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# Career Guidance for Student with Mentally Retarded: A Phenomenological Study



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### CONTENT

1. [Introduction](#)
  2. [Method](#)
  3. [Result and Discussion](#)
  4. [Implications and Contributions](#)
  5. [Limitations and Future Research Directions](#)
  6. [Conclusion](#)
- [Acknowledgments](#)  
[Author Contribution Statement](#)  
[Conflict of Interest Statement](#)  
[Ethical Approval Statement](#)  
[References](#)  
[Article Information](#)

### ABSTRACT

Every parent expects the presence of a child. Parents expect a perfect child without having any shortcomings. The purpose of this study was to determine the role of SMALB Bengkulu City in conducting career guidance for students with disabilities. This research uses a phenomenological approach. This research was conducted at Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri (SLBN) 01 Bengkulu City in 2022. The research subjects were 14 students. Data collection in this study used observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis used interactive analysis of the Miles & Huberman model. The results showed that the approach used in the career guidance process at the SMALB level at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City was individualized, the method used was the demonstration method and was carried out instructively.

### KEYWORDS

Career guidance; Student with mental retardation; Phenomenological Study

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every parent expects the presence of a child, parents expect a perfect child without having flaws (Pahlevi et al., 2022). The existence of parents is an important instrument for the development of children through guidance and parenting (Utomo et al., 2022). Every parent does not want to give birth to their child in a state of having a disorder or having a disability. The birth of a child with special needs (ABK) does not recognize that someone comes from a rich family, an educated family, a poor family, or a family that is religious or not (Rezieka et al., 2021).

Parents are unable to reject God's destiny with the birth of children with special needs. Children with special needs are those who need special education services (Fakhiratunnisa et al., 2022; Nisa et al., 2018; Widiastuti, 2019) because they have permanent or temporary deficiencies as a result of physical, mental, or combined disorders or emotional conditions. If children with special needs receive appropriate educational services, their potential will be able to develop optimally (Bening & Putro, 2022).

Special education (extraordinary education) is education for students who have difficulty in following the learning process due to physical, emotional, mental, and

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social abnormalities (Jaya et al., 2018; Kistoro et al., 2021). Education for children with special needs is provided in special education institutions, namely Special School and Integrated Education. Special Schools as the oldest special education institution accommodate children with the same type of disorder so there are Special Schools for the Blind, Special School for the Deaf, Special School for the Deaf, Special Schools for the Deaf, Special School for the Deaf, Special School for Deaf, Special School for the Deaf, and Special Schools for the Deaf.

Special elementary schools accommodate various types of children with special needs as there may be children who are blind, deaf, mentally impaired, physically challenged, unsociable, and have multiple handicaps, while integrated education is a regular school that also accommodates children with special needs, with the same curriculum, teachers, teaching facilities, and teaching and learning activities.

Children who are categorized as having abnormalities in physical aspects include visual sensory abnormalities (Visually Impaired), hearing sensory abnormalities (Deaf), speech abnormalities, and limb function abnormalities (Noviandari & Huda, 2018). Children who have abnormalities in the social field are children who have difficulty in adjusting their behavior to the surrounding environment, children who are included in this group are known as unsociable (Jannah, 2020).

Children who have abnormalities in mental aspects include children who have more mental abilities (supernatural) known as gifted children or superior children, and children who have very low abilities (subnormal) known as mentally retarded children (Asmani, 2015). Mentally retarded is a condition of children whose intelligence is far below average and is characterized by limited intelligence and inadequacy in social communication (Dewi & Ulfah, 2022). Children with special needs are also often known as mentally retarded because of their limited intelligence, as a result of which children with special needs mentally retarded find it difficult to participate in education in ordinary schools (Syafarana & Chairani, 2020).

A psychologist classifying mentally retarded children leads to aspects of the mental intelligence index, the indication can be seen in the number of intelligence test results, such as IQ 0-25 is categorized as an idiot, IQ 25-50 is categorized as imbecile, and IQ 50-75 is categorized as debit or moron (Alexander & Reynolds, 2020). A pedagogic in classifying mentally retarded children is based on an assessment of the educational program presented to the child, from the assessment can be grouped into mentally retarded children able to learn (IQ 68-52), mentally retarded children able to train (IQ 51-36), mentally retarded children able to care (IQ 39-25) (Luria, 2014).

