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Efforts to Improve Career Planning Skills Among Vocational School Students Through Group Guidance Using Mind Mapping Media

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Abstract

Career planning ability is an important aspect that vocational high school students must possess in preparing for their future education and employment. However, many students still experience confusion in determining career choices, lack self-understanding, and are unable to systematically plan their careers. This study aimed to improve students' career planning abilities through group guidance services using mind mapping media. The research employed a Guidance and Counseling Action Research (PTBK) approach conducted in two cycles. The subjects were 25 students at SMK Salafiyyah Darurrohmah who had low career planning abilities. Data collection techniques included questionnaires, observation, and documentation. Data were analyzed descriptively and quantitatively by comparing pretest and posttest results. The findings showed that all students experienced improvement in career planning abilities after receiving group guidance services using mind mapping media. The average pretest score was 193.96, while the average posttest score was 129.96, with an average difference of 64. Therefore, group guidance services using mind mapping media are effective in improving vocational students' career planning abilities.

Keywords: career planning, group guidance, mind mapping,

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INTRODUCTION

Career planning is a crucial process in individual development (Gould, 2017), particularly for Vocational High School (SMK) students who are being prepared to enter the workforce or pursue higher education. Career planning skills help students understand their personal potential, identify career opportunities, and determine the appropriate steps to achieve their future goals (Amirullah, 2017). Career development is a lifelong process influenced by various concepts (Herr, 2001); meanwhile, Daharnis and Daharnis (2025) state that career choice is influenced by the fit between an individual's personality and the work environment. Therefore, students need the ability to understand themselves and the work environment to make appropriate career choices (Pangkey & Mangantes, 2020). Issues frequently observed in schools indicate that many students remain confused about their career direction (Hulukati, 2017). Students often lack an understanding of their own interests and talents, lack access to career information, and are unable to systematically plan for their future. These conditions result in low career readiness and lead to immature career decision-making (Yulianti et al., 2023). Preliminary observations at SMK Salafiyyah Darurrohmah indicate that the majority of students possess poor career planning skills. Students remain uncertain about their choices regarding employment or further education after graduation. Furthermore, they lack motivation and a clear vision of the future they wish to achieve (Zona & Zulvia, 2022).

One guidance and counseling service that can assist students in improving their career planning skills is group guidance (Firman & Netrawati, 2023; Kadafi, 2016). This service enables students to engage in discussions, share experiences, and gain new insights through group dynamics. In this study, group guidance is combined with mind mapping—a visual technique that helps individuals systematically organize ideas and information (Yulianti & Saraswati, 2015). Mind mapping can help enhance creativity, memory, and an individual's understanding of concepts. The use of mind mapping is expected to assist students in understanding their personal potential, career goals, and the steps required to plan their future. Based on this background, this study aims to improve students' career planning skills through group guidance services utilizing mind mapping at SMK Salafiyyah Darurrohmah.

METHOD

This study employs the Guidance and Counseling Action Research (PTBK) approach (Mughiroh et al., 2018). PTBK is a form of action research conducted by guidance and counseling teachers to systematically, reflectively, and sustainably improve and enhance the quality of

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services (Suriata et al., 2025). This study aims to enhance students' career planning skills through group guidance services utilizing mind-mapping media (Sari & Istiqoma, 2019). The research subjects consisted of 25 students at SMK Salafiyyah Darurrohmah who demonstrated low career planning skills. The study was conducted over two cycles, with each cycle comprising four stages: planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection.

During the planning stage, the researcher developed the group guidance service design, service materials, mind-mapping media, research instruments, and observation sheets. The action implementation stage involved delivering group guidance services using mind-mapping media, focusing on self-understanding, identifying potential, setting career goals, and formulating future plans. The observation stage took place during the service sessions to monitor student activities, group participation, and the development of career planning skills. Subsequently, the reflection stage was conducted to evaluate the outcomes of the actions in each cycle, serving as a basis for improving services in the following cycle.

