

Development of a Career Guidance Module for Elementary School Students: A Pedagogical Approach to Early Career Education

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Abstract

This study aims to develop a career development module for elementary school students. The research method employed Research and Development (R&D), which involved the following steps: (1) identifying potential and problems, (2) data collection, (3) product design, (4) design validation, (5) design revision, (6) product testing, and (7) product revision. Data were collected through questionnaires, including expert validation questionnaires and small group testing questionnaires. The data sources comprised three experts: a Career Guidance and Counseling expert, a Media Guidance and Counseling expert, an Indonesian language expert, and three elementary school teachers for the small group testing phase. Data analysis was conducted using qualitative methods to evaluate the results from expert validations and small-group testing. The research and development process produced an Elementary School Career Development Module deemed suitable for use in fostering career development among elementary school students. The module's feasibility was established through validations by career guidance and counseling experts, media design experts, Indonesian language experts, and small group testing conducted by guidance and counseling teachers and subject teachers at the elementary level. Therefore, the elementary school career development module is recommended to facilitate career development among elementary school students.

Keywords: Module, Career Development, Students, Elementary School

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INTRODUCTION

Elementary school-aged students are individuals undergoing a developmental process toward subsequent growth phases. Therefore, this age is considered a foundational stage for individual development. Elementary school students are individuals with various potentials ready to be nurtured through stimulation in a conducive environment. The development of the potential of elementary school-aged children is also regarded as a basis for achieving accomplishments in various fields in the future.

Career potential is one of the capabilities demonstrated by elementary school students and requires development efforts by teachers, particularly through career guidance services provided by guidance and counseling teachers (Rahim, Hulukati, & Madina, 2021). Assisting students in understanding their talents, interests, aspirations, intellectual abilities, attitudes, and emotions, as well as helping them comprehend the workforce, such as types of jobs, job requirements, further education, and study programs, which are among the activities included in career guidance. Teachers with specialized competencies as guidance and counseling professionals must carry out these activities. In Indonesia, introducing ideas related to career interests and knowledge to children is undoubtedly a challenging task. One of the primary obstacles is the lack of human resources and knowledge, as the number of counselors in elementary schools remains insufficient (Ayriza et al., 2020). Unlike private schools, public elementary schools, including those in Gorontalo, lack dedicated guidance counselors. Consequently, counseling services are integrated into learning activities led by subject or homeroom teachers.

According to Yavuz (2022) and Oliveira et al. (2016), elementary school is an ideal time to initiate career development and early exploration. As highlighted in the case study by Mariani et al. (2016), forming a team to enhance a career-related curriculum can effectively implement early career readiness interventions for the transition to middle school. Thus far, activities conducted by elementary school teachers to support students' career development include writing exercises, such as writing about their aspirations and plans for further education. These activities often appear to be conducted without significant follow-up efforts. This is assumed to be due to teachers lacking the skills to use writing as a method for career development among elementary school students. Based on this perspective, developing a module that can assist elementary school teachers in utilizing writing methods for career development is necessary. This consideration is also supported by the condition of elementary schools in Gorontalo City, which currently lack such a module.

The use of writing methods in developing student behavior has been demonstrated in a study by Thalib, Rahim, and Usman (2020), which found that writing techniques can enhance the naturalistic intelligence of elementary school students. Similarly, research by Hibatulloh, Nurihsan, and Rusmana (2023) showed that expressive writing can improve students' happiness. The problem addressed in this study is the absence of a guide for utilizing writing methods that teachers can use to foster career development among elementary school students. This research aims to develop a module for employing writing methods to enhance career development in elementary school students.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Career Guidance and Counseling in Elementary Schools and Career Development Stages of Elementary School Students

The responsibility of education is not limited to helping students achieve behavioral changes in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains; education is also responsible for assisting students in developing their career potential as a foundation for planning and selecting careers appropriately. This support can be provided through subject-based learning or career

guidance and counseling services. Career guidance and counseling is an activity aimed at helping students develop various career potentials, enabling them to choose a career that aligns with their personal circumstances and benefits society.

