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Assessing the Career Readiness of Students in Bengkulu and Understanding How the Secondary Cultural Values of the Serawai Tribe Provide a Framework for Career Guidance in Vocational Schools

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Abstract: This study explores the career readiness of vocational school students in Bengkulu and examines how secondary cultural values, particularly the Serawai tribe's Sekundang Setungguan philosophy, can inform effective career guidance frameworks. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive methodology with a survey approach, data were collected from 347 students across grades X, XI, and XII through a Career Readiness Inventory distributed via Google Forms. The inventory's validity and reliability were tested using the Rasch model with Winstep software, resulting in 37 valid items out of 42. Findings indicate weak career readiness among students in key areas such as career exploration, decision-making, job information access, and occupational knowledge. Gender analysis reveals higher readiness levels among female students, while the Serawai ethnic group outperforms others in career preparedness. Factors influencing career planning include parental aspirations, limited guidance, and cultural diversity. The study underscores the importance of fostering career awareness early, incorporating cultural strengths into guidance programs. The Serawai values of cooperation, resilience, and mutual support provide a foundation for cultivating responsibility, empathy, and perseverance among students. These cultural frameworks can address career uncertainties and enhance readiness through collaborative efforts involving families, schools, and communities. By leveraging cultural values and fostering robust support systems, vocational students are better equipped to navigate challenges and seize opportunities, contributing to societal growth. The findings highlight the significance of culturally informed guidance to prepare students for the complexities of the modern workforce.

Key Words: Career Readiness; Vocational Education; Serawai Tribe; Cultural Values; Career Guidance

INTRODUCTION

The senior high school age phase is a very crucial phase, this is based on developmental stages which emphasize this age in being able to make choices. Career choice is an ongoing process and will have continuity in future achievements. Thus, career maturity is needed while students are at school. Students' career maturity will be achieved if career readiness is formulated well. The research results show that there are differences between men and women in career stages and maturity (Nightingale et

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al., 2022) . This stage in career readiness will further help students in career independence. Student career development will be heavily influenced by other factors, both internal and external. Career choice is not just about achieving a job choice, but is a long process that has an impact on career success. Schools as educational institutions have a very important role not only in the academic or knowledge sector, but can also lead students to achieve career maturity.

SMK is a vocational high school which is different from other high schools. This school was specifically designed by the government as a space and forum for people to be able to get jobs quickly. Students are booked as individuals who are ready to work according to their field of expertise after graduating from school. So that vocational schools are given vocational options that students can choose according to their talents and interests. The existence of vocational schools is a strategy implemented by the government in creating a productive young generation. This is a common concern because nowadays, with the progress of the times, it has an impact on competition and job opportunities. With a high population and a large number of young people, this also becomes a challenge for educational institutions in their role in preparing quality human resources. Choosing a suitable career is part of the future , so students are given the freedom to explore career interests. Even in achieving career success, this is part of a person's preferences in positioning their future lifestyle (Kumar, 2016) . In the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning National Education Students, Article 18, emphasizes that Vocational Education is secondary education which has a role in preparing students with certain skills and being ready to work. So it is clear that vocational school graduates can have skills according to their potential to compete in the job market.

Career is one part of life that will influence overall human happiness (Wahyuningsih & Nugraha, 2021). Career readiness and career choice as an important point in life begins in adolescence, namely the school period (Gee et al., 2019). In Indonesia, the field of student career development in formal schools is one of the authorities of guidance and counseling teachers, this is in accordance with PERMENDIKBUD RI No. 111 of 2014 articles 2, 3, 6 and Guidance and Guidance Operational Guidelines (POPBK) for SMP, SMA/SMK which emphasize that one of the duties of Guidance and Counseling teachers in educational units is to distribute students' educational, employment and career choices. In this aspect, the scope of career guidance is the development of a positive attitude towards a job and skills used during the transition period so that students can have an awareness of the importance of career choices. Career success will be achieved if students receive support and space to explore themselves according to their competencies, talents and interests. Meanwhile, specifically for vocational schools, through the Ministry of Industry No. 3 of 2017, PERMENDKKBUD RI No. 34 of 2018, Regulation of the Coordinating Minister (PMK) and Human Development and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 6 of 2022, Vocational High Schools (SMK) are important units because be the spearhead in providing education on a competency basis according to job market needs and skills.

