



A Career Counseling Model as a Therapeutic Approach for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Noorsofiana Affandi^{1*}, Asmah Haji Husaini²

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to:

* Noorsofiana Affandi, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei Darussalam,
 sofianaaffandi@gmail.com

This article is available online at <https://doi.org/10.64420/ijcp.v2i3>

How to Cite this Article (APA 7th Edition):

Affandi, N., & Husaini, A. H. (2025). A Career Counseling Model as a Therapeutic Approach for Students with Intellectual Disabilities. *International Journal of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 2(3), 144-153. <https://doi.org/10.64420/ijcp.v2i3.377>

SCROLL DOWN TO READ THIS ARTICLE



Academia Edu Cendekia Indonesia (AEDUCIA), as the publisher, makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all information (the "Content") contained in its publications. However, we make no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy, completeness, or suitability of the Content for any purpose. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors and do not reflect or are endorsed by AEDUCIA. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon without independent verification using primary sources. AEDUCIA shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, or other liabilities, whether direct or indirect, arising from the use of the Content.

International Journal of Counseling and Psychotherapy (IJCP) is published by AEDUCIA and complies with the [Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing](#) at all stages of the publication process. IJCP may also contain links to websites operated by other parties. These links are provided solely for the dissemination of knowledge in the fields of education, counseling, and psychology.

Article Information

Copyright holder:

© Affandi, N., & Husaini, A. H. (2025)

First Publication Right:

International Journal of Counseling and Psychotherapy

Article info:

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64420/ijcp.v2i2.377>

Word Count: 6304

Publisher's Note:

The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of AEDUCIA and/or the editor(s). AEDUCIA and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.

This Article is licensed under the: [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information, are available at:

<https://ojs.aedicia.org/index.php/ijcp/about>



Copyright @ 2025 by the author(s). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0) License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)



A Career Counseling Model as a Therapeutic Approach for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Noorsofiana Affandi^{1*}, Asmah Haji Husaini² 

^{1,2} Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei Darussalam

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: November 2, 2025

Revised: December 26, 2025

Accepted: December 28, 2025

Published: December 31, 2025

CONTENT

[Introduction](#)

[Method](#)

[Result and Discussion](#)

[Implications and Contributions](#)

[Limitations & Future Research Directions](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[CRediT Authorship Contribution Statement](#)

[Declaration of GenAI in Scientific Writing](#)

[Conflict of Interest Statement](#)

[Informed Consent Statement](#)

[References](#)

[Author Information](#)

ABSTRACT

Background: Career counseling is crucial for students with intellectual disabilities, enabling them to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for future employment. These students require personalized career guidance that addresses their unique abilities and challenges. **Objective:** This study aimed to investigate the planning and implementation of career guidance for students with special needs at the senior high school level. **Method:** A qualitative phenomenological approach was used to examine students' experiences and perceptions of the career guidance process. The research, conducted in 2025 at government secondary schools within the Brunei-Muara district, involved 14 students. Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using Miles & Huberman's interactive model. **Result:** Career guidance was highly individualized, focusing on each student's abilities and needs. Demonstration methods were commonly employed, with clear and instructive steps to ensure comprehension and skill acquisition. **Conclusion:** Career guidance at government secondary schools within the Brunei-Muara district was effectively implemented using individualized, instructive approaches with demonstration techniques to meet students' unique learning needs. **Contribution:** This study makes a significant contribution to special education and career counseling by highlighting the need for adaptive and individualized career guidance models for students with intellectual disabilities. It offers valuable insights for educators, counselors, and policymakers on creating inclusive career programs within special education institutions.

KEY WORDS

Career counseling model; Therapeutic approach; Students with intellectual disabilities

1. INTRODUCTION

Students with intellectual disabilities face complex challenges in their educational journey, particularly in developing life skills and preparing for future careers. Limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior frequently affect their ability to plan, make decisions, and adjust to the demands of the work environment (Gorddard et al., 2016). As a result, these students require educational and counseling services that are not only instructional but

also therapeutic in nature, emphasizing emotional support, self-understanding, and gradual skill development. Career counseling designed with a therapeutic approach is, therefore, considered an essential service to support independence and improve the overall quality of life of students with intellectual disabilities (Rezaiee & Kareski, 2024).

