

## IMPROVING SECONDARY STUDENTS' CAREER UNDERSTANDING THROUGH SOCRATIC DIALOGUE IN GROUP GUIDANCE

<sup>\*1</sup>Bakhrudin All Habsy, <sup>2</sup>Faradita Ayu Anggraini, <sup>3</sup>Sayyidah Zakiyah Zulfah  
<sup>\*1,2,3</sup>Universitas Negeri Surabaya

Email: <sup>\*1</sup>bakhrudinhabasy@unesa.ac.id, <sup>2</sup>faradita.21089@mhs.unesa.ac.id,  
<sup>3</sup>sayyidah.21091@mhs.unesa.ac.id

### Abstract

This research aims to assist students in formulating a mature career plan by understanding their interests and talents. Many students still do not know the career path they will take in the future due to a lack of understanding of their potential. Therefore, this study was conducted to provide intervention through group guidance with Socratic discussion techniques. This technique was chosen because it involves active dialogue between participants in groups to discuss career planning in depth. It is hoped that through an open and reflective dialogue process, students can broaden their horizons and change their views on careers based on the results of mutual exchange of ideas and knowledge. This study uses a quantitative descriptive method with a pretest and posttest approach to measure the effectiveness of the intervention carried out. The research sample consisted of 10 students out of a total of 30 students who were the subjects of the study. Each participant attended a group mentoring session facilitated by Socratic discussion techniques, and their understanding of career planning was evaluated before and after the intervention. The results of the study show that Socrates' discussion technique is effective in improving students' understanding of career planning. Participants become more open in thinking, more aware of their potential and interests, and have a clearer picture of the career path they want to take. This technique encourages participants to think critically and reflectively, thus helping them make more informed decisions in planning their future careers.

**Keywords:** Learner, Career, Socratic Dialogue, Group Guidance

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membantu peserta didik dalam merumuskan perencanaan karier yang matang dengan memahami minat dan bakat yang mereka miliki. Banyak peserta didik yang masih belum mengetahui jalur karier yang akan mereka tempuh di masa depan karena minimnya pemahaman terhadap potensi diri. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini dilakukan untuk memberikan intervensi melalui bimbingan kelompok dengan teknik diskusi Sokrates. Teknik ini dipilih karena melibatkan dialog aktif antar peserta dalam kelompok untuk mendiskusikan perencanaan karier secara mendalam. Diharapkan, melalui proses dialog yang terbuka dan reflektif, peserta didik dapat memperluas wawasan serta mengubah pandangan mereka mengenai karier berdasarkan hasil pertukaran ide dan pengetahuan bersama. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode*

*deskriptif kuantitatif dengan pendekatan pretest dan posttest untuk mengukur efektivitas intervensi yang dilakukan. Sampel penelitian terdiri dari 10 peserta didik dari total 30 siswa yang menjadi subjek penelitian. Setiap peserta mengikuti sesi bimbingan kelompok yang difasilitasi dengan teknik diskusi Socrates, dan pemahaman mereka mengenai perencanaan karier dievaluasi sebelum dan sesudah intervensi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa teknik diskusi Socrates efektif dalam meningkatkan pemahaman peserta didik mengenai perencanaan karier. Peserta menjadi lebih terbuka dalam berpikir, lebih sadar akan potensi dan minat mereka, serta memiliki gambaran yang lebih jelas mengenai jalur karier yang ingin mereka tempuh. Teknik ini mendorong peserta untuk berpikir kritis dan reflektif, sehingga membantu mereka mengambil keputusan yang lebih tepat dalam merencanakan masa depan kariernya.*

