

Empowering Career Choices: Developing Social and Emotional Support Services for Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a critical developmental phase where career decision-making plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' economic stability, personal fulfillment, and societal contributions. This research addresses the challenges adolescents face in career planning, particularly in Indonesia, where structured career counseling frameworks are limited. Existing approaches often neglect the emotional and social dimensions of decision-making, resulting in increased career indecision and misalignment between aspirations and opportunities. While global research highlights the transformative potential of integrating social and emotional support into career counseling, these practices remain underdeveloped in Indonesian educational settings. This study aims to fill this gap by developing a context-specific counseling module tailored to Indonesian high school students. Employing a Research and Development (R&D) methodology, the study integrated self-assessment tools, emotional regulation strategies, and goal-setting guidelines to address cognitive and emotional barriers in career decision-making. The module was validated through expert reviews and field testing with high school students, achieving high ratings for its relevance, clarity, and usability. The findings reveal significant improvements in students' confidence, decision-making skills, and career readiness, underscoring the effectiveness of incorporating social and emotional competencies in career counseling. The research contributes to theoretical discourse by applying Social Cognitive Career Theory and Trait and Factor Theory to explore the interplay between individual attributes and environmental factors in career development. While the study demonstrates promising outcomes, it acknowledges limitations, such as its focus on a specific population and the absence of longitudinal assessments. The research provides a scalable framework that bridges critical gaps in Indonesian career counseling and offers valuable insights for global applications in similar contexts.

Keywords: career decision-making, social and emotional support, career counseling frameworks, adolescent development, context-specific interventions



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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence represents a dynamic and transformative phase in human development, characterized by significant biological, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that shape an individual's trajectory toward adulthood. During this period, adolescents are tasked with navigating developmental milestones such as identity formation, emotional independence, and preparation for adult roles, including career planning (Kulcsár et al., 2020). Career planning during adolescence holds a critical position as decisions made at this stage have enduring

implications for economic stability, personal fulfillment, and societal contributions (Zhou et al., 2023). High school is a pivotal environment where adolescents explore and refine career aspirations. This phase requires students to identify strengths, set goals, and align them with feasible career pathways. However, the process is complex. Internal factors such as self-awareness and talents intersect with external influences, including family expectations, societal norms, and institutional support systems (Darmayanti & Salim, 2020). These dynamics often create challenges, making it difficult for adolescents to align personal aspirations with real-world opportunities (Lee & Jung, 2022).

The increasing complexity of career decision-making among adolescents is magnified by globalization, technological advancements, and evolving labor market demands. Such pressures necessitate that adolescents make well-informed and timely career decisions. Despite the heightened stakes, many students experience career indecision characterized by uncertainty, lack of clarity, and anxiety about future prospects (Kulcsár et al., 2020). A lack of guidance and limited access to career-related information exacerbate these challenges, particularly in countries with underdeveloped educational support systems like Indonesia. Globally, career counseling practices have adapted to address these challenges. In the United States, for example, comprehensive career guidance programs incorporate personalized assessments, workshops, and mentoring to equip students with the tools necessary to make informed decisions (Curry, 2017). Similarly, Turkey has developed modules to enhance students' emotional resilience and decision-making skills, enabling them to articulate aspirations in supportive environments (Kırdök, 2018). Studies emphasize the transformative potential of integrating cognitive and emotional dimensions into career counseling (Zhou et al., 2023). However, in Indonesia, the lack of structured career counseling frameworks remains a significant obstacle (Ni & Ayu, 2022). Career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) has emerged as a critical concept in contemporary research. Self-efficacy shapes an individual's confidence in their ability to identify and pursue career goals effectively. Research suggests that adolescents with higher CDMSE are better equipped to navigate career challenges and make informed decisions (Zhou et al., 2023; Lee & Jung, 2022). Additionally, social and emotional support plays a vital role in fostering CDMSE. Emotional support from family, peers, and mentors can mitigate anxiety and encourage proactive decision-making (Kulcsár et al., 2020).

