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The Effectiveness of Classroom Guidance Services Using the Goal-Setting Technique to Improve the Career Planning of Grade XI Students at SMAN 15 Pandeglang

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Abstract

Career planning is an important aspect of adolescent development, yet some senior high school students experience difficulties in recognizing their potential, accessing career information, making decisions, and preparing future plans. This study aimed to describe students' career planning levels and examine changes following classroom guidance incorporating goal setting. A quantitative pre-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design was employed, involving 35 Grade XI students at SMAN 15 Pandeglang selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a career planning questionnaire and analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. The mean career planning score increased from 79.89 at pretest to 124.29 at posttest, and the analysis indicated a statistically significant pretest–posttest difference ($p < .001$). The observed improvement provides preliminary support for incorporating goal setting into classroom career guidance, although the one-group design limits causal attribution. These findings contribute contextual evidence to the development of school career guidance and highlight the potential value of structured goal formulation and students' action plans in supporting career planning.

Keywords: Career Planning; Classroom Guidance; Goal Setting; Senior High School Students; Guidance and Counseling

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INTRODUCTION

Career planning is an important aspect of students' development at the senior high school level because it is related to their ability to recognize their potential, explore career information, make choices, and develop steps to achieve their future goals. During their senior high school years, students begin to face various options after completing their education, such as pursuing higher education, entering the workforce, or developing other career pathways. Therefore, students need to have well-directed career plans to ensure that their decisions align with their abilities, interests, and goals. Dostanić et al. (2021) found that career decision-making skills, career decision-making self-efficacy, and career adaptability are interrelated among high school students. In line with this finding, Lau et al. (2021) found that career exploration interventions can improve career maturity and self-concept among high school students. Meilanda et al. (2021) also showed that group counseling focused on career decision-making self-efficacy can be used to improve students' career adaptability. Thus, career planning needs to be developed through a process that helps students understand themselves and prepare for their future choices.

Career planning is not limited to determining the type of occupation one wishes to pursue; it also involves a process of self-understanding, obtaining information, considering various alternatives, and making decisions based on realistic goals. Kutlu and Bedel (2021) explained the importance of career awareness activities in helping high school students reduce irrational beliefs about career choices and develop decision-making skills. Chen et al. (2022) demonstrated that online career interventions can support high school students' career readiness. Meanwhile, through a systematic review of career interventions for university students, Soares et al. (2022) showed that career interventions need to be designed by considering their framework, effectiveness, and intended outcomes. Although their study focused on university students, its findings provide an overview of the importance of structured intervention programs in supporting career development. Therefore, career planning among senior high school students needs to be directed through systematic activities that are appropriate to their developmental stage.

One aspect that needs to be considered in career planning is students' ability to recognize their potential, interests, and abilities. Self-understanding serves as a foundation for students to consider educational and occupational choices that suit them. Gashi et al. (2023) found that career guidance workshops can improve adolescents' career self-efficacy

and career goals. Siebert et al. (2023) also demonstrated that analytically designed decision-making interventions can support proactive decision-making and improve career choice self-efficacy among high school students. In addition, Abdi et al. (2023) examined the relationship between self-regulation and career planning among senior high school students. Through a literature review on adolescents' career adaptability, Cristy and Kurniawati (2023) also emphasized the relevance of adaptability in responding to career development. These findings indicate that career planning is associated with several personal abilities that need to be developed so that students can determine their career direction.

In addition to self-understanding, exploring career information is also necessary to ensure that students have adequate knowledge of further education options and the world of work. Such information can help students compare available alternatives before making a decision. Cahyaningtyas et al. (2023) examined the relationship between self-awareness and self-efficacy and career decision-making among senior high school students. Pambuka et al. (2024) demonstrated the application of SWOT analysis, goal setting, and mission statements in training to support students' career maturity. In a broader context, Wang et al. (2024), through a systematic review of career interventions for high school students, found that these interventions commonly involved group counseling and were aimed at developing career adaptability and career decision-making. Simanjuntak et al. (2024) also explained that career exploration alone may not be sufficient to address high school students' career decision-making difficulties. This means that exploration activities need to be accompanied by the ability to process information and relate it to students' self-understanding and career goals.

The implementation of career guidance in schools is one way to help students address these challenges. Guidance services need to provide students with opportunities to obtain information, recognize their abilities, and develop decision-making skills. Through a systematic review of school counselors in the classroom, Slaten et al. (2024) discussed the role of counseling services delivered within the classroom learning context. Prayoga et al. (2024) examined career maturity among high school students by considering self-efficacy and locus of control. Susanto et al. (2024) demonstrated that career exploration training can be used to improve career decision-making self-efficacy among senior high school students. Barusi and Suharso (2024) also found the relevance of career exploration behavior as a mediating variable in the relationship between social support and career decision-making self-efficacy among high school students. These findings indicate that career guidance

services need to encourage students' active involvement in understanding themselves, seeking information, and preparing for career decisions.