**Kata kunci:** Peserta Didik, Karier, Dialog Socrates, Bimbingan Kelompok

## INTRODUCTION

Career planning for high school students is very important to support how they determine their career path in the future. According to literature studies and observations that have been carried out, it is found that there are still very many students who, when they graduate from high school, are confused about what major to choose when they apply for college, and what field they want to work in if they want to work. Because of the ignorance and lack of understanding of students regarding what career path they want and following their interests and talents, many students or workers are found who think that they are not suitable for their college majors and professions. This phenomenon is quite crucial if it is linked to the impact that can occur due to their incompatibility with their college majors and professions. Examples of bad impacts that can occur are such as instability in carrying out activities related to their majors and professions, such as what happens to students who are not interested in the course material that is being carried out, lazy to do assignments, not enthusiastic about studying, often procrastinate on assignments and for workers to be lazy to work, not doing their work well, doing work not wholeheartedly, feeling unsuitable for the work environment, being shunned by fellow professionals, and so on.

According to Wibowo dkk., (2023), a career is one or several job positions carried out by a person during the life cycle of their work, from the bottom position to the top position. Meanwhile, according to Wahyu dkk., (2022), a career is everything that displays the development of skills and knowledge possessed by an individual employee, both in rank or position that will be held by the employee. So it can be concluded that this career is a series of activities or behaviors and things related to work, attitudes, values, and aspirations that a person has during their life that have been carefully arranged to achieve the goals of the plans they have. Careers are seen as important and also essential to everyone's life because a career that suits what they want will be fun to do, so it will not be work because they have to. A career is also an achievement that will meet the spiritual needs of a person if he has achieved the career they desire (Veronika, 2023).

The Socratic Dialogue, rooted in the classical philosophy of Socrates, continues to hold significant relevance in the modern educational context, especially when applied as a strategic method in guidance and counseling services. At its core, the Socratic Dialogue

operates by engaging students in reflective questioning initiated by the teacher or counselor, allowing them to reexamine their thoughts, beliefs, and prior knowledge. This reflective process is not merely about finding the "right" answer, but rather encouraging students to explore multiple perspectives, consider underlying assumptions, and refine their reasoning. It places students in an active role, fostering intellectual humility, critical thinking, and self-awareness. The teacher or counselor does not act as a provider of knowledge but rather as a facilitator who guides students to arrive at deeper understandings through inquiry and discussion.

When integrated into guidance and counseling, particularly in the area of career planning and self-discovery, the Socratic Dialogue method becomes a powerful tool. Students are often faced with uncertainty regarding their futures, lacking clarity about their interests, strengths, and aspirations. Many students have never had the opportunity to genuinely reflect on their personal goals, let alone express or challenge them within a supportive dialogical setting. The implementation of Socratic questioning in group guidance sessions allows these students to voice their thoughts, listen to differing opinions from peers, and develop stronger convictions based on thoughtful deliberation rather than passive acceptance. The potential impact of this technique lies in its ability to empower students to articulate and defend their ideas while remaining open to revision and growth. In a group setting, the Socratic Dialogue facilitates a dynamic exchange of ideas, prompting students to consider not only their viewpoints but also those of others. This interaction helps cultivate empathy and respect for diversity of thought, qualities essential not only for academic success but also for future career environments that demand collaboration and critical engagement. As students discuss career choices, interests, values, and personal goals, they gain insights not only from within but also from the shared experiences of their peers. They begin to recognize patterns, question stereotypes, and develop a clearer, more personalized vision for their futures.

According to Kurniawan, (2020) The structure of the Socratic Dialogue makes it particularly suitable for guiding students through the complex process of career decision-making. The method starts with a central, open-ended question, such as "What does success mean to you?" or "Why do you want to pursue this profession?" which then branches into a series of sub-questions designed to peel back layers of assumptions and beliefs. As students respond, they are encouraged to provide justifications, reflect on their motivations, and consider alternatives. This iterative process gradually builds a more nuanced and realistic understanding of their goals and the steps needed to achieve them. Moreover, the Socratic Dialogue fosters metacognition, or the awareness and regulation of one's thinking processes. In the context of career guidance, metacognition enables students to better assess their preferences, evaluate their decisions critically, and adjust their plans when faced with new information or changing circumstances. Instead of relying solely on external guidance, students develop internal frameworks for problem-solving and decision-making that will benefit them throughout their educational and professional journeys.

