

Navigating Diverse Career Paths: Students' Perception on Career Counselling Need in Islamic Universities

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the needs of career counseling services for students in different majors in Islamic universities and identify how these services can be tailored to meet their unique needs. A mixed-methods approach was used to collect and analyze data from undergraduate students in diverse majors at an Islamic university in Kendari, Indonesia. The study found that students in certain majors require more specific counseling, such as information on job market trends and technical skills development. Additionally, the study suggests that career counseling services can be tailored to meet the specific needs of students in diverse majors by providing specialized workshops and networking events, as well as spiritual counseling and guidance. Providing a combination of in-person and online resources can also be highly beneficial for students' career development. The findings of this study can inform the development of more effective and tailored career counseling services for students in Islamic universities and help ensure that graduates are well-prepared for the job market and can make meaningful contributions to society.

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1. Introduction

To ensure a successful future, it is important for every student to have career aspirations, as it is a fundamental requirement for leading a fulfilling life (Aschbacher, Ing, & Tsai, 2014; Nuraini et al., 2019). Career counseling plays a crucial role in helping students in universities make informed career decisions and achieve their professional goals (Argyropoulou & Kaliris, 2018; Tovar, 2015). Islamic universities provide students with a diverse range of majors, from religious studies to science and technology, to prepare them for various career paths. It is important for students to engage in career planning at a young age in order to prepare themselves for the future and map out the necessary steps to achieve their goals and objectives (Anwar et al., 2021) and it is also a crucial aspect of one's life journey, and it plays a significant role in education as it encompasses personal work values, job choices, and decision making. Education is commonly linked to making a positive impact, contributing to society, and having a meaningful role, making it a conducive setting for pursuing career opportunities (Esters, 2008). In addition, it is expected that students will cultivate an independent mindset that they can rely on, and be equipped to confront the competitive globalization and career challenges that lie ahead. To this end, various initiatives and measures are being implemented to provide career services for students attending Islamic Colleges (PTKIN), such as State Islamic Institute of Kendari and other Islamic University in Southeast Sulawesi.

This is particularly important in Islamic universities where students may have different career aspirations and face unique challenges related to their chosen fields. Additionally, research has found that providing students with access to relevant career resources and tools can enhance their career development (Miharja, 2019).

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Career counseling is a crucial service provided to university students to assist them in making informed decisions about their future careers (Lent, 2001; Sharma et al., 2021). In Islamic universities, career counseling has the added challenge of catering to students with diverse majors ranging from religious studies to science and technology. Despite the importance of career counseling in Islamic universities, there is a lack of research on the specific needs and challenges of these students. Recent studies have explored the effectiveness of career counseling services (Autin et al., 2020; Miharja, 2019) and the exploration of career counseling practices in Islamic universities (Anwar et al., 2021; Nuraini et al., 2019). However, there is still a need to understand the specific career counseling needs of students in different majors, how counseling services can be tailored to meet their unique needs, and the career resources and tools that are most useful for them (Whiston & Rose, 2015). Addressing these research questions is critical to developing effective career counseling services in Islamic universities that support students in navigating diverse career paths.

The need for effective career counseling in higher education institutions, including Islamic universities, has never been greater. With the rapidly evolving job market and increasing competition among job seekers, it is essential for universities to equip their students with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their future careers. This is especially important for students from diverse majors in Islamic universities who may face unique challenges in navigating their career paths. By identifying the specific career counseling needs of these students, as well as effective methods for tailoring career counseling services and identifying useful career resources and tools, universities can better support their students in achieving their career goals. Therefore, this study aims to provide valuable insights into how career counseling can be enhanced and tailored to meet the specific needs of students in Islamic universities.

Therefore, this research aims to explore the needs of career counseling of students in different majors in Islamic universities, and identify how career counseling services can be tailored to meet these needs. To achieve these research goals, a mixed-methods study, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. First, we will administer a survey to students across different majors in Islamic universities to identify their perceived career counseling needs. Then, we will conduct in-depth interviews with a subset of survey respondents to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and perspectives on career counseling services. The findings of this research can inform the development of more effective and tailored career counseling services for students in Islamic universities. By identifying the specific career counseling needs of students in diverse majors, this study can contribute to a better understanding of the career development needs of students in Islamic universities and inform future research on this topic.

