

Role of Career Information Services Towards Career Maturity Through Career Interests of Students

Duwi Sitoresmi^{1✉}, Sugiyo², Sinta Saraswati³

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

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Abstract

Career maturity is essential as it enables students to select appropriate career paths and prepare for further studies. This study aims to identify the role effect of career information services on career maturity through students' career interests. A quantitative approach with an ex post facto correlation design was employed, involving 329 students from public vocational schools in East Semarang District. This research was conducted by involving regression analysis. The results of the regression analysis indicate that career information services affect students' career interests in public vocational schools in East Semarang District. Additionally, career information services impact students' career maturity in these schools. There is also an influence of career interest on career maturity among students in East Semarang District public vocational schools. Furthermore, career information services impact career maturity through students' career interests. The further implications of this study are discussed in the analysis section.

Correspondence address:

FIPP UNNES, Sekaran, Kec. Gn. Pati,

Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50229

E-mail: dwisitoresmi123@students.unnes.ac.id

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INTRODUCTION

As an individual, there comes a life point when students must make decisions. These decisions range from small or simple choices (i.e. selecting clothes or color preferences) to more significant decisions (i.e. concerning life goals, aspirations, or career paths). For high school (SMA) or vocational school (SMK) students, a crucial stage in decision-making is the “career” decision-making, which is typically realized through choosing a major. To make an optimal choice, numerous aspects are involved and influence the process, including both internal and external factors.

Students in the high school level is in the position of adolescence level. Adolescence is a period marked by an increase in decision-making regarding future plans, friends, college selection, dating choices, whether to engage in sexual activity to purchasing a car (Santrock, 2002). In addition, adolescents are in a phase where they embark on higher education as a means to shape the career integrity they aspire to achieve. Thus, career maturity is crucial for all students, especially high school students. This is reinforced by Lalitpasan (2014), who stated that intensifying competition and the narrowing job market demand that secondary school students prepare for the workforce and further educational levels. For students, career maturity is vital, as they are required to choose an appropriate career path or further studies. An indication that a student has achieved career maturity is when they demonstrate a clear orientation toward future planning (Grashinta, 2018).

According to Sunarto and Hartono

(2013), one significant factor impacting adolescents' career lives is their adolescent life experience. In their research, Supriatna dan Budiman, (2010) stated that career maturity underpins students' ability to analyze career opportunities, leading to accurate career decision-making. Super (as cited in Bi & Wang, 2023) explained that career maturity is an individual's successful completion and navigation of typical career development tasks at each stage of career progression. This view is further supported by Crites (as cited in Levinson, 1998), who stated that career maturity reflects an individual's success in completing career development tasks characteristic of each career development stage.

Career maturity in students is indicated by their readiness to make decisions and their ability to consider the risks associated with those decisions. According to Super (as cited in Patton, 2002), students who have achieved a certain level of career maturity actively seek out information related to the job market and utilize various information sources, such as parents, peers, teachers, and counselors. This readiness is reflected in their attitudes toward career planning, career exploration, decision-making skills, and knowledge of the job market. According to Supriatna and Budiman (2010), common issues include confusion in choosing study programs, selecting a major in higher education, setting career goals, a lack of understanding of personal talents and interests, and anxiety about securing employment after further studies. A typical confusion among students arises when they need to decide on educational pathways after high school, compounded by anxiety about their future and the job

market.

An interview conducted on January 10, 2024, revealed that many students remain unsure and hesitant in choosing majors; some follow their friends' choices without genuine personal conviction. Although one school lacks formal guidance and counseling sessions, counselors have taken initiatives to provide services related to career options after vocational school and have encouraged students to visit the counseling office or contact teachers via personal WhatsApp messages for career guidance consultations. Additionally, counselors offer alternative career services, such as multimedia-assisted career information sessions.

Based on preliminary research using a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, the total number of the respondents include 280 from 10th-grade students across public vocational schools in East Semarang District. Several issues were identified, such as: 63% (190 students) had unstable career aspirations, 43% (144 students) struggled to make decisions regarding career and college choices, 55% (181 students) found it difficult to select a college, and 51% (152 students) lacked confidence in securing their desired job placements.

The analysis of the collected data for the preliminary study suggests that the school faces challenges related to career maturity, specifically in terms of students' difficulty in making firm choices for their future paths and their tendency to have easily swayed aspirations. According to Super (as cited in Asri, 2021), several factors can affect students' career maturity, including: (1) Biosocial factors, such as age and intelligence; (2) Environmental factors,

such as parents, school, peers, and culture; (3) Personality factors, including self-concept, emphasis on control, talents, specific interests, values/norms, and life goals; (4) Occupational factors, with individual professional maturity positively correlated with the degree of career aspiration fulfillment and career expectations; and (5) Personal success factors, including academic achievements, independence, extracurricular involvement, and active participation in extracurricular activities.