In many educational systems, students with intellectual disabilities are served either through special needs schools or inclusive education settings (Gavish, 2017). Special needs schools are designed to accommodate students

* Corresponding Author: Noorsofiana Affandi,  sofianaaffandi@gmail.com

Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei Darussalam

Address: Jalan Tungku Link, Gadong, BE1410, Brunei Darussalam



with similar disabilities, aiming to develop their remaining potential so that they can live independently and adapt to their social environment (Mahmood et al., 2025). In contrast, inclusive education integrates students with special needs into regular schools using the same curriculum, teachers, and learning environments (Gavish, 2017). While both systems seek to promote students' development, special needs schools play a vital role in providing individualized support and vocational preparation for students with intellectual disabilities, especially at the secondary level.

Intellectual disability is defined as a condition characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, including conceptual, social, and practical skills (Simplican et al., 2015). These limitations often hinder students' ability to understand career options, recognize their strengths, and make informed decisions regarding future employment. Consequently, students with intellectual disabilities are at greater risk of unemployment, dependency, and social exclusion if appropriate career guidance is not provided during their school years (Lent & Brown, 2020). This highlights the critical role of career counseling services in helping these students prepare for a successful transition from school to the workplace.

Career counseling refers to systematic guidance that helps individuals understand themselves, explore career opportunities, and develop realistic career plans (Carvalho et al., 2023). For students with intellectual disabilities, career counseling extends beyond traditional career planning and must incorporate therapeutic elements, such as emotional regulation, confidence-building, and gradual skill acquisition (Vaiid, 2024). Therapeutic career counseling focuses on helping students identify their strengths, cope with anxiety related to future employment, and develop adaptive behaviors that support independence and social participation (Enns et al., 2016). Previous studies have demonstrated that counseling interventions, including individual counseling and group-based approaches such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, can improve career maturity, self-confidence, and decision-making skills among students with special needs.

Comprehensive career guidance programs for students with intellectual disabilities generally follow several developmental stages, including career awareness, career exploration, pre-vocational education, vocational training, and post-vocational preparation (Lent et al., 2020). These stages are designed to gradually prepare students to become independent and productive members of society. However, conventional career counseling approaches are often less effective for students with intellectual disabilities because they do not sufficiently address the emotional and therapeutic support required to build resilience, self-efficacy, and independence. As a result, many students struggle to determine suitable career paths and lack access to counseling services tailored to their specific needs.

Despite the growing body of research on career counseling for students with special needs, several gaps remain. Previous studies have primarily focused on the effectiveness of specific counseling techniques or interventions at the individual level, with limited attention to how career counseling services are implemented within special needs secondary schools (Yuen et al., 2022; David et al., 2022; Carvalho et al., 2023; Whiston et al., 2017; Hom et al., 2015). Moreover, there is a lack of empirical research examining the institutional factors that support or hinder the delivery of therapeutic career counseling, particularly within specific cultural and educational contexts. In the context of the Brunei-Muara district, research exploring how special needs high schools provide career counseling services for students with intellectual disabilities is still limited.

Based on these conditions, the research problem addressed in this study is the limited understanding of how therapeutic career counseling services are implemented for students with intellectual disabilities in special needs secondary schools, as well as the factors that influence their effectiveness. This study seeks to analyze both the supporting and inhibiting factors in the career counseling process, including school resources, counselor competencies, institutional policies, and student-related challenges.

This study aims to examine the role of Special Needs High Schools in the Brunei-Muara district in providing career counseling services for students with intellectual disabilities. By identifying the strengths and barriers within existing counseling practices, this research is expected to contribute to the development of more effective, context-sensitive, and therapeutic career counseling models that support the independence and future employability of students with intellectual disabilities.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design. The approach used is phenomenological, which typically operates within a micro-subjective realm and is based on a case study. The term "micro-subjective" refers to the level of social reality being studied as a small segment of a broader social continuum, intentionally targeted as the focal point of the research within a limited scope. As a result, this phenomenological study does not aim to interpret or understand the macro-level social realities that individuals construct through their interactions with the world. In phenomenological research, symbolic interaction is a key analytical framework to consider. This study describes career counseling stages for students with mild intellectual disabilities in the Brunei-Muara district.

2.2 Research Subject

The study was conducted at government secondary schools within the Brunei-Muara district in 2025. The researcher selected four students with mild intellectual disabilities and five guidance counselors as the primary informants. Additional informants included the school principal, administrative staff, and three parents of students with mild intellectual disabilities. A total of seven informants participated in this study. Informants were selected using purposive sampling. The criteria for informants included students with mild intellectual disabilities who are capable of reading, writing, and basic arithmetic, as well as their guidance counselors.

