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Between Talents and Environment Impact during Pandemic COVID-19: Sketching the Career Perception in Vocational School

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine and examine how student career perceptions are handled by students related to the environmental impact, talents, and COVID-19 circumstances on career services at State Vocational School 3 Klaten. This study uses a qualitative approach. Respondents were students and teachers of Guidance and Counselling at state vocational high school 3 Klaten. The findings indicate that students' career conceptions are connected to the environmental influence, skills, and the COVID-19 settings surrounding career services and that these beliefs favourably affect students' self-development. The findings indicate that the results of interviews with students regarding factors influencing their perceptions of career counselling and career development, including talents, promising career planning with parental support and the impact of the environment, career exploration, career development, and support from learning facilities during the COVID-19.

Introduction

As experience becomes more extensive concerning work awareness, a more sophisticated vocational self-concept is formed. In today's era, people are looking forward to a higher stage in their career (Chu et al., 2007). Career counselling is needed conceptually and in implementing vocational schools



that have a precise orientation about work choices. Furthermore, Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk (2018) asserted that the increasing globalization and the use of technology in various economic sectors make one's career unstable, linear, and tied to the organizational hierarchy. Therefore, vocational students should be preparing to enter the job market. However, the study results found that vocational students still need career guidance services because of students' career maturity in general in the middle category (Juwitaningrum, 2013). Moreover, student work has become an increasingly prominent issue worldwide (Zhu et al., 2021), especially when we are currently facing the case of COVID-19.

WHO data exposure, 1 March 2020 or The Indonesian Society of Respirology (PDPI) at the end of December 2019. So far, it has been confirmed that 65 countries are infected with the coronavirus or COVID-19 virus. According to Syaefudin & Humardhiana (2020). Coronavirus is an RNA virus with a 120–160 nm particle size. This virus mainly infects animals, including bats and camels. UNICEF (2020) revealed that prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, there were six coronavirus strains capable of infecting humans: alphacoronavirus 229E, alphacoronavirus NL63, betacoronavirus OC43, betacoronavirus HKU1, Severe Acute Respiratory Illness Coronavirus (SARS-CoV), and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV).

Based on these two circumstances, namely a) the need for career development services and b) the COVID-19 outbreak, it is necessary to investigate how career counselling and development are conducted. A new career orientation characterizes and prepares a person's career to develop, have a career without limits and process the changes and values (Baruch, 2006, 2014). Furthermore, Drucker (2019) explains that the new professional

orientation emphasizes a shift in perspective, where the sole certainty is that the future will change and/or be different. While most students are capable of managing their own lives and career plans, a few students also face difficulties in their professions. Among the difficulties vocational students face are still undecided about their future courses. Students in Class XII do not comprehend the notion of career development. Students in Class XII lack confidence when it comes to picking a major in vocational schools, prompting concern about the future (Widiyanti, 2019).

Regarding these problems, guidance and counselling teachers should respond through guidance and counselling services and methods. One of the guidance and counselling services to overcome career problems and student career development is to use career counselling services. Career counselling is a process in which activities, strategies, and interventions are used to assist counselees in career exploration, planning, and career decision-making in the learning process within the school and the work process (Sutrino, 2013). It is hoped that the Indonesian people will catch up through the education process. Because with education, various proper knowledge, technology, and skills can be possessed by individuals to solve different problems they face, including the ability to prepare themselves to enter the job market (Istia'dah et al., 2018).

Furthermore, career counselling is a systematic effort (process, technique, and service) to help individuals understand themselves in exploring job opportunities, education, and free time and developing decision-making skills following their life goals (Nurlela & Budiamin, 2015). Career services' success indicators are career planning services, assessment of talents and interests, parental support, teacher and school support, and

social support (Atli, 2016). In other words, internal and external factors are essential in supporting career counselling goals. In line with Nurlaela & Budiman, and Atli (2015), the purpose of career counseling for vocational students is to facilitate the career development of the counselee, including increasing the counselee's awareness of the job market (Nurrega et al., 2018). The counsellor's actions towards the counselee in career guidance and counselling services can increase the counsellor's understanding of the job market. The counsellor is expecting to assist the counselee in finding facts about himself and the job market that have not been known before (Nulhakim & Ibnukhalilulloh, 2018). Career counselling attempts to assist students in recognizing themselves, exploring their interests and abilities, and developing an effective career strategy. It focuses on assisting students in developing a sustainable and relevant career.