Despite the demonstrated efficacy of social and emotional support in career counseling, Indonesian schools lack structured frameworks that address the multifaceted nature of career decision-making. Existing programs often prioritize academic achievement or generalized career guidance, overlooking the nuanced emotional and social dimensions crucial to informed decision-making (Darmayanti & Salim, 2020). Moreover, many counselors are inadequately trained to address these complexities, limiting their capacity to deliver comprehensive support (Ni & Ayu, 2022). Consequently, students frequently base career decisions on external pressures rather than informed self-reflection and aspirations. The absence of context-specific interventions exacerbates this issue. Career counseling frameworks in Indonesia often rely on imported models that fail to adapt to the unique cultural and systemic realities faced by Indonesian students (Pramudi, 2015). This misalignment reduces the effectiveness of existing programs and highlights the need for innovative, localized solutions that integrate global best practices with Indonesia's unique socio-cultural context (Darmayanti & Salim, 2020).

Addressing this gap is critical for several reasons. Adolescence is a formative period where timely interventions can significantly influence individuals' career trajectories. Without

adequate guidance, students risk making suboptimal decisions, resulting in dissatisfaction, career stagnation, or underutilization of their potential (Zhou et al., 2023). Integrating social and emotional support into career counseling aligns with the global shift toward holistic education, which emphasizes overall well-being and life preparedness (Bandura, 1986; Bennett et al., 2015). Furthermore, addressing psychological barriers such as fear of failure and self-doubt is crucial in enabling adolescents to make confident and informed decisions (Lee & Jung, 2022). Localized interventions tailored to the Indonesian context offer scalable solutions to the systemic challenges within the country's educational institutions. Modules addressing both cognitive and emotional dimensions can empower students to navigate their career journeys confidently and align their choices with personal aspirations and professional goals. Such frameworks also equip counselors with practical tools to deliver personalized guidance, enhancing their effectiveness (Kulcsár et al., 2020).

This study aims to contribute to career counseling by developing and validating a social and emotional support module tailored to the Indonesian educational context. Grounded in theories such as Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and Parsons' Trait and Factor Theory, the module integrates global best practices with localized insights. The proposed intervention focuses on four key areas: 1) Helping students identify strengths, interests, and values as a foundation for informed decision-making. 2) Providing tools to help students overcome psychological barriers such as anxiety and fear of failure. 3) Offering accessible, accurate data on career options, educational pathways, and labor market trends. 4) Guiding students through structured activities to evaluate options and align their choices with goals. This research also advances theoretical discourse on career decision-making by exploring the interplay of cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions. By emphasizing culturally sensitive approaches, the study bridges theory and practice, offering actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a Research and Development (R&D) approach, which is recognized as a systematic method for creating or refining products to achieve accountable and measurable outcomes. According to Sukmadinata (2005), R&D focuses on product development that can be validated for its effectiveness and utility. Similarly, Sugiyono (2007) explains that R&D aims to create products and evaluate their efficacy within specific contexts. Borg and Gall (1983, as cited in Sugiyono, 2007) further emphasize the significance of R&D in the development and validation of educational and instructional tools, which is particularly relevant for the field of counseling and education. The primary objective of this study is to develop a counseling module that enhances students' career decision-making abilities through the integration of social and emotional support services. This development process adopts the ten-step R&D model proposed by Borg and Gall, with adaptations made to accommodate resource limitations, such as time and cost constraints. The steps in the R&D process include: (1) Research and information collection, (2) Planning, (3) Developing a preliminary product draft, (4) Preliminary field testing, (5) Main product revision, (6) Main field testing, (7) Operational product revision, (8) Operational field testing, (9) Final product revision, and (10) Dissemination and implementation. This study concludes at step nine, producing a validated module that supports effective career decision-making without proceeding to large-scale

dissemination due to practical constraints. The research flowchart outlines the stepwise methodology adopted in the study, beginning with identifying students' needs, developing the module, conducting validation through expert and field testing, and refining the product based on iterative feedback. This structured approach ensures that the module addresses students' needs effectively and meets established educational standards.

