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CAREER INTEREST AND KNOWLEDGE OF LOWER GRADE STUDENTS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL

Yulia Ayriza, Agus Triyanto, Farida Agus Setiawati

Children’s career development should have been developed since childhood so that

ABSTRACT

They can achieve the basic career adaptability in the future. This research aimed to identify the highest orientation of students’ career interest and knowledge based on the six career dimensions found in Holland’s theory. Moreover, this research also aimed to examine the fit model of career knowledge of lower grade primary students based on Holland’s Theory of Career Choice. This research involved 576 lower grade students of primary schools in DIY, Indonesia, both from private and from public schools, determined by multi stage stratified random sampling. Instruments used in this research were a check list to measure students’ career interest, and a test to measure students’ career knowledge. Data collected were analyzed by using quantitative descriptive technique to measure the student’s highest orientation of career interest and knowledge among the six career dimensions in Holland’s theory, while Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to confirm the fit model of students’ career knowledge based on Holland’s theory. The findings showed that the highest orientation of the students’ career interest and knowledge is on Social dimension found in Holland’s theory. Furthermore, the results of the fit model construct test showed that the models of career knowledge of lower grade primary school students in DIY fit significantly with the model of career classification in Holland’s theory. These findings implicate that the developing of game media for students’ career development guidance can be based on the career choice model found in Holland’s theory.

Keywords: Career Interest, Career Knowledge, Lower Grade Students of Primary Schools

I. Introduction

Playing an important role in vocational development, career development is often understood as a phase happening only in adolescence period. However, the fact shows that career development begins in early childhood (Super, 1954). More than a few people take a sceptical view of the study of career development in children. As a result, there has been so much research on this topic, especially in Indonesia.

Childhood is considered an important stage in which an individual’s career development begins as in this stage they start developing knowledge about various kinds of occupations, imagining their dream careers, and considering their possibility as well as self status in many kinds of occupations based on social influences such as those of gender stereotypes, race, and socio-economics. This period will of course affect the next stage that is determining their education and career. This is in line with what Hartung, Porfeli, and Vondracek (2005) believe that the reason for considering childhood an important period in the beginning of career development is that in this period children have closely involved in the world of work.

According to Wagner (2003) career development beginning since early childhood happens in a cultural context. Since early childhood, children have developed career aspirations which tend to be more realistic and stable as children grow older (Armstrong and Crombi, 2000). Often, a child’s career orientation on a certain kind of work-field has been totally eliminated due to social stereotypes so that the child may think that the work does not suit their status and culture (Gottfredsome, 1996). As a result, an individual often develops a career not suitable with his or her talent and interest, while actually satisfaction in an individual’s work-life commonly determines the harmony in his or her family life (Bandura, 1977; Ozer, 1995). Thus, an intervention in career in the form of a program of guidance and counseling on career needs to be held for children as early as possible.

Guidance and counseling service is a very strategic field in giving career guidance for children especially of primary school. In the middle of this decade, guidance and counseling services in elementary schools have been developed. Accordingly, developmental oriented approaches are utterly necessary to support the maturity of child development.

If children are not provided with knowledge related to career guidance, they can be unprepared for their future and they will have difficulties in entering the coming stages in their psychological development. Although career choice is one of the important decisions in an individual’s life, students who are about to graduate from their schools sometimes still have no ideas about their future career. According to Super (1996), somebody’s career is developing; it does not start when he or she chooses his or her major at school, but it begins when he or she enters childhood.

Introduction to career awareness to children is a kind of challenge for Indonesian teachers. The problems lie in the limited number of references
related to career development on children and teachers who do not have adequate knowledge in career guidance for children. Even in Indonesia it is class teachers who are responsible for holding the program of career guidance and counselling due to the insufficient number of counselors in primary schools. Thus, a guidance needs to be created for primary school teachers so that they can give career guidance for their students since they are in the early level.

This research is the first year research under multi year research, with the main target of creating game media for career guidance towards lower grades of primary school children (of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year). Accordingly, this first year research was conducted for having a kind of need assessment with some specific purposes, namely: (1) to describe the tendency of children's career interests on certain dimensions among the six career dimensions of Holland's theory; (2) to describe the tendency of children's most learnt career knowledge on certain dimensions among the six career dimensions of Holland's theory; (3) to describe both the five most and the five least popular career interests and learnt career knowledge among lower grade students of primary schools; and (4) to test the fit model of the classification of students' career knowledge based on Holland's career interest theory.

