counselling teachers and school counsellors which includes,

- 1) What is counsellor's views on the task of providing career services to students?
- 2) What are the specific form that have been used by guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors in their duty of providing career education to students?
- 3) What are the materials to assist guidance and counselling teachers as well as school counsellors in providing career education to students?
- 4) What types of career education materials are required?

Therefore, this study will explore empirical evidence for career development at the primary school level and explore the views of guidance and counselling teachers as well as school counsellors on the need for standard materials in providing career education to students. The researchers will also summarise the suggestions for the direction of further research in the

future. This study aims to examine the views of guidance and counselling teachers on the need of standard materials for career education for primary school students.

### 1.1 Career Education in Other Countries for Primary Schools

Career education from the views of Savickas (2012) is such that individuals are responsible for their own career development, appropriate to their level of life and that may help to apply career concepts or career identities that can be used in their careers. Thus, career education for schools needs to be focused on forming new attitudes, beliefs, and abilities starting at an early stage. Focusing on the 21st century global economy demands a variety of professions to continually evolve due to the influence of new technologies disrupting the way in which people perform their tasks. Implementing career education programs at the primary school level gives students more time to practice the critical thinking skills expected and required to succeed in all occupations in the 21st century global economy (Coogan, 2016). Therefore, preparing students as early as primary school level can provide benefits at many levels later.

In Greece, career guidance programs in primary schools were mostly based on curriculum infusion techniques and group activities where teachers attend for career-related learning by using a variety of activities that help children develop awareness about themselves and the career world (Dimakakou et. al, 2013). In Dimakakou et.al (2013), their study aims was to examine the following three relevant to career decision-making dimensions of primary education students (i) concerns/ fears regarding career future, (ii) investment in decision making process, and (iii) knowledge of the world of work. Based on the study, the result showed that students seem to have a rather low level of uncertainty and fear regarding their future career. The low level of uncertainty and fear regarding the future career of the children may have a positive impact on their development and may create strong mental readiness to handle any an unexpected crisis in future.

Welde, Bernes, Gunn, and Ross (2016) stated that a teacher training program was introduced in Southern Alberta, Canada that enabled trainee teachers to integrate career education projects into their respective primary school courses. There are currently 25 projects being carried out with reviews showing positive effect on the attitude of students on their willingness to further explore career options. There were 555 students from Grade 1 until 6 involved in this study to evaluate the project that had been carried out by the intern teachers. The result of the study showed that students benefit from a learning experience through a variety of exciting projects that allow them to engage in self -exploration and identify potential career interests.

Meanwhile, long time ago in the study by Gillies, McMahon and Carroll (1998) had also stated that children can have a lot of positive effect through career education program such as gain job knowledge, understanding themselves, understanding of the personal attributes required for job success, and able to demonstrate links between what they learned at school and job requirements. The study were involving 107 children in Grade 6 in four intact classes from a private coeducational college in Brisbane, Australia and an investigation was done to see the effects of a 10-week career education intervention. The finding of the study showed that the children who got the intervention have better understanding of personal self and can relate it to the world of work.

According to Coogan (2016), many primary and secondary schools in the United States, already have the key resources to assess the needs, to implement, and to evaluate the most appropriate career development program for their schools. Amongst the key resources are professional guidance and counselling teachers with a master's qualification, having a

counselling license and has the ability to develop great programs to improve career development curriculums in schools. This clearly shows that some foreign countries are beginning to realize the importance of providing career education in the early stages of growth, especially in primary schools.

Super (1957), stated that the process of career development has begun during the growth stage where children who form attitudes, behaviours, and self-concept of someone to help the person continue to the stage of exploration and beyond. However, there is still a lack of studies in Malaysia that focuses on career exposure and awareness to children, especially at the primary school level. Therefore, the researchers conducted this study aims at improving career education services primarily focusing on the primary school level.

## 2. Method

This study was conducted to identify the need for standard materials in providing career education to students from the point of view of guidance and, counselling teachers as well as school counsellors. The discrepancy model by McKhillip (1987) was used in this study. This model focuses on discrepancy identification or discrepancies between what problems have occurred and what should have happened (MohdRidhuan&NurulRabihah, 2020).

### 2.1 Participants

The design of this study is a quantitative study. This study involved 131 guidance and counselling teachers as well as school counsellors working in Klang Valley, Malaysia.

### 2.2 Measures

Data were collected through questionnaires distributed through Google Forms. The study questionnaire was developed by the researchers themselves. The questions were constructed in accordance with the objectives of the study which is to explore the views of guidance and counselling teachers as well as school counsellors on the need for standard materials in providing career education for students and to answer the research questions on this study. In addition, the study's questionnaire instruments were discussed and reviewed with other researchers in the same study to further strengthen the statements and questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted a total of 10 structured questions in the form structured questionnaire that has a mix of closed and open-ended questions. All questions included in the questionnaire were further divided into two parts, namely part A (demographics) and part B (career education). In part A the researchers focused on questions aimed at gathering demographic information of the respondents.