2. Method

This study aimed to explore the career counseling needs of students in different majors, how career counseling services can be tailored to meet their unique needs, based on their perceptions. A mixed-methods approach was used to collect and analyze data. The study involved a 101 sample of undergraduate students from diverse majors at an Islamic university in Kendari, Indonesia. Participants were recruited through an online survey invitation sent to *Whatsapp group chat*. Data were collected through an online survey that consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The survey was developed based on a literature review of previous studies related to career counseling in Islamic universities. The survey included questions about the students' demographic information, their perceptions of the need of career counseling. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were analyzed using content analysis. The study was approved by the institutional review board of the participating university. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they could participate in the study. Participants were informed that their responses would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes.

3. Results

The survey was completed by 101 students from diverse majors at the Islamic university in Kendari. The participants were undergraduate student which equally distributed by gender, with 76% female and 24% male respondents range age 18-20 years old. The participants were from three

different Islamic universities or institution in Kendari, Indonesia, namely State Islamic Institute of Kendari (IAIN Kendari), Muhammadiyah University of Kendari and Nadhlatul Ulama University of Southeast Sulawesi (UNUSRA) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Institution Distribution

No	Institution	Number of Participants
1	IAIN Kendari	40
2	UM Kendari	29
3	UNSULTRA	32

The results showed that students in different majors had specific career counseling needs. For instance, students majoring in science and technology reported needing more information on the job market and networking opportunities, while students majoring in religious studies expressed the need for guidance on how to balance their spiritual and career goals. The study found that students had specific career counseling needs. Below is the example of question of the questionnaire:

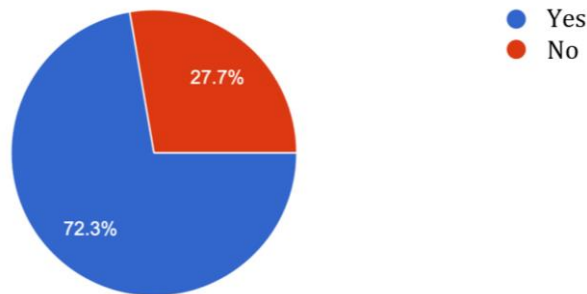


Figure 1. Anxiety about Unemployment After Graduation

Based on the Figure 1, it can be observed that 72% of respondents reported experiencing anxiety and fear about becoming unemployed or not being able to find a job after graduating from college. This data suggests that students still require guidance and counseling concerning employment prospects after obtaining their degree. Furthermore, in the subsequent question regarding "Fear of being unable to plan for the future" (see Figure 2) learners also indicated that more than 50% of them did not know what to do or what they would do to plan for their future.

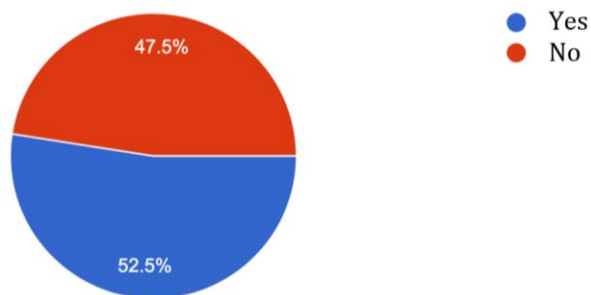


Figure 2. Fear of Being Unable to Plan for the Future

Response to the question "Lack of broad knowledge about job fields and types of jobs," it is proven that 87.1% of respondents reported that they still lack information regarding the types of jobs that are suitable for them (see Figure 3). The figure also highlights the need for career counseling as the majority of student respondents are unaware of the various types of jobs available in the job market. This emphasizes the importance of providing career guidance to students.