Career planning problems are also related to students' ability to set goals and develop steps to achieve them. Liu et al. (2024) discussed career decision-making self-efficacy among senior high school students and its relationship with learning engagement. Through a quasi-experimental study, Yin et al. (2024) demonstrated the importance of empowering high school students from low-income families to develop career decision-making self-efficacy. Furthermore, Zeng and Ma (2025) evaluated the effects of career courses and group counseling on high school students' career decision-making. Their study indicated that learning programs and career guidance services can be part of efforts to help students address difficulties in making career choices. Pellegrino et al. (2025) also examined the relationship between social, emotional, and behavioral skills and career adaptability among high school students. These findings reinforce the need for services that not only provide information but also train students to set goals and design actionable steps.

One technique that can be used to help students develop career goals is the *goal-setting* technique. This technique guides students in establishing clear goals and identifying the steps needed to achieve them. In its application, the SMART principles (*Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant,* and *Time-bound*) can be used to ensure that the goals are more specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Song (2025) found that career adaptability plays a role in explaining the relationship between students' need satisfaction and career decision-making difficulties, while career exploration contributes to this relationship mechanism. Chang and Wang (2025) also examined the relationships

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design. A quantitative approach was adopted to measure changes in students' career planning through numerical data collected before and after the intervention. Specifically, the study used a one-group pretest-posttest design. In this design, a single group completed an initial assessment, received classroom guidance incorporating the goal-setting technique, and subsequently completed a final assessment. Comparing the pre-intervention and post-intervention scores enabled the researchers to examine changes in students' career planning following the

intervention. This design was therefore aligned with the study's objective of examining the effectiveness of classroom guidance services using goal setting.

The primary research variable was students' career planning, operationalized with reference to Donald Super's career development theory (2015). It was assessed through four dimensions: knowledge of self, career information, decision making, and planning for the future. Knowledge of self covered students' awareness of their interests, talents, abilities, strengths, limitations, and personal values. Career information concerned their understanding of educational pathways, occupational options, educational qualifications required for particular occupations, future employment opportunities, and sources of career information. Decision making referred to their ability to select career options, consider relevant factors, make realistic choices, and take responsibility for their decisions. Planning for the future encompassed setting career goals, identifying steps to achieve them, planning further education, selecting career-supporting activities, and making efforts to implement future plans. The intervention consisted of four classroom guidance sessions, each lasting 45 minutes. Goal setting was implemented through the SMART principles: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

The research was conducted at SMAN 15 Pandeglang, Pandeglang Regency, Banten, Indonesia. The target population comprised 208 Grade XI students. Using Slovin's formula with a 10% margin of error, the initial sample calculation yielded 68 students. The final experimental group, however, was selected through purposive sampling. Selection considered the preliminary career-planning assessment and the need to deliver classroom guidance to an intact class. Accordingly, the final experimental group consisted of 35 students from one class.

The principal research instrument was a career-planning questionnaire developed from the four dimensions of Super's theory. Responses were recorded on a four-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Different scoring arrangements were applied to favorable and unfavorable statements. Instrument suitability was assessed through expert judgment by two specialists in Guidance and Counseling. A pilot test involving 32 respondents was subsequently conducted. Of the 53 tested items, 39 were classified as valid and 14 as invalid, based on the comparison between the calculated correlation coefficient and the reference value of 0.349. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha produced a coefficient of 0.994, indicating very high reliability. The questionnaire was

administered before and after the intervention. Observation, interviews, and documentation were also identified as supporting data-collection techniques.

The collected pretest and posttest scores were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS version 30.0 for Windows. A normality test was conducted before hypothesis testing. When the data met the parametric assumptions specified in the thesis, differences between the paired scores were examined using a paired-samples t-test. If those assumptions were not met, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used as the nonparametric alternative. The research process lasted approximately two months from the issuance of the research permit. One month was allocated to questionnaire distribution and data processing, while the remaining month was devoted to delivering the intervention.

RESULTS

1. Overview of Students' Career Planning

Table 1. Overview of Grade XI Students' Career Planning

Category	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
High	112	12	17.6%
Moderate	68–111	42	61.8%
Low	54–67	14	20.6%
Very Low	54	0	0%
Total	–	**68**	**100%**

source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 1. Overview of Grade XI Students' Career Planning shows that out of 68 students who completed the pretest, 12 students (17.6%) were classified in the high category, 42 students (61.8%) in the moderate category, and 14 students (20.6%) in the low category. No students (0%) were classified in the very low category. These findings indicate that most students had a moderate level of career planning, suggesting the need for further improvement.