While Part B was further divided into three sub-sections to answer the research question, namely:

- a) Duty for career education in schools - there was one question that measures the awareness of the duty to provide career education to students as required by MOE.
- b) Delivery of current career education – four questions that aimed to explore the implementation of current career education as well as materials used by guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors in their respective schools. One of the question is open question and optional. In this sub-section, examples of the question included were "In what forms of career education and guidance were typically implemented in your school?" and "Examples of references or materials you used?"

- c) The need for standard materials for career education - Five questions aimed at identifying the need for the development of standard materials or references and alternatives for specific materials and formats required. Examples of a question included in the questionnaire were "*Based on your opinion, do standard materials/ references necessary to provide career education for students?*" and "*Examples of career education materials / references required (Can be marked more than one: Reference books, tools, modules, career dictionaries, others.)*".

### 2.3 Analysis

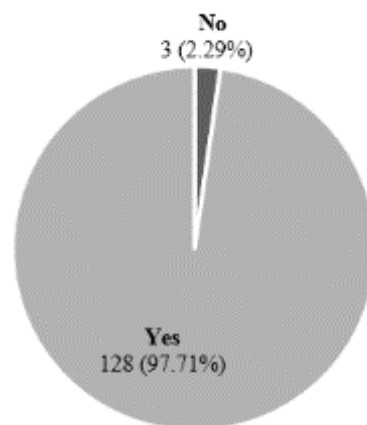
The data collected for this study were analysed using the Social Science Statistics Package (SPSS) for closed-ended questions. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were conducted to determine the results of the study based on the questions and the main objectives of this study. Meanwhile, for open-ended questions, the data has been analysed using manual encoding to extract the necessary information provided by the respondents.

### 3. Results

In this section, the findings of the study obtained were to answer the research questions and objectives of this study.

#### 3.1 Research Question 1: What is counsellors' views on the task of providing career services to students?

The findings of the study found that the majority of the respondents agreed that providing career education to students is their duty as guidance and counselling teachers or as counsellors in schools. A total of 128 respondents with a percentage of 97.71% answered "Yes" for the statement item "Providing career education and guidance is one of your main duties" and only 3 respondents answered "No" for the item. The findings of the study are shown in Figure 1.

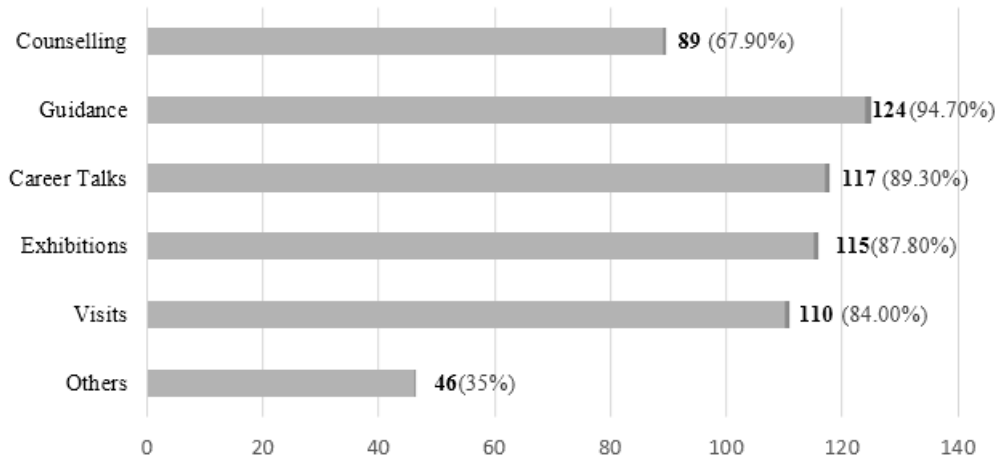


**Figure 1.** Data analysis on statement "Providing career education and guidance is one of your main duties"

#### 3.2 Research Question 2: What are the specific form that have been used by guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors in their duty of providing career education to students?

Figure 2 shows that most of the respondents performed their duties of providing career education to students through guidance activities which is 94.7% of the respondents. Activities such as career talks, exhibitions and visits are also among the activities that were commonly

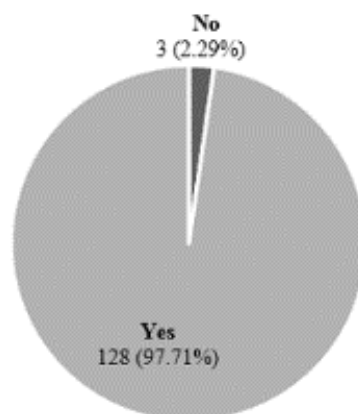
implemented by the respondents in schools when providing career education to students, where the percentage of these activities shows a relatively high value of 89.3%, 87.8%, and 84% respectively.



