

Career Guidance and Counseling Programs For At Risk Children At Edu-social Setting In Malaysia

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INTRODUCTION

Career is one big issue in any society. Every family and community must provide all aspects of career support to every individual in order to perform their adolescent and adult developmental task. However, for the past many years families in Malaysia did not contribute much as far as career awareness and development among siblings at home is concern. Many reasons focus towards their lack of knowledge, skills and abilities to provide basic guidance in area of career education and career choice.

Hence, when and where do our young been guided into their proper career path? They are quite lucky to receive some extent of career guidance and counseling from respective schools. For the past 40 years, Malaysian education system has tried very hard to help students develop their career lifeline. This job has also being done with the strong participation and involvement of few others and relevant community agencies within multiple career guidance and counseling activities.

Generally, guidance and counseling programs has always produced positive impact on successful career choices. But over the past decade career development has undergone tremendous changes. The world of work in the latter half of the 20th century is described as "harsh and challenging" (Jones, 1996, cited in Donahue, 1998). Holding a job for life is no longer an option, instead the world of work is dominated by the environment of uncertainty and constant changes. Thus a career is described as a "process and not a structure" and is

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related to constructions that individuals make of many changes or opportunities that occur through out their lives (Watts, 1996; cited in Donohue, 1998).

In dealing with this complexity in career decision making, quality career guidance and counseling programs are needed to promote self-knowledge, exploration, career planning, and self advocacy skill attainment and good career development requires recognizing that success and fulfillment are individually defined (Feller, 2003; pp262). Thus school counselors play the important role with regard to educational option, curricular development and occupational opportunities (Herr, 2002; cited in Feller, 2003). These include those at risk children as well. Schools need to prepare every student for the next level transition successfully. This next level may include a college or university, a community college, a Technical Institution, a vocational rehabilitation centers or a job (Feller, 2003). Students' competencies and skills need to be established by the school counselors and they need to be aligned with the employers' needs at any cost.

Henderson (1999, cited in Wahl and Blackhurst, 2000) has emphasized the goal of career guidance program inclusive of at risk child is to provide students with the tools to integrate awareness about themselves, potential careers and post secondary education in order to make decision about the future. In relation to this, effective career guidance programs (Wahl and Blackhurst, 2000) should exhibit the following characteristics:

- developmentally appropriate
- Actively dispel limiting occupational stereotypes and broaden students' awareness of potential occupations
- Be responsive to cultural values and furnish practical and realistic information about a wide range of postsecondary options.

Students' development of several key competencies need to be facilitated in the programs which include:

- identifying and rejecting gender, race, culture and class-based occupational stereotypes
- investigating potential careers
- identifying postsecondary training requirement for careers of interest
- acquiring practical information about postsecondary education or training

In order to have congruence in students' expectations and workplace realities, students of present time need to be able to anticipate and adapt to changes that occur at workplace. This is evident as Yergin & Stanislaw (2002; cited in Feller, 2003) who mention the organizations are fostering cultures that encourage entrepreneurial values and attitudes which emphasize initiative and rapid response.

So in order to be able to deliver quality career guidance and counseling programs, it is important for the school counselors at the school setting in

Malaysia to have the same perception on the domains deemed important in the programs in helping each and every students which include those at risk as well.

General Objective

The general objective of this study is to explore the perception of the school counselors on the effectiveness of the career and counseling programs school at school setting in Malaysia.

Specific objective

The specific objective of this study is to explore the perception of school counselors on the effectiveness of the career and counseling programs at school setting in Malaysia with regard to

- (a) the counselor factor
- (b) the counseling strategies factor
- (c) principal and teacher factor
- (d) records
- (e) parents' involvement

LITERATURE REVIEW

This changing in work place needs and employer demands require different readiness skills and counseling approaches. At school setting the assumptions related to career development need to undergo major shifts in order to prepare students to a successful transfer from high schools to planned postsecondary alternatives.

