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Research Paper

Career maturity among gifted and talented students in Malaysia

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Abstract

Career maturity is one of the crucial element for students in the school setting. Career maturity is vital for students to discover their knowledge about their future professions. For gifted and talented students, they may advance from the regular students in discovering their future jobs. This study focusing on career maturity among gifted and talented students in Malaysia. The level of career maturity is measured by the researcher by using Career Maturity Inventory (CMI)-Revised 1995. This research involved 2500 respondents around Malaysia, focusing on boarding schools' students. The descriptive statistical analysis is used to present the demographic data involving gender, the level of education, and family income of the respondents. The main finding of this research indicates the difference in career maturity between respondents (gifted and talented students) and the regular students. The implications of this research are discussed especially in terms of guidance and counseling provision in boarding school.

Keywords: *Career Maturity, Gifted and Talented Students, Guidance and Counseling*

1. Introduction

The concept of career maturity was introduced by Donald Super in 1957, and later followed by Crites who introduced the Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) to measure the level of career maturity among students in school setting in 1978. Career maturity is important for the students to develop attitudes toward their career [1]. Career maturity enable students to be ready to get more information on their future career path. Dhillon and Kaur [2] found that students in public schools possess a higher career maturity than government schools. This situation indicated that school environment play an important role to increase the career maturity level among the students. However, research on career maturity among gifted and talented students in local schools is really scarce. History showed that since 1906 from Frank Parson era until now, there were many development for gifted and talented education system [3]. Gagné [4] introduced the model of giftedness which consist of two elements; gift and talent. The gifted students need to be monitored by the catalyst in order to be talented. In Malaysia, some of the identification method to identify the gifted and talented students are using the online test [6] and the assessment of standardized national written tests. Generally, students who passed all stages in the test will be offered to enroll PERMATA pintar National Gifted and Talented Center and the boarding school in Malaysia. Gur [6] divided gifted and talented students to four developmental traits of physical, cognitive, and social domains. Wood [7] stated that the best practice for school counselor to do counseling session with the gifted and talented students are by using the counseling relationship, skills sets, developing awareness, program, services, and interventions. Bakar and Ishak [8] stated that career counseling is the most sought services by gifted and talented students in comparison to other services like academic guidance, group counseling, individual counseling, and family counseling. Ignata [9] explains the counselor attitude and the role of the counselor from different models' perspective.

Career counseling is the crucial period for high school students to understand themselves in order to plan for their career paths. Based on the developmental theory proposed by Super in 1957, there are different stages of career development, and one of them is the exploration phase between age ranges of 15 to 24 years old. At this stage, an individual student is starting to explore the self and occupational concepts. The gifted and talented students had some issues in career counseling especially in career choices, perfectionism in career planning, and gender-role barriers in career exploration. Apart from that, the other issue of the gifted and talented students is the need of career counseling [10].

Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) is a well-known instrument to measure the level of career maturity in the world. Since 1961, CMI is governed to measure this variable [11]. This research is using the instrument and try to figure out the answers for the following questions:

(a) What is the level of the career maturity among gifted and talented students in Malaysia?

(b) Are there any relationships between demographic factors and career maturity?

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The sample comprised of 2500 subjects, in which 1287 (51.5%) out of them were male and 1213 (48.5%) were female. The students are between 13 to 16 years old and came from different re-

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gions in Malaysia. All of the participants are from science stream education backgrounds.

2.2. Instrument and variables

The variables of the study is the dependent variables which are the career maturity of the gifted and talented students. The totals of instrument is 50 items. The scale of instruments is nominal which is using dichotomous. The instrument used is the questionnaire and the respondents ranked the level of career maturity from the lowest 50 to the highest 100. The analysis and the data interpretation were done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21.0.

2.3. Procedure

The study was conducted between January to May 2017, and the participants were the students from selected boarding school from different areas of Malaysia. There were assured the confidentiality of the answers for all participants. In order to verify the hypothesis, the researchers applied the descriptive statistic and parametric test for the variable and the researcher compare them between groups.

3. Results

3.1. Demography and level of career maturity

According to the result, participants of this research have 3 different age group are 13 years old (38.0%), 14 years old (30.4%), and 16 years old (31.6%). Gender of participant are male (51.5%), and female (48.5%). Third variable is family income in Ringgit Malaysia for participant of this research are below RM 5000 (51.5%), RM 5001 – RM 10000 (38.3%), and RM 10001 above (10.2%). Based on table and the result, the level of career maturity among gifted and talented students in Malaysia is high which is between 75 marks to 89 marks. The highest score for the career maturity is 89 from 100 of total marks and the lowest score is 75 of 100 marks.

Table 1: Socio Demographic and Level of Career Maturity

Socio Demography	Percent (%)	Level of Career Maturity
Age (n=2500)		
13	950 (38.0)	High
14	761 (30.4)	High
16	789 (31.6)	High
Gender (n=2500)		
Male	1287 (51.5)	High
Female	1213 (48.5)	High
Family Income (Ringgit Malaysia) (n=2415)		
<5000	1244 (51.5)	High
5001-10000	924 (38.3)	High
>10001	247 (10.2)	High

3.2. Correlation between Socio demographic and level of career maturity

Result shows that, two variable have strong correlation with career maturity; age (0.67**), and gender (0.78**). From the result, there have no correlation between family incomes with career maturity (0.04).

Table 2: Correlation between Socio demographic and Level of Career Maturity

Socio Demography	Correlation (r)
Age	0.67**
Gender	0.78**
Family income	0.04

4. Discussion

The result shows that, there are discussion need to be done on:

(a) Background of gifted and talented students in Malaysia – the majority of gifted and talented students in Malaysia are from low income family. In Malaysia, most of intellectually gifted are sending to boarding school.
(b) Differences level of career maturity based on socio demography – the finding of this study shows that socio demography does not have any influences to the level of career maturity level. It shows that, if the gifted and talented students have different gender, ages, and family income, the level of career maturity is not affected. The school environment play an important role to the career maturity.
(c) Correlation of career maturity based on socio demography – career maturity has positive correlation with ages and gender. It shows, ages and gender will increase if this variable are increase.

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