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Analysis of Students' Needs in Understanding Themselves and Planning Their Careers among Eighth-Grade Students of Class VIII B at SMPK St. Yoseph Noelbaki

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Abstract: *Self-understanding and career planning are important aspects of student development because they help students recognize their potential, interests, and abilities, as well as determine future educational and occupational directions. However, students may still experience difficulties in understanding their personal characteristics and obtaining information about career options. This study aimed to describe students' needs in self-understanding and career planning based on the Student Needs Assessment (Analisis Kebutuhan Peserta Didik/AKPD) conducted among Grade VIII B students at SMPK St. Yoseph Noelbaki. This research employed a quantitative descriptive approach using documentation. The research involved 36 students, and the data were obtained from the AKPD recapitulation document collected in September–October 2026. The data were analyzed by grouping relevant items according to their areas of need, frequencies, percentages, and priority levels recorded in the document. The findings indicate that self-understanding needs were reflected in students' difficulties in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, recognizing their potential, and maintaining self-confidence. Meanwhile, career-planning needs were indicated by uncertain aspirations, limited understanding of the relationship between interests, talents, hobbies, and abilities, and insufficient knowledge of occupational options and further educational information. These findings highlight the need for guidance and counseling services that gradually support students in understanding themselves and exploring career information.*

Keywords: *student needs assessment, self-understanding, career planning, guidance and counseling*

Abstrak: *Pemahaman diri dan perencanaan karier merupakan bagian penting dalam perkembangan peserta didik karena membantu mereka mengenali potensi, minat, bakat, serta menentukan arah pendidikan dan pekerjaan pada masa mendatang. Namun, peserta didik masih dapat mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami karakteristik dirinya dan memperoleh informasi mengenai pilihan karier. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kebutuhan peserta didik dalam memahami diri dan merencanakan karier berdasarkan hasil Analisis Kebutuhan Peserta Didik (AKPD) pada siswa kelas VIII B SMPK St. Yoseph Noelbaki. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kuantitatif dengan metode dokumentasi. Subjek penelitian berjumlah 36 siswa, sedangkan data diperoleh dari dokumen rekapitulasi AKPD yang dikumpulkan pada September–Oktober 2026. Analisis dilakukan melalui pengelompokan butir sesuai bidang kebutuhan, frekuensi pilihan, persentase, dan tingkat prioritas yang tercantum dalam rekapitulasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kebutuhan terkait pemahaman diri tampak pada kesulitan mengenali kelebihan dan kekurangan, potensi diri, serta rendahnya kepercayaan diri. Sementara itu, kebutuhan terkait perencanaan karier terlihat dari belum jelasnya cita-cita, kurangnya pemahaman mengenai hubungan minat, bakat, hobi, dan kemampuan, serta terbatasnya pengetahuan tentang jenis pekerjaan dan informasi pendidikan lanjutan. Temuan ini menunjukkan perlunya layanan bimbingan dan konseling yang membantu peserta didik mengenali dirinya dan memperoleh informasi karier secara bertahap.*

Kata kunci: *analisis kebutuhan peserta didik, pemahaman diri, perencanaan karier, bimbingan dan konseling*

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Introduction

Students at the junior high school level are in the adolescent developmental stage, which is characterized by changes in physical, social, emotional, and psychological aspects. At this stage, students begin to develop an understanding of themselves, recognize their abilities, cultivate their interests, and form a vision of their future. This process plays an important role in helping students make educational and career choices that are appropriate to their individual characteristics.

Self-understanding refers to an individual's ability to recognize and understand personal characteristics, including strengths, weaknesses, interests, talents, potential, and abilities. Understanding these aspects helps students develop a clearer perception of themselves. Self-concept is an important component of identity development because it is related to how individuals perceive and understand themselves. Onetti et al. (2019) explain that self-concept influences individuals' identity and behavior and may change throughout the developmental process. Students who have not yet recognized their potential and personal characteristics may experience difficulties in choosing activities that match their interests and abilities. This condition may also affect their confidence when making decisions related to education and their future.

In addition to self-understanding, career planning should also be introduced at the junior high school level. Career planning is not limited to choosing an occupation; it also involves identifying interests and abilities, seeking information about various occupations, understanding educational pathways, and considering options that align with one's personal characteristics. Şen-Baz (2026) explains that early adolescence is an important period for career exploration, during which students begin to identify their interests, abilities, personal values, and occupational preferences. Similarly, Wang & Wang (2025) emphasize that career education at the junior high school level should provide students with opportunities to explore their potential, interests, and experiences as a foundation for career planning. Artosandi et al (2025) also highlight the importance of vocational interest identification in supporting career exploration and decision-making among junior high school students. These aspects indicate that career awareness should be developed gradually in accordance with students' developmental stages.