Career problems will continue to emerge and become a global problem as the demands of the times advance and work problems become more complicated in people's lives. Choosing a career during school is an important phase so it must be a concern for schools. Career achievement will be a factor in determining the quality of social welfare. Career guidance is a process of assistance, services for individuals and groups to know and understand themselves, get to know the world of work, plan for the future, make decisions and be responsible for decisions so that they can realize the meaning of life (Nadira et al., 2020) . The direction of choosing a career is part of the individual development process as a long process that is influenced by the level of development. Considering the importance of career in life, thorough, targeted, programmed and measurable career readiness and preparation is needed which is built early on at school age (Rohmah 2018). Students' low career readiness has an impact on career maturity caused by low knowledge, inappropriate school choices, lack of self-confidence and relatively low school quality (Saripah, Priliani, and Nadhirah 2023). The low absorption capacity of vocational school graduates in the industrial world also occurs to this day, with the ability and competency readiness of students being less able to respond to challenges. So career readiness is needed as a factor in supporting individual career development. This career willingness will encourage students to plan for future achievements after graduating from school (Aprilyani, Rasimin, and Amanah 2023; Fajrah et al. 2023). Career preparation is not only about academic coverage with high grades, but also self-readiness in broad knowledge and good skills. Facing challenges and the transition period for

students towards career readiness is important which will change the student's career journey (Izbassar et al. 2024).

Exposure the show exists problem urgent related with career development for vocational school students, namely the existence of career planning that is not mature so that causing high unemployment. This condition is very unfortunate, because vocational school graduates as a vocational education institution specially prepared to create graduate of Ready Work. Career readiness Which No ripe happen Because exists confusion election career Which happen on student especially post passed school. Career is indeed a thought and will certainly be a goal for all individuals. Someone who has mature career readiness will have an impact on the individual's readiness in looking for work and choosing a job. This condition is also compounded by the weak role of culture as a force of local wisdom in every aspect of social life. The pattern of developing cultural power as a form of local wisdom has components that include; 1) cultural competence, 2) cultural knowledge and 3) cultural brokering (García-Martínez de Bartolomé, Barrio-Torres, and Cilleruelo-Pascual 2020; Im and Lee 2018).

Bengkulu is one of the regions in the Sumatra Islands that upholds local culture and wisdom values to this day. The passing on of cultural values continues to be carried out to generations through various aspects of cultural activities both at the regional government level and at the social community level. One of the second largest tribes in Bengkulu is the Serawai Tribe which has a large population in Bengkulu Province. The philosophical values that are still implemented today are the values of Sekundang Sengguan. Sekundang Sengguan Values have the power of values to shape the individual's character as a hardworking character that is formed to achieve future success together. The people of Bengkulu have implemented these values from generation to generation which are indirectly passed on to the children in their respective families. Under any conditions, a struggle together will build future achievements. Students as students at school have an important role not only in inheriting culture but also implementing it in school life, especially in the aspect of career development. Researchers focus on how far vocational school students are career prepared and the role of culture in viewing the stages of these students' career development. The cultural value approach is an important aspect in life, because through culture humans will be able to think, feel, behave, know who they are and communicate and organize our reality. Students as teenagers have a natural development phase, during this period they will encounter cultural uniqueness. So, to look for cultural patterns, it is important to think about the role of culture and individual development. Thus, values are a vital aspect of life because humans have the ability to change themselves through beliefs, skills and values in culture.

METHOD

Participants & Procedure

This study employs a quantitative descriptive methodology utilising a survey approach. An inventory was utilised and thereafter distributed to vocational school pupils in Bengkulu through Google Form. The acquired data undergoes a data processing procedure and is subsequently displayed in accordance with the field findings. The scenario is depicted through a narrative that comprehensively and methodically documents data and information pertaining to the descriptions, phenomena, and job preparedness of vocational school students in Bengkulu, Indonesia. The researcher administered an inventory to students at State Vocational School in Bengkulu to ascertain their career planning profiles. The data collected comprised 347 vocational school students from grades X, XI, and XII.

Data collection was conducted through inventory distribution methods utilising Google Forms for students. This procedure is implemented to streamline the allocation of goods to students. An inventory has been created with alternative response options: 1) extremely suitable, 2) suitable, 3) unsuitable, 4) unsuitable. Subsequent to data acquisition, data processing and analysis of the resultant findings are conducted. A total of 37 items were utilised for data collection from pupils.

Measure & Data Analysis

The instrument used is Career Readiness inventory. The formulation of this inventory has been tested for validity and reliability in accordance with research procedures. The validity testing process is carried out by experts in the fields of career, academic, culture and language. The involvement of several parties was carried out to test readability such as guidance and counseling teachers, practitioners and students. Before use, the instrument is first subjected to empirical trials which include; 1) item validation test, 2) unidimensional test and 3) validation test. The empirical cob test was conducted on 347 vocational high school students in several vocational high schools in Bengkulu City. The empirical trial was conducted using the Rasch model by utilizing the Winstep application. The criteria used include; 1) the Outfit Mean Square (MNSQ) value received: $0.5 < \text{MNSQ} < 1.5$, 2) the Outfit Z-Standard (ZSTD) value received: $-2.0 < \text{ZSTD} < + 2.0$, and 3) the Point Measure Correlation (Pt Measure Corr) value received: $0.4 < \text{Pt Measure Corr} < 0.85$. An item can be said to be valid when it is able to meet at least 2 of the 3 requirements set. The following are some empirical tests conducted. Of the 42 items, there are 37 valid items and 6 invalid items. The item validity test through the Rasch model with the Winstep application has several requirements that must be met so that an item can be said to be valid. After conducting the validity test, the instrument is then tested for its reliability. The reliability of the instrument was tested through the Rasch model by utilizing the Winstep application. Some data obtained from the reliability test of the instrument items include person reliability, Alpha Cronbach and Item Reability. For the results of the person reliability of the instrument, it is known to be 0.54, which is in the weak category, while the Alpha Cronbach value of 0.61 is in the sufficient category and the item reliability value of 0.98 is in the excellent category (Suminthono & Widhiarso, 2015). The last empirical test conducted was the unidimensionality test of the instrument, while the results of the unidimensionality test of the instrument used the Rasch model by utilizing the Winstep application. The results of the dimensionality test above in the raw variance explained by measured section are known to have a value of 39.3%. This condition explains that the instrument has met the minimum requirements for the unidimensionality test, which is a minimum of 20%. In addition, the unexplained variance in 1st contrast section is known to have a value of 12.6%. This value has also met the minimum requirements, namely a value below 15% ($x < 15\%$).