Another strength of using Socratic Dialogue in group guidance is its ability to create a safe and inclusive space for all participants. When properly facilitated, these discussions

encourage respectful dialogue, where students feel heard and validated. This is particularly important for students who may lack confidence in their abilities or who come from backgrounds where open discussion is not commonly practiced. By participating in Socratic Dialogue, these students gradually build communication skills, self-efficacy, and a sense of belonging, factors closely tied to academic motivation and career readiness.

Research has also shown that the Socratic Dialogue can increase student engagement and retention of information. According to Skivington dkk., (2021), students who participate in Socratic-based guidance sessions are more likely to internalize what they have learned because the knowledge emerges from their reasoning rather than being passively received. They become active constructors of meaning, which leads to deeper learning and a stronger sense of ownership over their decisions. This is particularly relevant in career planning, where self-knowledge and confidence are critical. Furthermore, in the ever-evolving landscape of education and work, where adaptability and lifelong learning are essential, the ability to think critically, communicate clearly, and make thoughtful decisions is more important than ever. The Socratic method helps students build these competencies from an early stage, equipping them not just for academic success, but for the uncertainties and opportunities of the modern workforce. As they encounter conflicting advice, societal pressures, or rapidly changing job markets, students who have been trained to think socratically will be better positioned to navigate these challenges with resilience and clarity.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a mixed method combining qualitative descriptive and true experimental approaches to gain an in-depth understanding and accurate measurement of the effects of certain treatments in the research context. The qualitative descriptive method is used to present a systematic and factual description of the conditions under study, based on actual data obtained directly from the field. According to Djaali, (2021), the quantitative descriptive method begins with data collection in the field, which is then analyzed and presented systematically and objectively. Meanwhile, Juniatmoko, (2019) explain that the qualitative descriptive approach serves to present accurate and structured descriptions of the data obtained, regarding the facts found in the research object. In this context, qualitative methods help researchers explore the context, meaning, and deep understanding of participants regarding the situation being studied, particularly in terms of perceptions, attitudes, and responses to specific treatments. Additionally, the type of research used in this study is a true experiment with a pretest-posttest control group design. This design involves two groups: an experimental group that receives treatment and a control group that does not receive treatment, with the results compared before and after the intervention is implemented. This technique aims to objectively measure the effectiveness of a particular treatment or intervention. In this case, data collection is carried out through a pretest and a posttest, which are then analyzed to determine whether there are significant changes as a result of the treatment given to the experimental group. This approach allows for more valid testing of the cause-and-effect relationship in a research phenomenon.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research conducted using a mixed method combining a qualitative descriptive approach and a true experimental research design with a pretest-posttest control group, some important findings were obtained that indicate the effectiveness of the Socratic dialogue technique in improving the career understanding of secondary school students. This study involved two groups: an experimental group that received treatment in the form of group guidance using the Socratic dialogue technique and a control group that did not receive similar treatment. A total of 30 students participated in this study, with 10 students from each group serving as the main sample for data analysis. Quantitatively, the pretest results showed that the career understanding of students in the experimental group was still relatively low. On a scale of 0–100, the average pretest score of the experimental group was 58.6. This indicates that most students did not have sufficient knowledge and awareness of career planning, including the ability to identify their interests and talents accurately. Conversely, the control group had an average pretest score of 57.4, indicating relatively balanced initial conditions between the two groups. After the treatment was administered to the experimental group through the Socratic dialogue technique in group guidance sessions over three weeks (two sessions per week), a posttest was conducted.