Cakolli (2023) found that career guidance activities involving self-understanding, career exploration, awareness of educational and occupational pathways, and decision-making can support the development of adolescents' career confidence and goals. Artosandi et al (2025) also emphasize the importance of vocational interest exploration among junior high school students as part of their preparation for understanding educational and occupational options. These findings demonstrate that self-awareness and career information are important aspects that should be considered in the implementation of school guidance and counseling services.

The implementation of guidance and counseling services should be based on students' actual needs. Guidance and counseling teachers can use the Student Needs Assessment (Angket Kebutuhan Peserta Didik/AKPD) to obtain an overview of students' needs across various areas of their lives. The results of the AKPD can serve as a basis for determining the content, types of services, and priorities of guidance and counseling programs. Thus, the services provided are not based solely on the assumptions of guidance and counseling teachers but also take into account the needs expressed by students through the instrument.

Based on the AKPD results for Class VIII B students at SMPK St. Yoseph Noelbaki, several needs related to self-understanding and career planning were identified. In the area of self-understanding, some students reported that they had not yet understood their strengths and weaknesses, were unaware of their own potential, and experienced feelings of low self-esteem. In the area of career planning, identified needs included uncertainty about career aspirations, limited understanding of the relationship between hobbies, talents, interests, and abilities, as well as insufficient knowledge of occupational options and educational information.

These findings indicate that students' needs are not limited to learning difficulties and social relationships but also include the development of self-understanding and preparation for the future. Nevertheless, these needs should be mapped more systematically so that guidance and counseling teachers can determine service priorities that are appropriate to students' actual conditions.

This study aims to describe students' needs in understanding themselves and planning their careers based on the AKPD results for Class VIII B students at SMPK St. Yoseph Noelbaki. The findings are expected to serve as a consideration for guidance and counseling teachers in developing personal and career guidance programs that address students' needs.

Method

Research Design and Setting

This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach. This approach was used to describe students' needs based on the numerical data

contained in the Student Needs Assessment (Angket Kebutuhan Peserta Didik/AKPD) summary. The study was conducted at SMPK St. Yoseph Noelbaki, focusing on Class VIII B students. Data collection took place from September to October 2026

Participants, Sample, or Data Sources

The participants in this study were 36 students from Class VIII B at SMPK St. Yoseph Noelbaki. The research data were obtained from the AKPD summary document, which had been completed and compiled by the school. The document contained statements regarding students' needs, the number of selections for each item, percentages, priority categories, and the planned schedule for service implementation.

This study used existing documentary data rather than collecting new data through questionnaires. Therefore, the analysis was conducted based on the information provided in the AKPD summary document.

Instruments and Measures

The instrument serving as the data source was the AKPD, which was used to identify students' needs in the personal, social, learning, and career domains. Data were collected through documentation by reviewing and recording relevant information from the AKPD summary.

The analyzed items were selected based on their relevance to the focus of the study, namely self-understanding and career planning. In the area of self-understanding, the analysis focused on items related to recognizing personal strengths and weaknesses, potential, self-identity, and self-confidence. In the area of career planning, the analysis focused on items related to career aspirations, the relationship between interests and abilities, awareness of different occupations, as well as educational information and self-development activities.

Procedure and Research Ethics

The study was conducted in several stages. The first stage involved obtaining the AKPD summary document for Class VIII B students. The second stage involved examining the information contained in the document, including the number of selections, percentages, and priority categories. The third stage involved identifying items relevant to self-understanding and career planning. The final stage involved classifying and describing the findings based on the frequency of selections and priority categories presented in the summary.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed descriptively by classifying the AKPD items into two main areas: self-understanding and career planning. Each item was then described based on the number of selections, percentage, and priority level indicated in the document. The percentages used in this study followed the AKPD summary results, with a total of 666 needs selections serving as the basis for calculating the overall percentages.

It should be noted that the total of 666 represents the accumulated number of needs selections across all items, not the number of students. The number of participants in this study remained 36 students. This analysis was not intended to examine relationships or effects between variables but rather to describe students' needs as a basis for developing guidance and counseling services.

Results and Discussion

Results

Overview of the Student Needs Assessment Results

The AKPD summary for Class VIII B students at SMPK St. Yoseph Noelbaki indicates that students have needs across four guidance and counseling service domains: personal, social, learning, and career. A total of 666 needs selections were recorded in the document.