RESULTS

The data obtained indicates that the overall career readiness of vocational school students remains relatively low. This conclusion is based on a survey conducted with 347 vocational school students in Bengkulu.

Career planning readiness

Based on Figure 1, career planning among vocational high school students is generally still suboptimal. This presents a critical issue, as vocational high school students are expected to adequately prepare themselves in alignment with their areas of expertise and potential to achieve their future career goals. Insufficient readiness in career planning can lead to confusion in making career choices and hinder career independence.

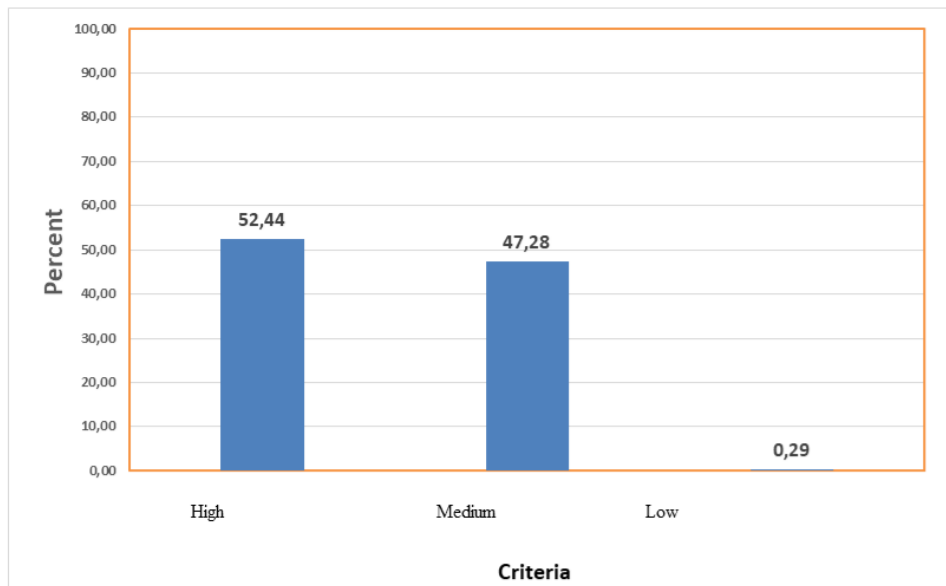


Figure 1. Career Planning Readiness of Vocational High School Students

Schools, as facilitators, must take an active role in documenting and assessing the development of students' career planning readiness across all grade levels. This approach is essential to ensure that students' progress appropriately through the stages of career development. Both external and internal factors significantly influence students' career development, making it imperative for schools to address these dimensions effectively.