In general, the community is ignorant of mentally retarded children, and cannot even distinguish them from crazy people (Trent, 2016). Parents usually have no idea about their child's future, they are not aware of the services available in the community that their children need (Coyne et al., 2015). If these children with special needs receive good services, good treatment, and a conducive environment, they will show perseverance, empathy, and sympathy (Gilbert, 2014).

Career Guidance is guidance to assist individuals in planning, developing, and resolving career problems such as understanding positions and work tasks, understanding conditions and abilities, understanding environmental conditions, career planning and development, job adjustment, and solving career problems faced (Argyropoulou & Kaliris, 2018). On the objective, education for children with special needs in special schools aims to develop their potential optimally so that they can live independently and adjust to the environment where they are (Lundqvist et al., 2015).

SLBN 01 Bengkulu City is one of the schools that serve education for children who have deficiencies, one of which is for mild mentally retarded children. Based on the results of the author's initial observations, graduates from SLBN 01 Bengkulu City some continue their education in the D-III community nursing college at UMB then some work at Honda dealers, some become janitors, namely Iqbal, a mentally retarded graduate from SLBN 01 Bengkulu city who is employed and some become library officers at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City and some work at Al-Baik, one of the fast food restaurants in Bengkulu City. Judging from this, it means that a person mentally retarded can compete in the world of work with other normal people if he gets guidance in developing his potential.

From the exposure of the preliminary study above, the purpose of this research is to find out the role of SMALB Bengkulu City in providing career guidance to students with disabilities. The focus of the research discusses the supporting factors and inhibiting factors of the Career Guidance process for SMALB mentally retarded children at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Research Approach

This research uses a type of qualitative research. The approach in this study uses a phenomenological approach, which is generally in the realm of subjective micro and case study-based (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). By micro subjective, it means that the level of social reality under study is a small part of the micro-social continuum that is deliberately targeted as a research focus and limited domain, and as a consequence, this phenomenological study has no ambition to interpret and

understand the macro social reality constructed by actors dealing with their world (Tholen, 2015).

In phenomenological research, symbolic interaction is a type of main research framework that must be considered by researchers. The forms of the symbolic interaction framework. This research intends to describe the stages of career guidance for SMALB mentally retarded children at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City.

## 2.2 Research Subject

This research was conducted at Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri (SLBN) 01 Bengkulu City in 2022. Researchers took 4 children with mild mentally retarded and 5 mentor teachers as research informants. Then the complementary informants are the principal, TU Staff, and 3 guardians of students from mild mentally retarded children. So the number of research informants in this study was 14 people.

The selection of informants was taken with a purposive sampling technique. The criteria for informants studied in this study are mild mentally retarded children, mild mentally retarded children who can read, write and count and the mentor teacher.

## 2.3 Data Sources

Data sources include (1) Primary data, data taken from primary data sources, or the first source in the field. This primary data will be obtained from the interview process, and observation of mentally retarded children at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City; (2) Secondary data, supporting informants such as teachers and parents of mentally retarded students at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City, as well as several previous studies, books that are relevant to the subject matter of the researcher.

## 2.4 Data Collection

Data collection in this research used observation, interview, and documentation of the object of study. Observation was conducted using researchers seeing and observing how Career Guidance and the supporting factors of the Career Guidance process at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City.

Interviews were conducted using researchers asking questions to mentally retarded children, supervising teachers, principals then parents of mentally retarded students who had been prepared, namely regarding the process of Career Guidance stages regarding self-understanding, values, understanding the environment, obstacles, and how to overcome obstacles, planning for the future as well as supporting factors and inhibiting factors in the Career Guidance process at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City.

Documentation is carried out using researchers collecting, selecting, and categorizing documents by the research objectives, then starting to explain, record, and

interpret, as well as connecting with other phenomena to strengthen the status of the data.

