

## Exploring Environmental Support for Children's Career Interests

Rabiatul Zakirah Zabidi, Ku Suhaila Ku Johari

Faculty of Education, National University of Malaysia

Email: kusahaila@ukm.edu.my

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### Abstract

This study aims to identify children's interests and career interest knowledge. Additionally, identifying their personality in career interests as well as exploring environmental support that influences children's career interests. This case study was conducted through psycho-educational group counseling involving six respondents in year 6 at a primary school located in Banting, Selangor. Research data collection techniques through five face-to-face sessions in group counseling sessions. The data was analyzed thematically and the findings of the study found that children have an interest in their career as well as the tasks in that career. Some respondents are confident that their personality is compatible with their chosen career interests and some are less confident. All respondents are aware of the support of their environment which consists of family, treatment places and internet information sources.

**Keywords:** Career Interests, Children, Environmental Support, Personalities

### Introduction

The environment greatly affects the development of children. Environmental factors are one of the factors in an individual's career choice because the environment has a positive or negative influence. According to the Children Act (2001), a child refers to a person under 18 years of age. Children are a very important asset in a country as heirs of the country in the future. Therefore, in a career context, children should be given encouragement and knowledge as preparation for the future. The Super Theory is a theory that explains the stages of career development and the social role of society. Super summarizes career development theory into five stages, namely the growth stage aged between 4 and 13 years old, the exploration stage aged between 14 and 24 years old, the establishment stage aged between 25 and 44 years old, the maintenance or management stage aged between 45 and 65 years old, and the release stage aged 66 and over. Each age level is in the process of reaching career maturity.

Referring to Super's vocational theory, it states that a baby up to the age of 13 is a growth stage for an individual. Vocational development will increase in the growth stage when

individuals are exposed to work through family, school, community, the media, and other sources. During the growth phase, young people develop a sense of autonomy and begin to develop work-related skills and habits. In addition, young people can identify roles related to their careers as well as increase their level of career knowledge in a better direction according to their interests (Super et al., 1996). Based on Super's theory, each person's job choice will develop in line with the passage of time and a person's age (Sumari et al., 2020).

The choice of job starts at the elementary school level and continues until the next stage in the life of every human being. Job choice is a process that constantly develops throughout life (Yedemie, 2021). Career development in childhood will help a person who has a good identity achieve high potential. In addition, a childhood career is the beginning of interest and is closely related to one's abilities in the future. Therefore, children should be given appropriate exposure to explore careers, career knowledge, and specific skills as an early preparation for them. The children's stage is the period when they gain career awareness and career knowledge, as well as the ability to think using imagination and knowledge. Future career aspirations will be planted in their imagination gradually until adulthood (Ayriza et al., 2020). In the Circumscription Compromise Theory, Gottfredson states that each individual will evaluate their job in the context of society's acceptance and their values, such as their abilities, interests, and feelings towards the job. In addition, in this theory, the psychological factors of the person and the environmental factors of the person are emphasized in evaluating the job. This theory outlines several stages of a person's personal development from childhood to adulthood. At the age of 3 to 5 years, a child will be oriented toward size and power. For example, work equipment such as stethoscopes and syringes will be associated with work as a medical officer. In this stage, children do not know that this job is dominated by male or female gender and the level of prestige of a job in society (Sumari et al., 2020).

Next, at the age of 6 to 8 years is the level of orientation based on gender roles in society. Children's way of thinking when they have entered the formal school environment, they have been able to evaluate. They know that gender plays a role in job selection and that there are jobs dominated by women and men. At the age level of 9 years to 13 years is an orientation based on social values. They do not evaluate a job based on gender but based on the status level of the job in society. They evaluate a job in the context of lifestyle, income earned every month and the house they live in if they venture into that job field. The last stage is the stage of age 14 and above which is oriented towards the uniqueness and one's abilities in the field of interest. The assessment is based on their responsibility to others. They no longer evaluate in the context of gender dominance and social values but tend to their abilities, interests and personalities toward career aspirations (Sumari et al., 2020).