Comparison of career planning readiness of male and female students

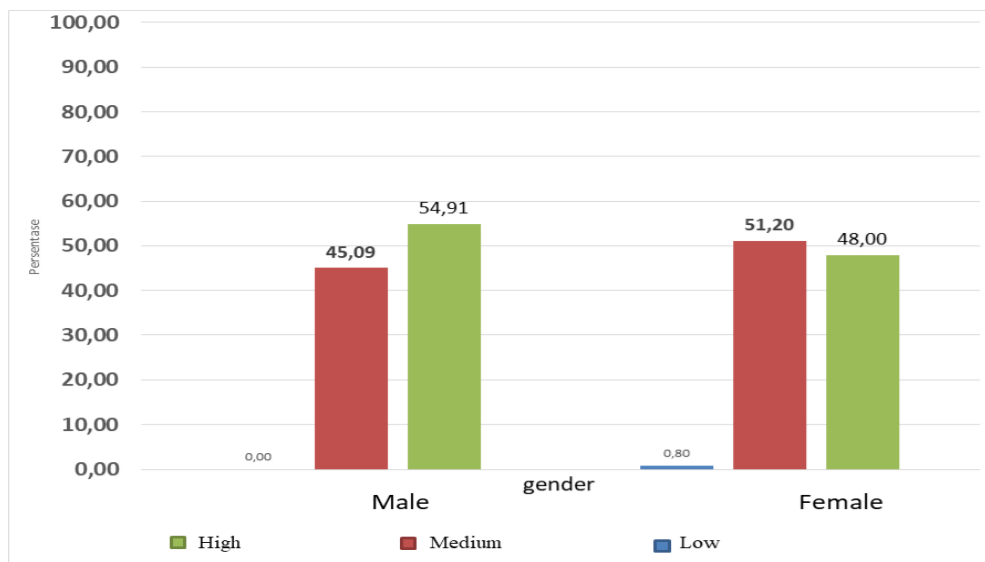


Figure 2. Students' career planning based on gender

Based on Figure 2, the career planning readiness of vocational high school students shows slight differences, though not statistically significant. Male students tend to score lower in career planning readiness compared to female students. However, both male and female students have equal opportunities and rights for self-development to achieve future career success. Students are encouraged to choose fields of expertise offered by the school that align with their interests and talents.

The low level of career planning readiness among both male and female students should be a point of concern for schools. Confusion in career planning can place students in uncomfortable and uncertain positions regarding their future. Therefore, intensive mentoring and structured discussions are essential to support students in their career development journeys.

Student career planning by class

Based on Figure 3, it can be concluded that the career planning readiness of students in grades X, XI, and XII remains suboptimal. This is particularly concerning as students in grade XI exhibit higher levels of career planning readiness compared to those in grade XII. Grade XII students, who are nearing the transition to the workforce or higher education, should have a clearer understanding of their abilities, talents, and potential. At this stage, they are expected to be well-prepared for their chosen career paths.

Career guidance plays a crucial role, especially for grade XI students, as this is the time when career decisions should ideally be made. By grade XII, students should focus on solidifying their choices and preparing to execute their plans. Internal and external factors will inevitably influence students during this period, underscoring the need for resilience and strategic thinking to adapt to emerging challenges. It is essential for schools to instill awareness of the importance of career planning as early as grade X. Early preparation enables students to approach career planning not merely as a choice of occupation but as an ongoing process and developmental stage necessary for achieving career satisfaction and long-term success.

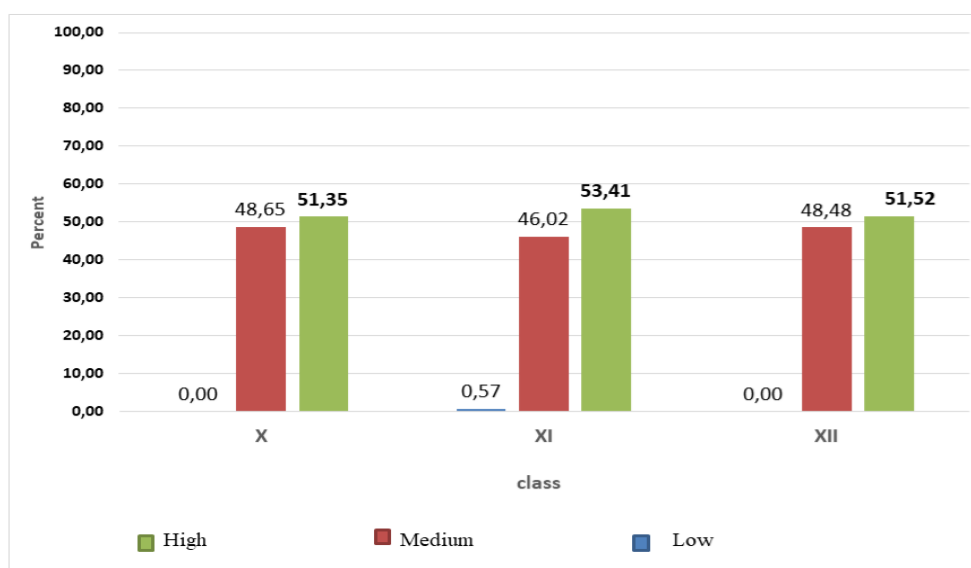


Figure 3. Student career planning by class

Students' career planning readiness from an ethnic aspect

We also recognize the importance of assessing the career readiness of student teachers in relation to their tribal backgrounds. According to the data presented in Figure 4, the career readiness of students across various tribes, including those from Bengkulu such as Lembak, Serawai, Rejang, Muko-Muko, and Kaur, remains suboptimal. This highlights the need to address cultural factors in student development, as students' cultural identities are deeply intertwined with the values and traditions of their respective tribes.