**Figure 2.** Data analysis on statement “In what forms of career education and guidance were typically implemented in your school?”

**3.3 Research Question 3: What are the materials to assist guidance and counselling teachers as well as school counsellors in providing career education to students?**

Figure 3 indicates the majority of the respondents agreed that they used specific materials in performing their duties that is a total of 128 respondents answered "Yes" for the question item "Do you use specific references / materials in the duty of providing career education?" While 2% of respondents answered "No" for the same item and this shows that they do not have any materials or reference in conveying career information to students.



**Figure 3.** Data analysis on statement item "Do you use specific references / materials in the duty of providing career education?"

Next, Table 1 indicates the findings for data analysis for item which indicates the examples of references or current materials used by the respondents in schools to provide career education to students. Among the types of references or materials that were often used by most

respondents include career-related books, internet and pamphlets. In addition, other materials or references such as posters, brochures, social media, websites, and career inventories, materials from career talks, videos and flyers related to the latest career were also mentioned by the respondents.

**Table 1.** Data analysis on statement item “what are the materials used in providing career guidance”

Item 5: Examples of references/ materials used are (open question)
Career books
Internet
Pamphlets
Posters
Brochures
Social Media
Websites
Career inventories
Materials/ Slides from career talks
Videos
Flyers

### 3.4 Research Question 4: What types of career education materials are required?

#### a) *The need for standardised materials for career education*

Based on the findings, the Table 2 indicates that the majority of the respondents with a total of 127 people that is 97% agreed if standard materials or references regarding career education are to be distributed to counsellors in schools. This shows that guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors in schools require standardised materials to assist them in providing career education to students. Findings on statement item “Do you agree if a standard materials/references regarding career education are to be distributed to counsellor in school?” found that 92.4% majority, that is 121 respondents agreed and felt that it is necessary to prepare standard materials in providing education to students. Meanwhile, 10 respondents, that is 7.6% disagreed that standard materials or references are necessary for students. Respondents also shared their opinions on why they agreed and disagreed to develop standard materials or references for students as shown in Table 3.

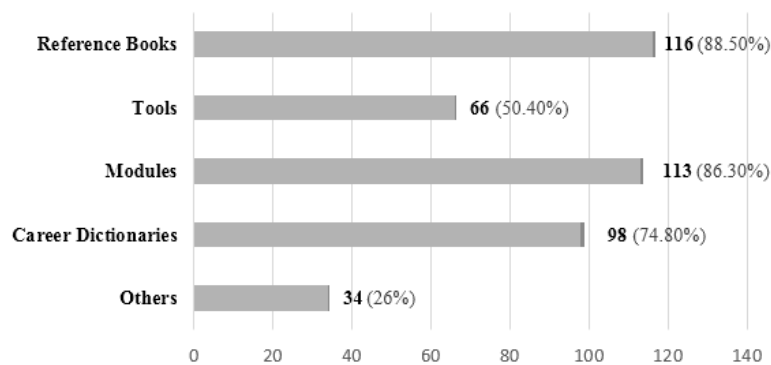
**Table 2.** Data analysis on statement item “the needs to standard materials”

Item	Yes (%) n	No (%) n
Based on your opinion, do standard materials/ references necessary to provide career education for students?	(92.4%) n = 121	(7.6%) n = 10

**Table 3.** Data analysis on statement item “why standard materials necessary/ not necessary to provide career education for students”

Item: If Yes or No, why? Optional	
Yes	No
“As a guide to facilitate the delivery of information.” “Give a clear picture to the students.” “A standard guideline according to the level and with language that is easy to understand.” “As inspiration and motivation to be more successful in learning.” “The results and knowledge of all students will be the same.” “Yes, because of the lack of information obtained by myself”. “Not all counselors understand and know about a certain career.” “Specific references are difficult to obtain. If so, it is easy to refer.” “Facilitate guidance teachers to provide career guidance to students.” “More understanding.” “Increase knowledge”. “Can focus the direction of students with their careers”.	“No, adds students’ works”. “Need for Form 5” “Various ways can be made to provide information to students.” “For primary schools, careers are only basic knowledge and operation, opportunities are only limited to secondary schools that have a wider openings and branches.” “Students prefer to surf the internet than books” “All info can be obtained from google”

Next, the data analysis to identify the types of materials or references required by guidance and counselling teachers as well as school counsellors. Based on the findings obtained, among the materials required include reference books, modules, career dictionaries and career tools. Analysis data shows that reference books and modules are the most popular materials with a frequency of 116 (88.5%) and 113 (86.3%) respondents, respectively. This followed by career dictionaries with 74.8% and tools with 50.4%.