For vocational students, the notion of career development is critical. Thus far, more careers have been reserved for employees or businesses. Professional development is a job system in which a person's temperament and social environment impact his or her career choices (Wahyuni, 2014). Systematic career development can overcome the problems of adolescents (Vocational students) in planning sustainable studies by not ignoring the student identity factor (Siti et al., 2016). Consequently, the counsellor should provoke students in various technical and conceptual aspects of identity as a provision for career decision-making. The career development process is an effort to improve the counselee's technical, theoretical, conceptual, and moral abilities following the needs of the job or position through the educational process (Marpaung & Yulandari, 2017). Regarding the career development of students in schools, Masdonati (2015) suggested

that career education should stimulate career awareness in school students, which allows them to understand, visualize, and plan the dynamics of career development in their own lives.

More profoundly, the career development process influences individual career output. This goal of career education suggests a constructivist focus on individuals as active agents in the context of their lives who create their careers (Salimah & Wibowo, 2019). Must consider several things in achieving career development, including career view, education, facilities and infrastructure, and social support (Hadi et al., 2020). In addition, each institution's career counselling and career development services are different, depending on the characteristics of the environment and policymakers (Anwar et al., 2021). Especially now, it is a career problem and the Covid-19 condition that has occurred to students. This situation has become the basis for researchers to explore related services and career development in vocational schools, especially state vocational high school 3 Klaten.

Field findings show that the process of career counselling services and career development experiences several obstacles. The interviews with Guidance and Counselling teachers concluded that since the COVID-19 pandemic, career counselling services and career development systems are used online through WhatsApp and Zoom media. The results of online career counselling services received positive and negative responses. For instance, these services help students, although sometimes they are not optimal. Another finding, as felt by one of the class XII students, was that they did not understand the process of career development and the benefits of career counselling services. Students were still confused in determining further studies, were not confident in choosing majors in Vocational High School, and had anxiety regarding their future. Several of the findings are applicable to

schools and are experienced by students. Researchers need to study and explore how student career perceptions are handled by students related to the environmental impact, talents, and circumstances of COVID-19 on career services at state vocational high school 3 Klaten.

Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach based on ethnographic exploration to analyse specific socio-cultural contexts, especially student perceptions regarding career perceptions perceived by students related to the environmental impact, talents, and circumstances of COVID-19 on career services at State Vocational High School 3 Klaten. Ethnography is a detailed description of groups or individuals who share a culture, which produces a holistic cultural portrait as the end product (Creswell, 1998). Furthermore, Poedjiastutie, Mayaputri, & Arifani (2021) said that in this study, the role of insider researchers, who are members or have a priori knowledge about the organization or group where the research is carried out, is considered essential. In this instance, one of the researchers is a Klaten native who maintains a positive relationship with the State Vocational High School 3 Klaten. As a result, researchers have an easier time interacting with community members.

The snowball sampling technique was used in the research. The researcher implements this technique because the data collected can provide actual data; if one data source remains insufficient, the researcher can supplement it with additional data or informants. The key informants in this study were guidance and counselling teachers and students of State Vocational High School 3 Klaten. Interviews were conducted utilizing independent online interviews with five student respondents. Several questions

attempt to reveal the students' views regarding their interests, career guidance services at school, and their opinions regarding the support provided by parents and people from the surrounding environment who are close to their daily lives. For example, the questions asked are "How do you see yourself one year from now? What will be different? How do your parents support you to achieve your expectations?". At the same time, we obtained the validity of the data by using source triangulation. The data is obtained differently from one source to another, deepening the information through interviews. Patel & Patel (2019) explained that data analysis, which includes data reduction, is the process of summarizing and categorizing research data, displaying the data, presenting the data in the form of a brief description, and concluding the study of research data.

Result

Perception is how someone perceives and interprets something, and perception is the process when we become aware of the many stimuli that affect our senses (Sobur, 2003). This study explores how the career perception felt by students is related to the impact of the environment, talent, and the state of COVID-19 on career services at vocational schools. Meanwhile, the student career development process goes through several stages. Especially vocational school students are in the age range of 15-24 years. They are classifying vocational students as explorers (Ledesma, 1997). At this stage, the explorer has characteristics, among others: the individual thoughtfully explores various alternative positions/careers and tries to match these alternatives with their interests (Supardi, 2016). Therefore, career development goals for vocational students are a) assisting in individual and workplace achievement, b) demonstrating

well-being, c) helping to realize potential, and d) strengthening the relationship between the counselee and the workplace. The background of the respondents in this study is as follows.