2.3 Data Sources

Data sources consisted of: (1) Primary Data was obtained directly from field sources through interviews and observations of students with intellectual disabilities at government secondary schools within the Brunei-Muara district; (2) Secondary Data was gathered from supporting informants such as teachers and parents of students, as well as previous research and relevant literature.

Data were collected using observation, interviews, and documentation. An observation was conducted to examine how career counseling is carried out and to identify supporting factors in the counseling process at government secondary schools within the Brunei-Muara district. Interviews involved asking structured questions to students, guidance counselors, the principal, and parents about the stages of the career counseling process, including self-awareness, values, understanding the environment, identifying obstacles and strategies for overcoming them, planning for the future, and recognizing both supporting and inhibiting factors. Documentation involved collecting, selecting, and categorizing documents relevant to the research objectives. These documents were then described, recorded, interpreted, and linked to other phenomena to enhance the validity of the data.

2.4 Data Validity Check

Data validation was conducted by triangulating multiple methods to examine the interconnected phenomena from different viewpoints and perspectives. The researcher used three types of triangulations: (1) Methodological triangulation, comparing information or data collected through different techniques. Source triangulation, validating specific pieces of information through various methods and sources. Theoretical triangulation, testing the consistency and relevance of multiple theories in relation to the research data.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles & Huberman, which includes: (1) Data reduction.

Selecting and focusing on relevant data related to career counseling for students with mild intellectual disabilities at government secondary schools within the Brunei-Muara district will help the researcher present a clearer picture of the study; (2) Data display, organizing the reduced data into a narrative text to present findings on career counseling for students with intellectual disabilities; (3) Conclusion and Verification, reviewing and interpreting the data, identifying the important information, and presenting the final results in a written narrative format. The researcher then concludes and verifies the findings related to career counseling.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

This section presents the study's findings, based on a thematic analysis of interview data collected from guidance teachers at government secondary schools in the Brunei-Muara district that serve students with intellectual disabilities. The results describe the stages of career counseling implementation as well as the supporting and hindering factors encountered in practice.

a) Developing Self-Understanding

The first theme identified from the interviews relates to the development of students' self-understanding. Guidance teachers reported that career counseling activities were integrated into daily teaching and learning processes. Through continuous observation and informal assessment, teachers helped students recognize their basic abilities, interests, and talents. This stage focused on enabling students to understand themselves, including their strengths, limitations, interests, and aspirations. One guidance teacher explained:

"Self-understanding is built little by little. We observe what students can do every day, what activities they enjoy, and which skills they repeat confidently" (AG Informant).

Teachers emphasized that self-understanding develops gradually by observing students' daily activities and identifying skills that students can perform consistently.

b) Aligning Talents, Interests, and Self-Potential

The second theme involved aligning students' talents and interests with their personal potential. Guidance teachers emphasized the importance of helping students identify values related to work and daily living. During counseling sessions, students were encouraged to select activities and skills that aligned with their interests and abilities. Some students participated voluntarily in these activities, which helped them express preferences more clearly. As one teacher noted:

"When students are allowed to choose activities they like, they become more engaged and confident, even if their abilities are still limited" (GF Informant)". Teachers noted

that this process supported students in developing a sense of choice, although the level of independence varied among students.

c) Understanding Environmental Opportunities

Another important theme was environmental understanding. Teachers reported that students were introduced to information about their surrounding environment, including educational pathways, available training programs, and potential job opportunities after graduation. Career counseling activities were designed to align students identified abilities with realistic opportunities in the local job market. One participant stated:

"We introduce simple job roles that exist around them, so students can imagine what kind of work they might do after leaving school" (TF Informant)". Teachers explained that exposure to simple work-related activities and collaboration with external partners helped students gain a basic understanding of the world of work.

d) Recognizing Barriers and Coping Strategies

The interviews revealed that students faced several barriers in the career counseling process. These barriers included difficulties with memory, limited attention span, and boredom, which are commonly associated with cognitive limitations in students with intellectual disabilities. Teachers described strategies used to address these challenges, such as repetition of learning activities, structured routines, and close collaboration with parents. One teacher shared:

"Students often forget what they learned yesterday, so repetition is essential. We also involve parents to practice the same skills at home" (SS Informant)". According to the teachers, consistent guidance and reinforcement were necessary to help students retain skills and remain engaged.

e) Future Career Planning

The theme of future planning highlighted that many students had not yet developed realistic career plans alig-

ned with their abilities and socio-economic conditions. Teachers reported that students often expressed aspirational career goals without fully understanding the requirements of these professions. One teacher explained:

"Many students say they want to be doctors or pilots, but they do not yet understand what is required for those jobs. At this stage, we focus more on exploration than final decisions" (DS Informant)". Parents played a significant role in guiding students' plans by providing support and helping determine which skills should be prioritized. Career planning at this stage was therefore described as exploratory rather than decisive.

f) Supporting and Hindering Factors in Career Counseling

The final theme concerned factors that supported or hindered the implementation of career counseling services. Supporting factors included adapting counseling activities to students' individual needs and capacities, the availability of facilities for skill development, collaboration with local businesses, and the presence of patient and motivating teachers. One participant highlighted:

"Facilities and cooperation with external partners really help students practice real skills, not just learn in the classroom" (FG Informant)". In contrast, hindering factors included students' limited ability to absorb information, difficulties with concentration and communication, lack of discipline, and insufficient parental support in some cases. As one teacher stated:

"When parents are less involved, it becomes difficult to maintain consistency in training the students" (DZ Informant)". These factors influenced the consistency and implementation of career counseling services provided at the schools.

The following is a detailed description of the interview findings (context: career counseling at a government secondary school in the Brunei-Muara district for students with intellectual disabilities).

Table 1. Description of Research Findings

No./Stage	Focus	Process Summary	Stakeholders	Key Output	Notes: Barriers/Enablers
1. Identifying Self-Understanding	Recognize potential, interests, talents, and aspirations	Facilitators conduct assessments and observe students' daily routines; counseling is integrated with teaching activities	Facilitators, students	Students start to understand "who they are" (potential, abilities, interests, talents, aspirations)	—
2. Identifying the Alignment of Talents, Interests, and Self-Potential	Align personal values with skill choices	Students select skills that match their preferences; some join counseling voluntarily	Students, facilitators	Clearer alignment between talents/interests and chosen skills	—

No./Stage	Focus	Process Summary	Stakeholders	Key Output	Notes: Barriers/Enablers
3. Identifying Environmental Understanding	Understand further education, local resources, and job opportunities	Facilitators provide information on further study and careers; skills are aligned with students' potential and labor-market needs	Facilitators, students	Counseling effectively supports transition to work according to abilities	—
4. Identifying Obstacles and Ways to Overcome Them	Recognize barriers and solutions	Common barriers: forgetfulness and boredom linked to cognitive limitations; solution: repeated practice with support from facilitators and parents	Students, facilitators, parents	Repetitive learning helps retain and apply skills	Barriers: limited information absorption, low concentration/discipline, communication issues; Enablers: facilitator and parent support
5. Identifying Future Planning	Plan career pathways	Many students have not yet made career choices aligned with talents, interests, and socio-economic conditions; aspirations vary (doctor, teacher, flight attendant, entrepreneur)	Students, parents	Career directions begin to be discussed; parents play a significant guiding role	Challenge: immature career decisions; Key lever: parental guidance and encouragement
6. Supporting and Hindering Factors	Conditions affecting counseling	Enablers: tailoring to students' needs/capacities; adequate skill-development facilities; partnerships with businesses; patient, motivating staff. Barriers: limited information absorption; low concentration/discipline; communication barriers; insufficient parental support for some students	School, business partners, parents, facilitators, students	More adaptive learning environment; stronger links to the world of work	Positive impact when enablers are strong; progress slows when barriers dominate

Based on the table above, career counseling already follows a comprehensive sequence, starting with self-understanding, aligning talents and interests, mapping the work environment, identifying barriers, and planning for the future. Its strengths include facilitator-led assessment and observation, aligning skills with labor-market needs, and repetition strategies supported by facilitators and parents. However, progress is still slowed by immature career decision-making, as students' aspirations are often not yet realistic, and dependence on facilitators and parents remains high, compounded by cognitive and communication barriers. The implication is that schools need to lock in the planning stage through a measurable Individual Transition Plan, job sampling, and structured workplace visits, as well as evidence-based career portfolios, regular parent training, and stronger partnerships with industry to secure real internship and placement pathways. Success

can be monitored through the share of students with active RTIs, the average hours of career exploration per student per semester, stable accuracy on core tasks, parent engagement, the number of industry partners, and transition outcomes three months after graduation.