Various career developments programs or models were developed to enhance the career development of special groups such as the learning disabled adolescents, college students and adults; the unemployed individuals. Learning disabled young adults have the same needs like any other normal young adult which is a need for career preparation and independence, intimacy and a sense of identity (Cruickshank, Morse, & Johns, 1980; Erikson, 1968; Siegel, 1975; Super, 1957; cited in Rosenthal, 1985). In relation to this, Rosenthal (1985) proposes the CSDC model (funded by Child Service Demonstrations Centre) with the purpose:

- a demonstrate that learning disabled students can survive in college if offered an array of support services, from tutoring and special testing to special registration and psychological and career counseling
- b disseminate information nationwide about the project

(Siegel, 1979 cited in Rosenthal, 1985)

In this project which took 3 years, 25 learning disabled students were chosen through high school special education records, previous psychological testing,

faculty referral, and a psycho-educational evaluation using the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery, the Bender-Gestalt, a writing sample an extensive questionnaire and a clinical interview (Rosenthal, 1985). This model uses the holistic approach to deliver services to the learning disabled students which also included a one-credit, 1-hour per session, 12-week course taught by the a counselor at the Learning Opportunities Centre of Kingsborough Community college which was the first federally funded Child Service Demonstration Centre. This course was offered at 3 different times and the class size ranged from 9 to 13 students because a small class size is needed since the students' need for individualized instruction. In planning and teaching this course for learning disabled students, consideration were given to cognition and attention, reality testing, sense of self, visual imagery and learned helplessness (Rosenthal, 1985).

Cognition and Attentional Deficits

The learning disabled students are known to have difficulty in acquiring and processing information and in expressing in own words what they have learned due to the cognition and attention deficits (Lerner, 1976; Mann, Goodman & Wiederholdt, 1978; Meyers & Hammil, 1969). Thus the concepts of career and career decision making was provided through the specifics of career choice they and significant others in their lives had made. It involves an inductive process where the students are asked to look at the way important people in their lives make decisions and the quality of decisions their role models had made after they were asked to interview these important people in their lives. Then they were asked to analyze the satisfactory and unsatisfactory career decisions made by the significant others and to relate them to the decisions in their lives. At this stage, the world of work has begun to take on a structure, and thus have a meaningful content (Rosenthal, 1985).

Reality testing

The Guided Design model was used to equip these students with the tools and techniques for better reality testing and effective use of their personal history. This model involves a script or a story written about steps that a fictitious student in making career decisions. The students were able to explore and ventilate feelings about self and make better informed decisions about their future in group sharing.

Sense of self

These students are known to have poor sense of self, lack of inner understanding, and inability to deal with the uncertainties with their feelings (Bryan & Bryan, 1981; cited in Rosenthal, 1985). Transactional analysis model of personality was used to make the students to have a better understanding of SELF. It is important according to Rosenthal (1985) for these students to have an insight of themselves since they are always associated with a history of academic failures, misunderstanding and social isolation and experience of learned helplessness.

Visual Imagery

In this model Rosenthal (1985) proposes that these learning disabled college students to learn how to visualize their hopes and dreams. Due to this deficiency the students may have a severely limited "fantasy" period of career decision making (Ginsberg, 1951; cited in Rosenthal, 1985).

Learned helplessness

In addressing this deficit the traditional methods of going to field visits to industry, attending career days and learning how to interview others were used but they were carried out on individualized basis.

Through this model the students have improved ability to gather career information systematically and make rational, mature career decisions. They had come to career choice as a process which involves self and not as out of control act (Rosenthal, 1985).

Similarly Super (1983; cited in Biller & Horn, 1991) has also suggested a career assessment model to cater the needs of adolescents with learning disabilities. It encompasses the traditional four-phase assessment approach and also addresses the need to assess career readiness competencies. Vocational maturity readiness for making career decisions refers to the degree to which a student makes career plans, explores his or her environment participation in a broad range of school activities, acquires career information, possesses a strategy for making decisions and uses competencies in realistic manner (Super, 1983; cited in Biller & Horn, 1991).

