

The Archipelago's Development of Career Meaning Background: An Analysis of Bangka Belitung's Career Counseling Services

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Abstract

Bangka Belitung through the perspective of career counseling services. A qualitative approach using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed. Participants were senior high school students purposively selected based on their involvement in career counseling services. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, limited observations, and document analysis, and analyzed using interpretative thematic analysis. The findings indicate that career meaning is constructed through a negotiation process involving personal aspirations, family influence, local cultural values, and structural constraints of the island context. Career is predominantly understood as a means of life security and social sustainability rather than self-actualization. The study also reveals a tension between globally shaped career aspirations and locally constrained realities. Career counseling services are perceived primarily as sources of information rather than reflective spaces that facilitate contextual career meaning-making. This study highlights the need for more contextual, reflective, and dialogical career counseling practices to better align with students' socio-cultural realities in island regions.

Keywords: career counseling; meaning; Bangka Belitung

History:

Received : 27 Juni 2025

Revised : 28 Juli 2025

Accepted : 03 August 2025

Published : 28 August 2025

Publishers: LPM IAIN Syaikh Abdurrahman Siddik Bangka Belitung, Indonesia

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Introduction

The increasingly complex landscape of the working world demands that individuals to have a career understanding that is no longer static and linear (Sahin & Sugiharto, 2023). A career is not merely understood as a job choice but rather as a process of meaning construction that develops throughout the lifespan, influenced by the interaction between personal potential, subjective experiences, socio-cultural values, and the environmental context in which the individual resides (Sharf, 2016; Zunker, 2002). In this perspective, career counseling plays a strategic role as a reflective space that helps individuals understand, interpret, and make sense of their career journey more comprehensively (Hidayat et al., 2019).

But because this method is frequently taken for granted, it ignores the variety of social and geographic contexts, including archipelagic areas with their own distinct features (Kusuma, 2020; Nathan & Hill, 2005; Savickas, 2020; Watson, 2006). Therefore, there is a risk of conceptual and practical mismatches when career counseling services are implemented in locations with differing structural conditions (Yula Wardani et al., 2023).

Due to its archipelagic location, the Bangka Belitung region offers a distinctive career dynamic (Valeriani et al., 2023). The dominance of local job sectors, societal cultural values, the lack of access to career information, and the significant influence of family on a child's future all have an impact on students' career choices and orientations (Nikmarijal & Ahmad, 2023). As opposed to the long-term self-development process that many contemporary career theories portray, a career is frequently pragmatically interpreted in this context as a way to maintain life or carry on the family's work pattern (Hidayat et al., 2019).

These conditions create a tension between the global narrative about the importance of education and career mobility and the local reality full of limitations and social demands. Students in the archipelagic regions often find themselves in a dilemma between pursuing personal aspirations or conforming to environmental expectations (Dewi et al., 2024). This tension leads to the emergence of career confusion, future uncertainty, and career decision-making that tends to be reactive and less reflective (Nikmarijal et al., 2022).

According to Astuti and Purwanta (2020), career counseling services in schools ought to be able to close the gap between local realities and demands from around the world. Career counseling services in island regions, however, are still frequently focused on administrative and informational aspects, such as choosing a major or a profession, rather than going deeply into how students understand careers in the context of their lives (Salim et al., 2024). The development of contextual, pertinent, and helpful career counseling services actually depends on an understanding of how students form their professional meanings (Sahin & Sugiharto, 2024).

Furthermore, quantitative methods that prioritize the assessment of psychological variables independently continue to dominate empirical research on career counseling in Indonesia (Yula Wardani et al., 2023). There is currently a dearth of qualitative research that examines career meanings and subjective experiences in particular geographic contexts, especially in island countries (Juita et al., 2024). Research that may thoroughly examine how students in the island environment understand and develop occupations from the standpoint of career counseling services is desperately needed, as shown by this circumstance (Nur, 2019; Nursalim, 2013).

According to the description, this study uses a qualitative technique to investigate how professional meaning is constructed within the Bangka Belitung archipelago. It is anticipated that this study will offer a more thorough contextual understanding and serve as a basis for creating career counseling services that are more cognizant of the unique features of the archipelagic region.

This study has a research gap in a number of important areas. The first is the prevalence of career counseling theories and methods that are derived from metropolitan and Western contexts, ignoring the social and geographic contexts of island communities (Ratts & Pedersen, 2014). The second is the dearth of qualitative studies conducted in Indonesia that particularly examine professional meaning as a student-constructed construct rather than just a psychological variable with quantitative measurements (Ain, 2022; Putro & Jawandi, 2024). Third, there aren't many empirical studies that connect career counseling techniques in Bangka Belitung's local environment with the creation of career meaning.