3.2. Discussion

This study examined the implementation of career counseling as a therapeutic service approach for students with intellectual disabilities in government secondary schools within the Brunei-Muara district. The findings indicate that career counseling is conducted through a series of systematic stages that reflect both instructional and therapeutic dimensions. These stages include developing self-understanding, identifying personal values, understanding environmental opportunities, recognizing obstacles, developing coping strategies, and planning for future career

goals. The discussion below interprets these findings in relation to existing theories and previous research.

The first stage, developing self-understanding, highlights the importance of helping students with intellectual disabilities recognize their abilities, interests, and limitations through continuous observation and assessment. This finding aligns with Parsons' trait and factor theory, which emphasizes self-understanding as a fundamental component of career guidance, enabling individuals to be matched with suitable occupational roles (Xu, 2021). In the context of this study, self-understanding was developed through daily instructional activities, demonstrations, and repeated practice, indicating that career counseling for students with intellectual disabilities is closely integrated with teaching and learning processes. This supports Bimo Walgito's view that career counseling should be embedded within educational activities rather than delivered as a separate service.

The individual-based approach identified in this study, which includes demonstration, role-playing, and drill methods, reflects the need for concrete and repetitive learning strategies for students with intellectual disabilities. Repetition was found to be particularly important in addressing cognitive limitations related to memory and attention, a finding consistent with Gladstone & Cimpian (2021) assertion that repeated practice strengthens learning outcomes when students rely on teachers as key role models. These instructional strategies also serve a therapeutic function by fostering confidence, emotional security, and gradual skill mastery, which are essential for career readiness among students with intellectual disabilities.

The second stage, identifying values, emphasizes the role of teachers and parents in guiding students' career-related decision-making. The findings show that despite cognitive limitations, students with intellectual disabilities often express strong aspirations and motivation to work after graduation. This supports previous research indicating that family and social support play a critical role in career development for individuals with disabilities (Guan et al., 2016). Career counseling in this context functions therapeutically by validating students' aspirations while simultaneously helping them align their goals with realistic options based on their abilities and circumstances.

Environmental understanding, as the third stage, involves introducing students to educational pathways, vocational training, and employment opportunities available in their surrounding context (Yadav et al., 2022). The findings suggest that exposure to realistic job options and alignment between students' skills and labor market demands are central components of career counseling practices in these schools. This is consistent with Lent et al. (2020), who emphasize the importance of contextual factors and environmental supports in career development, particularly for individuals with special needs. However,

the extent to which environmental exploration could be implemented depended on the availability of school resources and external collaborations.

The fourth stage, recognizing obstacles and coping strategies, highlights challenges such as limited memory, short attention spans, and reduced concentration among students with intellectual disabilities. These findings are consistent with Elsey et al. (2015), who identified cognitive and attentional difficulties as common barriers to learning and skill retention. The reliance on repetition, structured routines, and parental involvement reflects a therapeutic coping approach aimed at minimizing frustration and sustaining engagement. This underscores the importance of collaboration between schools and families in supporting students' career development.

Future career planning emerged as a complex and ongoing process. While students often expressed aspirational career goals, many had not yet developed realistic plans aligned with their abilities and socio-economic conditions. This finding aligns with Halim et al. (2018), who emphasized the crucial role of parental guidance in helping students with disabilities make informed career choices. In this study, career planning was primarily exploratory, suggesting that for students with intellectual disabilities, the goal of career counseling is not immediate decision-making but gradual preparation and readiness for post-school transitions.

From a broader counseling perspective, the findings reinforce the view that career counseling serves as a therapeutic service for students with intellectual disabilities by integrating emotional support, skill development, and self-understanding. Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of structured career counseling programs in supporting students with special needs (Lombardi et al., 2018; Ali & Cerkez, 2020). The present study extends this literature by highlighting how such approaches are implemented within government secondary schools and shaped by contextual factors, including teacher competencies, parental involvement, and institutional resources.

Overall, the findings suggest that career counseling for students with intellectual disabilities should be understood as a holistic and therapeutic process rather than a purely informational service. By integrating instructional strategies with emotional and social support, career counseling can help students develop confidence, adaptive skills, and readiness for the workforce. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing the need for context-sensitive and developmentally appropriate career counseling models that support the independence and social inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities.