According to Dabula and Makura (2013, 91), career guidance programs should aim at developing important skills for life and work and assisting with immediate decisions. Gibson and Mitchell (2011, 446) define career counseling as an activity carried out by counselors in various settings to stimulate and facilitate career development throughout a person's working life. This activity includes assistance in career planning, decision-making, and self-adjustment. Natawidjaja (Gani, 2012:11) states that career counseling is a process of support provided to students to help them understand themselves, gain an understanding of the world of work outside of themselves, and align their self-image with the world of work, ultimately enabling them to: (a) choose a career field, (b) prepare themselves for that field, (c) enter the field, and (d) nurture their career in a particular field. Nurihsan (2009:16) explains that career counseling is "an effort to assist individuals in recognizing and understanding themselves, understanding the world of work, and developing a future that aligns with the expected way of life." It can be concluded that career guidance and counseling is an effort to help students prepare for entering the workforce (career), plan and make career decisions, and overcome various challenges encountered in the work environment.

In general, career guidance and counseling are provided to help students gain career insights, demonstrated by their ability to understand themselves, the world of work, make career plans, choose a career, make career decisions, and resolve various career-related issues. Specifically, the objectives of career guidance and counseling are to assist students in: (a) obtaining information about specific careers, positions, or professions, (b) acquiring an accurate understanding of a specific job or profession, (c) being able to plan and make career choices, (d) adjusting to the chosen career, and (e) developing their career after completing their education (adapted from Tohirin, 2008:134).

Career guidance and counseling in elementary schools are integrated with the learning activities that are the responsibility of subject teachers or class teachers (Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 111 of 2014). Based on this policy, career guidance and counseling, as one of the fields within guidance and counseling, is also carried out in an integrated manner with the learning activities of subject teachers or class teachers.

Career development progresses in tandem with overall individual development. Donald Super (Gladding, 2004; Zunker, 1986; Kidd, 2006; Gibson and Mitchell, 2011) outlines the stages of career development as follows: (a) Ages 0–14: the growth stage, characterized by the development of capacities, attitudes, interests, and needs related to self-concept, and (b) Ages 15–24: The exploratory stage (ages 15–24) is marked by a tentative phase where options are narrowed down but not yet finalized. (c) Ages 25–44: the establishment stage, characterized by trials and stabilization within a chosen career field. (d) Ages 45–64: the maintenance stage involves continuous adjustments to improve one's position and work situation. (e) Age 65 and beyond: the decline stage, marked by pre-retirement considerations, reduced work output, and eventually leading to retirement.

Considering career development, according to Donald Super, it can be understood that elementary school students are in the growth stage, characterized by developing capacities, attitudes, interests, and self-concept-related needs. The elementary school years also mark a development period in various interests, skills, abilities, and values (Knight, 2014). According to Clark (1991) and Chancy (2022), career development should be designed from the elementary school level so that students understand their career direction after completing secondary school and benefit them throughout their lives.

Writing as a Career Guidance and Counseling Technique

Writing is a skill that every student should possess from elementary school age. Therefore, every elementary school student has acquired writing skills, especially in the upper grades. Writing can be used as one of the methods for providing guidance and counseling services (Rahim et al., 2021). According to Rahim et al. (2021), writing is a service method implemented by asking students (counselee) to compose or write (poems, short stories, complete sentences) about something related to the goals and content of the service. This writing activity is expected that students (counselee) will exhibit behaviors aligned with the predetermined goals of the service.

Rahim et al. (2021) define writing as an activity of expressing ideas, thoughts, opinions, and feelings through written language. The writing activity allows the writer to visualize things that are thought, desired, or felt in written form, making them accessible to others. Writing can also be used to express an experience about someone or a situation as if the writer were the one experiencing it. Silberman (2006, p. 198) argues that writing activities allow students to reflect on their own experiences. Writing is a dramatic way to enhance and express independent reflection in written form.

As a career guidance counseling service method, the writing technique is used with the following procedure: (a) Ask the students to choose a topic they will write about, for example, my dream, when I become a police officer, I want to be a teacher, becoming a parking attendant, activities in a factory/office and other workplaces, my mother is a nurse, and other topics that align with the service topic. (b) Explain to the students the objective of writing on the chosen topic, (c) Ask the students to write (in the form of poetry, short stories, or completing sentences) about the topic they have selected. Ensure that each student writes all their thoughts in simple sentences according to their individual abilities, (d) Provide enough time for the students to write. Once finished, ask each student to read their writing aloud in front of the teacher and classmates, (e) Discuss the writing content to draw conclusions, (f) Ask each student to make a commitment regarding their thoughts or feelings related to the writing they have created. Through clear procedures, the writing activity is expected to shape specific behaviors in students, including behaviors related to careers, such as career understanding, career development, or career planning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a research and development (R&D) approach to create and validate a career development module for elementary school students, with a particular focus on writing as a method for career exploration. The research followed a structured seven-step model to ensure a systematic and iterative development process.