In addition, the inadequate career maturity can hinder individuals from successfully completing career development tasks (Super, 1994). Students lacking career maturity may experience challenges in academic or vocational selection, self-knowledge, career information, career decision-making skills, integration of self-knowledge with job information, and career planning.

This lack of career maturity impairs their ability to handle assigned tasks effectively and to develop their careers successfully (Hirschi, 2009). High school students often view career exploration and decision-making as accompanied by confusion, uncertainty, and stress (Ngalim, 2014). They begin to form ideas about desired careers and the steps needed to achieve these goals, often evaluating career choices based on perceived capabilities and limitations. Career information is acquired from both school and family.

This career information service is essential for students in solidifying their career direction. Decisions must be made regarding how career guidance and placement will align with or differ from the aforementioned factors. According to

Manrihu (2010), career guidance can be most effective when it not only teaches specific skills or job-related abilities but also promotes elements of career development that allow students to freely utilize their skills and achieve personal competence in these abilities. The educational competence involves considering needs, motivational readiness, and integration with academic experience.

The research conducted by Athiyah (2014) shows that all indicators of students' career maturity significantly increased following the intervention of multimedia-assisted career information services. Information services can aid in guiding students to actively participate in addressing career-related issues, allowing them to directly engage in solving the career challenges they face. Information services are a form of guidance and counseling that prepares students for further educational pursuits, helps them select specific fields or professions, and equips them to align themselves with desired career paths. These services encourage students to actively participate in tackling career issues, fostering direct involvement in solving their career-related problems.

Furhermore, the researchers have also observed the learning process. Students with career maturity demonstrated enthusiasm, particularly in subjects supporting their career goals. Additionally, many students actively utilized the career information services provided by their counseling teachers, frequently inquiring about the requirements and future prospects of careers aligned with their interests.

Previous research by Herin and Sawitri (2017) on vocational high school

students indicates that parental support is strongly correlated with students' career maturity. However, contrasting findings emerged in the research by Dewi and Aziz's (2020). It shows a very low correlation between family social support and career maturity, with only a 12.0% contribution, indicating that 88% of career maturity is influenced by other factors. Similarly, Widyastuti and Prawiti (2013) found an 11.6% contribution to career decision-making stability from external influences. Due to these varying findings, this study seeks to clarify prior research by examining whether the relationship between family support and career maturity is indeed strong or weak.

This indicates that efforts to enhance students' career maturity must consider several contributing factors, including career interest, the quality of career information services, and career understanding. Djaali (2012) found that career interest is a person's tendency toward a specific job or position that aligns with their personality traits. Thus, career interest motivates students to actively learn about and explore potential careers by seeking information from various sources and engaging in career-related activities. This process leads to a stronger career understanding, enhancing students' ability to make relevant career decisions in the future.

The distinction in this research lies in the research variables; while previous studies included only two independent variables, this study adds a mediating variable, career interest. In addition to expanding the literature on factors influencing career maturity, this study differs from previous research in both its

variables and methodology. This study is motivated by two primary factors: first, the lack of prior research examining the impact of career information services on career maturity through career interest; and second, the variation in findings across previous studies. The purpose of this research is to examine the influence of career information services on career maturity through students' career interest. The findings are intended to provide counselors with recommendations to help students achieve optimal career readiness.

Therefore, this research aims to verify and clarify the impact of career information services on career maturity through career interest. Access to quality career information services assists students in understanding various career options, requirements, and market prospects, enabling them to make better career decisions.

METHOD

This research involved 329 students from public vocational schools across East Semarang District. In addition, this research utilized proportional random sampling as the sampling technique. The psychological scales used in this research, included four measurement tools: (1) Career Information Services Scale; (2) Career Maturity Scale; and (3) Career Interest Scale. Each item on these scales offered five response options from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree).

The Career Information Services Scale consisted of 26 items based on indicators developed by Suharto (2010). These items include: (a) career understanding, (b) career planning, (c) choosing career alternatives, and (d)

evaluating career alternatives. The trial test results identified 18 valid items, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.85, indicating a high level of reliability.

The Career Maturity Scale, consisting 24 items, was developed based on indicators from Super (1994), such as: (a) planning, (b) exploration, (c) informational competence, and (d) decision-making. The trial test results identified 15 valid items, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.79; which indicates within the high reliability category.