This research will be beneficial for the critical and constructive study of career development theory, from the perspectives of East culture, especially Indonesia. In addition, the research results will help the implementation of the program of guidance and counselling service in elementary schools because its implementation will be based on the results of students' need assessment so that it can increase students' opportunities to have career development based on their interest and ability, which then reduces the risks of difficulties and failure in career development in the next stages.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this study, the theoretical framework describes: (a) Career Development Theory, and (b) Career Interest and Knowledge.

a. Super's Theory of Career Development

Based on the theory of career development formulated by Super, there are five stages of career development: (a) Growth stage, covering the ages ranging from 4-13 years old; (b) Exploration stage, covering the ages ranging from 14-24 years old; (c) Establishment stage, covering the ages ranging from 25-44 years old; (d) Maintenance stage, covering the ages ranging from 45-65 years old; and (e) Disengagement stage, covering the ages ranging from 66 years old-above (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996).

Of all the five stages mentioned above, Growth stage is the one which covers the ages of elementary school children. Children start this stage by trying to find the information about a certain career choice from their parents and teachers. Children start learning how to appreciate achievement values, to develop effective working habits, and to think more about their future. Based on those characteristics, Gies (1990) states that to be able to go through this stage, children really need to develop well both physically and psychologically so that they can expand their self concepts and learn more about various kinds of career choice.

According to Super (in Brown & Lent, 2005), an individual's aspiration as well as career choice is the manifestation of his or her self concept in career.

The purpose of career development is of course not to gain ability but to gain adaptability and career maturity to make a career decision. Hence, school counselors need to conduct a program of career development through career guidance and counselling to help children to gain career maturity, characterized by planning, having responsibilities and having career awareness including career interest and knowledge (Sciarrà, 2004). Interest and knowledge are the things that become the main focus of the research, which will be discussed in the following sub section.

Inte According to Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994, p.88), vocational or career interest is "the pattern of likes, dislikes, and indifferences regarding career-relevant activities and occupations".

In relation with career interest, Holland (in Brown, 2002) describes his theory of career development by concerning personality and individuals' career interests.

An individual finds a job which will give him or her a space to train his ability and to express his or her attitudes and values. If an individual finds congruence between his or her personality type and their job circumstances, then it can be predicted that he or she will achieve what is called job satisfaction, stability, and positive performance in his or her lifetime. According to Holland (in Kidd, 2006) there are 6 types of career interests:

Realistic: People with this type of career interest tend to prefer to have realistic jobs such as mechanics, surveyors, farmers, and electricians. They have mechanical abilities but their social abilities are not so high.

Investigative: People with this type of career interest prefer to have jobs related to research like in the fields of biology, chemistry, physics anthropology, etc. They have strong abilities in mathematics and physics, but they lack of ability in leadership.

1. Artistic: People with this type of career interest like to be involved in jobs related to arts such as composers, musicians, stage directors, writers, painters, etc. They are emotional, expressive, intuitive, extrovert, imaginative people but without well-organized thoughts.

2. Social: People of this type like being teachers, counsellors, or psychologists. They have social ability and talent.
3. Enterprising: People with this type of career interest love being self-employed like having jobs such as sellers, managers, television producers, buyers, etc. These people have leadership and speaking abilities but they are not really good at exact sciences.

4. Conventional: People with this type of career interest love jobs like finance analyst, bankers, and tax officers. They have strong clerical and arithmetical abilities but they lack of artistic abilities.

b. Career Knowledge

Career knowledge according to Super (Sharf, 1992) is the understood information about job assignments in certain positions and all the manners and behavior in doing jobs.

Related with career knowledge, career education is often given to elementary school children through activities like Career Day. There are many things which can be done in this activity such as introducing different types of career based on children's interests, identifying individual and team work, classifying indoor and outdoor jobs, etc. Children can participate in an activity called "Workday Day".

Besides, they can be encouraged to provoke questions (about working time, the good things about certain jobs, the tools used to work, what subjects need to be learnt for that job, and many others) to presenters or guests being invited in this activity. At the same time, students can make pictures about jobs they find at schools like teachers, administration staff, waiters in school cafeteria, bus drivers, school guards, librarians, and so on. They can make pictures describing about the activities conducted by people having those jobs (Beale dan Williams, 2000).

From the activities described above, there are many things to be introduced and taught to children to make them get career knowledge. In this research, the children's career knowledge being examined are in line with the materials explained by Beale dan Williams (2000) related with the material for career education in primary schools, that is, knowledge about various characteristics of career such as:
- activities conducted in certain jobs;
- the place of activities, either indoor or outdoor;
- the workwear;
- the working time (day or night); and
- the devices being used.

Meanwhile, the children's knowledge about the kinds of jobs explored in this research is classified according to Holland's job classification.

Based on the theoretical framework, some questions can be drawn:
If Holland's six career dimensions, in which career dimensions was children's career interests? Of Holland's six career dimensions, in which career dimensions was children's career knowledge?