In tackling adults with disabilities, a 3-week career development program was developed by Enright (1997). In this program the participants were people with severe disabilities who were unemployed or underemployed. The participants were 38 unemployed or underemployed people with disabilities who were recruited from a community-based independent living program and it involves a post-test-only experimental design. The effectiveness of the program was measured using 3 career decision-making instruments and individualized interviews. Adults with disabilities are known to have barriers to career development. These barriers include low self-esteem, limited life experiences, lack of confidence in decision making, social stigma, restricted range of available occupations, few successful role-models, difficulties in finding employment, fear of losing Social Security benefits (Enright, 1997). Thus to get the clear picture of career development processes for people with learning disabilities, patterns of belief, types of learning experiences and characteristics of different environments and contexts need of these people to be assessed (Enright, 1997).

This program was designed to enhance their career development by expanding their career options and to increase their career decision making self-efficacy through performance accomplishment and verbal persuasions. The first session was on participant self-assessment where two motivational speakers and

small group discussions were held to explore the participants' abilities, values, interests and possible career options. The second session was on teaching the participants the world of work whereby speakers give lectures on job seeking, interviewing skills, job accommodations, social security work incentives and self-advocacy. In the final session, Enright (1997) closes the gap between the participants' career aspirations and barriers they perceive to these goals through group discussions and individualized exit interviews. On the effectiveness of the program it was found there was no significant difference between the experimental and the control group. 20 were placed in the experimental group and 18 were placed in the control group. 34.3% identified themselves as Black or African American. The participants ranged from 24 to 54 years. 74.3% were not working and 25.7% were working part time. 72% of the control group reported musculoskeletal disabilities compared to only 25 % of the experimental group. 72% of the participants in the control group exhibit secondary disabilities and only 50 % in the experimental group.

Results from the exit interviews indicated the majority of participants from both groups reported enhanced self esteem and life decision making self-efficacy. The conflicting result was attributed to failure of random assignment, poor construct validity of outcomes measures, weakness of the treatment, low statistical power, failure to account for possible attribute-treatment interactions (Enright, 1997). These people with disabilities need to be educated about the world of work, about their rights and possible opportunities (Brodwin, Parker, & DeLaGarza, 1996; Enright, Conyers, & Szyaski, 1996 cited in Enright, 1997).

A career assistance program was developed to cater the needs of the long-term unemployed adults (Donohue & Patton, 1998). This study involved 58 long-term unemployed participants in a range of training programs provided at various Skillshare organizations in South East Queensland, Australia. The sample consisted of 36 women and 22 men with the age range from 16 to 58 years with a mean age of 29.70. The length of time participants were actively seeking work varied from 6 months to 8 years with a sample mean of 19.86 months. This career guidance intervention involved a brief introductory session on issues like purpose, process, confidentiality of information, text anxiety. The DAT and the SDS were chosen by Donohue & Patton (1998) to be main sources of participant data. The DAT comprises multiple aptitude battery which consist 8 tests such as Verbal reasoning, Numerical Ability, Abstract Reasoning, Clerical Speed and Accuracy, Mechanical Reasoning, Space Relations, spelling and Language Usage. After this respondents were provided with individual career counseling session with a vocational psychologists and the length is from 45 to 60 minutes. Information obtained from DAT and SDS was synthesized and career option explored. Finally the participant will learn the relevant sources of career information and guidance for ongoing support. Accessing job skills program was also provided. The participant were asked to complete questionnaire before and immediately upon the completion of the program. From the findings 83% of the participants had never received career guidance and nearly half in the sample had no clear conception of future career paths. 67% of the participants indicated

they found the intervention to be very effective and provided strong efficacy for professional career guidance (Donohue & Patton, 1998). The majority (91%) believed they had formed realistic expectations regarding the types of employment options they would like to pursue after they completed the program.