The strength of this research lies in the development of a personalized and adaptive career counseling model specifically designed to meet the unique needs of students with intellectual disabilities. The study demonstrates that

career guidance, when tailored to the individual, enables students to understand their career paths better and acquire essential skills for their future. This model prioritizes a step-by-step demonstration approach, enhancing comprehension and skill acquisition for students who might otherwise struggle with traditional methods. Additionally, the use of a qualitative phenomenological approach provides a deep, nuanced understanding of students' lived experiences, offering insights into how they perceive and engage with career counseling. This methodology enables a more comprehensive examination of the challenges and successes faced by students with intellectual disabilities, illuminating the specific support they require. The findings make a significant contribution to the field of inclusive education, advocating for the importance of adaptive, student-centered career counseling models that can be replicated across various educational settings. By providing valuable insights into the realities faced by these students, this research offers practical recommendations for educators, counselors, and policymakers to create more inclusive and effective career programs that ensure students with intellectual disabilities are not left behind in preparing for their futures.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for educational practice and counseling services in government secondary schools, particularly for students with intellectual disabilities. The results indicate that career counseling, when integrated into instructional activities and designed as a therapeutic service, can support students in developing self-understanding, work readiness, and adaptive skills aligned with their abilities. Schools and counselors are encouraged to implement individualized and context-sensitive career counseling approaches that actively involve parents and external partners, such as vocational training providers and local employers. Additionally, the findings underscore the importance of institutional support and professional development in equipping teachers and counselors with the necessary competencies to deliver practical, therapeutic career counseling tailored to the cognitive, emotional, and social needs of students with intellectual disabilities.

4.1 Research Contributions

This study makes a significant contribution to the field of career counseling for students with intellectual disabilities, both theoretically and empirically, by conceptualizing career counseling as a holistic therapeutic service. Theoretically, it extends existing literature by integrating career counseling frameworks with therapeutic approaches within the context of special education at the secondary school level. Empirically, the study provides con-

text-specific insights into career counseling practices in government secondary schools in the Brunei-Muara district, identifying key stages of implementation as well as supporting and inhibiting factors. These contributions lay the groundwork for future research aimed at developing structured, sustainable, and inclusive career counseling models that foster independence and promote workforce participation among students with intellectual disabilities.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the findings. First, the research employed a qualitative design with a limited number of participants drawn from government secondary schools in the Brunei-Muara district, which may restrict the generalizability of the results to other educational contexts or regions. Second, the data were primarily collected through interviews with guidance teachers, which may reflect professional perspectives more strongly than those of students or parents. Additionally, the study focused on describing the implementation of career counseling practices without measuring long-term outcomes, such as post-school employment or sustained independence among students with intellectual disabilities.

5.1 Recommendation for Future Research Directions

Future research is recommended to expand on the findings of this study by employing mixed-methods or quantitative designs to examine the effectiveness of therapeutic career counseling on measurable outcomes, such as career readiness, self-efficacy, and post-graduation employment. Studies involving multiple stakeholders, including students with intellectual disabilities, parents, employers, and policymakers, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of career counseling processes and outcomes. Furthermore, longitudinal research is needed to explore how career counseling interventions influence students' long-term transition into the workforce and independent living, as well as to test the applicability of the proposed therapeutic career counseling model across diverse cultural and educational settings.

6. CONCLUSION

The career counseling process for students with intellectual disabilities at government secondary schools within the Brunei-Muara district consists of several stages. First is the stage of self-awareness. The second is identifying the alignment between interests, talents, and personal potential. Third is the stage of environmental understanding. Fourth, the stage of identifying obstacles and how to overcome them. Fifth is the stage of future planning. The career counseling process is conducted using an indi-

vidualized approach, presented in an instructional manner, and supplemented by career field trips. The methods employed in the career counseling process include demonstration and drill techniques.

Therapeutic-based career counseling has the potential to become an effective service model in helping students with intellectual disabilities prepare for independence and the workforce. However, this approach requires more specific strategies, including adjustments in guidance methods, involvement in the social environment, and therapies that support students' emotional and social development. Therefore, further research is needed to develop a more applicable counseling model that meets the needs of students with intellectual disabilities.