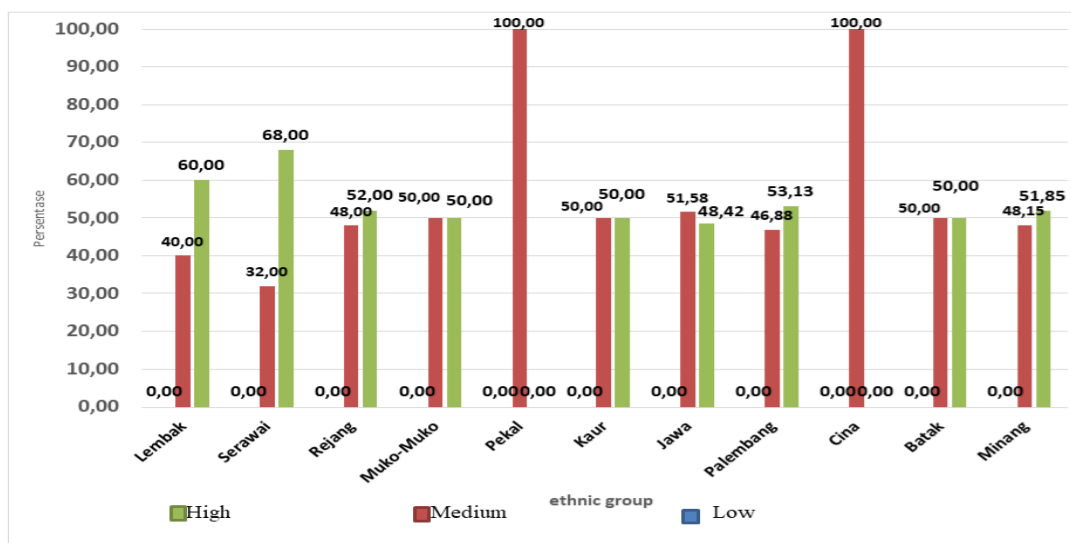


Figure 4. Career planning readiness seen from ethnic background

Cultural values and perspectives represent the strengths of local wisdom and the unique characteristics of each tribe. However, a significant challenge lies in the declining understanding and interest of students in their own cultural heritage. As a result, the potential of these cultural assets remains underutilized in the educational context.

In addition, career planning readiness also varies based on the educational background of students' parents, further emphasizing the multifaceted nature of the issue. The younger generation is now confronted with numerous challenges, particularly in adapting to the rapid changes occurring in society. This necessitates a more integrative approach to career planning that bridges cultural awareness, family influence, and the demands of an evolving world.

Career planning profile of vocational school students in Bengkulu based on parental education

Based on Figure 4, it can be concluded that parental education is a crucial factor influencing students' career planning processes. Parents, as the individuals closest to students, serve as key references and discussion partners for future career choices. The support, motivation, and guidance provided by parents significantly shape students' readiness for career planning. A higher level of parental education often correlates with a greater ability to support children in achieving successful careers and contributing positively to their families.

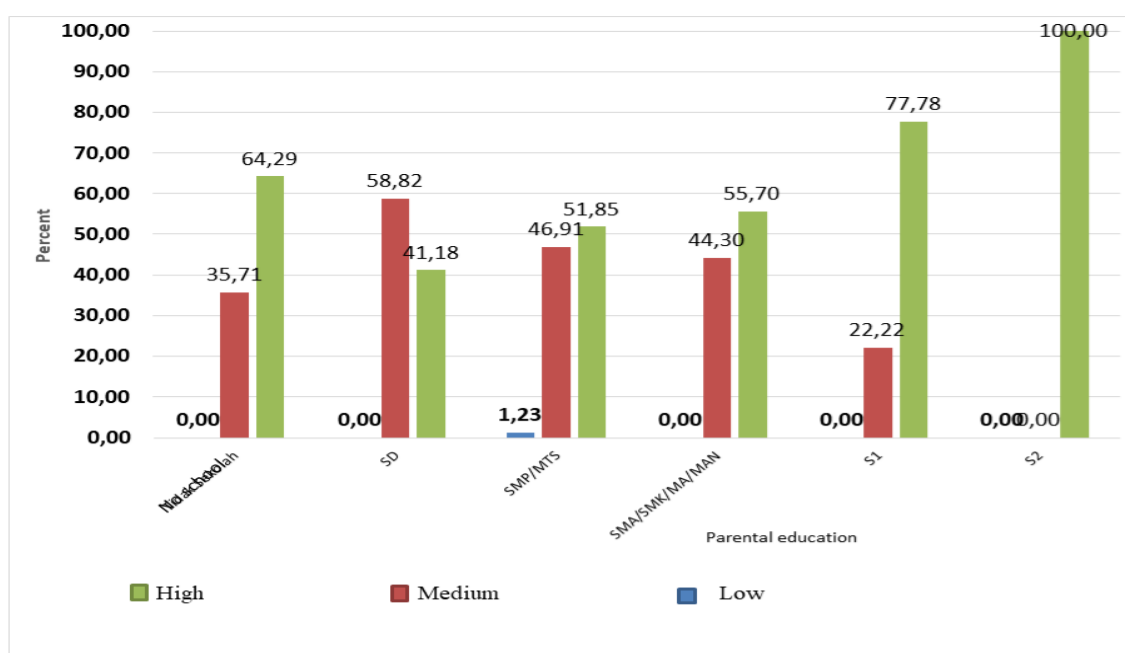


Figure 4. Career planning profile of vocational school students in Bengkulu based on parental education