Developmental counseling and guidance program was proposed by Neukrug & Barr (1993) which and was designed to foster academic, personal-social, career, and physical development and are based on the concept of working all children in holistic manner through knowledge of developmental theory with specific developmental tasks to be mastered at each life stage (Humes, & Hohenshil, 1987; cited in Neukrug & Barr, 1993). This model included aspects like students' developmental tasks and special issues which must be addressed, the school counselor functions, the consumers of the program services, and the grade-level indications. Evaluating of the program is the key component of the process (Neukrug & Barr, 1993). Involving administrators, teachers and the community from the beginning strengthens the program's development and implementation. Needs assessment needs to be carried to assess the counseling needs of the client populations of the individual school or school division. Goals and objectives in terms of students' outcomes should be developed according to students needs and can be identifies through the needs assessment. Areas like academic and intellectual development, personal and social development, and career-vocational development should be considered when developing objectives. Strategies should reflect the students' ages, grade levels, and individual differences (Neukrug & Barr, 1993).

Wahl & Blackhurst (2000) also mention that an effective career guidance program should be developmentally appropriate; actively dispel limiting occupational stereotypes and broaden students; awareness of potential occupations; responsive to cultural values and furnish practical and realistic information about a wide range of postsecondary options. These programs should enhance the development of the following key competencies:

- identifying and rejecting gender- race-, culture- and class- based occupational stereotypes
- investigating potential careers
- identifying postsecondary training requirements for careers of interest
- acquiring practical information about postsecondary education or training

Parents has been identified to be the most influential role models for elementary school children (Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). Thus parents exert powerful influence in their children's early educational and career aspirations (Ramos & Sanchez, 1995; Reisman & Banuelos, 1984; Trice & Tillapaugh, 1991; cited in Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). So parents may even need to be educated on their role in their children's career development (Whiston & Sexton, 1998; cited in Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). Parents should be involved in career guidance activities such as home-based projects like family trees highlighting family

members' occupations or collages about family members' occupations and / or aspirations (Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a survey design using a self-administered questionnaire which contains 17 items developed by a team of IRPA "Human resources at risk" researcher. The study was conducted among 342 school counselors from 121 urban schools and 221 rural schools in Malaysia (109 MPV schools and 233 electives schools). Randomized sampling was used among respondent which has been identified as at risk student. The data gathered was analyzed using descriptive statistics to obtain the mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS FROM STUDY

1. The perception of the school counselors on the effectiveness of career guidance and counseling program at school-setting in Malaysia in general.

Table 1: The perception of the effectiveness of the career guidance and counseling program at school-setting in Malaysia

Ranking	ITEMS	MEAN	S.D
1	Principal's support on career & guidance program.	4.52	.82
2	Planning of the career & guidance activities for students.	4.49	.66
3	Explanation on career choice to students on group basis.	4.35	.84
4	Identifying students in assisting them in choosing future career.	4.32	.68
5	Gathering of the latest career information to be delivered to students.	4.26	.61
6	Instilling of career awareness on the prospect of the students' career choice.	4.24	.55
7	Explanation on the connection between elective subjects and career to students on individual basis.	4.23	.74
8	Delivery of latest career information to students.	4.19	.73
9	Assisting students in exploring careers chosen by them.	4.15	.59
10	The use of various approaches to clarify career to students.	4.05	.66

Ranking	ITEMS	MEAN	S.D
11	Collaboration with other teachers to know the students' skills.	4.01	.78
12	Complete records on the students' background.	3.84	.62
13	Making an attempt to find financial resource to sponsor career programs in schools.	3.83	.75
14	The monitoring on the development of the students' career aspirations.	3.62	.78
15	Explanation to the parents on their children's career information.	3.52	.84
16	Consultation with the parents on their children's career exploration.	3.43	.83
17	Complete records on the students' career aspirations.	3.43	.72

Overall mean :

4.02

The table shows the perception of the school counselors on the effectiveness of the career guidance and counseling programs at school-setting in Malaysia. Since the scale used to measure the results ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), overall, the results can be grouped under three response categories; almost strongly agree, agree and a bit uncertain categories.