2. Distribution of Career Planning Aspects

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Grade XI Students' Career Planning Aspects

No.	Career Planning Aspects	High	Moderate	Low
1	Self-Understanding	18%	63%	19%
2	Career Information	16%	68%	16%
3	Decision-Making	16%	75%	9%
4	Future Planning	22%	57%	21%

source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Grade XI Students' Career Planning Aspects shows that the percentage distribution varied across the four career planning aspects. Self-understanding was dominated by the moderate category (63%), followed by career information (68%) and decision-making (75%). Meanwhile, future planning had the highest percentage in the low category (21%), indicating that students experienced the greatest difficulties in developing concrete steps and long-term strategies to achieve their career goals after graduating from senior high school.

3. Implementation of Classical Guidance Services Using the Goal-Setting Technique

Table 3. Implementation Schedule of Classical Guidance Services Using the Goal-Setting Technique

No.	Date	Activity	Session Theme	Career Planning Aspect
1	August 19, 2026	Pretest	–	–
2	August 26, 2026	Session 1	Recognizing Personal Potential for Career Planning	Self-Understanding
3	August 28, 2026	Session 2	Establishing Clear and Measurable Career Goals	Career Information
4	August 31, 2026	Session 3	Developing Strategic Steps to Achieve Career Goals	Decision-Making
5	September 4, 2026	Session 4	Self-Commitment and Continuous Evaluation of Career Plans	Future Planning
6	September 7, 2026	Posttest	–	–

source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 3. Implementation Schedule of Classical Guidance Services Using the Goal-Setting Technique shows that the research activities consisted of six stages, beginning with the pretest on August 19, 2026, followed by four intervention sessions conducted between August 26 and September 4, 2026, and ending with the posttest on September 7, 2026. Each intervention session focused on a different career planning aspect: self-understanding, career information, decision-making, and future planning.

4. Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores

Table 4. Comparison of Students' Mean Career Planning Scores Before and After the Intervention

Measurement	Number of Students (N)	Mean Score
Pretest	35	79.89
Posttest	35	124.29
Mean Increase	–	**44.40**

source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 4. Comparison of Students' Mean Career Planning Scores Before and After the Intervention shows that the mean career planning score increased from 79.89 in the pretest to 124.29 in the posttest, representing an increase of 44.40 points. These findings indicate an improvement in students' career planning after participating in classical guidance services using the goal-setting technique.

Data Analysis

1. Normality Test

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the research data were normally distributed. Data are considered normally distributed when the significance value is greater than 0.05 (Sig. > 0.05), whereas a significance value below 0.05 (Sig. < 0.05) indicates a non-normal distribution (Sugiyono, 2016). The test was performed using SPSS version 30.0 for Windows.

Table 5. Results of the Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test

Data	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic	df	Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	0.162	35	0.021	0.880	35	0.001
Posttest	0.158	35	0.027	0.951	35	0.125

source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 5. Results of the Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test shows that the Shapiro-Wilk significance value for the pretest was 0.001, which is below 0.05, indicating that the pretest data were not normally distributed. Meanwhile, the posttest significance value was 0.125, which is above 0.05, indicating that the posttest data were normally distributed. Therefore, the data did not meet the normality assumption for both measurement periods.

2. Wilcoxon Test

The Wilcoxon test was conducted because the normality test indicated that the pretest and posttest data did not both meet the normality assumption. This test aimed to determine whether there was a significant difference between students' career planning scores before and after the intervention.

Table 6. Results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

Test Statistic	Posttest – Pretest
Z	-5.005
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001

source: Compiled by the researcher (2026)

Table 6. Results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test shows that the Z value was -5.005, with an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of less than 0.001. Since the significance value is below 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. These results indicate a statistically significant difference between students' pretest and posttest career planning scores. Thus, classroom guidance services using the goal-setting technique were effective in improving the career planning of Grade XI students at SMAN 15 Pandeglang in the 2026/2027 academic year.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that classroom guidance incorporating the goal-setting technique was associated with a significant improvement in the career planning of Grade XI students at SMAN 15 Pandeglang. The mean career-planning score increased from 79.89 at pretest to 124.29 after the students had participated in four guidance sessions, representing an average gain of 44.40 points. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test further produced a Z value of −5.005 and an asymptotic significance level below 0.001. As this value is lower than the 0.05 significance threshold, the results indicate a statistically significant difference between students' scores before and after the intervention. These findings support the conclusion that classroom guidance using goal setting was effective in improving career planning among the students involved in this study.

This improvement needs to be considered in relation to students' initial career-planning conditions. The preliminary assessment of 68 students showed that 42 students (61.8%) were in the moderate category, 14 (20.6%) were in the low category, and 12 (17.6%) were in the high category. This distribution suggests that most students had developed some awareness of their career direction but had not yet achieved a sufficiently strong level of career planning. The results across the four dimensions provide a more specific picture of these needs. The proportion of students in the low category was 19% for self-understanding, 16% for career information, 9% for decision making, and 21% for future planning. The highest proportion of low scores occurred in future planning. This suggests that a major challenge was not simply identifying possible career options, but translating career intentions into concrete steps and realistic timelines.