Identifying Potential and Problems

The initial step involved recognizing the need for career development materials for elementary school students. A preliminary literature review and field observations were conducted to analyze existing gaps in career education at the elementary level. The study identified that career guidance in elementary schools is often limited to basic introductions to professions, lacking structured activities that engage students in self-exploration.\

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through interviews and questionnaires with stakeholders, including elementary school teachers and experts in career guidance, counseling media, and Indonesian language education. These data sources provided insights into the existing

challenges in career education and the feasibility of introducing a structured module to enhance students' career awareness through writing activities.

Product Design

The development of the module was based on the findings from the previous steps. The module was designed to introduce students to various professions through structured writing exercises, allowing them to express their career interests, self-concept, and aspirations. The content was structured to include learning objectives, professional field clusters, guided writing exercises, interactive activities, and career-related reflections to facilitate self-exploration.

Design Validation

The initial draft of the module underwent an expert validation process to ensure its effectiveness, accuracy, and appropriateness for elementary school students. Three experts were involved in this validation process:

1. An expert in **Career Guidance and Counseling**, who assessed the module's alignment with career development theories and its applicability in elementary education.
2. An expert in **Counseling Media**, who evaluated the module's instructional design, usability, and effectiveness as a learning tool.
3. An expert in **Indonesian Language**, who reviewed the language clarity, readability, and appropriateness for elementary school students.

The expert evaluation used the following scale

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(Very Poor)										(Very Good)

Revisions were required for aspects that received an average score of 7.0 or below to enhance the quality of the module before proceeding to the next stage.

Design Revision

Based on feedback from the expert validation process, modifications were made to improve the content, structure, and instructional strategies within the module. Revisions included clarifying instructions, refining writing prompts, restructuring sections for better coherence, and incorporating additional career exploration activities to enhance engagement.

Product Testing (Small Group Trial)

The revised module was tested with a small group of three elementary school teachers who implemented it in their classrooms. The teachers provided feedback on the module's usability, effectiveness, and practicality in guiding students through career-related writing activities. Student engagement and comprehension levels were also observed during the trial phase.

Product Revision

After the small group trial, final modifications were made based on the teachers' feedback. This process aimed to refine the module further and address any issues that arose during implementation. The revisions focused on enhancing user-friendliness, improving activity flow, and ensuring that students could independently navigate the module with minimal teacher assistance.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from expert validation and the small group trial were analyzed using qualitative methods. The qualitative analysis involved:

- Thematic analysis of expert feedback to identify strengths and areas for improvement in the module.
- Descriptive analysis of responses from the small group trial to evaluate the module's practicality and effectiveness in a classroom setting.

The final career development module was refined based on these analyses, ensuring that it serves as a structured, engaging, and effective tool for career exploration among elementary school students.

RESULTS

Based on the research and development process, the results or product obtained is a career development module for elementary school students. This module explains the use of writing methods in developing the career paths of elementary school students. The following steps were undertaken to achieve this result:

Step I and II: Potentials and Problems and Data Collection

The research activities at this stage focused on identifying the potential and problems related to career development for elementary school students. Based on interviews with elementary school teachers, it was found that there was no existing career development module for elementary students, specifically regarding the use of writing methods to support career development. This data served as the basis for developing the career development module for elementary school students.

Step III: Develop the Initial Product Design

At this stage, planning the initial product design, the career development module for elementary students, began. The activities started with preparing various literature and data required for developing the initial product design.

Step IV: Design Validation

Activities at this stage included: (1) developing the design validation instruments. These instruments consisted of a career counseling expert validation instrument, a media design expert validation instrument, and an Indonesian language expert validation instrument; (2) peer validation, which involved validation by fellow researchers of the instruments developed; (3) validation of the initial product design by career counseling experts, media design experts, and Indonesian language experts. The validation results were used to revise the product.

The expert validation data is explained as follows:

Table 1. Career Counseling Expert Validation Data

Indicator	Score	Assessment Category	Revision / No Revision
Clarity of objective formulation	9	Very Good	No
Relevance of material description to the objective	10	Very Good	No
Adequacy of material	9	Very Good	No
Appropriateness of exercises	9	Very Good	No
Suitability with the career development of elementary students	9	Very Good	No
Completeness of module content	9	Very Good	No

Indicator	Score	Assessment Category	Revision / No Revision
Benefits for elementary students	10	Very Good	No
Benefits for elementary school teachers	9	Very Good	No
Average Score	9.25	Very Good	No

Table 1 shows that the average score for the career counseling expert validation is 9.25, categorized as "Very Good." The results of this assessment conclude that no revisions are necessary for the components of the module.