What were the five most popular career interests and learnt career knowledge among lower grade students of primary schools, and what were the five least popular career interests and learnt career knowledge among lower grade students of primary schools?

Did the empirical data of career knowledge of lower grade primary school students in DIY, Indonesia fit the concept of career classification in Holland's theory?

3. Methods, Techniques or Modes of Inquiry

This research was a kind of explorative research with the purpose of having need assessment by using quantitative approach to find the construct of career knowledge appropriate for lower grade of primary school children. There were two instruments used in this research, that is, a checklist to measure the level of children's interests of certain kinds of jobs presented in the six types of interest from Holland's theory, namely Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC).

Meanwhile, to assess children's career knowledge, self constructed instrument in the form of a test on career knowledge was used. This test includes 5 indicators of career: work activity, place, wear, time, and device. These instruments were validated using content validity, and their reliability coefficients, tested using Alpha Cronbach formula, each of which were 0.935 for the career interest check list and 0.891 for the career knowledge test. The data were analyzed using quantitative descriptive technique to find out the level of children's career knowledge and interest, while Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to test the fit model of children's career knowledge based on Holland's theory.

4. Source of Data

The data of this research were taken from 576 students of both public and private primary schools in DIY, Indonesia, consisting of 236 first-grade students, 197 second-grade students, and 143 third-grade students. Multi stage cluster stratified random sampling was used to determine the sampling. The first step was determining randomly students of the first, second, and third grade in three sub-districts in each district in DIY, Indonesia. The second step was determining randomly two schools of each sub-district. From this sampling technique, 576 students from 30 classes were taken as samples.

5. Procedure

Before collecting data, the researchers asked for permission to or notify the local government and the head master of the schools taken as samples, and gave informed consent to the children's parents so that they could give data about career knowledge.

For fulfilling the checklist and test, 16 assistants, who are students of Educational Psychology and Counselling Study Program, were
6.1.3 What were the five most popular career interests and learnt career knowledge among lower grade students of primary schools, and what were the five least popular career interests and learnt career knowledge among lower grade students of primary schools? Figure 6.3 Student Career Interest based on the percentage

![Figure 6.3](image)

Based on Figure 6.3, the five most popular students' career interests were teacher, principal, doctor, singer, and police officer. On the other hand, the five least popular were administration employee, sales, counsellor, sculptor, and model.

6.1.4 Did the empirical data of career knowledge of lower grade primary school students in DIY, Indonesia fit the concept of career classification in Holland's theory? Table 6.1 the outcome of Chi-Square test between Holland's model and Empirical Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>0.422</td>
<td>0.310</td>
<td>0.302</td>
<td>0.3855</td>
<td>0.4391</td>
<td>0.3905</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigative</td>
<td>0.08517</td>
<td>0.0727</td>
<td>0.09157</td>
<td>0.1361</td>
<td>0.11881</td>
<td>0.08096</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $\chi^2$ = Chi-Square
Based on Table 6.1, it shows that on Realistic dimension (R), \( \chi^2 = 42.28, df = 31, \) or \( \chi^2 < 2 \times df, \) with \( p = 0.08517 > 0.05, \) and RMSEA = 0.025 < 0.08; on Investigative dimension (I), \( \chi^2 = 31.05, df = 21, \) or \( \chi^2 < 2 \times df, \) with \( p = 0.07278 > 0.05, \) and RMSEA = 0.029 < 0.08; on Artistic dimension (A), \( \chi^2 = 30.02, df = 21, \) or \( \chi^2 < 2 \times df, \) with \( p = 0.09157 > 0.05, \) and RMSEA = 0.027 < 0.08; on Social dimension (S), \( \chi^2 = 38.55, df = 30, \) or \( \chi^2 < 2 \times df, \) with \( p = 0.13613 > 0.05, \) and RMSEA = 0.022 < 0.08; on Enterprising dimension (E), \( \chi^2 = 43.91, df = 34, \) or \( \chi^2 < 2 \times df, \) with \( p = 0.11881 > 0.05, \) and RMSEA = 0.023 < 0.08; and on Conventional dimension (C), \( \chi^2 = 39.05, df = 28, \) or \( \chi^2 < 2 \times df, \) with \( p = 0.0809 > 0.05, \) and RMSEA = 0.026 < 0.08. It can be inferred that all the six sub-models fit, so the conclusion is that the empirical data of students' career knowledge (of lower grade primary school students in DIY, Indonesia) in each dimension, namely R, I, A, S, E, and C respectively, fit the Dimensions of Holland’s Career Choice Theory.

Further, whether the empirical data of career knowledge of lower grade primary school students as a whole fit the concept of career classification in Holland’s theory was also tested.