**Figure 4.** Data analysis on statement item “Examples of career education materials/references required”



#### 4.0 Discussions

In the scope of this study, the need on career education materials for primary school among guidance and counselling teachers were measured based on three aspects, namely i) the duties for career education in school, ii) the delivery of current career education and iii) the need of guidance and counselling teachers for standard materials for career education.

The findings of this study have provided the answer to the first research question - Providing education and career guidance is one of your main duties? The majority of guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors were aware of their responsibility to provide career education to students. This shows that they know that it is their duty to provide career education and implement the guidance and counselling guidelines as outlined by the MOE.

However, the researchers have not been able to entirely summarize the level of awareness of guidance and counselling teachers about their main duties. In a study by Anctil, Smith, Schenck, and Dahir (2012), counsellors were found to spend less time for career development activities with students compared to other development areas, such as academic, personality and social development of students. Therefore, future researchers can further explore the level of awareness and the level of focus given by guidance and counselling teachers on their duties to implement career education services in schools. There are recommendation that guidance and counselling teachers may trying to do the career education through group session method such as group of career guidance activities. Group sessions activities is able to reduce the barriers of time, limited staff, and help to improve individuals knowledge and confidence (Yusni, Zaida, Wan Marzuki, et al., 2020).

In addition, with regards to the second research question related to certain materials that have been used in the duty to provide career education to students, the findings of the study found that most guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors used various types of materials and references to convey career information to students. Based on the examples of the usage of different materials and references as mentioned by guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors as per the findings of this study, this clearly shows that there is standard materials used by guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors. Therefore, efforts to improve career education services can be enhanced.

Next, based on the findings of this study, the researchers also found that the majority of teachers agreed that they require materials for career education to the students. These findings answered the third research question regarding the need for standard materials or references. Furthermore, guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors also expressed their opinions on the necessity for standard materials or references to students. Most teachers believe that this can facilitate their duty of conveying information, increase students' motivations and coordinate students' knowledge on careers. Career education being focused on an early stage of the students' growth is to enhance career development and to promote the formation of the students' life design (Briddick, Sensoy-Briddick&Savickas, 2018).

There were also a few teachers who stated that they lack materials or references, and this made it difficult to provide effective career education to students. This was also felt by Knight (2014) a researcher who is also a counsellor in primary school, has shared his personal experience of the difficulties felt in trying to provide effective career development to primary school students and the need for counsellors to get additional supports and trainings. This shows that guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors who work in primary schools require comprehensive information and support on careers to help them deliver career education to students.

In addition, the findings of this study also acquired suggestions of materials or references required by guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors, hence answering the fourth research question. Among the much-required materials include reference books, career modules, career dictionaries and career tools. There were also other materials suggested by guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors such as career websites. According to Cerrito, Trusty and Behun (2018) web-based career education method can also serve as a useful medium to enable career exploration and development for the students.

Digital based leaning is one of required teaching and learning strategies especially for new generation in this 21<sup>st</sup> century (Abdul JalilTohaTohara et al., 2021). Furthermore, with the use of technology into the field of education, it can make it easier for educators to incorporate new understandings and innovative techniques in teaching and learning session (Özpinar, 2020).

A standard materials should to be developed to facilitate and coordinate career education. Through a standard materials use, it might be impartial to all students from every corner of the state and in both areas, urban and rural as well as to improve career education services to be more effective. The development of a standard career education materials is also one of the efforts to realize one of the commendations emphasized by the MOE in the letter on date 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2014, regarding the duties of guidance and counselling teachers which is to improve career education services for students.

The recommendation for future researcher, the development of a standard career education materials should focuses on transferring knowledge equitably to all students through group activities. Furthermore, evidently group activities able to help students increasing positive self-esteem and improving study skills in group session (Yusni, Zaida, Nor Aniza, et al., 2020). In other study, showed that group cognitive-behavioral approaches would bring positive impact on youth at a low-cost measure especially on school setting (Yusni, Norsyamimie, Zaida, et al., 2020). Guidance and counselling teachers should structure the positive information about career world for students to enhance their development of career. The teacher should restructuring the cognitive and behaviour on how should primary students perceive the about career. Besides, the use of qualitative methods is recommended for future research in order to obtain more specific information such as observations, interviews and focus groups in assessing the need for career development of primary school students.

## 5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, in the process of providing career education to students, specific activities or materials need to be well planned in order to achieve various learning outcomes based on needs and context. Guidance and counselling teachers as well as counsellors in schools must use new strategies to try to achieve the results for the self-development of students integrally according to current needs. The findings of this study also clearly pointed out that the need for standard materials for career education in primary schools is necessary and is important to note. High quality career education and guidance is an important part of schooling in preparing young people for their future.

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