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### **Problem Statement**

Work is a priority in the life of every human being when they reach the age of maturity. Job search, career planning and deciding which career to choose play an important role in

students' career choices. Many students are unclear and face pressure when they make career choices. Most students do not do enough research and reading on their careers and seek career guidance from their school counselors. Many students choose inappropriate careers due to a lack of information and lack of work experience. In addition, pressure factors from peers, advice from friends, parents and teachers or as a result of being tied to a particular job without adequate vocational guidance and career counseling (Yedemie, 2021). According to Gottfredson (2002) in Sumari et al (2022) stated that errors in job selection will cause labor shortages and imbalances in the labor market. Parents are also worried and have difficulty helping their children because they lack knowledge of relevant job knowledge following the technological age. Parents are important people for children when making career decisions. Positive communication from parents will contribute to positive emotional levels for children. If parents do not support interests and give negative communication to children, it can cause children to also have negative emotions (Yusoff, 2018). This statement is also supported by Mohamad (2018) in Ibrahim et al (2018) that parents who do not play their role well towards children will affect the development process of children's personality and self-worth. They will seek attention and affection outside the home and from others. If this happens, children are exposed to negative things which can lead to other problems. This study was carried out in primary schools because most studies related to environmental factors influencing career choice at the secondary school level and educational institutions. Therefore, the researcher examines the environmental support that affects the choice of career interests at the primary school level for children who are 12 years old before they continue their education at the secondary school level and higher education institutes.

### **Objective**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Identify the child's interest and knowledge related to the career of interest
2. Identify children's personalities in career interests
3. Exploring environmental support that influences children's career interests

### **Literature Review**

#### **Children's Career Interests And Knowledge**

Children's career interest is an early start to getting a career they are interested in as an adult. In the theory of career development, Super states that career interests nurtured since childhood will produce a high sense of curiosity and the process of career exploration will occur (Kim et al., 2021). Chambers et al (2018) stated that although children's career aspirations are not necessarily realistic, they can be used to obtain perceptions and ideas about jobs when they reach adulthood. The same study also states that the career interest that has been identified by the child is a good indicator of how a child behaves and acts when in school.

Another study by Flouri and Panourgia (2012) has supported this statement by reporting that primary school students who have higher career aspirations are less likely to have behavioral or emotional problems while at school. Referring to Osman and Ali (2022), the importance of a career is important to inject the spirit of studying hard and increase desire in a field that one wants to pursue. Therefore, career planning from the beginning can facilitate career planning in the future. The process of career interest development is a process of formation and implementation of self-concept. Self-concept is the result of the interaction of intelligence,

physical appearance and observations made as well as evaluations of career fields that suit themselves.

According to Paton and Mc. Mohan (2001) in the study of Aprinal et al (2021) proves that the career interest that exists from childhood is a lifelong process to adulthood in the life of each individual and determines the level of development to the next level. In addition, the school environment exerts a great influence on children to obtain sufficient training and knowledge through guidance from school guidance and counseling teachers. Therefore, environmental support influences the development process and children's success in exploring career interests.

In addition, career interest factors help to increase their career aspirations. This statement is supported by Suherman (2009) in the study of Aprinal et al (2021) who stated that the process of career goals is a process that takes place based on the potential, talent, abilities and personality possessed by the child. Therefore, they will find and understand all the information about their dream career from various sources around them to help them achieve that career.

### **Children's Personality in Career Interests**

Concerning that, a great influence can be proven through the relationship between parents and children in their career choices. The parenting style during the child's growth stage affects the child's personality. The career one wants to pursue can express an individual's self with the parenting style received from parents (Yahya & Mahmud, 2021). This is because parents' communication and involvement in career interests will directly and indirectly influence the formation of children's personalities and interests. For example, parents who want to pass on the family business to their children will influence and provide the children with business knowledge from the beginning. Therefore, communication, cooperation and involvement in children's lives are influenced by family factors until they can set a career when they grow up (Ojo, 2019).

Children's personalities influence their choice of career interests. A person will choose a career that matches his personality and some other attractive factors in that career (Damiri et al., 2005). Personality also has a relationship with a student's academic achievement as well as a person's learning style. The selection of career interests will encourage a person to choose training, skills and subjects that need to be paid attention to achieve a career of interest in the future. The selection of these exercises and subjects also needs support from parents because they are close individuals and can help children achieve their interests.

### **Environmental Support That Influences Children's Career Interests**

According to the study of the Influence of Environmental Factors on Career Selection among Students at the Faculty of Management and Muamalah, QUIZ conducted by Jalalludin and Rashid (2018) says that environmental factors, namely the influence of family, the influence of teachers and counselors, peers and the environment on selection career among students. In addition, environmental factors include everything that exists around the individual. The influence of the family has a great influence on the choice of a career and is followed by the role of a career counselor or teacher as a motivational driver and helps to increase the student's potential. The role of peers is also important in choosing a career but the influence of peers will decrease as a student matures.