In the almost strongly agree quadrant, the respondents gave responses with mean that ranges from 4.25 and above. In this quadrant, the highest mean is the principal's support on career programs (M=4.52), planning of activities (M=4.49); clarification on career choice to students on group basis (M=4.35) identifying student in assisting them choosing future career (M=4.32), and gathering of the latest career information (M=4.26), and. This shows the 342 school counselors almost strongly agree that these items to be the important items of an effective career guidance and counseling program.

In the agree quadrant the mean ranges from 4.0 to 4.24. In this quadrant, the highest mean is instilling career awareness (M=4.24), followed by individual explanation on the connection between electives and students' careers (M=4.23); delivery of latest information (m= 4.19); use of various approaches to clarify career (M=4.05); and collaboration with other teachers in knowing the students' skills (M=4.01),. This shows the 342 school counselors agree on these items characteristics of effective career guidance and counseling program.

The last quadrant represents responses which belong to the bit uncertain category. The mean ranges from 3.43 to 3.83. This shows the 342 school counselors were a bit uncertain on the choice of these items to be characteristics of an effective career guidance and counseling program.

II. The perception of the school counselors on the effectiveness of career guidance and counseling program at school-setting in Malaysia with regards to:

(a) The counselor factor

Table 2: The perception of the effectiveness of the career guidance and counseling program at school-setting in Malaysia with regards to the counselor factor

	ITEMS	MEAN	S.D
	Planning of the career & guidance activities for students.	4.49	.66
	Gathering of the latest career information to be delivered to students.	4.26	.61
	Instilling of career awareness on the prospect of the students' career choice.	4.24	.55
	Delivery of latest career information to students.	4.19	.73
	Overall mean	4.30	

This table shows the perception of school counselors towards the effectiveness of career guidance and counseling program in Malaysia on the aspect of the counselor factor. The data gathered showed that the planning of the career and guidance as the highest (M=4.49), followed by gathering of the latest career information (M=4.26), instilling of the career awareness on the prospects of the students' career choice (M=4.24), and delivery of latest career information (M=4.19). The overall means (m= 4.30) shows that the school counselors perceived the counselor factor to be important in overall view of the effectiveness of the career guidance and counseling program.

(b) counseling strategies

Table 3: The perception of the effectiveness of the career guidance and counseling program at school-setting in Malaysia in the aspect of counseling strategies

	ITEMS	MEAN	S.D
	Explanation on career choice to students on group basis.	4.35	.84
	Identifying students in assisting them in choosing future career.	4.32	.68
	Explanation on the connection between elective subjects and career to students on individual basis.	4.23	.74

	ITEMS	MEAN	S.D
	Assisting students in exploring careers chosen by them.	4.15	.59
	The use of various approaches to clarify career to students.	4.05	.66
	The monitoring on the development of the students' career aspirations.	3.62	.78

This table shows the perception of school counselors towards the effectiveness of career guidance and counseling program in Malaysia on the aspect of the counseling strategies. The data gathered showed that explanation on career choices to students on group basis has the highest mean (M=4.35), followed by identifying students in assisting them in choosing future careers (M=4.32), explanation on the connection between electives and career to students (M=4.23), assisting students in exploring chosen careers (M=4.15), the use of various approaches to clarify careers to the students (4.05,) and finally the monitoring on the development of the students' career aspirations (M=3.62). In the counseling strategies factor it is interesting to note that the school counselors perceive a bit of uncertainty in the ranking of the students' career aspirations to be related to the effective career guidance and counseling program.

(c) principal and teacher factor

Table 4: The perception of the effectiveness of the career guidance and counseling program at school-setting in Malaysia in the aspect of teachers and principal factors

	ITEMS	MEAN	S.D
2	Principal's support on career & guidance program.	4.52	.82
11	Collaboration with other teachers to know the students' skills.	4.01	.78
12	Making an attempt to find financial resource to sponsor career programs in schools.	3.83	.75

This table shows the perception of school counselors towards the effectiveness of career guidance and counseling program in Malaysia on the aspect of teachers and principal factors. The data shows that principal's support has the highest mean (M=4.52) followed by collaboration with other teachers to know the students skills (M=4.01) and making an attempt to find financial resources to sponsor career programs in schools (M=3.83). This shows that the school counselors seem to agree on these characteristics to be related to effectiveness of the career guidance and counseling program.

