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Digital-based Career Specialization Service is an Innovative Counseling Service for Counseling Teachers of Junior High Schools

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Abstract: Choosing the right career specialization significantly affects students' future life prospects. However, the career specialization service provided by the Guidance and Counselling (GC) teachers remains suboptimal due to the continued reliance on manual instruments, which results in protracted analysis periods. One challenge GC teachers face is their limited proficiency in utilizing technology to digitize instruments. The objective of providing training on digital-based career guidance services is to assist counseling teachers in analyzing career guidance instruments. Digital-based career guidance service training was provided to 26 counselling teachers who are MGBK SMP Barito Kuala Regency members with brain storming and hands-on practice methods guided by the Mandatory Research Lecturer Program team. The training yielded a 75% improvement in technology-related proficiencies, meaning counseling teachers are capable of implementing this digital career specialization service within their respective academic institutions.
Keywords: career specialization; digital; training

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INTRODUCTION

The advancement of science and technology serves as an embodiment of favorable transformations in human society. Human productivity and performance can be enhanced by every outcome of human effort, including endeavors, passion, innovation, and labor, constituting culture in the form of technology. As stated by Jalil (2021) and Suwenda & Surtiyoni (2022), technology facilitates and enhances human effectiveness, thereby increasing work productivity. Technology, in turn, is an outcome of human culture, as it is constructed from human ideas that ultimately find practical application and have the potential to sustain future existence.

Similarly to the rapid rate of technological advancement in the twenty-first century, guidance and counseling teachers must possess a high level of proficiency in technology. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the proficiency of counseling teachers aligns with Permendiknas Number 27 of 2008, which pertains to the criteria for academic qualification standards and competency of guidance and counseling teachers. Consequently, counseling teachers are required to enhance the

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caliber of services rendered through the utilization of technology or digital science, including the delivery of career specialization services (Ayub et al., 2022; Retnaningdyastuti, 2018; Suharmawan, 2023).

The specialization service's purpose is to allow students to select and pursue an education according to their personal preferences, thereby facilitating a clear and purposeful educational journey. The provision of specialized services falls within the domain of guidance and counseling. It is the duty of the guidance and counseling teacher to offer specialized services that cater to students' preferences, aptitudes, and academic capabilities. These services should emphasize the consolidation, development, and profundity of a specific set of scientific disciplines, expert field competencies, programs, and knowledge packages (Kemendikbud, 2014).

Career planning, which involves identifying one's interests and potential, ought to commence as soon as feasible so junior high school graduates can make informed decisions regarding their post-graduation education. Career planning enables individuals to identify, comprehend, and undertake necessary actions to attain their professional objectives. Career planning aims to facilitate students' growth and progress by assisting them in selecting and strategizing to capitalize on all available opportunities and possibilities within the educational institution or the labor market (Atmaja, 2014; Rosmana et al., 2019; Zona & Zulvia, 2022).

Junior high school students, particularly grade IX students, should prioritize career planning. This is because upon graduating from junior high school, they will ultimately be confronted with various post-secondary education options, including vocational high school or continued attendance at senior high school. In contrast to the more practical focus of vocational high school lessons, the secondary school curriculum is predominantly theoretical (George, 2023). Career planning and specialization guidance will aid students in making informed decisions regarding their future academic pursuits and careers.

Aryani and Rais (2017) stated that students' future prospects are significantly impacted by the specialization they select. Nevertheless, this is a challenging objective, necessitating professional assistance services. Within this particular framework, counseling teachers are deemed the most suitable individuals to assist in identifying and confirming students' specialization (Tim Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan, 2021).

According to the findings of the situation analysis and interviews conducted with the chairman of the Barito Kuala Regency MGBK, the following issues arise: junior high school guidance and counseling teachers in Barito Kuala Regency encounter challenges in conducting career orientation activities, particularly in the analysis of overly general career orientation service instruments, digitization difficulties, and limited skills of utilizing technology, resulting difficulties to students to choose secondary education which may cause to the low learning achievement and stress. Additionally, guidance and counseling teachers at junior high schools in Barito Kuala Regency have never received professional development in digital-based student career specialization.

The benefits of this digital-based specialization service training are anticipated to facilitate the implementation of school guidance and counseling services. This is accomplished to foster the personal growth of guidance and counseling teachers by acquiring digitalization competencies pertinent to the specialization model of junior high

school students. It is hoped that this digital-based specialization service training will facilitate and support the implementation of career specialization services at schools. So that students may be able to ascertain their subsequent careers.