Career Planning Readiness Based on Parents' Occupation and Cultural Influences

The Serawai tribe, the second largest tribe in Bengkulu, is experiencing a growing population, leading to the broader distribution of its members. An integral aspect of Serawai cultural identity is the philosophical value of *sekundang setungguan*, a life principle passed down through generations. This philosophy emphasizes mutual support, collaboration, resilience, hard work, humility, and sportsmanship. Its essence lies in the belief that success is not achieved individually but collectively, with the spirit of uplifting others rather than competing destructively. The value of *sekundang setungguan* has significant potential to be implemented in educational settings. Students with well-developed career plans can encourage and assist their peers in achieving shared career success. By fostering mutual support and collaboration, schools can help students realize the collective benefits of career planning and achievement.

Local Cultural Values as Educational Strengths

Local cultural values, such as those of the Serawai tribe, are critical factors in student development within schools. By leveraging these cultural strengths, schools can create an environment where students actively engage in shared career planning, motivate one another, and offer mutual encouragement. As cultural actors, students who embrace their heritage are better equipped to navigate and integrate external cultural influences. The low career planning readiness of vocational high school students remains a pressing issue, as it directly impacts their ability to make informed career choices after graduation. Incorporating cultural values into career guidance programs can provide a meaningful and contextually relevant framework to address this challenge and enhance students' career readiness.

DISCUSSION

Weak career planning has an impact on career development which causes students to have difficulty deciding on a career. Thus, it is very important for students to increase their understanding of career planning from an early age. Vocational Schools are a space and forum for students to be able to facilitate their needs in achieving a successful career. Career planning is an important aspect that must

be done before graduating from school to become familiar with various types and levels of careers (Astuti et al., 2024). Having thorough career planning will help students be more focused in planning their future and desired goals (Sutrisno et al., 2024). It needs to be emphasized that self-development and career exploration will not be optimal if students have minimal information about the world of work. This is urgent because vocational school graduates are in accordance with the objectives of a school that creates students with work-ready graduates. Both men and women have the same opportunity to achieve their desired career success needs. The results of research (Sugara et al., 2023) state that there are differences in the self-efficacy of male and female students. Integrating what students have learned related to the world of work and themselves is a process that will continue afterwards. Because in this position, with an age range of 14-24 years, students will decide their future based on their interests and potential. Career is not only a matter of career decisions according to what is expected, but also leads to how students can achieve these goals, thus the role of career planning is very necessary. It was also emphasized by (Wulandari & Nirwana, 2019) that a person's career will be influenced by internal and external factors.

Parental education is one of the important aspects in student development. The condition of the educational background and work of parents affects the future and career decisions of students. Students' career decisions and choices are not only the personal choices of individual students, but also the role of parents and other parties that influence. This is a form of parental participation and expectations for their children in the future. Parents will have diversity in desires for their children's future. This is also what can influence parents on children, including the careers they decide on (Khairani et al., 2024). Parents have a great influence and involvement in the development of their children's careers. This is based on the aspect that parents are a part that is trusted and followed by children in determining attitudes. However, it will be a factor that hinders the development of children's careers if there is no good communication. The achievements of parents' careers with the livelihoods they do have an impact on the mindset of parents who can become pessimistic due to many limitations. Parents or family are the closest people who have a strong influence on the development of students' careers and as one of the external factors (Herin & Sawitri, 2017). Unrealistic student career planning and only based on will without considering strength, ability, qualification will impact on students' difficulty in achieving career goals, so education and family role are needed. Not all problems faced by students can be solved independently, parents and peers. So communication is needed that is built by students to teachers. Teachers as educators also act as motivators, facilitators and have roles that are more easily found by students at school. Students' openness in communicating with teachers can help self-development and foster self-confidence in students' career planning choices and formulations.

This condition is a big problem because career readiness is a stage that an individual must go through in developing a career. As a young generation who has a long future, students at their ideal age have a big role in positioning their lives in the future. The weak career readiness of students needs to be underlined that management of career readiness cannot be done suddenly and abruptly. Students' confusion during the ideal period regarding various factors related to career readiness has become a driver of future uncertainty. Personal factors, family, teachers, media, and other information play a major role in students' career decisions (Aspden et al., 2015). Weak information related to career paths, the job market and job market opportunities also has an impact on weak career readiness, because students will not understand where to start. Career development is not only a process of obtaining information, but also students' ability to carry out studies and make career decisions. The age period in the senior high school phase is an ideal phase and also a phase that requires great consideration. This is due to the impact and future of students after graduating from school. These data results are not in line with survey data that has been generally conducted in the Bengkulu area for career planning for vocational school students, which reached 19% (Rusmana, Nurihsan, et al., 2023).