(d) parents involvement

Table 5: The perception of the effectiveness of the career guidance and counseling program at school-setting in Malaysia in the aspect of parents' involvement.

	ITEMS	MEAN	S.D
14	Explanation to the parents on their children's career information.	3.52	.84
15	Consultation with the parents on their children's career exploration.	3.43	.83

This table shows the perception of school counselors towards the effectiveness of career guidance and counseling program in Malaysia on the aspect of parents involvement. The data shows parents' involvement is not given a high ranking since both means belong to the a bit uncertain category. The item on the explanation on their children's career information has a mean of 3.52 and consultation on their children's career exploration has a mean of 3.43.

DISCUSSION

I The perception of the effectiveness of career guidance and counseling program at school-setting in Malaysia in general.

In first quadrant the 342 school counselors gave almost strongly agree ranking to items which belong to the counselor factor (delivery of the latest career information, instilling career awareness on students' career prospects, gathering of the latest career information and planning of the activities); counseling strategies (explanation of career choice on group basis, assisting students in exploring careers chosen by students); and principal and teacher factor (principal's support). This is in tandem with the latest development which occur at the world of work. Previously school counselors have less dominant role to play in the world of work but now they are central to educational mission as "key information brokers: (Herr, 2002 cited in Feller, 2003). The school is now a place that prepare students to successfully transit to the next level either a college or university, a community college, a technical institution or a job (Feller, 2003). The trend in placing a higher priority of the counselor and counseling strategies is parallel to the change in the work place needs. Job security is something of the past and the emerging diamond-shaped workforce has transformed work roles, job titles, and organizational structures (Feller, 2003). Thus students need to have technical skills, "intellectual" capital and personal strength (Clifton & Anderson, 2002; cited in Feller, 2003).

Henderson (1999, cited in Wahl and Blackhurst, 2000) has emphasized the goal of career guidance program is to provide students with the tools to integrate awareness about themselves, potential careers and post secondary education in order to make decision about the future. Wahl and Blackhurst (2000) stresses the importance of counselor to keep an up to date knowledge about students' developmental needs and also cultural values, job market trends and post secondary education options. Thus it is the counselor's job to make sure the students to be more competent in communication, mathematic, computer technology, self-management, problem-solving and decision-making skills. In fact in planning career guidance for the students, Goodlad (2002, cited in Feller, 2003) suggests to include activities to promote developmental assets, opportunities to learn to be self-reliant career managers, lessons on democracy besides the academic and technical skills. In relation to the principal's support Neukrug (1993) mentions that effective career counseling programs to be initiated with dissemination of information with significant persons in school such as administrators, parents, the community.

In the second quadrant, the school counselors gave an agree ranking to items which belong to the counseling strategies factor (identifying students in assisting them in choosing future career, the use of various approaches to clarify careers to the students, explanation on the connection between electives and career to the students individually), the teachers and principal factor (collaboration with other teachers to know the students' skills, making an attempt to find financial resources to sponsor career programs in schools) and the records factor (complete records on the students background). Counseling strategies is an important factor since the school counselors needs to design a career program that satisfy the needs of the target population. Feller (2003) mentions that career and technical education (CTE) has demonstrated strong evidence in reducing high school dropouts through greater students engagement. Since the students need to be equipped with communication, mathematic, computer technology, self-management, problem-solving and decision-making skills the collaboration of counselors with teaches is of utmost importance.