Training must be conducted to enhance the competency of junior high school counseling teachers and thereby elevate the quality of professional guidance and counseling services. Inspired by this issue, a community service project was conducted for junior high school guidance teachers in Barito Kuala Regency with the objectives of the practical application and efficacy of digital-based career guidance services.

METHOD

The Obligatory Lecturer Service Program (OLSP) team established a timetable for conducting training and developing career specialization instruments based on the outcomes of discussions with the head of GCTC Batola and the situation analysis of partner issues in implementing career specialization services. On Thursday, August 3, 2023, the offline implementation of OLSP occurred at SMPN 1 Anjir Muara, Barito Kuala Regency. A total of 26 junior high school counseling teachers from Barito Kuala Regency who were members of the Barito Kuala Regency Guidance and Counselling Teacher Conference (GCTC) participated in the digital-based career specialization training activities. The OLSP was executed utilizing a combination of training, interactive discussion, brainstorming, and evaluation.

The training activity commenced with the distribution of questionnaires regarding technology mastery in order to determine the level of technology proficiency among junior high school guidance teachers in Barito Kuala Regency. Subsequently, the participants engaged in a collaborative ideation session to generate content about career specialization. This was followed by hands-on practice utilizing a Google form to convert the career specialization instrument into a digital format. After completing the exercise, participants were administered a Google form containing an evaluation questionnaire. This form aimed to ascertain the degree to which the utilization of digital-based career direction services and proficiency in technology mastery improved due to the obligatory lecturer service program.

Continuing this training, counseling teachers may integrate digital-based career orientation services into their respective educational institutions. Should the need arise, they may promptly apprise students and parents of the findings of their evaluations. This is because digital-based services can streamline the responsibilities of counseling teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The student specialization service aims to aid students in selecting and participating in academic activities or programs that align with their strong or moderate inclinations or desires regarding the education/learning program implemented in the educational institution (Makrifah & Nuryono, 2014). Subsequently, the OLSP group imparted the training material that had been customized to align with the Merdeka curriculum to junior high school students.

The efficacy of guidance and counseling services can be enhanced through their digital delivery, in line with technological advancements and the tech-savvy nature of the current generation Z. Consequently, guidance and counseling teachers must possess a proficient command of technology.

By providing junior high school counseling teachers in Barito Kuala Regency who are members of the Barito Kuala Regency Guidance and

Counselling Teacher Conference (GCTC) with digital-based career specialization services training, the capacity of these teachers to master technology, particularly as it pertains to the provision of counseling services at school, is anticipated to be enhanced. The community service team disseminated the pre-test questionnaires to assess the level of technology mastery skills exhibited by counseling teachers in Barito Kuala.

The junior high school career specialization material is shown in Figure 1.

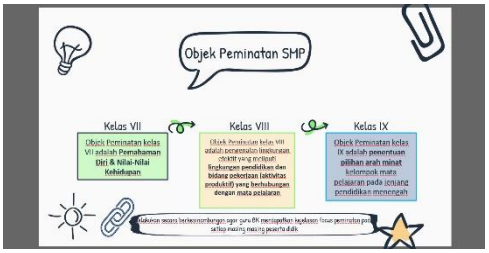

Figure 1 Materials for junior high school career specialization

The findings obtained from examining the questionnaires distributed are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Questionnaire regarding digital-based career specialization services prior to training

Aspect	Indicator	Assessment of Respondents		
		Not Skilled	Skilled Enough	Very Skilled
Skill in Employing Digital-Optional Career Specialization Services	1. Skilled in initiating digital career guidance services on various devices	19	7	0
	2. Skilled in entering data about questionnaire results	20	6	0
	3. Skilled in handling individual reports	20	6	0
	4. Skilled in analyzing the results of individual reports	20	6	0

According to the responses to a Google form questionnaire administered to 26 junior high school guidance teachers in Barito Kuala Regency, it was determined that before undergoing training on digital-based career guidance services, the teachers had a minimal understanding of technology.