In line with Sobur and Supardi, the findings related to students' perceptions of the environmental impact, talents, and circumstances of COVID-19 on career services at vocational schools are based on several stages of the interview process. The first stage is the introduction stage. The introduction involves a) personal information of students, family, and residence information b) information on economic conditions, social conditions, and the surrounding environment. The second stage is the exploration stage. This stage includes: a) exploring the talents and interests of students, deficiencies in students b) exploring career views and life passions. The third stage is the career planning stage. At this stage, students identify the career potential that exists in themselves, such as a) parental support, b) school curriculum support, c) support for facilities and infrastructure in school institutions d) career information services. Finally, the fourth stage is the career development stage, including a) career counselling services, b) course education and training services c) job placement services. In addition, the role of the family in informing the exploration and career decisions of students and assisting in the career development of their students (Keli Bussell, Patrick D. Cunningham, Edward C. Fletcher, Jr., Barbara J. Boone, 2021). In more detail, as follows:

Introduction Stage

In the first stage of the interview process with individual I, the interview process begins with the introduction of the individual. Subjects I, Y, R, E, B, and D revealed their background at this stage. It is related to background, identity, and family

background. Self-introduction includes information about the number of families, the distance between home and school, and the educational background of students enrolled in vocational schools. The research findings indicate that each respondent is capable of comprehending the social contexts of their school and community. They are in a safe environment at school as well as in the community. Recognition of several subjects also received the mandate to become chairman or active in youth associations. In other words, students can convey their respective backgrounds openly. Students also have various conceptions of learning, but some concepts appear to be more important or influential in shaping their learning behaviour than others (Purdie et al., 1996). The environment impacts students' career development processes. Furthermore, Patton & McMahon (2001) said that career development is a framework that influences individuals and the environment. Xin, Tang, Li, & Zhou (2020) emphasize that cultural orientation can influence career development, career services, and career orientation.

Exploration Stage

In the second interview stage, the interview process explores the career exploration process that exists in the individual. Some subjects can understand the potential that exists in themselves. For example, the respondent I can apply makeup, the potential is channelled because he chooses a major that matches his potential. Meanwhile, subjects Y, R, E, and D also have skills in their respective fields to be comfortable carrying out learning activities during their education at vocational school. However, based on an interview with subject D, the person concerned is still confused in finding his strengths. As a result, he is not comfortable taking education at vocational school. In terms of

education level, vocational school students are in the exploration stage, marked by combining various information and making career decisions. Students will experiment with alternatives to the choices they will make. Career exploration serves as a self-image of its abilities to support itself in the future (Anwar, 2017).

Furthermore, the average career view of the subject has aspirations that are following the majors they are currently pursuing. The five subjects have studied in the school environment and participated in various activities outside of school (extracurricular). It aims to increase self-potential and establish relationships between individuals with one another. They assume that talents and interests can develop if they are constantly honed through various student activities and community activities. In addition, talent and interest services in schools are very helpful in increasing potential outside the academic climate. Students' process is part of an important process for adolescents to develop and direct individuals to suitable jobs (Lee, B., Porfeli, E. J., & Hirschi, 2016). The process of collecting and analysing information about themselves and their careers (Lim, Y., & Lee, 2019). Therefore, Keli Bussell et al. (Keli Bussell, Patrick D. Cunningham, Edward C. Fletcher, Jr., Barbara J. Boone, 2021) describes each type of partnership and applies it to the career exploration process to help educators understand the important role families play and permitted identify specific opportunities for collaboration between schools and families for secondary school career exploration. Thus, the talent exploration process carried out by students is part of clarifying their abilities, interests, and talents. In addition, the existence of support and environmental impact strengthens in increasing students' talents in developing their abilities, skills, or potential.

Career Planning Stage

Findings related to student career planning showed a positive response. The results of interviews with six subjects (I, Y, R, E, B, and D) shows that guidance and counselling teachers in vocational schools provide assessments both through test and non-test assessments when students enter a new school year in the vocational school. Additionally, each student meets with the guidance and counselling teacher regularly to discuss the study plan with guidance and counselling teacher. Thus, career counselling services related to career planning are operating effectively in Vocational High Schools. Career planning and development are frequently associated with locus of control. Individual differences in the degree to which events are believed to be under personal control or not are referred to as locus of control. Individuals who believe in internal control believe they can exert control over their lives through their efforts and abilities. Individuals who believe in external control view themselves as passive agents. Then, events in their lives occur primarily due to forces beyond their control, depending mainly on chance, luck, influential individuals, or institutions (Mittendorff et al., 2012).