## 2.5 Data Validity Checking

The data that has been collected is then combined with various methods to examine interrelated phenomena from different points of view and perspectives. In the process of checking the validity of data, researchers use triangulation, including (1) Triangulation of methods, carried out by comparing information or data in different ways; (2) Triangulation of sources, carried out by exploring the truth of certain information through various methods and sources of data acquisition; (3) Triangulation of theories, carried out by testing the parallelity of explanation and analysis or not between one theory and another theory of the research data

## 2.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis uses interactive analysis of the Miles & Huberman model. This analysis includes (1) Data reduction, researchers select important and necessary data related to career guidance for SMALB-level mentally retarded children at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City so that it makes it easier for researchers to provide a clearer picture of this research; (2) Data display, information that has been obtained from the data reduction process, then the data or information is compiled and arranged in the form of narrative text regarding career guidance for SMALB level children at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City; (3) Conclusion and verification, researchers seek information about the desired data then after the data is obtained in large quantities the researcher will select which data is important and which is not then the data that has been selected and considered important will be presented in writing in the form of narrative text and conclusions are drawn and verified regarding Career Guidance for mentally retarded children at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City.

# 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

## 3.1 Result

Based on the results of interviews, the findings show that the implementation of career guidance at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City at the SMALB level is still collaborative with teaching and learning activities but has fulfilled the following stages:

### 1) Identifying Self-Understanding

In the process of the stages of self-understanding, what is meant here is recognizing, finding talents and interests and the potential of mentally retarded children is done using assessment, then from observations made by the supervising teacher about the daily life of mentally retarded children while in VI SMPLB which skills are more suitable for them to explore.

Self-understanding is intended to help students to know and understand who they are. Students are expected to know and understand their potential, abilities, interests, talents, and aspirations.

## 2) Identifying the Suitability of Talent and Interest Aspects with Self Potential

This stage is expected so that students can know and understand the values that exist in themselves and society.<sup>147</sup> Interviews regarding the stages of Career Guidance regarding values in children with disabilities have several opinions. In the process of the second stage of Career Guidance regarding identifying values in mentally retarded children, the skills they choose are by their desires, some of them voluntarily participate in the Career Guidance process and some of them do not, they act in determining their careers with direction from parents and teachers, they have the desire to master various skills but their conditions do not allow it.

## 3) Identifying Environmental Understanding

At this stage, students are expected to know and understand the environment, so that they can take appropriate steps. This package includes matters relating to education information, regional wealth and its development, and job information. In the process of understanding the environment, teachers provide an understanding of further study information and what jobs mentally retarded children can do after they graduate from SLBN 01 Bengkulu City later. The skills learned by mentally retarded children are by what their teachers identify, and the potential possessed by mentally retarded children is by the demands of the field of work they can enter, Career Guidance provided at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City is optimal for mentally retarded children to enter the world of work according to their abilities.

## 4) Identifying Barriers and How to Overcome Barriers

At this stage, students are expected to know and understand what obstacles exist to achieve suitable career goals and after knowing the obstacles, they will try to solve the existing obstacles. In the process of stages of obstacles and how to overcome obstacles that mentally retarded children experience obstacles in following the Career Guidance process, obstacles such as forgetting easily and getting bored quickly with what has been taught by their teachers due to the limited IQ they have and how mentally retarded children overcome the obstacles they experience by repeating what they have learned with the help of their teachers and parents.

## 5) Identifying Planning for the Future

After students understand what is in themselves, their circumstances, existing values (within themselves or in society), the environment (information about edu-

cation or work), and existing obstacles (within themselves or outside) then students are expected to be able to plan their future.

In the process of planning the future, there are still many mentally retarded children who have not determined their career choices according to their talents, interests, and socio-economic conditions, they have various aspirations such as those who want to become doctors, teachers, flight attendants or have their businesses, they have figures in determining their careers.

Parents of mentally retarded children take part in determining their children's career choices such as always giving the child support and suggesting what skills the child will learn for the child's future but some do not take part.

## 6) Supporting and Hindering Factors in the Implementation of Career Guidance for Children with Disabilities

The process of providing career guidance to children with disabilities is influenced by several things. Supporting factors for the implementation of Career Guidance at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City are adjusting Career Guidance to the needs, capacities, and abilities of mentally retarded children, complete facilities for all fields of skills, collaborating with the business world, and having Human Resources who are patient and always provide motivation in guiding mentally retarded children.