Following the training, the team administered a Google form questionnaire, and the results are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 Questionnaire following training on digital-based career specialization services

Aspect	Indicator	Assessment of Respondents		
		Not Skilled	Skilled Enough	Very Skilled
Skill in Employing Digital-Optional Career Specialization Services	1. Skilled in initiating digital career guidance services on various devices	0	11	15
	2. Skilled in entering data about questionnaire results	0	14	12
	3. Skilled in handling individual reports	0	13	13
	4. Skilled in analyzing the results of individual reports	0	10	16

The responses to the questionnaire indicate that there has been progress in the participants' proficiency with digital-based service skills. Specifically, they can now access the career orientation service on their preferred devices, enter questionnaire data, process individual reports, and analyze the outcomes of said reports. While not all participants showed a high level of expertise, a shift occurred from those who lacked proficiency to those who were willing to attempt. Some junior high school counseling teachers demonstrated exceptional skills. The age factor also appears to exert an influence, as youthful teachers emerged as the respondents who reported being highly skilled upon analysis, while those who stated they lacked skill ceased to exist. By consistently implementing digital-based counseling services, individuals will inevitably develop an understanding of their usage, and counseling teachers' proficiency in technology can be enhanced.

The team also administered questionnaires regarding the efficacy of digital-based career guidance services training to junior high school counseling teachers in Barito Kuala Regency and those assessing technology proficiency. The subsequent findings are listed in Table 3.

Table 3 The responses to the survey regarding the efficacy of the digital-based career specialization service training

Aspect	Indicator	Assessment of Respondents		
		Less beneficial	Beneficial enough	Very beneficial
The Efficacy of the Digital-Based Career Specialization Service Training	1. Does this community service endeavor contribute to time efficiency?	0	0	26
	2. Does this community service endeavor contribute to the convenience of service provision?	0	0	26
	3. Does this community service endeavor contribute to the career need assessment process?	0	0	26

The responses to a Google form questionnaire concerning the efficacy of digital-based career guidance service training, which was completed by 26 junior high school counseling teachers in Barito Kuala Regency, showed that this activity was deemed very beneficial in assisting training participants, particularly in terms of time efficiency when analyzing the results of digital-based career orientation instruments. Currently, counseling teachers employ time-consuming manual instruments for analysis, specifically the Interest Search Tool Instrument (ISTI). The ISTI is a tool utilized to ascertain the inclination or level of preference of junior high school students towards 14 objects of specialization pertaining to the operations of the established subject groups at the secondary level of education. The instrument utilized in this study is a checklist questionnaire comprising 156 items (Hapsari et al., 2022). This ISTI was developed in digital format. Additionally, the counseling teacher stated that this training was very beneficial in conducting career need assessments.

Succeeding in the workforce necessitates education and proficiency

in career planning to prevent students from being uncertain about their career trajectories (Musrifah, 2015). Career planning should be meticulously crafted to foster a desire for lifelong learning and cultivating diverse abilities. A portion of the junior high school years is devoted to vocation exploration. It is necessary to comprehend and investigate the following: competencies, industry and occupational classifications, the correlation between contemporary society and employment, career preparation education, the development of prospective future career plans, career enrolment and preparedness, the significance and necessity of work, and the factors that influence job selection (Yun & Min, 2015). It is recommended that adolescents investigate prospective professional paths and execute objectives related to their passions, aptitudes, and values (Choi et al., 2015).

The training results indicate a 75% increase in proficiency, meaning that the teachers can integrate digital-based career guidance services into their respective educational institutions. Subsequently, regarding efficacy, every junior high school counseling teacher in Barito Kuala Regency who participated in this training also gained significantly. Their ability to deliver counseling services at school was greatly facilitated, particularly in career guidance, which assists students in organizing their professional trajectories.

The utilization of technology in counseling services has the potential to enhance human performance and productivity. This is consistent with the assertions made by Jalil (2021) that technology will enhance and facilitate human effectiveness, allowing individuals to be more productive in their professional lives. Technology, in turn, is an outcome of human culture, as it is constructed from human ideas that ultimately find practical application and have the potential to sustain future existence (Suwenda & Surtiyoni, 2022).

The implementation of digital-based career specialization service training is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 The execution of digital-based career specialization service training

The career specialization service is extremely required for junior high school students to make informed decisions about their future educational pursuits. The purpose of career guidance services is to simplify the process for students when selecting a school. The implementation of technology-based counseling services has the potential to streamline school counselors' responsibilities, particularly in career guidance. The selection of an appropriate career specialization holds significant implications for students' future prospects.

CONCLUSION

Based on this exercise, the subsequent deductions can be made: a 75% increase in technological proficiency has enabled junior high school guidance and counseling teachers in Barito Kuala Regency to comprehend the operational procedures of digital-based specialized services and evaluate the outcomes of

the instruments they utilize. This proficiency facilitates the teachers' execution of their responsibilities regarding providing counseling services in schools, particularly focusing on career guidance.

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