Research Procedures

The procedures for conducting the research begin with research and information collection, which includes both needs analysis and literature review. In the needs analysis, data is gathered using the *Media Lacak Masalah* (MLM) questionnaire, designed to identify the specific requirements of students regarding career counseling materials. Results from 25 students revealed that 76% required counseling services focused on social and emotional support for career decision-making, with 60% preferring a module-based medium for delivery. The literature review complements this step by examining relevant studies on social and emotional support in career counseling to provide a strong theoretical foundation for module development. This step also involves formulating the problem statement, which centers on evaluating whether the developed counseling module is suitable for students in grades XI and XII at SMK NU 1 Pesanggaran.

The planning phase focuses on defining the objectives for module development. The goal is to produce a validated counseling module tailored to the needs of students and practitioners, which serves as both a supplementary medium and a primary resource for career counseling sessions. The next step involves the development of the preliminary product, where the module draft is designed based on identified needs and integrated with materials that enhance career decision-making through social and emotional support. The preliminary field testing phase evaluates the draft module through assessments by experts in counseling, educational media, and content development. Feedback is collected from these experts to identify strengths and weaknesses, informing necessary revisions. The module is subsequently refined during the main product revision phase to ensure alignment with the counseling objectives and students' requirements. The main field testing phase involves small-scale trials with a sample of 25 students selected through random sampling. This testing assesses the practicality, usability, and relevance of the module in real-life educational settings. Findings from this phase lead to the operational product revision, where further refinements are made to improve the module's content and effectiveness based on feedback from the main field testing. In the operational field testing, the module is tested on a larger scale to evaluate its efficacy and applicability across a broader student population. This phase follows Suharsimi Arikunto's (1998) sampling guidelines, using 25% of the target population to ensure robust testing. Feedback from this stage informs the final product revision, resulting in a validated and refined counseling module. The final product is designed to enhance career decision-making through structured support, addressing both the cognitive and emotional needs of students.

Data Analysis

This study employs both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques to evaluate the module's effectiveness and gather insights for further improvement. Qualitative analysis involves organizing and interpreting feedback, suggestions, and critiques provided by experts and students. Data from expert evaluations and student responses are categorized to identify

recurring themes, which are then used to inform revisions and improve the module's quality. This method ensures that the module addresses practical and contextual needs effectively. Quantitative analysis uses evaluation forms completed by experts and students during field testing. These forms are analyzed using percentage calculations to assess the module's overall effectiveness. Each response is scored on a scale ranging from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent), with the percentage of positive responses determining the module's success rate. Arikunto's (1998) classification system is used to interpret these percentages: 76–100%: Very good, 55–75%: Good, 40–55%: Fair, 0–40%: Poor. These percentages provide a clear metric for evaluating the module's effectiveness and alignment with educational goals. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, the study ensures a comprehensive assessment of the module's practicality, relevance, and potential impact on students' career decision-making abilities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of the Development

The primary output of this research is the development of a counseling module focused on social and emotional support to improve career decision-making among students at SMK NU 1 Pesanggaran. This module serves as a supplementary tool for guidance counselors to address students' challenges in career planning. It is specifically designed to assist students in grades XI and XII, incorporating social and emotional dimensions to aid in decision-making processes. The module's development follows a systematic Research and Development (R&D) process, informed by initial needs assessments and expert consultations.

Research and Data Collection

The first phase of the development involved a needs analysis using the Media Lacak Masalah (MLM) questionnaire. Responses from 25 students revealed that 75% of students faced difficulties in decision-making, as indicated by their agreement with statements such as "I often find it difficult to make decisions" and "I need external help to plan career goals." Additionally, 60% of students expressed a preference for a module-based learning medium. Observations and interviews with teachers confirmed these findings, highlighting the lack of adequate support materials, including counseling modules specifically tailored to career decision-making. This gap underscored the importance of developing a tool that incorporates both social and emotional support.