Table 2. Media Design Expert Validation Data

Indicator	Score	Assessment	Revision/No Revision
Relevance of cover image to module content	9	Very Good	No
Layout of the cover image	9	Very Good	No
Layout of text on the cover page	9	Very Good	No
Font size on the cover page	9	Very Good	No
Font size in the module content	10	Very Good	No
Appearance of the cover page	8	Very Good	No
Appearance of the module content pages	8	Very Good	No
Overall appearance of the module	9	Very Good	No
Average Score	8,88	Very Good	No

Table 2 shows that the average score for the media design expert validation is 8.88, categorized as "Very Good." The results of this assessment conclude that no revisions are necessary for the components of the module.

Table 3. Indonesian Language Expert Validation Data

Indicator	Score	Assessment	Revision/No revision
Use of diction	8.5	Excellent	No revision
Sentence coherence	9	Excellent	No revision
Paragraph coherence	9	Excellent	No revision
Clarity of sentences used	9	Excellent	No revision
Clarity of the main ideas in paragraphs	9	Excellent	No revision
Use of capital letters	9	Excellent	No revision
Use of punctuation marks	8,5	Excellent	No revision
Conformity with Indonesian writing standards	9	Excellent	No revision
Ease of understanding by the reader/user	9	Excellent	No revision
Average Score	8.89	Excellent	No revision

Table 3 shows that the average Indonesian language expert validation score is 8.89, categorized as "Excellent." The results of this assessment conclude that no revisions are necessary for the components of the module.

Step V: Product Revision

Based on the validation data obtained from experts, revisions to the initial product were carried out during this stage. However, the expert validation results indicated that no revisions were necessary for the career development module for elementary school students developed in this research.

Step VI. Product Testing

Several activities were conducted at this stage, including: (1) Preparing the product testing instruments, (2) Validating the small group testing instruments through peer validation, and, (3) Conducting small group testing. The small group testing was performed by three elementary school teachers who assessed various aspects of the module content, including: (1) Introduction, (2) Objectives, (3) Material explanations, (4) Exercises, and (5) Summaries. The teachers used the following assessment categories:

- a. Comprehension: MD (Easily Understood), CMD (Moderately Understood), SD (Difficult to Understand)
- b. Implementation: MD (Easily Implemented), CMD (Moderately Implemented), SD (Difficult to Implement)

The results of the small group testing are shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Results of Small Group Testing

Assessed Aspect	Comprehension			Implementation			
	R1	R2	R3	R3	R1	R2	R3
Introduction	MD	MD	MD				
Objectives	MD	MD	MD				
Material Explanations	MD	MD	MD				
Tasks/Exercises	MD	MD	MD	MD	MD	MD	MD
Summary	MD	MD	MD				

Step VII: Product Revision

Table 4 presents the small group testing results conducted with three elementary school teachers. The data indicate that the career development module received evaluations from all three respondents in the categories of "easily understood" (MD) and "easily implemented" (MD). Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the career development module for elementary school students developed in this study is suitable for use as a medium to support students' career development.

The module contains several components, including (1) Content, which consisting of: (a) Introduction, (b) Activity objectives, (c) Material, (d) Activities, (e) Tasks/Exercises, (f) Summary, and (g) References. The material covers: (a) Understanding talents and interests, (b) Understanding aspirations, (c) Developing self-concept, (d) Understanding the working world, and (e) Understanding future planning. (2) Methods, including: (a) Writing paragraphs, (b) Completing sentences, (c) Writing poems, and (d) Writing short stories. (3) Tasks/Exercises, aligned with the objectives. (4) Summaries, in accordance to the objectives.

CONCLUSION

The career development module designed in this study serves as an independent learning resource that can be effectively integrated into teaching and guidance and counseling services for elementary school students. Career education at an early stage plays a crucial role in shaping students' self-awareness, aspirations, and professional orientation. However, career development initiatives at the elementary level remain underdeveloped in many educational settings. This study responds to that gap by introducing a structured career development module using writing as an interactive and reflective method to help students explore and articulate their career aspirations.

Modules as educational tools offer clear guidelines, objectives, and structured content, making them accessible for independent use by both teachers and students. In career guidance, they provide essential information on various professions, aligning career awareness with

students' self-concept and future aspirations. The module developed in this study incorporates expert validations from guidance and counseling professionals, Indonesian language experts, and education practitioners, ensuring its appropriateness and effectiveness in facilitating career exploration among young learners. Through small group trials, it was evident that students showed increased engagement and a deeper understanding of career-related concepts when guided through structured writing activities.