The inhibiting factors in the implementation of Career Guidance at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City are the children's very poor absorption in responding to Career Guidance, lack of concentration, lack of discipline, communication barriers, and lack of support from some parents.

## 3.2. Discussion

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, the researchers then analyzed the results of the research in the form of descriptive analysis. The researcher explained the results of the researcher's interviews with several informants about "Career Guidance for mentally retarded Children (Study at Bengkulu City SMALB) and compared and analyzed them, based on the existing theoretical framework.

### 1) Stages of Identifying Self-Understanding

The process of self-understanding stages in recognizing, discovering the talents and interests, and potential of children with disabilities is carried out using assessment. Then from the observations made by the supervising teacher about the daily life of mentally retarded children while in class VI SMPLB in following the skills, the teacher will assess and will see the interests and abilities of students to determine what skills are suitable for mentally retarded children to learn.



Based on the theory of properties and factors put forward by Parson vocational guidance is carried out in three processes where in the third process, namely by matching or matching individuals with positions.

The approach used in the career guidance process at the SMALB level at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City is individualized. The method used is the demonstration method where the discussion emphasizes the urgency of providing career guidance, one of which uses the demonstration method, namely this method is carried out by showing directly how to do something then students imitate what the teacher does.

The method also used is the play method which aims to improve the development of intelligence, physical, emotions, and how to socialize. Another method used is drill or practice, which is a learning method used to obtain a dexterity or ability that students want to achieve.

The method also used in the Career Guidance process at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City is by repeating what has been learned. As stated by Sunardi, repetition in the learning process is based on two things, namely the first, individuals generally tend to imitate other people, especially those who are imitated are quite influential, for example, teachers, then the second is repetition paying attention to high effectiveness.

Career guidance at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City is carried out instructionally. This is to the theory put forward by Bimo Walgito that career guidance activities are carried out instructionally, which is not carried out specifically, but combined with teaching and learning activities.

The direction of students' careers after graduating or completing their education is very diverse, some are in line with the skills they learn, and some are not in line because it depends on what jobs they can get (Sewell et al., 2011). Mentor teachers provide self-understanding of the talents of mentally retarded children so that they are by the skills chosen and the jobs that mentally retarded children will enter after graduation (Murrell, 2013).

## 2) Stages of Identifying Values

Regarding the values of mentally retarded children, the skills they choose are by their wishes. Some of them voluntarily participate in the Career Guidance process while others do not. They have a positive attitude about the world of work. Judging from the results of interviews with several informants, they have high ideals and have the desire to have a job after graduating later even with the limitations they have.

In determining their careers, mentally retarded students are directed by parents and teachers, mentally retarded children also have difficulties in taking care of themselves in society, therefore they need help. The Career Guidance Process at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City also holds field trips every five months. This explanation, has a connection with the theory put forward by Behrendt &

Franklin (2014) that career field trips are programmed by schools, of course, the object of this field trip must be related to student career development. With this career field trip, students can find out exactly what is in reality.

## 3) Stages of Identifying Environmental Understanding

The process of understanding the environment, namely in finding the talents interests, and potential of children with disabilities, is carried out by the teacher providing information on further studies to his students depending on whether the student and the child's parents are able or not to continue to a higher level, the school only provides direction and at school, there is also a field trip program then the teacher also provides an understanding of what jobs can be done by children with disabilities after they graduate from SLBN 01 Bengkulu City later.

The skills learned by mentally retarded children are by what their teachers identify, and the potential possessed by mentally retarded children is by the demands of the field of work they can enter, Career Guidance provided at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City is optimal for mentally retarded children to enter the world of work according to their abilities.

## 4) Stages of Identifying Barriers and How to overcome them

The process of understanding obstacles and overcoming obstacles that mentally retarded children experience obstacles in following the Career Guidance process, their obstacles such as forgetting easily and getting bored quickly what has been taught by the teacher, this explanation has a connection with the theory put forward by Brown et al., (2012) that the memory of mentally retarded children most of them have difficulty in remembering information. The way mentally retarded children overcome the obstacles they experience by repeating what they have learned with the help of their teachers and parents.