The Career Interest Scale, consisting of 30 items, was developed based on Holland's indicators for measuring career interest by personality type and environment. These include: (a) realistic, (b) investigative, (c) artistic, (c) social, (d) enterprising, and (e) conventional. The trial test results identified 13 valid items, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.70, indicating moderate reliability.

Data analysis in this study employed classical assumption testing, hypothesis testing, multiple regression analysis, path analysis, and Sobel test. Two regression models were used: the first model tested the effect of career information services (X) on career interest (Z), while the second model tested the effect of career information services (X) on career maturity (Y) through career interest (Z).

If the significance level for a variable is < 0.05 , it indicates the existence of an effect between variables. The contribution or shared variance between variables is indicated by the R^2 or R-Square value. This study utilized the Sobel Test Calculator, which, as described by Herlina and Diputra (2018), assesses indirect relationships via a

mediating variable—in this case, career interest. In Sobel Test results, a p -value < 0.05 signifies a significant effect in the mediated relationship among variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive analysis results in Table 1 show that the mean score for career information services was ($M = 59.27$; $SD = 9.100$), for career maturity ($M = 54.32$; $SD = 8.134$), and for career interest ($M = 46.21$; $SD = 7.053$). The descriptive statistics for all research variables indicate that the mean (M) is greater than the standard deviation (SD), suggesting that the mean is a good representation of the data distribution.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Analysis Results

	1)	2)	3)
1) CIS	-		
2) CM	0.69*	-	
3) MK	0.54**	0.59**	-
Mean	59.27	54.32	46.21
SD	9.10	8.13	7.05
Min	37	30	23
Max	90	75	65

Information:

CIS: Career Information Services; CM: Career Maturity; CI: Career Interests.

* $p < 0.01$

** $p < 0.05$

Furthermore, the regression analysis results in Table 2 indicate that there is an effect of career information services on career interest ($\beta = 0.55$, $p < 0.05$). In addition, there is an effect of career information services on career maturity ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.05$). There is also an effect of career interest on career maturity ($\beta = 0.30$,

$p < 0.05$). Lastly, there is also an effect of career information services on career maturity mediated by career interest ($\beta = 0.164$, $p < 0.05$).

The data analysis results reveal that career information services significantly affect students' career interest. This finding aligns with Jumeno (2020), who discovered that career information services impact career interest, with career interest being influenced primarily by career information services. In addition, the other independent variables also contribute to career interest aside from career information services.

Further findings show that career information services impact students' career maturity. It is supported by research from Athiyah et al. (2014), which demonstrated that all indicators of students' career maturity significantly increased after multimedia-assisted career information service interventions. Career information services assist in guiding students to actively engage with career issues, directly involving them in resolving career challenges. This finding is further corroborated by research conducted by Kamil and Daniati (2017), showing that career information services effectively enhance career maturity among students at Madrasah Aliyah Qudsiyah, Kotabumi, North Lampung. Daniati (2012) also reinforced this by affirming that "Information Services Can Improve Career Maturity," as shown by increased career maturity scores between pre-test and post-test results.

Table 2. Path Analysis Results

Predictor	β	t	p	R	R ²	F	p
Criterion:							
Career Interests (Z)				.57	.29	69.57	<0,01
Career Information Services (X)	.55	.10.21	<0,01				
Criterion: Career Maturity (Y)							
Career Information Services (X)	.46	9.57	<0,01	.75	.56	141.46	<0,01
Career Interests (Z)	.30	7.00	<0,01				
Mediator	β	Z_{Sobel}	SE	p			
X1-Z-Y	0.16	5.77	0.05	<0.05			

Furthermore, the finding also indicates the existence of career interest role effect on students' career maturity. This finding aligns with research conducted by Prasetyo (2015) who showed a relationship between interest and career maturity among 11th-grade marketing students at SMK Sawunggalih Kutoarjo. A strong career interest helps students plan their career goals with greater clarity and realism. Individuals interested in a particular field are more likely to set specific goals and plan the steps to achieve them, while career maturity involves the individual's ability to make career decisions.

Additionally, there also found the relationship between career information services and career maturity mediated by students' career interests. This finding supports the research from Jumeno (2020). He discovered a significant positive effect of career information services on career maturity mediated by career interest among students at SMAN 1 Pringsurat. Career interests motivate students to actively learn and explore potential careers, seeking information from various sources and engaging in related activities, which

strengthens their understanding of the career field and enhances their ability to make relevant career decisions in the future.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis results, it is concluded that career information services affect students' career interest in public vocational schools at East Semarang District. Career information services also impact students' career maturity in these schools. Additionally, career interest also affects students' career maturity in public vocational schools in the East Semarang District. Furthermore, career information services affect career maturity through students' career interest in these schools.

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