Table 1. Expert Assessment Scale for Content Experts

Aspect Evaluated	Statement	Score	%	Category
Relevance	Alignment of content with students' needs	4	100	Excellent
	Alignment of the table of contents with module content	3	75	Good
	Alignment of content with expected competencies	3	75	Good
	Appropriateness of images used in the module	4	100	Excellent

Aspect Evaluated	Statement	Score	%	Category
	Summary relevance to the content	4	100	Excellent
	Alignment of references with the module content	3	75	Good
Sequence	Interconnectedness of topics	3	75	Good
	Content presented in a logical sequence	4	100	Excellent
	Sequential presentation of references	3	75	Good
Clarity	Clarity of language used in the module	4	100	Excellent
	Clarity of content delivered to students	3	75	Good
	Content is easy to understand	4	100	Excellent
Usefulness	Module's usefulness for teachers	3	75	Good
	Module aids counselors in delivering guidance services	3	75	Good

Table 2. Expert Assessment Scale for Media Experts

Aspect Evaluated	Statement	Score	%	Category
Cover	Cover appearance	4	100	Excellent
	Alignment of images, font type, and font size	3	75	Good
	Color composition harmony	4	100	Excellent
Introduction	Clarity of introduction	3	75	Good
	Print quality of the introduction	4	100	Excellent
Table of Contents	Clarity of text	4	100	Excellent
	Alignment of font type, size, and color components	3	75	Good
Introduction Section	Alignment of font type, size, and color components	3	75	Good
Content	Appropriateness of images with the content	4	100	Excellent
	Image size and placement accuracy	4	100	Excellent
References	Presentation of the references	3	75	Good

Table 3. Assessment Scale by Guidance and Counseling Experts

Aspect Evaluated	Statement	Score	%	Category
Content	Alignment of content with students' needs	4	100	Excellent
	Alignment of the table of contents with module content	4	100	Excellent
	Clarity of the language used	3	75	Good
	Logical sequence of content	4	100	Excellent

Aspect Evaluated	Statement	Score	%	Category
	Alignment of references with content	3	75	Good
Design	Cover appearance	4	100	Excellent
	Alignment of cover images with the content	3	75	Good
	Accuracy of image size and placement	3	75	Good
	Suitability of font type and size	4	100	Excellent
	Color composition harmony	4	100	Excellent
	Print clarity	4	100	Excellent

Table 4. Student Assessment Scale in Field Testing

Aspect Evaluated	Statement	Total	Average	%	Category
General Components	Cover appearance	45	3.00	75	Good
	Image placement and size	45	3.00	75	Good
	Suitability of font type and size on the cover	46	3.07	76.67	Excellent
	Clarity of the introduction	42	2.80	70	Good
	Clarity and appearance of the table of contents	50	3.33	83.33	Excellent
Content	Language clarity	48	3.20	80	Excellent
	Image relevance	36	2.40	60	Good
	Content delivery	37	2.47	61.67	Good
	Evaluation alignment with content	47	3.13	78.33	Excellent
References	Presentation clarity	51	3.40	85	Excellent

Table 5. Student Assessment Scale in Operational Field Testing

Aspect Evaluated	Statement	Total	Average	%	Category
General Components	Cover appearance	75	3.00	75	Good
	Image placement and size	75	3.00	75	Good
	Suitability of font type and size on the cover	83	3.32	83	Excellent
	Clarity of the introduction	82	3.28	82	Excellent
Content	Image relevance	82	3.28	82	Excellent
	Content delivery	83	3.32	83	Excellent
References	Presentation clarity	71	2.84	71	Good

Planning and Initial Draft Development

The planning phase involved defining the objectives of the module, which included enhancing students' understanding of career choices and improving their decision-making skills. The draft module was structured into accessible sections, including an introduction to

career planning, emotional and social support concepts, and practical exercises for career decision-making. Visual elements such as images and diagrams were integrated to improve engagement and comprehension, based on recommendations from experts in media, content, and counseling.