Another finding shows that students obtain career counselling services related to career planning. For example, all respondents understand the career views that exist in themselves. Also, all respondents can map the potential (strengths and weaknesses). Then all respondents can determine the picture of their future career. No less important, they can career according to their potential and support from family, school, and the surrounding environment (social). The finding from interviews with D and E. D stated that the study was majoring in business or industrial engineering, where industrial engineering was related to garments. I know the information on scholarships and

lectures are more from a martial arts (Pencak Silat) coach who also gets a full scholarship to study because he goes through a non-academic achievement path, in line with what was said by E that "Lecture and work after graduation. Also hopes to participate in cultural exchange programs abroad. I can get this understanding from asking friends around and then there are also online classes that I know from Instagram. The way to realize that hope is by taking an online English course. If the information from school friends themselves is lacking, they rarely meet and rarely interact. Through the English class, I also met people from various cultural backgrounds and characters from various parts of Indonesia, so I got motivation from them." Work exploration refers to the orientation to align one's identity and competence with the values and competencies required in specific work situations, and career control refers to career-related planning and influencing learning and work processes (Akkermans et al., 2013). Thus, career counselling services in vocational schools are running well, marked by career planning services based on individual tests and non-test assessments to capture students' potential.

Career Development

These findings are related to job skills development and information services, course education services, vocational training, and job placement services. The interview process for six subjects showed some positive responses, and the career development service went well. Findings from six respondents (I, Y, R, E, B, and D) indicate that career development services in vocational schools during the pandemic still focus on developing student skills. For example, a) job fair services in a vocational school are always open with limited face-to-face

and continue to apply health protocols; and b) course services (sewing, makeup, education, and English language courses) are also running, although limited. Based on the career development process, formulated competencies relate to three aspects: personal exploration or self-knowledge, exploration in work and education, and career planning (Mittendorff et al., 2012). In line with these findings, the existing career development services provided run well and support students' abilities and career decision-making.

Furthermore, students' career decisions are also coloured by the life values of the students and the support provided by the people around them. These values of life are related to the role of women as prospective first educators in the family and financial independence. From the interviews conducted I "Women are wives and mothers who need higher education and earn their income. Women also need to have a career through work that can provide them with economic income. Can have a career and not be wasted by men". This value reflects students' lives to see the phenomena in social life. As stated by E, "Out there, most women's phenomena are sometimes underestimated by men. Men sometimes fail to be leaders in managing the family. Through education, it can change everything." It shows that the values of life that exist then colour the choices and views on future careers to project their lives after graduating from a vocational school. As shown in Y's interview, the picture of career planning that students have is "Graduate and then go to college while working because college can develop insight. Work to pay for college. Things that have been done include looking for information through social media like Instagram or TikTok. Now all the info is milling about everywhere, just want to or not to look for information. The thing that motivates me to think about "want it or not" is because I

want to have a lot of experience and not stagnate." In other words, the integration between self-knowledge and understanding and gathering information about careers will make students' careers more mature, planned, systematic, and following their interests and talents (Anwar, 2017). Several respondents have indicated that they have collected information related to themselves the job market and integrated it. Thus, the career development process that was carried out went well despite other obstacles, such as Covid-19.

Discussion and Conclusion

The career counselling service process needs to include services that accommodate students' data. The introduction of the data information service (introduction) helps the teacher map the students' actual condition. Furthermore, career counselling can link information from different sources to create a multifaceted picture of individuals and relevant career choices (Stevent D, Brown & Robert, 2005). Various ways are also to increase students' potential and ensure the relationship between individuals and others. The process of carrying out activities that match their passions and interests is an exploration process (Chasanah & Salim, 2019).

Career exploration is defined as collecting information about oneself and the environment to help individual career development (Porfeli & Lee, 2012). Environmental exploration is related to students' efforts to obtain job information in the environment as material for making career decisions, which can be done through interviews, searching for information online, and direct practice in the job market. Self-exploration focuses on establishing and exploring self-interest, values, past experiences, and career goals. Self-exploration is more cognitive and can be

done through self-reflection, self-optimization, and filling out instruments to help the career exploration process. Career development or career exploration through self-optimization plays an essential role in identity development and individual psychological well-being (Ayriza, Y., Setiawati, F. A., Triyanto, A., Gunawan, N. E., Anwar, M. K., & Budiarti, 2017). Career exploration precludes students from planning a career, focusing attention exclusively on the education major and type of work to be pursued. Career exploration enables students to better understand their various career options and future career plans. Students' career decisions in the future are not based on their parents' wishes, following friends or groups, or only temporary choices. Still, the right decisions are based on the information and various knowledge they already have. It is also reinforced by the regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture (2014) that career guidance and counselling is the process of providing counsellor assistance to students or counselees to experience growth, development, exploration, and aspirations. Then the career decision-making throughout their life span rationally and realistically based on potential information and opportunities available in their environment to achieve success in life.