Table 1. Summary of Students' Needs Based on Guidance and Counseling Service Domains

Service Domain	Number of Selections	Percentage
Personal	278	41,74%
Social	151	22,67%
Learning	132	19,82%
Career	105	15,77%
Total	**666**	**100%**

Based on Table 1, the personal domain recorded the highest number of selections, with 278 selections or 41.74%. The social domain recorded 151 selections or 22.67%, the learning domain recorded 132 selections or 19.82%, and the career domain recorded 105 selections or 15.77%. These findings indicate that personal needs appeared most frequently in the AKPD summary. Although the career domain had fewer selections than the other domains, needs related to future planning still require attention through career guidance services.

Students' Needs in Understanding Themselves

The identification of AKPD items related to self-understanding revealed students' needs in recognizing their personal characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, and potential. Several relevant items are presented in the following table.

Table 2. Students' Needs in Understanding Themselves

Item No.	Statement of Need	Number of Selections	Percentage	Priority
8	I feel inferior.	23	3,45%	High

14	I do not yet understand my strengths and weaknesses.	22	3,30%	High
12	I do not yet know my own potential.	15	2,25%	High
9	I feel embarrassed about my physical appearance.	14	2,10%	High
17	I do not yet know my true identity.	6	0,90%	Low

Based on Table 2, the most frequently selected need was the statement about feeling inferior, with 23 selections or 3.45%. Furthermore, 22 selections or 3.30% were recorded for the statement about not yet understanding personal strengths and weaknesses. The statement about not knowing one's own potential received 15 selections or 2.25%, while feeling embarrassed about one's physical appearance received 14 selections or 2.10%. Meanwhile, the statement about not yet knowing one's true identity received 6 selections or 0.90%.

These data indicate that students' self-understanding needs are primarily related to self-confidence and the ability to recognize personal characteristics. Difficulties in understanding personal strengths and weaknesses, as well as a lack of awareness of one's potential, are needs that require attention because recognizing these aspects can help students better understand their abilities and personal characteristics.

Students' Needs in Career Planning

In addition to self-understanding needs, the AKPD summary also revealed several needs related to career planning. These needs include clarity regarding career aspirations, understanding the relationship between interests and abilities, awareness of different occupations, and information about education and self-development activities.

Table 3. Students' Needs in Career Planning

Item No.	Statement of Need	Number of Selections	Percentage	Priority
45	I feel confused about choosing extracurricular activities at school.	21	3.15%	High
50	I do not yet understand the relationship between hobbies, talents, interests, and abilities.	17	2.55%	Moderate
47	I do not yet have definite career aspirations.	15	2.25%	High
43	I do not yet know how to obtain educational assistance (scholarships).	14	2.10%	High
48	I do not yet know much about the different types of occupations in society.	13	1.95%	Moderate

Based on Table 3, the need with the highest number of selections was confusion about choosing extracurricular activities, with 21 selections or 3.15%, categorized as high priority. Furthermore, 17 selections or 2.55% were recorded for the statement about not yet understanding the relationship between hobbies, talents, interests, and abilities, which was categorized as moderate priority.

The statement about not yet having definite career aspirations received 15 selections or 2.25%, categorized as high priority. The need for information about obtaining educational assistance or scholarships received 14 selections or 2.10%, also categorized as high priority. Meanwhile, the statement about having limited knowledge of different occupations in society received 13 selections or 1.95%, categorized as moderate priority.

These findings indicate that students still need information and guidance in exploring future options. Confusion about choosing extracurricular activities represents a need that can be addressed through activities aimed at identifying students' interests and abilities. Furthermore, uncertainty about career aspirations and limited knowledge of occupations indicate the need to provide career information that is appropriate to students' developmental stages.

Discussion

Students' Needs for Self-Understanding

The research findings indicate that the need for self-understanding among Class VIII B students at SMPK St. Yoseph Noelbaki is reflected in several statements, particularly feeling inferior, not yet understanding their strengths and weaknesses, and not yet recognizing their own potential. The statement about feeling inferior received 23 selections (3.45%), while the statement about not yet understanding personal strengths and weaknesses received 22 selections (3.30%). These findings indicate that recognizing personal characteristics and developing self-confidence are aspects that need to be addressed in guidance and counseling services.

Self-understanding helps students recognize their personal conditions and abilities, enabling them to develop their potential in a more directed manner. When students do not yet understand their strengths and weaknesses, they may experience difficulties in choosing activities that match their abilities and interests. Feelings of inferiority may also become obstacles when students interact with others, express their opinions, or try new experiences.

These needs highlight the importance of personal guidance services that provide students with opportunities to recognize their own characteristics. School counselors can use self-reflection activities, group discussions, personal potential identification worksheets, and activities to identify individual strengths and weaknesses. Such activities can help students develop a better understanding of themselves without comparing their personal abilities with those of others.

These findings are consistent with the emphasis on the importance of self-awareness in career development. Cakolli (2023) identifies self-awareness as one of the stages in career guidance activities for adolescents. This suggests that developing self-understanding is beneficial not only for students' personal lives but also serves as a foundation for exploring future educational and occupational options.