Based on the article The Interrelationships among Opportunity, Personality Type and Environmental Factors in Preparatory High School Students Career Choice: A Multilevel Study

written by Yedemie (2021) states that there are many factors influencing career choice for secondary level students and students in higher education institutes. The first factor in career selection, the environment can influence the career chosen by students. For example, students who have lived on an island can choose a career that involves water or they can choose to never have anything to do with water again. In addition, parents who have an educational background can influence students' views on whether to continue their studies or not. These are various environmental factors that will lead students to their chosen careers.

#### Methodology

This study is a qualitative study conducted through psycho-educational group counseling. This study involves 6 primary school students in Banting who are 12 years old. The psycho-educational group counseling conducted has three themes. First, this study aims to identify careers that children are interested in and their knowledge related to the duties and roles of those careers. In addition, identify the students' personality in career selection by using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test tool. Next, identify the environmental factors that influence the choice of career by using the drawing therapy method.

This group counseling session is conducted in as many as five group sessions covering five phases, the first phase being the session to build relationships with the students. The second phase is an exploration session. The third phase is the problem identification session. The fourth phase is an alternative search session. The final phase is the termination session and the follow-up session conducted by the counselor. The results of the study were analyzed thematically to obtain research data. This analysis is descriptive through psychoeducational group sessions to help researchers explore the issues and problems faced by students in terms of interest in careers, the personality of each individual, the environment and students' knowledge of the career they are interested in.

#### Research Findings and Discussion

A total of six students at one of the religious primary schools located in Banting, Selangor have attended a psycho-educational group counseling session. All respondents who have attended this session are voluntary and have received consent from the respondent's parents. All respondents signed an informed consent form before the counseling session began. Respondent information is briefly based on Table 1 as follows

Table 1

#### *Information profile of respondents*

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Heredity</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Career Interest</b>	<b>Environmental Support</b>
R1	Malay	Male	Police officer	Father and internet
R2	Malay	Male	Motorcycle mechanic	TikTok
R3	Malay	Male	Motorcycle mechanic	Father, shop and internet
R4	Malay	Female	Doctor	Clinic
R5	Malay	Female	Firefighter officer	YouTube
R6	Malay	Female	Police officer	Internet

(Source: Field Study 2023)



Table 1. shows the demographics of the study respondents according to race, gender, career interest and environmental support. Based on the table, all respondents are of Malay descent. There are six respondents consisting of three males and three females. Two respondents, namely R1 and R6, have the same career interests as police officers. Respondent R2 has a career interest as a chef and motorcycle mechanic while respondent R3 also has the same interest as a motorcycle mechanic. Respondent R4 is interested in a career as a doctor and respondent R5 is a firefighter officer. The environmental support obtained also shows that the respondent's support factors are the family, especially the father and the place when seeking treatment, which is the clinic and internet resources. The majority of respondents stated that the internet is one of the environmental support factors. This is so because the internet is one of the sources of information for today's generation.

### **Career interests and career knowledge of interest**

Aprinal et al (2021) explained in their study that the age of 11 years to 12 years is the period when children tend to choose careers according to their interests based on the objects used in careers. They do not know the reality and career-related knowledge in detail. Based on the research findings obtained, the researchers identified the children's interests and knowledge towards their career interests. Researchers get feedback from respondents through discussions and questions. All respondents have an interest in a particular career. They also know the tasks that need to be done on the job.

Two respondents gave feedback as if they knew the job from their father's job who worked in the relevant career field. Respondent R1 stated that he wanted to become a police officer to follow in his father's footsteps. He also knows the duties of a police officer from his father's narration.

"...I want to be a policeman...I saw my father wearing that uniform...it's the best..pick up dead bodies...arrest criminals..arrest drug addicts and many more.."

Respondent R2 is interested in a career as a motorcycle mechanic because he likes to see interesting motorcycles.

"...foreman...foreman motorbikes because I like to look at motorbikes..look at the beautiful motorbikes...from TikTok...wash the engine...repair motorbikes fix tires...change rims... it's all motorcycle stuff..."

Respondent R3 is also interested in the same career which is motor mechanic and knows duties as a motorcycle mechanic.

"Motorcycle parts... because I've been looking around in this village, I see that there are motorcycle parts shops and I'm interested... fix the motor... change rims... tires.. seats.. spokes.. there's a lot more.. ."

Respondent R4 stated that she knew the doctor's job while seeking treatment at the clinic as follows:

"...I want to be a doctor because I can treat patients and also save people who are infected from diseases that can also spread to other people..."

Respondent R5 stated that she was interested in a job as a firefighter officer from the YouTube application as follows:

"...firefighters because...can put out, prevent, control fire...maintain the safety of the public and property in the event of a fire..."

