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The Level of Career Maturity Among Female Adolescents in a Malaysian Shelter Home

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Abstract

Career development is widely discussed in Malaysia. Although there are some issues of constraint or limitation of careers faced by children in shelter homes due to academic and personal background factors, the process of career maturity can be enhanced with a variety of learning mediums. Therefore, this study is aimed to identify the level of career maturity in adolescent female at a shelter home in Malaysia. This study is a quantitative study involving 70 adolescent female in a children's shelter homes in Malaysia. Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) was used which included the domain of attitude and the domain of competency with a reliability value of alpha 0.700. The data was analysed using descriptive analysis of percentage, frequency and mean to answer the research questions. The results show that the mean value obtained for the career maturity level for the overall, for the attitude domain and for the competencies domain is at high level but approaching low level. As a result, children in shelter homes are still in need of counseling programmes related to career counseling in order to support the career maturity particularly on attitude domain, among adolescents in shelter homes.

Keywords: Career Counseling, Career Maturity, Attitude, Competencies, Shelter Homes.

Introduction

Career counseling, formerly known as Vocational Counseling is one of the long-standing counseling in Malaysia. It was first introduced to the Malaysian education system since the 60s through a voluntary body which aims to provide a form of intervention to promote the well-being of Malaysians by focusing on the planning and implementation of individuals in their careers (Mansor 1984). The circular that houses a guidance teacher in every primary and secondary school, was issued by the Ministry of Education in 1964 and in 1968, the Educational and Career Guidance service system was implemented in schools that covers the aspects of education, employment, health and personal guidance. (Abd. Latif 1981).

Awareness on the careers that are consistent according to the individual as well as the opportunities that can be pursued should be intensified to help clients make career choices,

especially in schools because according to Super in Sani et. al (2018), at the age of 15 to 18, students are mainly in the exploration phase of their career. Career disclosure and unclear career information are also one of the factors that should be emphasized by guidance and counseling teachers in schools to help students make career choices. The latest information regarding careers and job opportunities that can be pursued by students, especially in terms of the courses that are offered to help students achieve their career of choice (Sani et. al 2018). The use of career-measuring inventory can help counsellors identify and plan appropriate interventions to reduce career-related issues.

Azmir, Johari & Mahmud (2019) conducted a study to observed the relationship between multiple intelligence and career interests among 77 secondary students. The study used correlation method to identify the relationship between multiple intelligence variables and career interests. The research instruments used were Multiple Intelligence Inventory and Career Interest Inventory. The finding of this study shows that there is a moderate and significant relationship between multiple intelligence and career interest. This finding also shows that the higher intelligence range, the more congruent personality patterns.

Previous studies have found that students' career interests have been formed in students and influenced by personal factors and external factors such as parents, teachers, friends and others (Mahmud et al., 2006). However, for children at shelter homes, the main support system is the institution itself instead of their families.

Saifuddin & Abu Yazid (2018) conducted a study that looked at career aspirations among orphans at the Kompleks Anak Yatim Darul Kifayah. The study was a qualitative study that was done face to face. The results showed that orphaned adolescents have a career interest but have no knowledge of career choices. Given that there are very few studies that study child care in foster homes especially in Malaysia, this study may contribute to new programs that are suitable for children in shelter homes specifically on career issues.

Research Objective

The objective of the research is to:

1. Identify the reliability of career maturity inventory.
2. Study the career maturity level of female adolescents in a Malaysian shelter home

Research Methodology

This study is a quantitative study that uses the survey method by using the Career Maturity Inventory. This inventory has two domains namely the attitude domain and the competencies domain. A questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. The questionnaire consists of two sections, Part A consisting of the adolescent females' personal information, whereas Part B has 50 items consists of 25 items related to attitude domain and 25 items related to competency domain and each domain contains five sub-scales. Respondents were asked to complete both Part A and Part B by marking 'Agree' or 'Disagree' on each item stated in the Career Maturity Inventory on Attitude and Competency Domain Questionnaire. Implementing the CMI can encourage respondents to explore their career information in depth according to their personalities (Anon 2016). A total of 70 female adolescents as respondents from a Children's Home (RKK) under the Department of Social Welfare completed the questionnaire and the data was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 25.