The effort to provide a conceptual understanding of occupations as a construction of meaning generated within the framework of archipelagos and to directly integrate it with career counseling methods in schools is anticipated to be the innovative aspect of this study, given the research gap (Savickas, 2013). In addition to adding to the body of knowledge in contextual career counseling theory, this research provides a thoughtful basis for reimagining career counseling services that are better suited to the social, cultural, and geographic realities of archipelagic areas.

The constructivist paradigm, upon which this study is predicated, holds that occupations are the outcome of personal meaning creation through interactions with the environment (McIlveen & Luke, 2023). According to the study's conceptual framework, the Bangka Belitung archipelago's physical characteristics, local economic structure, cultural values, and familial expectations all have an impact on students' employment experiences (Hou & Li, 2022).

According to Quinlan and Renninger (2022), This concept views students as active participants who create career meaning through their social interactions and life experiences. According to Vehviläinen and Souto (2022), Career counseling services act as a mediating space that facilitates the processes of reflection, meaning negotiation, and contextual reinforcement of career knowledge. A unique and distinctive construction of professional meaning is shaped by the interplay of the island setting, students' subjective experiences, and career counseling services procedures.

In order to better understand how career meaning is created, what circumstances affect it, and how career counseling services can be improved to better fit the Bangka Belitung archipelago's setting, this conceptual framework serves as an analytical foundation.

Method

Approach and Research Design

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), also known as interpretative phenomenological design, is used in this study's qualitative methodology (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021). This method was used since the primary goal of the study is to gain a thorough understanding of how students use their subjective experiences to generate professional meaning within the Bangka Belitung archipelago. The constructivist-interpretive paradigm, on which IPA is based, holds that people create their own meanings through their interactions with social and cultural contexts.

By using the IPA approach, this study focuses on the investigation of meaning, life experiences, and the reflective processes of subjects in interpreting their careers and the role of career counseling services in the context of their lives, rather than attempting to make statistical generalizations. As a result, this strategy is thought to be the most pertinent to solving the exploratory and contextual aspects of the research topic.

Focus and Location of the Research

The building of career meaning for students in island regions and the ways in which career counseling services support this process are the main research topics. Considering the geological, social, and cultural features that characterize the island context, the study was carried out in the Bangka Belitung region.

Subject and Informant Selection Methods

Bangka Belitung high school and vocational school students who are in the process of deciding on a career are the research subjects. Purposive sampling (Heppner et al., 2015) was used to choose the participants, and the following standards were applied: 1) XI or XII final-year students who are making or will make professional decisions, 2) Have taken use of the school's career counseling programs, 3) Willing to thoughtfully express their experiences and opinions, 4) In the context of an island territory, represent a range of social and educational backgrounds, Without making them the primary focus of phenomenological analysis, guidance and counseling teachers can also serve as supporting informants in addition to students to enhance comprehension of the context of career counseling services. 6) The number of informants in IPA research is flexible and prioritizes data depth, typically ranging from 10 primary participants to meaning saturation.

Research Instrument

In keeping with the tenets of qualitative research, the researcher serves as the main tool in this study. In order to explore the participants' subjective experiences and career meaning-making processes, semi-structured in-depth interview guidelines were developed based on (Smith et al., 2021) Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) framework. The interviews' content makes reference to the Social Cognitive Professional Theory (Lent et al., 2002) to explain how contextual circumstances impact professional meaning and decisions, as well as the Career Construction Theory Savickas (2013) to comprehend careers as narrative creations. The context of career counseling services is better understood through the use of documentation studies and limited observations as supporting data.

Technique for Analyzing Data (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis)

Smith et al (1999) state that data analysis utilizing the IPA Procedure is carried out in the following steps: 1) Reading and Deeply Understanding the Transcript. 2) Initial Noting: To fully

comprehend the experiences of the participants, the researcher reread the interview transcripts several times. Descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual remarks that surface from the participants' stories are recorded by the researcher. 3) Emergent Themes are identified. The researcher creates emerging themes from the first notes that reflect the significance of the participants' experiences, 4) Theme Clustering. Main themes and subthemes are formed by grouping related themes together. 5) Analysis of Cross-Cases. The researcher looks for shared meaning patterns and individual experiences by comparing themes among individuals, and 6) Contextual Meaning Interpretation. Interpreting the results by connecting the emergent themes to the island situation and the research conceptual framework is the last step.