Bengkulu society is a society that has a philosophy of life with values that it upholds highly. This is a form of cultural integration in community activities, not only in community activities but also in the academic sphere. Based on the survey results, the students come from various tribes in Bengkulu, such as the Rejang tribe, Serawai tribe, Pekal tribe, reluctant tribe, Kaur tribe, and Muko-muko tribe. The values in each culture influence the thinking patterns and characteristics of students during school. This is the authority and role of schools in providing career, academic, social and personal guidance services through a cultural approach. In accordance with the Law on the Advancement of Culture

Number 5 of 2017, the role of various parties in safeguarding, maintaining and preserving culture by the central, regional or regional governments and educational institutions.

Career exploration is an important stage in a career. At this stage students are given extensive opportunities to explore further information related to work, so that students can understand their own abilities, talents and interests which then become considerations in making career decisions. There are times when individuals in life will make a career decision for the future. Career decisions are very important because everything will start from the career that has been formulated. Making a career decision does not just happen without any steps or processes, but it requires accuracy, in-depth analysis and the consequences that arise as a result of the career choice. Career decision making is part of the selection process carried out by students from alternative career choices according to their self-understanding, abilities and interests. In this position, students will usually experience doubts, which will require a long time and the involvement of various parties. The research results show that 89.5% of teachers' involvement in career guidance and information will help students in career choices (Kimiti and Mwova 2012).

Obtaining job and career information is an aspect that students must pay attention to. In this aspect, students are required to obtain information related to the work they have chosen. This information is to understand the requirements and career path that will be achieved if they choose this job. This is also a step for students to be able to prepare themselves more maturely. The next final stage is individual readiness in career readiness. Every career decision that a student will choose must be accompanied by the student's lifestyle. This lifestyle is a support and will help students in making career choices. Individual readiness in career readiness provides space for students to gain experience and finalize career choices so that there will be no doubts after the career choice has been decided. And guidance and counseling teachers have a big role in forming the character of students (Juwanto, Taufiq, and Yustiana 2023) from a variety of different cultures and backgrounds. Students are diverse individuals with different characters and backgrounds, but their lives cannot be separated from cultural elements wherever they live. Every student has plans and hopes for the future and aspirations (Fitrayani and Zuhdi 2024). However, the existence of culture can influence a person's career development. Students will take a stance on decisions after graduating from school, these decisions take various forms in their careers, such as working, continuing their studies, joining friends and others. This condition causes confusion in career decisions if students do not have mature career readiness. Career readiness is very important in the lives of school students so that the role of teachers is needed in providing direction and guidance to students (Ayunda et al., 2024), apart from that, it is also a starting point for students (Rahmananda, 2024). Students grow and develop in accordance with their developmental tasks which are influenced by their cultural elements. The existence of the family as a space for students to receive education based on cultural values. Cultural diversity that exists in society is a form of source of creativity and innovation that occurs within individuals to achieve the future of humanity. It is assumed that culture itself is a form of human thought and cultivation. The development in the life span that emerges in students is a reflection of the inherent existence and history that provides opportunities to learn and obtain formal education at school (Rusmana, Hafina, et al. 2023).

Families have a role in communicating cultural values to children apart from the role of schools. This shows that in education, fostering student creativity is a shared role for both parents and the school. With the current conditions of the industrial revolution, teachers and parents are faced with tough challenges in preparing the next generation of young people. Career guidance as a construction is given to the younger generation to be able to discover abilities, skills, so that satisfaction is achieved and the role of the family is very large, so that students have a clear career road map and are encouraged to be able to obtain employability (Ali and Mukhibat 2017) (Sumo et al., 2023). Even among high school students in Greece, the role of parents and students' career decision making has a strong influence (Pappas & Kounenou, 2011). Meanwhile in Malaysia, the existence of contextual factors such as role models in the family and weak career information influence career choices (Mohd et al., 2010). The career decisions taken will depend on the individual's lifestyle (Gray et al., 2020).

Career is a very crucial field in every country, this is because it will have an impact on the progress of a country, especially on the emergence of unemployment, so support is needed from all parties, including parents (Sulistiobudi & Kadiyono, 2023). Every student has hopes for the future of work so that they are able to adapt to their careers and have an impact on life satisfaction (Zeng et al.,

2022) . This condition is a special concern for every country, especially educational institutions as a space for students to prepare for the future. Through school, students are required to be able to self-identify their strengths and weaknesses. Students must have a strong awareness of future orientation in career development (Lai et al., 2024) . This is to equip students in preparation for the career choice decision they will take. Students who Weakness in career readiness will cause them to lose control and self-control, so that choices only rely on wishful thinking without paying attention to talents and interests.