This study emphasizes the importance of career counseling as a therapeutic service for students with intellectual disabilities. The findings reveal that the right career counseling approach can help students understand themselves, enhance their social skills, and prepare them for the workforce according to their abilities. In addition to providing insights into the workforce, career counseling also fosters students' independence and self-confidence. Various methods applied in this service, including individual guidance, job skills training, and emotional support, have proven effective in increasing students' motivation and ability to adapt in both the workplace and daily life. Thus, career counseling can be implemented as a therapeutic service model that improves the quality of life for students with intellectual disabilities. This service helps them develop their potential optimally and equips them to become more independent and prepared to face life productively.

Acknowledgments

The researcher would like to thank all parties and colleagues at government secondary schools within the Brunei-Muara district for facilitating the author during the research process

CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

All authors discussed the results, contributed to the final manuscript, and approved the final version for publication. Noorsofiana Affandi: Conceptualization; Methodology; Validation; Formal analysis; Writing - Original Draft. Asmah HJ Husaini: Conceptualization, Writing - Review & Editing.

Declaration of GenAI Usage in Scientific Writing

The author declares that generative AI was used solely for grammar checking, language editing, and identifying typographical errors in the manuscript titled A Career Counseling Model as a Therapeutic Approach for Students with Intellectual Disabilities. AI tools were employed to assist in improving the clarity, flow, and overall quality

of the writing. All other aspects of the research, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation, were conducted independently by the author. All instances of Generative AI usage in this article were conducted by the authors in accordance with the [IJCP GenAI Tool Usage Policy](#), with the authors assuming full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the work.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to the publication of this study. The research was carried out with complete independence, and no financial or personal affiliations influenced the study's results.

Informed Consent Statement

The author declares that this study is a literature review and does not involve human participants, personal data, or any other subjects. Therefore, written and verbal informed consent is not required. The entire research process was conducted in accordance with academic ethical standards, upholding scientific honesty, integrity, and the ethical use of legitimate sources.

REFERENCES

Ali, N., & Cerkez, Y. (2020). The Effects of Group Counseling with Gestalt Therapy in Reducing Depression, Anxiety and Stress among Traumatized People. *Revista de cercetare si interventie sociala*, 71. <https://doi.org/10.33788/rcis.71.21>

Bucaille, A., Jarry, C., Allard, J., Brochard, S., Peudenier, S., & Roy, A. (2022). Neuropsychological profile of intellectually gifted children: A systematic review. *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*, 28(4), 424-440. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1355617721000515>

Carvalho, L., Mourão, L., & Freitas, C. (2023). Career counseling for college students: Assessment of an online and group intervention. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 140, 103820. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2022.103820>

David, L. T., Truña, C., Cazan, A. M., Albisser, S., & Keller-Schneider, M. (2022). Exploring the impact of a career guidance intervention program in schools: Effects on knowledge and skills as self-assessed by students. *Current Psychology*, 41(7), 4545-4556. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00973-0a>

Elsey, C., Drew, P., Jones, D., Blackburn, D., Wakefield, S., Harkness, K., ... & Reuber, M. (2015). Towards diagnostic conversational profiles of patients presenting with dementia or functional memory disorders to memory clinics. *Patient education and counseling*, 98(9), 1071-1077. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2015.05.021>

Enns, J., Holmqvist, M., Wener, P., Halas, G., Rothney, J., Schultz, A., ... & Katz, A. (2016). Mapping interventions that promote mental health in the general population: a scoping review of reviews. *Preventive medicine*, 87, 70-80.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2016.02.022>

Gavish, B. (2017). Four profiles of inclusive supportive teachers: Perceptions of their status and role in implementing inclusion of students with special needs in general classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 61, 37-46.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.10.004>

Gladstone, J. R., & Cimpian, A. (2021). Which role models are effective for which students? A systematic review and four recommendations for maximizing the effectiveness of role models in STEM. *International journal of STEM education*, 8(1), 59.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-021-00315-x>

Gomez, R., Stavropoulos, V., Vance, A., & Griffiths, M. D. (2020). Gifted children with ADHD: how are they different from non-gifted children with ADHD?. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 18, 1467-1481.
<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1007/s11469-019-00125-x>

Gorddard, R., Colloff, M. J., Wise, R. M., Ware, D., & Dunlop, M. (2016). Values, rules and knowledge: Adaptation as change in the decision context. *Environmental science & policy*, 57, 60-69.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2015.12.004>