Data collection techniques included a career planning skills questionnaire, observation, and documentation. The questionnaire was used to assess students' career planning skill levels before and after the intervention. Observation was conducted to monitor behavioral changes and student engagement during the sessions (Datar & Ahmad, 2019), while documentation was used to supplement the research data. Data analysis was performed using descriptive quantitative methods by comparing students' pre-test and post-test results. Improvements in career planning skills were identified through changes in scores before and after the provision of group guidance services using mind-mapping media.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This guidance and counseling action research (PTBK) was conducted at SMK Salafiyyah Darurrohmah, involving 25 students with low career planning skills. The study utilized group guidance services incorporating mind-mapping media across two action cycles. The results indicate that all students experienced an improvement in their career planning skills following the group guidance intervention using mind-mapping media. This is evidenced by a positive sign (+) observed for all research subjects, signifying a change between pretest and posttest scores. The comparison of pretest and posttest scores is presented in Table 1.

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Table 1. Researh Comparation Pretest and Posttest

No	Description	Score
1	Average Pretest	193,96
2	Average Posttest	129,96
3	Mean Difference	64

Based on Table 1, the average pretest score was 193.96, while the average posttest score was 129.96. The mean difference of 64 indicates an improvement in students' career planning abilities following the intervention, which consisted of group guidance sessions utilizing mind-mapping tools. Furthermore, all 25 students—representing 100% of the research subjects—showed improvement. This demonstrates that the provided service effectively helped students understand their personal potential, identify career goals, and better formulate steps for future planning. Throughout the sessions, students were actively engaged in discussions, exchanging opinions, and articulating their aspirations and future plans. The use of mind mapping enabled students to visualize their ideas and career goals, making them easier to comprehend and remember.

DISCUSSION

The research results indicate that group guidance services utilizing mind mapping are effective in enhancing the career planning skills of students at SMK Salafiyyah Darurrohmah. This improvement is evident in the changes observed between pre-test and post-test scores for all students following the intervention. Group guidance services provide students with opportunities to learn through group dynamics, share experiences, and gain social support from fellow group members. Through group discussions, students become more open about the challenges they face regarding their career choices and future prospects.

The use of mind mapping also positively influences the guidance process. This tool helps students organize their ideas, recognize their personal potential, and formulate career goals more systematically. Visualizing information through mind maps makes it easier for students to grasp the connections between their interests, talents, abilities, and suitable career paths (Bangkit et al, 2019). These findings align with Tony Buzan’s view that mind mapping can enhance creativity, comprehension, and structured thinking skills. Furthermore, according to Gerald Corey, group guidance is an effective method for helping individuals develop personal and social skills through

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group interaction. The study's findings are also supported by previous research demonstrating that the use of mind mapping in guidance and counseling services helps students improve self-awareness, goal setting, and the maturity of their career decision-making.

Thus, group guidance services incorporating mind mapping can serve as an alternative strategy within guidance and counseling to enhance the career planning capabilities of vocational high school (SMK) students. Beyond helping students understand their future direction, this service also fosters greater engagement, creativity, and self-confidence as they develop their career plans (Irsu & Winingsih, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that group guidance services utilizing mind mapping are effective in enhancing the career planning skills of students at SMK Salafiyyah Darurrohmah. This is evidenced by the improvement in career planning abilities observed in all research subjects following the group guidance intervention. The results indicate that every student showed a positive change (+) between their pre-test and post-test scores; the average pre-test score of 193.96 shifted to an average post-test score of 129.96, representing a mean difference of 64. This change demonstrates that students became better able to understand their personal potential, define career goals, and formulate future planning steps in a more systematic manner.

The use of mind mapping within group guidance services assists students in visually organizing their ideas and career goals, making them easier to comprehend. Furthermore, group dynamics provide students with opportunities to engage in discussions, share experiences, and gain social support throughout the career planning process. This study implies that group guidance services incorporating mind mapping can serve as an alternative strategy for school-based guidance and counseling to help improve the career readiness of vocational high school (SMK) students. Future research is expected to develop more innovative media and service techniques, involve a larger number of subjects, and test the service's effectiveness across different educational levels to yield more comprehensive findings.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study implies that group guidance services incorporating mind mapping can serve as an alternative strategy for school-based guidance and counseling to help improve the career readiness of vocational high school (SMK) students. Future research is expected to develop more

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innovative media and service techniques, involve a larger number of subjects, and test the service's effectiveness across different educational levels to yield more comprehensive findings.

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