Methods of Gathering Data

Data collection for this study was carried out in accordance with the theory (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Heppner et al., 2015) which identifies three key methods: 1) In-depth, semi-structured interviews. The primary method for examining students' subjective perceptions of the meaning of a career is now interviews. The interview guide was created freely and adaptively, and it covered topics such as 1) Limited Observation, perspectives on the future, familial and environmental factors, and the significance of occupations in their life, as well as experiences with career counseling services. In order to comprehend the context of career counseling services in schools, including interactions between guidance counselors and students, as well as the environment and trends of services offered, non-participatory observation was carried out. 3) Documentation Analysis. Documentation in the form of counseling programs, career counseling activity records, and other supporting documents is used to strengthen the understanding of the research context and as supporting data.

Trustworthiness

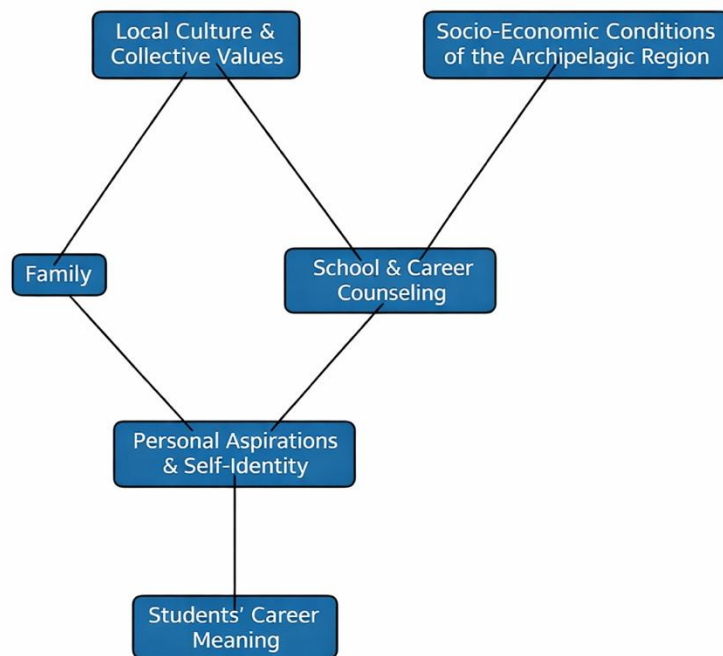
The following tactics are used to preserve the validity of the data in this study:

- **Credibility:** Verification of members and data source triangulation.
- **Transferability:** Detailed explanations of the participants and setting are presented.
- **Reliability:** A record of the data gathering and analysis procedure.
- **Confirmability:** The utilization of participant quotes as empirical evidence and the reflexivity of the researcher.

Results and Discussion

The construction of career meaning is not formed in a singular and linear manner, but rather through a layered negotiation process between personal aspirations, social environmental demands, and experiences participating in career counseling services at school, according to a thorough analysis of students' subjective experiences made when making sense of careers in the Bangka Belitung archipelago. The method was made clear by a number of key, connected concepts.

Diagram 1 :
Conceptual framework for constructing students' career meanings



This study demonstrates that the significance of students' professions in island locations is a complex construct created by the interplay of socioeconomic circumstances, family, school, self-identity reflection, and local culture. A career is not just seen as a personal decision; rather, it is the outcome of balancing personal goals with societal norms. These results are consistent with the social constructionist perspective, which sees career choices as the outcome of meaning construction within particular cultural contexts (Savickas, 2020), and the developmental ecology approach, which situates individuals within interacting social systems (Bronfenbrenner, 2000).

On a Macro Level, the socioeconomic circumstances of the archipelago region and collective culture influence the employment options available to students. Self-actualization perspective is less important than the values of family responsibilities, financial security, and social status advancement. The focus on financial security is strengthened by limited access to employment and educational options. These results support the idea that expectations and career goals are shaped by a communal value system that prioritizes relationships and social responsibilities and the limitations of opportunities that are available (Lent et al., 2002).

Families serve as the primary intermediaries in the transmission of cultural values and economic realities to students at the meso level. While students continue to balance their identities between personal desires and family loyalties, career selections are shaped by parents' expectations surrounding particular professions. This interplay demonstrates the relational nature of career growth in a collectivist setting. The Social Cognitive Career Theory emphasizes the role that schools and career counseling services play in enhancing self-efficacy and expanding perspectives through informational assistance and self-exploration (Lent et al., 2002).

In order to understand professional meaning based on local context, this research theoretically combines the social cognitive theory with the developmental ecology approach. This study's primary contribution is its confirmation of the importance of cultural values in helping students in island locations develop the meaning of their careers. Practically speaking, these results highlight the significance of creating contextualized and culturally sensitive career counseling services and including families as the main source of support when making professional decisions (Lent et al., 2002; Savickas, 2013).