Figure 6.5 Loading Factors of Dimension R, I, A, S, E, and C of Career Knowledge Model

Figure 6.6 Result of T tests of Dimension R, I, A, S, E, and C of Career Knowledge Model

Figure 6.5 shows that in Career Knowledge model, \( \chi^2 = 13.91, df = 8, \) or \( \chi^2 < 2 \times df, \) with \( p = 0.08416 > 0.05, \) and RMSEA = 0.036 < 0.08. Furthermore, from Figure 6.5 and 6.6, they show that dimension R has the loading factor (\( \Lambda \)) = 0.74 with \( t = 19.7 (> 1.96); \) dimension I has the loading factor (\( \Lambda \)) = 0.79 with \( t = 21.81 (> 1.96); \) dimension A has the loading factor (\( \Lambda \)) = 0.75 with \( t = 20.20 (> 1.96); \) dimension S has the loading factor (\( \Lambda \)) = 0.82 with \( t = 22.77 (> 1.96); \) dimension E has the loading factor (\( \Lambda \)) = 0.69 with \( t = 17.99 (> 1.96); \) and dimension C has the loading factor (\( \Lambda \)) = 0.72 with \( t = 18.86 (> 1.96). \) It can be concluded that the model fits. Thus, the empirical data of career knowledge of lower grade primary school students in DIY, Indonesia fit the concept of career classification in Holland’s theory.

Discussion

From the data analysis, the research revealed that the career interests and the mostly learnt career knowledge of lower grade students of primary school children in DIY tend to be in social dimension. This is reasonable considering the fact that the participants’ age ranged from 6-8 years old, which is categorized as children’s middle period age and school age (Berk, 2010). Based on Bronfenbrenner’s theory of ecology, the elements belonging to the microsystem environment are family, school, health services, peer groups, religious group, and the playgrounds in which they play around their neighborhoods (Sanfrock, 2011). As a result, the career which they learn and in which they are interested in tend to be the career found in the microsystem environment, proven by the fact that children’s career interest and knowledge were in social dimension. When observed in detail, the five most popular career interests among children are teacher, principal, doctor, singer, and police officers. This is because people with these kinds of professions are those who exist in the children’s microsystem environment, which make the professions familiar to them; besides, characters with professions such as teacher, principal, doctor, and police officer are considered as authority characters which have high status in the Asian children’s point of view (Kim & Turiel, 1996; Yau, Smetana, & Metzger, 2008) and are quite appealing for them.

Another important thing noted was that children’s both the five most and the five least learnt carrier knowledge and their both the five most and the five least career interests were in parallel. It can be inferred that children’s learnt career knowledge were likely followed by their career interests.

The congruence between models of career knowledge being tested by using Holland’s theory based on empirical data obtained from lower grade students of primary schools shows that the results were in line with those of the previous studies having the East cultural background, that is the similarity of four to six dimensions of career interests with Holland’s theory (Kidd, 2006).
This research results implicate that the developing of game media for the career development guidance of lower grade students of primary school, which becoming the main target in this multi-year research, can be based on model construct found in Holland’s theory, consisting of six dimensions namely Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, dan Conventional (RIASEC). It is expected that the media can contribute to give career guidance based on the personality of the individual being guided as what is stated as the purpose of the theory. According to Holland (in Brown, 2002), there are three principles becoming the base of Holland’s theory about an individual’s adaptation in the working place: (a) People and the working place can be categorized into six kinds of interests: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, dan Conventional interests; (b) The career choice is the result of the efforts to achieve congruence between interest and environment; (c) The congruence results in job satisfaction and stability. Thus, although children’s personality is developing and still unstable, guidance given as early as possible is expected to be able to guide children to achieve congruence among their interests, abilities, environment, values and characters and their future career.

7. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that both career interests and career knowledge of lower grade students of primary schools in DIY are leaning towards Social dimension. The reason behind is that their developing stage is still in the school-age period, so the environment that they encounter is mostly school environment and family. This is proven in the fact that the five most popular career interests that students chose were teacher, principal, doctor, singer, and police officer. Most of them are career in Social dimension. Meanwhile, the most learnt career knowledge of the students was equal between Social dimension and Realistic dimension. The least popular career with only limited knowledge is around Conventional and Enterprising dimensions. In addition, it can also be concluded that the empirical data of career knowledge of lower grade primary school students in DIY, Indonesia fit the concept of career classification in Holland’s theory. Thus, based on the research this year, it is recommended that the developing career guidance game media for lower grade students of primary schools, which is the target of the second-year (following) research, can be based on the career classification model of Holland which consists of six dimensions, namely Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional dimensions. Moreover, the game media for career guidance should encourage students to explore the less popular career and less known/learnt knowledge career, which were Enterprising and Conventional dimensions.

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