## 5) Identifying Stages of Planning for the Future

In the process of planning the future is that there are still many mentally retarded children who have not determined their career choices according to their talents, interests, and socio-economic conditions, they have various aspirations such as those want to become doctors, teachers, flight attendants or have their businesses, they have figures in determining their careers. Judging from the number of mentally retarded children who have not planned their future related to the theory put forward by Mercer (2022) mentally retarded children have deficiencies in planning for the future.

Parents of mentally retarded children take part in determining their children's career choices such as al-

ways providing support for the child and advising what skills the child will learn for the student's future.

#### 6) Supporting Factors and Obstacles

Based on the analysis that the author conducted, there are several supporting factors in providing Career Guidance for mentally retarded children at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City, namely (1) Adjusting Career Guidance to the needs, capacity, and abilities of mentally retarded children; (2) Complete facilities for all fields of skills; (3) Cooperation with the business world (4) Having Human Resources who are patient and always provide motivation in guiding mentally retarded children.

The inhibiting factors in the Career Guidance process at SLBN 01 Bengkulu city are (1) IQ of mentally retarded children who are below average; (2) Lack of concentration and self-discipline of Tunagrahita children; (3) Communication barriers between mentally retarded children and Career Guidance teachers; (4) Lack of support from some parents. The inhibiting factors in the implementation of Career Guidance at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City are mentally retarded children who have below average IQ, lack of concentration and self-discipline of mentally retarded children, communication barriers, and lack of support from some parents.

#### 4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Theoretically, the expected benefit of this research is to increase knowledge about Career Guidance for mentally retarded children.

Practically

- 1) For researchers, this research can provide information about the stages of Career Guidance for SMALB-level mentally retarded children at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City.
- 2) For SLBN 01 Bengkulu City, the results of this study can be used as information material and to develop a Career Guidance program for students of SMALB Bengkulu City.

#### 5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The following researchers describe the limitations and recommendations of the research results, among others:

- 1) This research uses qualitative methods so that the data obtained is subjective.
- 2) Future researchers can use experimental methods through treatment.
- 3) It is hoped that the school can provide career guidance specifically so that the potential possessed by mentally retarded children can be further developed and so that in the future Career Guidance at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City SMALB level will be even better in the future.

- 4) For parents of mentally retarded children, it is hoped that they can build good cooperation in assisting and helping the development of children's talents, which means not leaving the child's success entirely to the school, guiding the children at home and continuing to support them so that they have a strong spirit in overcoming the obstacles they experience.
- 5) Islamic Guidance and Counseling as one of the guidelines or references in the material in the field of career guidance for children with special needs.

#### 6. CONCLUSION

The Career Guidance process for mentally retarded children at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City consists of several stages. First, is the stage of self-understanding. Second, is the stage of identifying the suitability of interests and talents with self-potential. Third, is the stage of understanding the environment. Fourth, the stage of obstacles and how to overcome obstacles. Fifth, is the stage of planning for the future. The career guidance process with an individual approach is organized instructional and also field trips then the methods used in the implementation of Career Guidance are demonstration and drill methods.

The results of the research obtained the conclusion that there are two factors in Career guidance to mentally retarded children, namely supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors for the implementation of Career Guidance at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City are adjusting Career Guidance to the needs, capacities, and abilities of mentally retarded children, complete facilities for all fields of skills, collaborating with the business world, and having Human Resources who are patient and always provide motivation in guiding mentally retarded children. The inhibiting factors in the implementation of Career Guidance at SLBN 01 Bengkulu City are the children's very poor absorption in responding to Career Guidance, lack of concentration, lack of discipline, communication barriers, and lack of support from some parents.

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#### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The researcher fully guarantees and is responsible for all data that the researcher has presented in this study.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no significant competing financial, professional or personal interests

that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

## ETHICAL APPROVAL STATEMENT

The author has approved the article to be published in the Indonesian Journal of Guidance and Counseling Research (IJGCR) by following the Publication Ethics and Journal Policies.

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