The National Education Long-Term Development Plan targets the number of vocational schools to have a ratio of 70:30 when compared to senior secondary schools in 2025. This policy of increasing the number of vocational schools encourages junior high school students to prioritize vocational schools and choose from various majors. Vocational school students should be equipped with practical skills and knowledge to integrate into the job market quickly (Baert et al., 2017). The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) reports that most unemployed people in Indonesia come from the group of graduates from Vocational High Schools.

The unemployed population with a vocational final education level reached 11.13% in August 2021. The high unemployment rate for Vocational High School graduates also shows that the level of relevance of Vocational High School education with real-life is still low. On the other hand, the non-absorption of graduates, most of the graduates of Vocational High Schools in Indonesia, are less able to adapt to the development of science and technology and are also less able to develop themselves and their careers in the workplace (Depdiknas, 2004).

It is increasingly clear that career planning in educational institutions is essential, hoping that educational outcomes can be absorbed and valuable in society, especially for vocational education, which has a vision and mission to prepare graduates to be absorbed in the job market. Sutrisno (2013) said that career planning applied at the vocational education level should contain the following three aspects: (1) every student can know the opportunities, choices, constraints, and consequences that students will get when working, (2) identify career-related goals, and (3) educational institutions prepare educational work programs, which relates to the development of student competencies from the results of experiences. To provide direction, time, and steps to achieve career goals. As also explained in the legislation in Indonesia that the general purpose of guidance and counseling services is to facilitate the independence of students in making decisions, especially career decision making (Mendiknas, 2007)

Based on field findings that career counselling services are related to career planning. For example, all subjects understand the career views that exist in themselves through counselling services for counselling teachers on an on-going basis. All respondents can map potential (strengths and weaknesses). All

subjects can also determine a future career picture. The most important is choosing a career following the potential and support from family, school, and the surrounding (social) environment. It forms a hierarchy that develops from the least inclusive to the most inclusive understanding. The phenomenon that distinguishes the categories is called the dimension of variation, consisting of critical aspects to expand a more sophisticated level of experience related to each student's career development (Kettunen et al., 2013).

Furthermore, the career planning process is an effort to find excellence and identity in determining students' career choices. Cannot separate the process of career counselling service related to career planning from the career development process (Antoniu, 2010). Career planning is a deliberate process in which individuals become aware of the attributes associated with a personal career and the long series of stages that contribute to career fulfilment. It can also be said that career planning is a person choosing career goals and paths for those goals. Holland, Roe, and others (Raskin, 1985) hypothesize that people choose careers because they see the potential for need satisfaction as a more psychologically sophisticated approach than trait factor theory but which still emphasizes constant characteristics rather than growth or change over time. Thus, career planning and development can change according to specific circumstances and situations.

The career development process is not without clear goals, but the process dramatically affects individual career outputs (Adekola, 2011). It implies that vocational schools are expected to have a strategy to support output. Interviews with six subjects (I, Y, R, E, B, and D) indicate that career development services in vocational schools during the pandemic still focus on developing student skills.

For example, job fair services and course services. Complete career development services will support individuals in determining their career path. It is the same as individual career development that can make a basis when individuals will job positions that will be carried out (Omotayo et al., 2014). Thus, the career perception felt by students related to the impact of the environment, talent, and the state of COVID-19 on career services at vocational school tends to be positive, as evidenced by some good responses from students towards guidance and counselling services vocational school. As for future suggestions regarding research, the first decades of research in this domain are focused on measuring and choosing career interests. It was only in the late 1980s that research was expanded to include a variety of other career-related topics. Post-2000 research has involved a broad set of questions with the increasing sophistication of questions and methodologies. We suggest future research directions for scholars, including an increased focus on several contemporary issues (Wang & Wanberg, 2017). Therefore, current COVID-19, career development, and vocational education are interesting themes for further research.

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Author's Declaration

Authors' contributions and responsibilities

The authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis,

interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interest.

Additional information

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