Theme 1: Using a career to secure one's life rather than pursuing self-actualization

The majority of students view a job as an endeavor to attain future financial stability and life security. Practically speaking, a career is defined as a job that is "certain," "safe," and "close to home," rather than as a place for the realization of one's own ideals or capabilities. Life experiences in island areas with few employment opportunities and unstable economies have a significant influence on this view. Students' dream careers are frequently linked to occupations that have been in the family or the neighborhood for many generations. Instead of being merely manifestations of personal desires, career choices are seen as practical decisions that need to be tailored to local circumstances. According to this viewpoint, a career is seen less as a long-term path toward personal growth and more as a means of survival.

Theme 2: Local Culture and Family Have a Significant Impact on Career Meaning

Students' experiences demonstrate that families have a significant influence on how they see jobs. Future orientation is primarily determined by local cultural norms, family work customs, and parental expectations. In this situation, choosing a vocation frequently results from a process of conforming to social expectations rather than from introspection. Students discussed the conflict between their own aspirations and obligations to their families. Some of them opt to adjust in order to preserve family unity even when they are aware that their interests and potential deviate from what their parents had in mind. This demonstrates that a career's meaning is created by a social environment full of norms and values and is not only personal but also relational and collective.

Theme 3: The Conflict between Local Reality and Global Dreams

The conflict between the ideal career pictures derived from global narratives, schools, and the media, and the realities of life in the archipelago region is another rising subject. Although they are aware of the limited availability of postsecondary education, career information, and employment prospects in their immediate environs, they are also familiar with a variety of contemporary professions and worldwide career opportunities. Feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and concern about the future are brought on by this tension. A career is perceived as something that is both desirable and challenging to attain. In order to better fit with local circumstances, some students adopt a compromise mindset in this scenario by reducing their professional ambitions. These results suggest that expectations and constraints coexist in a domain where professional meaning is constructed.

Theme 4: Career Counseling as a Space for Information, Not Quite a Space for Reflection on Meaning

Generally speaking, students' encounters with career counseling services at school are regarded as a source of knowledge regarding potential career paths and academic majors. Though they are not yet fully perceived as a contemplative space to analyze the personal and contextual meaning of a career, career counseling services are considered useful in giving an overview of educational pathways and the working world. Reflection on life values, self-identity, and the connection between their occupations and social-cultural surroundings is rarely promoted for students. As a result, the majority of the career meaning-making process occurs informally and inwardly, for example, through family conversations or environmental observations. These results point to a discrepancy between the actual services offered in the sector and the potential role of career counseling.

Theme 5: Advice on career counseling that is more contextual and empowering

However, as persons growing up in island locations, the students stated their expectation that career counseling services would better comprehend their lives. They want career guidance that helps them discover professional meanings that are pertinent to local conditions, family values, and actual opportunities, in addition to providing them with perfect choices. This hope highlights the need for a more dialogical, reflective, and contextual approach to career advising. In order to ensure that the meaning of a job developed is not coercive but rather results from a more thorough awareness of oneself, career counseling is supposed to be a secure place for students to negotiate between their personal goals and social realities.

The study's overall conclusions show that students in the Bangka Belitung archipelago region develop their professional meaning through a complex process of interaction between structural circumstances, cultural values, family influences, and career counseling service experiences. Careers are viewed as connected and contextual rather than just as worthless personal decisions.

This result is in line with research by Afriyati and Pasmawati (2024), which highlights the significance of creating career counseling services that are focused on supporting a contextual and reflective career meaning-making process in line with the realities of island regions, rather than just dispensing information.

According to the study's findings, students in the Bangka Belitung archipelago region develop their professional meaning through a contextual, relational, and dynamic process. A career is not just a value-free personal decision; rather, it is the outcome of balancing one's own goals, obligations to one's family, cultural norms, and the structural constraints of the archipelagic region. This interpretation offers a crucial picture of how to reinterpret both traditional and modern career theories within a local setting.

A career is seen as a lifelong process of self-concept creation from the standpoint of career development theory (Super, 1980). These results are consistent with Ahmad (2024), which shows that the social and cultural milieu, particularly Bangka Belitung, has a significant impact on students' career self-concept rather than them developing it independently. According to (hen et al (2024), Students often modify their job self-concept during the discovery period in order to conform to family expectations and local realities. This demonstrates that the career self-concept in island environments tends to be flexible and compromise-oriented, supporting Super (1957) assertion that career development cannot be divorced from an individual's roles and life circumstances.