Findings

Career Maturity Inventor Reliability

Based on the data analysis of the career maturity, it is found that the value of reliability of the coefficients of career maturity among female adolescents in a Malaysian shelter home indicates that the Alpha Cronbach value is 0.700. This value indicates that the items reliability index is good and acceptable. According to Bond & Fox (2001) if the reliability value is above 0.7 is acceptable in Table 1.

Table 1 Career Maturity Inventory Reliability (N=70)

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Item
Career Maturity	.700	.700	50

Table 2 show the overall mean value for the career maturity test is 52.4571 and standard deviation 8.3139. In addition, for mean value subscale attitude domain is 52.2857, standard deviation 11.5634 and subscale competencies domain is 52.6286, standard deviation 12.3542.

Table 2 Career Maturity Inventory

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall Career Maturity	70	52.4571	8.3139
Attitude Domain	70	52.2857	11.5634
Competencies Domain	70	52.6286	12.3542

Overall Analysis Based on the Career Maturity Level

Table 3 shows the levels of career maturity. For overall 70 female adolescents under a shelter home, 32 are reported at a low level (45.7%) and 38 are reported at high level (54.3%). This shows that the maturity level of their career maturity as a whole is moderate and has no significant difference. While for attitude domain equals to overall level which 33 are reported at low level (47.1%) and 37 are reported at high level (52.9%). For competencies domain, 27 are reported at low level (38.6%) and 43 are reported at high level (61.4%).

Table 3 Career Maturity Level Overview

	Level	Frequency (N=70)	Percentage (%)
Career Maturity Overall	Low	32	45.7
	High	38	54.3
Attitude Domain	Low	33	47.1
	High	37	52.9
Competencies Domain	Low	27	38.6
	High	43	61.4

Note: Low (0% – 50%) High (50% – 100%)

Discussion and Conclusion

This study provides information on the career maturity of female adolescent in shelter homes in Malaysia. Based on the analysis of the career maturity, the female adolescents have moderate level on attitude domain and competencies domain. Even though statistically it is in high category but the percentage show it is moderate. This study are different from the findings of Mohd Sani et al. (2018) who found that the level of career maturity of students is at the moderate and low levels. The shelter home is under Malaysian government administration and play a role to protect children under 18 years old who are have no guardian, victims of abuse or involve in legal cases. Therefore, through this institution, Malaysian government provides effective programs that can support their wellbeing for their current needs and future. Exposure to careers path is one of the goals for them so that they have a good career maturity in order to sustain their future career. The findings by Saifuddin & Abu Yazid (2018) that says children have a career interest but do not have the necessary knowledge in choosing career interests and children need help and support from caregivers to achieve their career aspirations.

Most of the children at this shelter home are lack of academic capability. For those who are not able to cope with the school needs, they undergo skills program including cooking, sewing, baking, beauty and saloon which preparing them for their career path at the same time. The programs provide by the shelter homes under Malaysian government able to increase their career maturity compare to students at school setting. Thus, children in shelter homes are more exposed to career choices and mature in making career decisions in future. As mentioned by Abdul Razak and Norliza (2016), social support is an essential factor that can meet the needs of children in shelter homes.

In my opinion, children in shelter homes are still in need of counseling programmes and career counselling to assist in the maturing of young women in shelter homes. The results of this study can be used as a reference to certain parties such as the Department of Social Welfare, the teachers of guidance and counseling as well as the staff at the shelter homes to devise activities that can have an impact on the career maturity on female adolescents. Comprehensive disclosures about careers at an early stage can help children find careers of their choice. The study may also help the facilitators to plan activities that have more impact and exposure to the career maturity of children in the future.

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