Students' Needs for Career Planning

The research findings on career planning indicate that students still need support in determining their aspirations, understanding the relationship between hobbies, talents, interests, and abilities, and becoming familiar with various types of occupations. The statement about not yet having definite career aspirations received 15 selections (2.25%), while the statement about not yet understanding the relationship between hobbies, talents, interests, and abilities received 17 selections (2.55%). These findings indicate that some students still need assistance in connecting their personal characteristics with future educational and occupational prospects.

Career planning at the junior high school level does not necessarily require students to make definite occupational decisions. At this stage, students need opportunities to become familiar with various educational and occupational alternatives, understand their interests and abilities, and begin developing an understanding of their future prospects. Such exposure can help students gradually establish the direction of their choices.

The need for information about different types of occupations also deserves attention. A total of 13 selections (1.95%) indicate that students have limited knowledge of the various occupations available in society. Limited information may result in students having a narrow understanding of the world of work. School counselors can address this need through career information services, introductions to various professions, discussions about educational pathways, and occupational exploration activities relevant to students' daily lives.

Furthermore, confusion about choosing extracurricular activities received 21 selections (3.15%) and was classified as a high-priority need. Extracurricular activities can provide students with opportunities to try different activities, develop their interests, and identify their abilities. However, this finding does not necessarily indicate that confusion about choosing extracurricular activities directly reflects career immaturity. Rather, it is more appropriately understood as a need for guidance in exploring interests and selecting activities that are suitable for each student.

Cakolli (2023) found that career guidance activities involving self-exploration, information about educational and occupational pathways, and decision-making can support the development of adolescents' career goals. Artosandi et al (2025) also developed a vocational interest instrument intended to support career exploration among junior high school students. These studies reinforce the importance of recognizing students' interests and exploring career options from the junior high school level.

Implications of the Student Needs Assessment Results for Guidance and Counseling Services

The Student Needs Assessment (Angket Kebutuhan Peserta Didik/AKPD) results can serve as a basis for determining the needs and priorities of guidance and counseling services. Based on the research findings, two groups of needs require attention: the development of self-understanding and the introduction to career planning.

Regarding self-understanding, school counselors can provide classroom guidance services covering topics such as recognizing personal strengths and weaknesses, understanding personal potential, building self-confidence, and developing

self-acceptance. Group guidance services can also be used to provide students with opportunities to share experiences and reflect on their personal characteristics. For students who demonstrate more specific or in-depth needs, school counselors may consider providing individual counseling based on the results of further assessment.

Regarding career planning, school counselors can organize information services on the relationship between interests, talents, hobbies, and abilities; introduce various types of occupations; and provide information about educational pathways after junior high school. School counselors can also facilitate interest exploration activities through introductions to extracurricular activities, discussions about different professions, and simple activities to help students develop their career aspirations. Information about scholarships and educational opportunities can also be provided to give students an initial understanding of opportunities for continuing their education.

The provision of services should be adjusted to the priority categories identified in the AKPD summary. Items classified as high priority can receive particular attention when developing service programs, while items in the moderate and low categories can still be addressed through appropriate developmental activities. The systematic use of AKPD results is expected to help school counselors develop programs that are more responsive to students' needs.

Conclusion

The research findings indicate that Class VIII B students at SMPK St. Yoseph Noelbaki have needs related to self-understanding and career planning. In the area of self-understanding, the most prominent needs concern feelings of inferiority, a lack of understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses, and limited awareness of personal potential. In the area of career planning, the identified needs include confusion about choosing extracurricular activities, a lack of understanding of the relationship between hobbies, talents, interests, and abilities, uncertainty about career aspirations, and limited knowledge of different occupations and educational information.

The research findings can serve as a basis for school counselors in developing personal and career guidance programs. These services can focus on recognizing personal potential, developing self-confidence, exploring interests and abilities, introducing various occupations, and providing information about educational pathways.

This study used AKPD documentation data and therefore does not provide an in-depth account of the reasons why students selected each statement of need. The percentages were also calculated based on the total number of needs selections, rather than the total number of students.

Future research could expand this study by incorporating interviews or observations to obtain more in-depth information about students' needs in understanding themselves and planning their careers.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in the conduct and preparation of this research.

Author Contributions (Optional)

The author was responsible for formulating the research idea, collecting and processing the data, analyzing the findings, drafting the manuscript, and finalizing the article.

Generative AI Disclosure

In preparing this manuscript, generative artificial intelligence was used as an assisting tool for language editing and organizing the structure of the manuscript. The author remains responsible for the accuracy of the data, interpretation of the findings, and final content of the manuscript.

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