Respondent R6 stated that she was interested in a career as a policeman and learned about the job from the internet in childhood.

"...police...I want to be a policeman because I see people out there doing their job like arresting people they are authorized by law to arrest"

The results obtained can prove that children are interested and have the potential to follow an interest based on things that exist in their environment and if they get support from family members.

**Children's personality in career interests**

Based on the discussion and questions given to all respondents, they stated that the personality test they answered was the first time. They never answer a personality test like the MBTI. They also do not know the difference between introverted and extroverted individuals.

Table 2

*Respondents' personality and career interest information*

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Personality</b>	<b>Career interest</b>
R1	ESTJ	Police officer
R2	ISFJ	Motorcycle mechanic
R3	ENTJ	Motorcycle mechanic
R4	INTJ	Doctor
R5	INTJ	Firefighter officer
R6	ENTJ	Police officer

(Source: Field Study 2023)

Table 2. shows the respondents and their personalities and career interests. The researcher shared with all the respondents related personality traits from the scores obtained. The researcher asked the respondents about the suitability of the obtained personality test with their actual personality. Some respondents just nodded and some did not respond to the question. The researcher also asked about their personality by the career they are interested in. Four respondents responded that they believe their personality matches the career they are interested in. Two respondents informed that they are not confident and are not sure that it suits their career interests.

"I'm sure" (R1)

"...um...not sure" (R2)

"Confident..." (R3)

"Confident..." (R4)

"...not sure..." (R5)

"... yes.. sure..." (R6)

The researcher evaluated the answers given regarding their level of confidence according to the researcher's observations during the group counseling sessions. If they have a deep interest in the career and know the duties of the career indirectly their level of confidence will increase. This is also influenced by the support of the child's environment to achieve the career they are interested in in the future.

**Environmental support that influences children's career interests**

All respondents were aware of the environmental support that influenced their interest in the career. Respondents R1 and R3 stated that they were interested in their chosen careers

because they followed in their father's footsteps. They are also interested in the career was the result of storytelling and watching his father work.

"...I want to be like my father...my father is a policeman...my father always tells me when he comes back from work" (R1)

"...I saw my father talking about motorbikes...my father told me to talk about motorbikes...I also watched some from the shops in this village...on YouTube" (R3)

Respondent R4 stated that she was interested in the doctor's career when seeking treatment from the clinic.

"I know this job from the clinic when I was sick" (R4)

Respondents R2, R5 and R6 stated that they knew about careers as motorcycle mechanic (R2), firefighter officer (R5) and the police officer (R6) from TikTok, YouTube and social media applications.

"...from TikTok" (R2)

"...I know the job of a firefighter from YouTube" (R5)

"...I know from the internet since I was a child" (R6)

The results of these findings prove that the children's environment plays a very big role because it can influence their career interests in the future. The children's environment helps a lot and gives them knowledge of all the careers that exist. Career information can be known through observations made by the child in question in the process of improving his knowledge and preparation for a career. For example, the activities carried out on the job, the place of the activity or the work environment, work clothes, working hours during the day or night and the devices used to complete the work tasks.

Devices and the influence of technology can foster interest and attraction to a certain field of work. This statement is also supported by a study conducted by Osman and Ali (2022) that a factor in a person's career choice can exist because of interest and interest when watching a movie. Positive support from friends is also a catalyst of enthusiasm to continue in the field of interest. Attitude and personality also help to achieve a career in the future. Based on Holland's theory, it is suggested that job selection is in line with needs, personal abilities and personality (Ayriza et al., 2020).

## **Conclusion**

A child's career interest is a career aspiration that exists in childhood as only imagination of objects seen. This career imagination and career interest will become a reality when they grow up and become an ambition to achieve it. Children will choose ideals that match their personality and according to the environmental support they get at that time. A child's environmental support includes all things that exist in the environment including parents, guidance and counseling teachers, peers, the internet and so on.

Parental support in helping children choose career interests is a very good initial action. This is because exposure and support from parents toward children's careers and interests can give them enthusiasm and confidence in their career planning. Parents need to expose their children to careers starting at the primary school level so that they can easily understand the scope and career that suits their wishes.

In addition, parents can also explore their children's interests with various activities to further hone their understanding and interests. This is so, children do not know how to channel their skills and interests if their parents do not help them. For example, children who are interested in drawing can be sent to drawing classes to hone their talent. Therefore, the role of parents is very important in the formation and career choice of children. Children are also likely to

develop the same career interests as their parents because of seeing their parents' jobs. The process of exploring children takes place and every day until the selection and determination of the career takes place.

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