The post-test results of the experimental group showed a significant increase in career understanding. The average post-test score increased to 83.2. This increase reflects the effectiveness of using the Socratic dialogue technique in helping students explore their thoughts and understanding through a critical and reflective question-and-answer process. Meanwhile, the control group, which did not receive the same treatment, only experienced an increase in the average post-test score to 63.5, which means an increase of only 6.1 points, much lower than the increase in the experimental group, which reached 24.6 points. Statistical tests using a t-test showed a significance value of  $< 0.05$ , indicating a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in terms of career understanding after receiving the treatment. Qualitatively, the research findings were obtained through direct observation during the group guidance process and in-depth interviews with several students from the experimental group. The students admitted that they felt a change in the way they thought about their future and career planning. One participant said that before participating in the guidance, he felt confused about choosing a major because he did not know what he was interested in. However, after participating in several Socratic dialogue sessions, he realized that he was interested in communication, something he had never realized before due to a lack of self-exploration. The discussion process and open questions asked during the guidance sessions forced him to think more deeply and reflectively about his potential and aspirations.

The Socratic dialogue technique proved to be effective in creating an interactive and open learning atmosphere, where students did not just passively receive information but were actively involved in critical thinking. The dialogue allowed participants to hear other people's perspectives and construct logical arguments, as well as improve their understanding based on the input and questions that arose during the discussion. This approach facilitates the cognitive and affective development of participants, as they are

encouraged to be more confident in expressing their opinions and open to the opinions of others. In addition, from the researcher's observations during the group guidance process, there was an increase in active participation from the participants as the sessions progressed. In the initial meetings, some participants were still passive and reluctant to express their opinions. However, in the third and fourth sessions, they began to participate more actively, both in giving opinions and asking questions to their group members. This situation shows that the Socratic dialogue approach not only helps in understanding the material but also builds participants' courage, social skills, and confidence.

Furthermore, the documentation results from the dialogue sessions show that students began to use career terminology more appropriately and contextually. For example, in the initial session, most participants only mentioned certain professions without clear reasons, such as "I want to be a doctor because it's cool." However, after the discussion process took place, participants began to relate their career choices to their interests, personal values, and abilities. One participant even stated that he wanted to become a nutritionist because he felt concerned about people's eating habits and realized that his family background supported this. This change indicates the internalization of important concepts in career planning, such as the alignment between one's potential, opportunities, and community needs. This study also found that the use of Socratic dialogue techniques helped overcome participants' limitations in expressing their opinions because this approach emphasizes the thinking process rather than the final result. With the questioning approach, teachers or counselors do not provide direct answers but instead encourage participants to find their answers. This process aligns with the constructivist approach in education, where learners are viewed as active subjects in constructing their knowledge. This is consistent with Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development, where individuals can develop further through directed social interaction.

By combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the Socratic dialogue technique in the context of group guidance to improve career understanding. Quantitative data shows a significant increase in career understanding scores, while qualitative data reveals the processes and dynamics of change that occur in participants. These results indicate that the Socratic dialogue approach is not only effective as a learning method but also as a powerful guidance tool to facilitate more mature and focused career decision-making among high school students. Overall, the findings of this study emphasize the importance of integrating reflective learning methods into guidance and counseling services. The Socratic dialogue technique can open up a broad space for students to recognize their potential, understand their values, and develop more rational and realistic career plans. Therefore, it is recommended that guidance counselors and other educational facilitators begin to adopt this approach as part of their career guidance strategies in schools. Consistent and targeted implementation of this technique is believed to contribute positively to the quality of career decision-making among young people.



## Discussion

The discussion of the research results shows that the Socratic dialogue technique in group counseling services is effective in improving the career understanding of high school students. These findings can be understood from two perspectives, namely quantitative changes in career understanding scores before and after the treatment, as well as qualitative changes reflected in the students' thinking and attitudes toward career planning. The significant increase in posttest scores in the experimental group indicates that the critical and reflective thinking process instilled through the Socratic dialogue technique has successfully fostered students' awareness of the importance of understanding their interests, talents, and the relationship between their potential and career choices. In its implementation, the Socratic dialogue technique creates a discussion space that encourages students to question assumptions, review opinions they have held, and re-examine knowledge they have always considered true. This aligns with the constructivist theory proposed by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, where students construct their knowledge through experience and social interaction. According to Piaget, the processes of assimilation and accommodation in cognitive development occur when individuals are confronted with new information that challenges their cognitive structures (Brown & Desforges, 2013). In the context of this study, Socrates' questions serve as cognitive stimuli that trigger participants to accommodate new information about careers and themselves. As a result, participants not only absorb information but also process it deeply, forming new knowledge that is more relevant and meaningful.