Enhancing Career Awareness through Writing Activities

The integration of writing in career development modules offers a unique approach to fostering self-reflection and career exploration. Writing activities encourage students to express their aspirations, recognize their talents and interests, and connect them to potential career paths. Unlike traditional career guidance methods, which often involve passive exposure to career options, the writing-based approach allows students to actively construct their understanding of the professional world. By articulating their thoughts and experiences through writing, students develop self-awareness and begin to align their skills and interests with future career possibilities.

Moreover, writing as a medium enables teachers and counselors to gain valuable insights into students' career inclinations. The written responses provide a deeper understanding of each student's perspective, helping educators offer more targeted guidance. Writing exercises also foster creativity, critical thinking, and communication skills—competencies that are crucial in preparing students for future academic and professional endeavors.

Bridging the Gap in Career Education for Elementary School Students

Despite the importance of career development in early education, elementary school teachers often have limited resources and structured materials to introduce students to diverse professions. Career introduction activities in many schools are generally confined to superficial representations, such as role-playing in professional uniforms, without deeper engagement in the skills, knowledge, and educational pathways required for each profession. Additionally, entrepreneurship activities conducted in schools tend to focus solely on business skills, overlooking the broader spectrum of career possibilities.

This study's findings align with previous research emphasizing the necessity of structured career interventions at the elementary level. Welde et al. (2016) found that project-based or profession-focused career education significantly benefits students by fostering career awareness. Similarly, Calvaro et al. (2019) highlighted the need for short-term, school-based career development programs to familiarize young learners with career options early on. These studies support the importance of introducing career modules as an integral part of elementary education.

Adapting Career Education to Global Workforce Trends

The rapid advancement of technology has led to the emergence of new professions that were previously non-existent. This shift necessitates a modernized approach to career guidance, ensuring that students are introduced not only to traditional professions but also to careers shaped by technological and scientific developments. Elementary school students today will enter a workforce vastly different from the current job market, making it imperative to equip them with relevant career knowledge from an early age.

Several studies (Eliza et al., 2023; Karamoy et al., 2023; Leksana et al., 2013; Nurfauziah et al., 2023; Rajasa & Khusumadewi, 2022) have emphasized the effectiveness of career development modules in enhancing students' career awareness. However, the application of such modules remains limited, particularly at the elementary level. This research highlights the

need to develop and implement structured career guidance programs that not only introduce conventional professions but also integrate information about emerging careers influenced by digitalization, artificial intelligence, and other technological advancements.

Career Guidance as a Preventive and Developmental Approach

Career guidance and counseling in elementary schools serve not only as a developmental tool but also as a preventive measure to help students plan their future careers. According to Korompot et al. (2022), early career interventions can prevent career indecisiveness in later stages of education. Donald Super's career development theory states that elementary school students are in the growth stage, where they begin forming self-concepts related to their careers. This aligns with research findings indicating that young students can recognize their personal characteristics and relate them to potential career options.

Career development modules, such as the one introduced in this study, act as a vital medium for delivering career guidance at this early stage. Studies by Rahim et al. (2023) show that using career pocketbooks as career guidance tools enhances elementary students' career understanding. Similarly, Andriani (2019) found that guidance boards significantly improve students' comprehension of career information. These findings indicate that various educational media, including career development modules, can effectively support career education at the elementary level.

Implications for Policy and Educational Practice

The findings of this study suggest that career guidance should be systematically integrated into elementary school curricula. Schools, educational policymakers, and curriculum developers should prioritize career education as an essential component of early childhood development. The adoption of career development modules can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world career exposure, preparing students for future educational and professional challenges.

Furthermore, teacher training programs should emphasize career guidance strategies to ensure that educators are well-equipped to facilitate career education. Providing teachers with structured materials, such as career development modules, will enable them to guide students effectively in exploring various career options. Additionally, collaboration between schools, parents, and industry professionals can further enrich students' career learning experiences.

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This document has been proofread with the assistance of ChatGPT, an AI language model developed by OpenAI. The AI was used to enhance clarity, coherence, and grammatical accuracy while preserving the original intent of the content. During the proofreading process, the following prompts were used: "Proofread the research method section for clarity and coherence," "Revise the reference list to include English translations in brackets after the original titles," and "Ensure that the text follows proper academic writing conventions while maintaining its original meaning." The final content has been carefully reviewed and approved by the author to ensure it aligns with the intended message and maintains research integrity.

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