Additionally, Savickas (2020) Career Construction Theory (CCT) might be used to interpret the data on the conflict between local reality and global goals. According to CCT, a career is a narrative of life that people create to give their job and life experiences purpose. Despite the fact that these

narratives frequently diverge from the ideal professional representations they come across in global discourse, students in this study seem to be making an effort to construct a "reasonable" career narrative within the island environment. According to Sari et al (2023), This process demonstrates that career flexibility is more important for creating meaningful careers than just landing a certain job.

According to Savickas (2020) A career is a method for adjusting to the needs of the environment, which is consistent with the conclusion that a career is perceived as a means of life security. Students create career meanings focused on social closeness and life sustainability in the setting of island regions with few options. By claiming that career construction is influenced by both structural factors that restrict the room for individual narratives and subjective decisions, this broadens our understanding of CCT.

In the meantime, the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), put forth by Lent et al (2002), explains the significant impact of family and local culture on how students view their jobs. SCCT places emphasis on how contextual elements, like environmental impediments and social support, affect individual career objectives, outcome expectations, and self-efficacy. According to the study's findings, students' perceptions of their chances of succeeding in particular professions are greatly influenced by contextual factors such as cultural norms and family expectations. This is also in line with a study by Salim et al (2023), which claims that family support has a significant impact on career decision-making by both encouraging and restricting career exploration.

Furthermore, students' expectations for results are impacted by contextual limitations such as the restricted availability of information and employment prospects in island communities. Some students tend to decrease their career objectives in order to conform to local reality, which can be explained by this condition. This phenomenon demonstrates the intricate interplay between contextual and personal elements in determining realistic and achievable job choices within the framework of Social Cognitive Job Theory.

The results of this study also highlight the function of career counseling services, which have not yet fully developed into places for meaning reflection and still primarily function as information sources. According to Super's (1980) Theory, this state suggests that students have not yet received the best assistance from career counseling services in integrating their self-concept with the responsibilities they play in society. In the meantime, career counseling should facilitate career narratives inside the CCT framework, allowing students to think back on their experiences and create meaningful career meanings.

According to SCCT, career counseling services have the strategic potential to increase learners' expectations for outcomes and boost self-efficacy through more contextual career exploration. The results of this study, however, show that this promise has not yet been completely realized, particularly when considering island locations that need a career counseling strategy that is more cognizant of local cultural values and structural limitations.

This discussion demonstrates how Super (1980), CCT (Lent et al., 2002), and SCCT (Savickas, 2013) work in tandem to explain how students in the Bangka Belitung archipelago generate their professional meaning. Savickas describes the narrative process and adaptation of professional meaning, Super (1980) aids in the creation of career self-concept, and SCCT (Savickas, 2013) emphasizes the significance of social and environmental elements in career decision-making. By highlighting the significance of geographic and cultural context in influencing individual job experiences, the research findings enhance these three viewpoints.

Therefore, this study highlights the necessity for contextual integration of developmental, narrative, and social-cognitive approaches in the creation of career counseling services in island locations. In addition to offering information or helping students make the best career decisions, career counseling should concentrate on supporting a professional meaning-making process that is pertinent, introspective, and flexible enough to accommodate the realities of students' life in the island regions.

Conclusion

In Bangka Belitung, careers are developed through intricate, relational, and contextual procedures. A career is viewed as an adaptation approach to balance personal goals with the social, cultural, and structural realities of the archipelagic region rather than just as a personal choice of employment. Students' definitions of a career are typically focused on economic sustainability, social closeness, and life security, which reflects how much the local context shapes their outlook on the future.

The results of this study show that students' career meanings are significantly shaped by their families and local cultures. When choosing a career, social conventions, family work customs, and parental expectations serve as the primary framework for reference. Students frequently feel conflicted in this circumstance between their restricted local opportunities and their worldwide narrative-derived job aspirations. Career perplexity and a propensity to compromise personal goals are the outcomes of the tension.

Despite being a source of knowledge, career counseling services in schools have not yet fully developed into reflective environments that support a thorough and contextual process of career meaning-making. Career counseling has yet to make the examination of students' beliefs, self-identity, and sociocultural background the primary focus of its services; instead, it still frequently concentrates on administrative issues and alternatives for educational pathways.

The results of this study theoretically support the applicability of the Social Cognitive Career Theory, Savickas' Career Construction Theory, and Donald Super's career development theory in comprehending the professional experiences of students in island locations. But this study also demonstrates that in order to be in line with regional geographic and cultural reality, these ideas must be read contextually. As a result, this study significantly advances the field of contextual career counseling in Indonesia, especially when considering island locations.

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