Meanwhile, Vygotsky & Cole, (1978) zone of proximal development theory explains that learners can achieve optimal development through guidance from more competent adults or peers. In group guidance, Socratic dialogue techniques are not only facilitated by guidance counselors but also developed through interactions among participants. When one participant expresses their thoughts, others can ask follow-up questions or offer different perspectives, thereby broadening their horizons. This process creates a collaborative learning environment that strengthens social learning. Active involvement in discussions helps participants broaden their horizons, understand other people's points of view, and strengthen their arguments. The open and non-judgmental environment in group discussions also provides a sense of security for participants to express their ideas, thereby encouraging simultaneous affective and cognitive development. In addition, observations show that as the sessions progress, students begin to show improvement in communication skills, self-confidence, and reflective abilities. This is closely related to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of observation, modeling, and social interaction in the learning process (McLeod, 2025). Through group discussions, participants not only learn from the questions posed by the teacher but also from the responses and experiences of their peers. In this process, vicarious learning occurs, where participants observe how others present ideas or link career choices to their circumstances, then mimic or adapt these to their situations. This modeling effect is highly beneficial in assisting participants who previously lacked ideas or understanding about careers.

From the perspective of career development theory, the results of this study are also consistent with Donald Super's theory, which states that career development is a lifelong process that begins at a young age when individuals start forming their self-concept. According to Super, (1969), one of the important stages is exploration, where adolescents begin to try to understand themselves and explore various career possibilities. The Socratic dialogue technique provides an ideal space for this stage, as it encourages participants to evaluate themselves, recognize their interests and talents, and consider various career options available to them. Through open and in-depth questioning, students begin to form more realistic and personalized career concepts. Furthermore, the success of this technique in improving career understanding also demonstrates its connection to the humanistic approach in guidance and counseling, particularly as pioneered by Carl Rogers. This approach emphasizes the importance of creating an empathetic, warm, and accepting atmosphere so that individuals feel safe to express themselves (Nenda dkk., 2022). In Socratic dialogue, guidance counselors do not act as solution providers but rather as facilitators who guide participants to find their answers through reflection and exploration. This pattern reflects the basic values of the humanistic approach, namely, respecting individual potential and autonomy. When participants feel that their opinions are valued and are not judged when expressing their views, they are more open to exploring themselves and developing awareness of their life choices.

The connection between Socratic dialogue techniques and communication theory is also evident in the way participants build interactions during the guidance process. According to Martin Buber's theory of dialogical communication, meaningful communication occurs in an "I-You" relationship in which each party views the other as an equal subject, not an object to be directed (Okafor, 2021). In group discussions, when students listen to, respond to, and respect each other's arguments, they engage in mutually enriching communication. This not only improves the quality of career understanding but also shapes inclusive and empathetic character and social attitudes, things that are very important in their future personal and professional lives. In its implementation, the success of this technique is also influenced by the active role of the facilitator in designing questions that provoke and challenge participants' thinking. Socratic questions are not informative questions that require right or wrong answers, but evaluative, analytical, and reflective questions that encourage participants to construct arguments based on experience and logic. For example, questions such as "Why did you choose that major?" or "What would you do if your career plan failed?" open up a broader and deeper space for dialogue. Students learn to construct reasons systematically and become aware of the consequences of the choices they make.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the research we conducted by applying group guidance using the Socrates dialogue technique to high school students who initially did not understand and fully understand career planning, it was found that by conducting discussion activities with the application of the Socrates dialogue technique which raises the theme of career as an effective discussion topic in helping students to broaden their views on careers, and students become more aware of the importance of planning career choices since they are in high



school. Students become more optimistic and can determine the career path they want according to their interests.

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