Bengkulu as a region also known as "rafflesia land" upholds ancestral values that have been inherited by ancestors. In forming a strong character in humans for the Bengkulu community, it is depicted in the planting of advice for the Bengkulu community to become someone who "belaram" and consistent togetherness and "seio sekato". In the realization of the development of the values of "Sekundang setungguan" continues to be a container of togetherness in achieving success wherever they are. As one of the provinces on the island of Sumatra, Bengkulu has a variety of cultures that are passed down from generation to generation. As part of the cultural system of society with tribal attributes and which bind its people (Woodworth, 1989). in the implementation of the sekundang value, it is waiting for the role of various parties to go hand in hand and contribute in the form of planting and understanding cultural values in society, cultural inheritance for the younger generation. This role is carried out by the local government, schools, traditional halls, communities and families. This is in accordance with the policy that has been set by the government through the Law on Cultural Advancement Number 5 of 2017. Cultural development cannot be separated from the existence of society, because the policy places society as the driving force and owner and active in national culture. Culture as the foundation and direction in national development in general, it is based on social life and development in various aspects. So what is done by the Serawai Tribe community as a form of; 1) developing noble cultural values, 2) preserving local culture, 3) influencing the direction of development, 4) using objects of cultural advancement in everyday life, 5) maintaining the ecosystem of ancestral culture and 6) passing on objects of cultural advancement to the wider community and the younger generation.

Culture cannot be separated from society, and society cannot be separated from territory. So that the power of culture can continue to coexist and influence the progress of human civilization. With the existing cultural values, it will become a strength for society and a manifestation in society. The value of cultural strength is not only in behavioral patterns, attitudes, rituals that make humans their objects, but also as a strength in the environment and natural resources. This is also the basis for ancestors and ancient people to protect and glorify the surrounding nature. The habits of the Serawai Tribe who garden and farm form a pattern of society in exploring the potential of the region as a natural force that cannot be separated. This is what underlies the Serawai community in preserving the cultural values of their ancestors in various activities and activities so that they are still growing and developing until now. Through various activities that are held, apart from being people's entertainment, they also provide meaning as regulators of norms of life in society and become identity (Rahmadani et al., 2023).

The cultural values taken in this research are the values contained in one of the cultural objects in the form of Oral Tradition, namely "Sekundang Sengguan", as an approach to implementing career guidance . " Sekundang Sengguan" is part of an oral tradition that has long emerged and been passed down from the ancestors of the Serawai Bengkulu ethnic group. This oral tradition is a form of motivation and hard work for young people to be able to have a successful career together. Cultural understanding is important because it is necessary to navigate a multicultural world (Choi, 2024) (Helmut Zelloth 2014) (Vázquez-Sánchez et al. 2021) (García-Martínez de Bartolomé et al., 2020; Im & Lee, 2018) . So that student culture plays a role in career achievements in the form of ideas, behavior, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, mobility and career hopes (Faran, Dastgeer, And Akhtar 2022) (Wati et al., 2021) (Sivaprakasam et al., 2021) . Students who grow and develop within the scope of school will not be separated from their cultural background. Cultural aspects have great power as elements that either directly or indirectly play a role in influencing student development. Through the value of Sekundang Sengguan, students are taught to have a responsible attitude towards themselves and the future. The value of Sekundang Sengguan also teaches the importance of the value of togetherness and mutual cooperation in difficult conditions and achieving success together. Not all students have good career readiness, which will have an impact on maturity in career decisions. Students who have better career readiness have responsibility and a sense of empathy built to be able to help their friends who

still have difficulty in formulating career readiness. Apart from that, students also have a hardworking attitude, do not give up on circumstances and obstacles, are sportsmanlike and humble. This aspect really influences students' development in career readiness.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights that students' career planning remains weak across various aspects, including career exploration, decision-making, access to job information, knowledge of chosen occupations, and individual readiness. Gender analysis shows that female students are generally more prepared than males, while among ethnic groups in Bengkulu, the Serawai rank higher in career readiness compared to others. Weak career planning negatively impacts career development, making it difficult for students to decide on a clear career path. Thus, fostering an understanding of career planning from an early age is essential.

Career decisions are not solely personal; they are influenced by parents and other key stakeholders. Parental aspirations often shape students' career choices, adding complexity to career planning. However, career readiness cannot be achieved suddenly; it requires gradual management and guidance. Cultural diversity within society also plays a significant role in shaping career development, serving as a source of creativity and innovation for achieving future goals.

Career readiness is a critical stage in students' development, enabling them to navigate challenges and seize opportunities. Weak career readiness, caused by limited information, lack of guidance, or cultural disconnection, often results in career uncertainty. Addressing this issue requires collaborative efforts among families, schools, and communities. Integrating cultural values, such as the Serawai philosophy of *Sekundang Setungguan*, into career guidance programs can provide a solid framework for personal and collective success. These values, emphasizing cooperation, resilience, and mutual support, help students develop responsibility, empathy, and perseverance.

By leveraging cultural strengths and fostering collaborative support systems, students can build strong career readiness. As future contributors to society, those equipped with robust career planning and decision-making skills are better positioned to thrive in an increasingly complex and competitive world.

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