Guan, P., Capezio, A., Restubog, S. L. D., Read, S., Lajom, J. A. L., & Li, M. (2016). The role of traditionality in the relationships among parental support, career decision-making self-efficacy and career adaptability. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 94, 114-123.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2016.02.018>

Halim, L., Abd Rahman, N., Zamri, R., & Mohtar, L. (2018). The roles of parents in cultivating children's interest towards science learning and careers. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 39(2), 190-196.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.kjss.2017.05.001>

Hom, M. A., Stanley, I. H., & Joiner Jr, T. E. (2015). Evaluating factors and interventions that influence help-seeking and mental health service utilization among suicidal individuals: A review of the literature. *Clinical psychology review*, 40, 28-39.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2015.05.006>

Latifah, I. (2020). Pendidikan Segregasi, Mainstreaming, Integrasi dan inklusi, apa bedanya?. *Jurnal Pendidikan*, 29(2), 101-108.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.kjss.2017.05.001>

Lent, R. W., & Brown, S. D. (2020). Career decision making, fast and slow: Toward an integrative model of intervention for sustainable career choice. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 120, 103448.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103448>

Lombardi, A. R., Dougherty, S. M., & Monahan, J. (2018). Students with intellectual disabilities and career and technical education opportunities: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 29(2), 82-96.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1044207318764863>

Mahmood, A., Huang, X., & Rehman, N. (2025). The role of teachers and administrators in supporting the adaptation of students with special needs in mainstream high schools. *Quality Education for All*, 2(1), 35-54. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QEA-06-2024-0054>

Maki, K. E., Kranzler, J. H., & Moody, M. E. (2022). Dual discrepancy/consistency pattern of strengths and weaknesses method of specific learning disability identification: Classification accuracy when combining clinical judgment with assessment data. *Journal of School Psychology*, 92, 33-48.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2022.02.003>

Mantey, E. E. (2017). Discrimination against children with disabilities in mainstream schools in Southern Ghana: Challenges and perspectives from stakeholders. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 54, 18-25.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2017.02.001>

Rezaiee, M., & Kareshki, H. (2024). Empowering career pathways: integrating self-regulation strategies with career counseling practices. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 9, p. 1422692). Frontiers Media SA.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1422692>

Schalock, R. L., Luckasson, R., & Tassé, M. J. (2019). The contemporary view of intellectual and developmental disabilities: Implications for psychologists. *Psicothema*, 31(3), 223-228.
<https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2019.119>

Simplican, S. C., Leader, G., Kosciulek, J., & Leahy, M. (2015). Defining social inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities: An ecological model of social networks and community participation. *Research in developmental disabilities*, 38, 18-29.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2014.10.008>

Vaiid, N., Foong, K. W. C., Tayeb, H. O., Alansari, R. A., & Adel, S. M. (2024). Understanding critical thinking in orthodontic residency to transform novices to experts. *Seminars in Orthodontics* (Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 443-451). WB Saunders.
<https://doi.org/10.1053/j.sodo.2024.07.005>

Whiston, S. C., Li, Y., Mitts, N. G., & Wright, L. (2017). Effectiveness of career choice interventions: A meta-analytic replication and extension. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 100, 175-184.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.03.010>

Xu, H. (2021). Career decision-making from a dual-process perspective: Looking back, looking forward. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 126, 103556. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2021.103556>

Yadav, S. K., Banerjee, A., Jhariya, M. K., Meena, R. S., Raj, A., Khan, N., ... & Sheoran, S. (2022). Environmental education for sustainable development. *Natural resources conservation and advances for sustainability*

(pp. 415-431). <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-822976-7.00010-7>

Yuen, M., Zhang, J., Man, P. K., Mak, J., Chung, Y. B., Lee, Q. A., ... & Chan, R. T. (2022). A strengths-based longitudinal career intervention for junior secondary school students with special educational needs: a mixed-method evaluation. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 17(4), 2229-2250. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-021-10028-6>

Author Information

^{1*} Noorsofiana Affandi,  sofianaaffandi@gmail.com (Corresponding Author)

Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei Darussalam

Address: Jalan Tungku Link, Gadong, BE1410, Brunei Darussalam

² Asmah Haji Husaini,  asmah.husaini@ubd.edu.bn

Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei Darussalam

Address: Jalan Tungku Link, Gadong, BE1410, Brunei Darussalam