Finally in the last quadrant, the school counselors seem to be a bit uncertain on the items which belong to the parents' involvement factor (explanation to the parents on the children's career information, consultation with parents on their children's career exploration), the counseling strategies (the monitoring on the development of the students' career aspirations) and records factor (complete records on the students' career aspirations). This findings is a bit contradictory with the latest trend in studies carried out in the western countries. Goldring (1991 cited in Downing & D'Andrea, 1997) mentions that for school-based career programs to be effective, parental involvement must be invited and encouraged. If parents are not involved, a valuable resource may go unused and could even work at cross purposes with school personnel who attempt to guide the child (Downing & D'Andrea, 1997). On the area of students' career aspirations, Trice & King (1991, cited in Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000) mention that career aspirations

formed at the early developmental levels have found to be relatively highly stable in students' final career choices and occupational futures.

II the perception of the school counselors on the effectiveness of career guidance and counseling program at school-setting in Malaysia with regards to:

(a) the counselor factor

The counselor factor is important since the school counselor' role has undergone changes since nowadays the school counselors are being regarded as the key players in preparing students for the next transition level. In keeping up with the change at work place, school counselors need to make the students recognize the trends that shape the workplace; school counselor of present should play an important role in motivating students to be flexible and mobile as well as to gain academic, occupational and career development competencies needed for successful transition to adulthood (Feller, 2003). This new workplace expects the workers to be competent in communication, mathematic, computer technology and self-management, problem-solving and decision-making skills.

The students need to have skills such as technical, intellectual capital and personal strength which is critical in the competitive age. Latest career information should also include the work trend. The counselors in Malaysia is also of no exception. Job security will be a thing of the yesteryears since work roles, job titles and organizational structures was transformed by the global competition. The new workforce needs to be equipped with the ability to access and gain market-driven occupational proficiencies, retrieve and disperse information through technology and how to stay motivated and self-directed.

(b) counseling strategies

Counseling strategies is an important aspect since career guidance and counseling efforts particularly those with developmentally appropriate content has a positive impact on successful career choices (Herr, 2000; cited in Feller, 2003). The school counselors in Malaysia gave quite high ranking on the issue career exploration and this is also supported by Taveira & Moreno (2003) who mention that career development professionals need to increase the students' understanding of the career exploration process across the life span and for diverse populations. Jordaan (1963, cited in Taveira & Moreno, 2003) defines career exploration to be purposeful activities, directed toward enhancing self- and environment consciousness and knowledge that individuals engage in to progress in career development.

(c) the principal and teacher factor

In this aspect the school counselors in Malaysia agree that collaboration with teachers, attempting to find financial resources and the principal's support to be related to effectiveness of the career guidance and counseling program in Malaysia. Collaboration with other teachers on the students' skills is crucial. This is because the changing workplace needs and employer demands require the students to possess different readiness skills. Students need to be equipped with skills that go beyond traditional ones like note-taking skills, time management and others. Students need to be instilled with the following skills:

- creativity and other entrepreneurial skills
- intra and interpersonal communication and team-building skills
- independent thinking and problem-solving skills
- the imagination and flexibility to adapt to ever present change
- the character traits and strength to develop and act from a principled, ethical core
- faith and trust in one's abilities to negotiate life's challenges.

(Feller, 2003)

(d) parents involvement

Here the school counselors gave quite a low ranking to this domain which is in contradiction to the trend in career programs in findings from studies. On the topic of involving parents in disseminating of career information, Wahl and Blackhurst (2000) has stated that parents are the most influential role model for elementary school children. The children's early career aspirations are greatly influenced by their parents (Ramos & Sanchez, 1995; Reisman & Banuelos, 1984; Trice & Tillapaugh, 1991; cited Wahl and Blackhurst, 2000). That is why it is important to invite have parents to invite students into their work environments. Not only this the monitoring of the students' aspirations is also given utmost importance where career portfolio documenting the students' career-related interests, exploratory activities, academic achievements and co-curricular activities for school counselors, parents and students can provide a record of the student's career developmental journey.

In conclusion, the counselors in Malaysia need to look at certain domain such as career aspirations, parents' involvement from a different angle. Counselors of today are the primary shapers and facilitators of students' career development. School counselors need to facilitate in making students understand the changing workplace.

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