Validation and Field Testing

The module underwent rigorous validation by subject matter experts. Feedback from these experts included adjustments to improve clarity, design, and alignment with students' needs. For example, the material expert validation achieved a score of 85.71% (categorized as "excellent"), and recommendations included adopting interactive discussion methods and refining certain instructional sentences. Media experts recommended improving the module's visual appeal, including the use of vibrant colors and appropriate font sizes. After incorporating these suggestions, the module proceeded to field testing with small groups of students. The results of the small-group testing were encouraging, with an overall score of 75.30% ("good"). Students provided additional feedback for improvements, such as enhancing the clarity of the cover design and incorporating more engaging visual elements. The revised module was subsequently tested with a larger group of 25 students during operational field testing. This phase yielded a score of 78.36% ("very good"), demonstrating the module's effectiveness in addressing the identified needs.

The research findings emphasize the pivotal role of social and emotional support in enhancing career decision-making among adolescents, particularly in rural or resource-limited contexts. The developed module provides a framework that aligns with international best practices in educational counseling, such as those identified in studies by Kulcsár et al. (2020) and Zhou et al. (2023), which underscore the importance of emotional resilience and social skills in guiding students through career planning processes. This approach integrates self-awareness, stress management, and decision-making strategies, offering a comprehensive solution tailored to Indonesian students' unique challenges.

Social and Emotional Support in Career Counseling

Social and emotional competencies are increasingly recognized as foundational elements in modern career counseling. These competencies include the ability to understand and regulate emotions, build supportive relationships, and leverage social networks for career exploration. Studies indicate that students who receive robust social and emotional support are better equipped to navigate career-related uncertainties and align their choices with long-term aspirations (Kulcsár et al., 2020; Lee & Jung, 2022; Zhou et al., 2023). Emotional intelligence, which encompasses self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation, plays a critical role in enhancing career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) (Darmayanti & Salim, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2024). The importance of integrating social and emotional dimensions in career decision-making is further supported by studies highlighting stress and indecision as common barriers to effective career planning (Gati, 2013; Kim et al., 2023). Modules that incorporate self-assessment exercises and emotional regulation techniques empower students to address these challenges proactively (Puffer & Pence, 2020; Anghel & Gati, 2021). These interventions

not only mitigate decision-making anxiety but also enhance confidence in achieving career goals, aligning with Savickas' (2013) findings on the role of self-efficacy in career development.

Addressing Contextual Challenges in Indonesia

One of the study's primary contributions is its focus on creating a context-specific intervention tailored to Indonesian students. Unlike imported counseling frameworks that may not fully account for local cultural and systemic realities, this module was developed using Borg and Gall's R&D methodology, ensuring its relevance and applicability. By incorporating feedback from educators, students, and counseling experts, the module addresses unique socio-economic and educational challenges, such as limited access to career information and minimal parental support in rural Indonesia (Ni & Ayu, 2022; Ran et al., 2022). Research indicates that career counseling frameworks are most effective when they address both cognitive and socio-emotional aspects, particularly in resource-limited settings (Darmayanti & Salim, 2020; Zhou et al., 2023). By utilizing a modular format, the intervention ensures accessibility and ease of implementation. Additionally, the focus on interactive and independent learning mitigates common barriers, such as limited counselor availability (Shu et al., 2023; Bennett et al., 2022). These features make the module a scalable solution for under-resourced schools, supporting the educational goals of sustainable development in low-resource settings (Zhou et al., 2023).