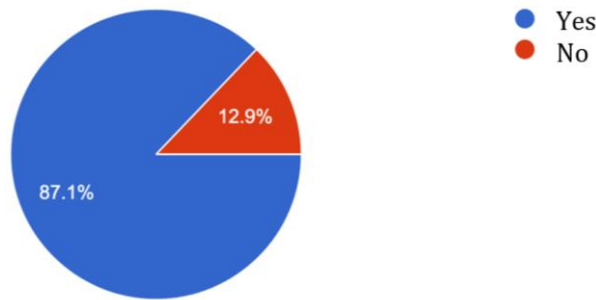


Figure 3. Lack of Broad Knowledge about Job Fields and Types of Jobs

In Figure 4, regarding "Inability to make decisions regarding their future job," it is shown that 55.4% of students responded that they still feel incapable of making decisions in their lives regarding the job they will take, including how to become their own leader in making decisions about their future career. More than half of the students lack the courage to determine their own fate.

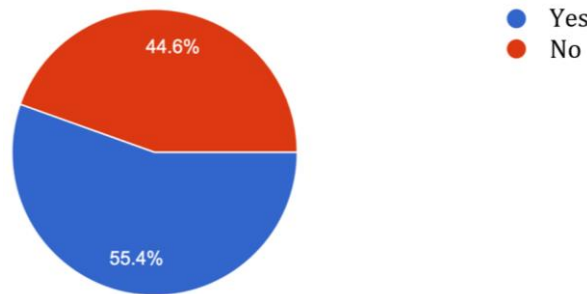


Figure 4. Inability to Make Decisions Regarding their Future Job

In Figure 5, "I want to participate in specific training that really supports the job search and application process", 70.3% of students responded that they truly need a medium or training to help them determine their career and future through a job that suits their interests and talents. This also indicates that career guidance and counseling are essential and a necessity for students in helping them design their future through suitable employment based on their interests and talents.

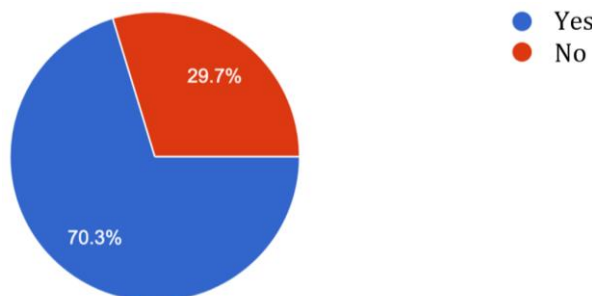


Figure 5. Desire to Participate in Specific Training That Really Supports the Job Search and Application Process

During the qualitative data collection session through interviews, it was also found that students in certain study programs require more specific counseling. For example, economic study program students reported needing more information on job market trends, teacher training study program students expressed the need for technical skills development. Furthermore, the religious studies students reported the need for guidance on how to integrate their spiritual beliefs with their career goals. Moreover, the study found that career counseling services could be tailored to meet the unique needs of students in diverse majors. For example, counselors could provide more specialized workshops and networking events for students in science and technology majors, while providing

spiritual counseling and guidance for students in religious studies majors. Additionally, the study found that providing online career counseling resources, such as webinars and virtual career fairs, could be beneficial for all students. The study found that career counseling services can be tailored to meet the unique needs of students in diverse majors.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of career counseling for students and tailoring career counseling services to meet the specific needs of students in diverse majors at Islamic universities. The findings suggest that providing a combination of in-person and online resources can be highly beneficial for students' career development. Career counselors can use these findings to improve their services and better support students in pursuing their career goals.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the importance of career counseling services and support for students in diverse majors at Islamic universities. Based on several questionnaire results, it can be concluded that the average student responses tend to indicate their need for career counseling in helping them determine career choices and resolving challenges they face. This is supported by the majority of their responses indicating agreement with the questionnaire questions, with over 50% agreeing with statements such as "Lack of broad knowledge about job fields and types of jobs". Furthermore, 87% of students responded that they still lacked information regarding suitable career choices for themselves. Career counselors can use these findings to improve their services and better assist students in achieving their career goals. These findings are consistent with previous research, which has also found that students need career counseling to help them deciding the proper and better career for them (Anwar et al., 2021; Carnevale et al., 2022; Darmayanti, Prasetyo, Winata, & Sakti, 2020; Eliamani, Richard, & Peter, 2014; Gati, & Kulcsár, 2021; Nike & Anike, 2023; Nweze, & Okolie, 2014; Verbruggen, Dries, & Van Laer, 2017).