Module Design and Key Features

The module's design reflects an evidence-based approach to career counseling, integrating theoretical and practical elements to support students' decision-making processes. Key features include: 1) **Self-Assessment Exercises:** These encourage students to evaluate their interests, strengths, and values, forming a foundation for informed career planning. Research confirms that self-awareness is a critical predictor of career satisfaction and alignment (Kulcsár et al., 2020; Li, 2024). 2) **Emotional Regulation Strategies:** Techniques for managing stress and overcoming decision-related anxiety are embedded within the module. Students who develop these skills demonstrate higher levels of confidence and satisfaction in their career choices (Lee & Jung, 2022; Zhou et al., 2023). 3) **Guidelines for Goal Setting:** The module includes step-by-step instructions for setting achievable career goals, helping students translate aspirations into actionable plans. Clear goal-setting frameworks are crucial for sustaining motivation and focus during career development (Savickas, 2013; Wang & Bagul, 2018). 4) **Interactive and Independent Learning:** The module encourages students to engage in independent exploration while offering structured guidance from counselors. This dual approach balances guided and autonomous learning in career counseling (Gati, 2013; Smyth, 2023).

Outcomes and Practical Implications

The module's effectiveness was validated through expert reviews and field testing, with results indicating significant improvements in students' confidence, decision-making skills, and career readiness. Expert evaluations consistently rated the module as "very good" across dimensions such as content relevance, clarity, and usability (Kim et al., 2023; Anghel & Gati,

2021). Additionally, field testing with students revealed a 78.36% approval rating, highlighting the module's practical value and acceptability. Global research corroborates these findings. For instance, studies in other developing nations have demonstrated the effectiveness of structured counseling tools in reducing career indecision and improving students' readiness for workforce entry (Zhou et al., 2023; Bennett et al., 2022). By addressing common barriers to career planning, this study offers a replicable model for educational counseling worldwide.

Theoretical Contributions

Beyond its practical applications, the study contributes to the theoretical discourse on career counseling by exploring the interplay between social, emotional, and cognitive factors in decision-making. Drawing on Social Cognitive Career Theory (Bandura, 1986) and Trait and Factor Theory (Parsons, 1909), the module emphasizes the dynamic relationship between individual attributes, environmental conditions, and career outcomes (Kim et al., 2023; Akinci & Eryılmaz, 2022). This holistic perspective underscores the importance of addressing both internal and external influences on students' career choices, providing a comprehensive framework for future research and practice (Li, 2024; Teng et al., 2022).

Limitations and Future Directions

While the study demonstrates significant advancements in career counseling, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The module's implementation was restricted to a specific population of high school students in rural Indonesia, limiting its generalizability to other contexts. Additionally, the study did not assess long-term outcomes, such as students' career satisfaction or workforce integration (Nguyen et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2023). Future research should explore these dimensions through longitudinal designs, evaluating the module's sustained impact on career trajectories. Additionally, training programs focusing on social and emotional learning competencies for counselors could further enhance the module's effectiveness (Wang & Parameswaran, 2018; Wright, 2002).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the development of a counseling module focused on social and emotional support significantly enhances career decision-making among adolescents, particularly in resource-limited and rural settings like SMK NU 1 Pesanggaran. This module bridges critical gaps in existing counseling frameworks by integrating self-assessment tools, emotional regulation techniques, and goal-setting guidelines, tailored to the specific cultural and socio-economic context of Indonesian students. Validated through expert reviews and field testing, the module achieved high ratings for its relevance, clarity, and effectiveness, with significant improvements observed in students' confidence, decision-making skills, and career readiness. These findings align with global research, underscoring the importance of holistic approaches in career counseling, where emotional resilience and social competencies are key drivers of informed career planning. Despite its promising outcomes, the study acknowledges limitations, such as its focus on a specific population and the lack of longitudinal impact assessments, suggesting avenues for future research. The study's theoretical contributions, grounded in Social Cognitive Career Theory and Trait and Factor Theory, reinforce the

dynamic interplay of personal attributes and environmental factors in career development. Overall, the module represents a scalable, context-specific solution that has the potential to transform career counseling practices in Indonesia and similar contexts globally.

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