Moreover, the results also suggest that career counseling services can be tailored to meet the unique needs of students in diverse majors by providing a combination of resources. For instance, engineering and technology majors expressed interest in more specialized workshops and internship opportunities, while religious studies majors preferred mentorship programs. Furthermore, the findings of this study have implications for career counseling services at Islamic universities. Career counselors can use these findings to improve their services and better support students in pursuing their career goals. By providing a variety of resources, career counselors can help students in diverse majors to achieve their career aspirations. Furthermore, career counseling services can collaborate with academic departments to develop tailored career counseling programs that meet the specific needs of students in different majors. One of them is using Islamic career guidance in improving the career maturity of the students (Miharja, 2019).

The importance of career guidance for students, especially in Islamic universities, cannot be denied. Many students are still confused in determining the career they will pursue after graduation. Therefore, career guidance is important to help them explore their interests, talents, and skills and provide the necessary information in determining a career that is suitable for their interests and abilities. Effective career guidance can help students prepare themselves for an increasingly competitive job market. Islamic universities as educational institutions have a responsibility to provide good and integrated career guidance for their students (Miharja, 2019). Career guidance that focuses on the needs and desires of students can help them obtain a job that is suitable for their interests and talents. Therefore, there needs to be an adjustment in career guidance services to meet the needs of students from various majors in Islamic universities (Anwar et al., 2021).

The present study aimed to investigate the career counseling needs of students from diverse majors in Islamic universities, and to identify ways in which career counseling services can be tailored to meet these unique needs. The study also sought to explore the most useful career resources and tools for students, as perceived by the students themselves. The results of the study suggest that students in different majors have different career counseling needs. For instance, students in science and technology majors expressed the need for more information about career opportunities in their field, while students in religious studies majors wanted more guidance on how to apply their skills to the job market. Additionally, the study found that career counseling services

need to be tailored to meet the unique needs of students from different majors. For example, career counselors may need to provide more technical information to science and technology students, while helping religious studies students explore non-traditional career paths.

The study also revealed that students perceived individualized counseling as the most useful resource for career counseling. Students felt that individualized counseling sessions provided them with the opportunity to ask specific questions and receive personalized guidance such as what kind of job will be suitable for them, the types of job available and so on. In addition, the study found that online career resources were also perceived as useful, particularly by students in all major.

The findings of this study have several implications for career counseling services in Islamic universities. First, career counselors need to be trained to provide tailored counseling services to students from diverse majors. Second, universities need to invest in online career resources and tools to support students' career exploration and decision-making. Finally, universities need to ensure that career counseling services are accessible and affordable to all students. Islamic university can also tailor the counseling using Islamic-based counseling (Nuraini et al., 2019), using cultural-based counseling (Esters, 2008; Paralkar, 2022), or enhancing career self-efficacy of the student (Elfina & Andriany, 2023). These findings are consistent with previous research in the field, which has shown that career counseling is a crucial service for university students (Anwar et al., 2021; Miharja, 2019; Nuraini et al., 2019). However, this study adds to the literature by specifically examining the unique needs of students in Islamic universities with diverse majors. The results of this study have important implications for policymakers, university administrators, and career counselors who seek to support students in navigating diverse career paths.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has shed light on the specific career counseling needs of students in Islamic universities in Kendari, Indonesia. The findings have highlighted the importance of tailoring career counseling services to meet the unique needs of students in diverse majors as well, such as providing information on job prospects, connecting students with alumni networks, and offering specialized training programs. The study has also revealed some challenges that need to be addressed in order to improve career counseling services for students in Islamic universities. For example, there is a need to overcome cultural barriers that may prevent students from seeking career guidance, and to ensure that career counselors are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to support students from different majors. Overall, this study highlights the importance of providing effective career counseling services to support the diverse career aspirations of students in Islamic universities. By addressing the specific needs of students from different majors, and providing them with the necessary resources and tools, universities can help to ensure that their graduates are well-prepared for the job market and can make meaningful contributions to society. We hope that the findings of this study will be useful to career counselors, university administrators, and policymakers who are interested in improving career counseling services for students in Islamic universities.

Author Contributions

All authors have equal contributions to the paper. All the authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

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