The differences across these dimensions provided an important basis for designing the intervention. In terms of self-understanding, students needed to recognize their interests, talents, abilities, strengths, and limitations as a foundation for determining their career direction. Regarding career information, they needed to broaden their knowledge of further

educational pathways, government-affiliated schools, occupational qualifications, and employment opportunities. Decision making involved evaluating available alternatives and selecting an appropriate direction with greater independence. Future planning, in turn, required students to translate their goals into stages, strategies, and time-bound targets. These dimensions are interconnected: self-understanding helps students recognize their personal characteristics, career information expands the alternatives available to them, decision making guides their choices, and future planning transforms those choices into practical actions.

The four guidance sessions reflected the relationship among these dimensions. The first session focused on identifying personal potential as a foundation for career planning. The second addressed career options and information, enabling students to relate their personal characteristics to educational and occupational alternatives. The third session guided students in formulating a career goal using the SMART principles: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. The final session focused on developing a career action plan that included practical steps, timelines, and strategies for anticipating potential obstacles. This sequence indicates that goal setting was not used merely to encourage students to develop aspirations, but also to help them formulate clearer objectives and identify actions required to achieve them. The increase in posttest scores is therefore consistent with the intended purpose of the intervention: strengthening students' self-understanding, career knowledge, decision-making abilities, and capacity to plan for the future.

The findings can be interpreted within Super's (2015) career development framework, which emphasizes self-understanding, exploration of the occupational environment, career decision making, and planning as important elements of career development. As discussed in the thesis, Grade XI students are at a developmental stage in which they need to explore their personal capacities and consider available educational and occupational pathways. The intervention reflected this perspective by connecting the four dimensions of career planning with specific learning activities. Identifying personal potential was related to the development of self-concept, exploring career information helped students understand their career environment, setting goals provided direction for their choices, and developing an action plan translated those choices into more concrete steps. Thus, the intervention was not limited to improving assessment scores; it also provided students with a structured experience of the career-planning process.

The results are also consistent with Suastini and Putri (2023), whose study indicated that classroom guidance services can help students explore their potential and prepare for their future. Both studies highlight the contribution of classroom guidance to students' career development. The present study extends this discussion by incorporating goal setting as a specific technique and organizing the intervention around four dimensions of career planning. Its contribution lies in illustrating how structured goal formulation can be integrated into classroom guidance to connect personal exploration with concrete future-oriented actions. Similarly, the findings correspond with Arif et al. (2023), who reported improvements in students' career planning following career guidance. Their findings included improvements in students' understanding of employment opportunities, ability to determine career direction, and preparation of further academic plans. This similarity reinforces the view that guidance interventions can support students in developing greater readiness to determine their future pathways. However, the intervention formats differ. Arif et al. (2023) focused on group career guidance, whereas the present study implemented classroom guidance using goal setting and incorporated Super's career development dimensions. The present findings therefore add evidence concerning the application of goal setting within a structured classroom guidance programme.

From a theoretical perspective, this study supports the importance of developing career planning through a process involving self-understanding, career exploration, decision making, and future planning. Integrating these dimensions with goal setting demonstrates how career objectives can connect students' understanding of their personal characteristics with the actions required to pursue a chosen career direction. The distinctive contribution of this study lies in implementing the four dimensions through a structured sequence of classroom guidance sessions, progressing from identifying personal potential to developing an action plan. The initial assessment also indicates that students' needs differ across dimensions. In particular, the relatively high proportion of low scores in future planning suggests that career guidance should not focus exclusively on exploring interests or presenting occupational information; it should also help students develop realistic strategies for implementing their decisions. In practical terms, the findings may inform school counsellors when designing career guidance services based on students' assessed needs. Initial assessments can help identify which dimensions require greater attention, allowing guidance activities to be tailored rather than limited to general career information. Activities such as personal reflection, career-information mapping, SMART goal formulation, and

action-plan development may be incorporated into classroom guidance. At the institutional level, schools may use these findings to strengthen career guidance provision and support students as they prepare for educational and occupational transitions after secondary school. Methodologically, the study demonstrates the use of pretest and posttest measurements and the application of the Wilcoxon test when the normality assumption was not satisfied in the reported analysis.

Nevertheless, several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. Delivering the intervention in a large classroom required substantial classroom management to maintain students' attention and participation during goal-setting activities. The intervention also required careful preparation, particularly in developing the guidance implementation plan and career exploration materials. In addition, the primary measurement instrument was a questionnaire, which could not provide a sufficiently in-depth account of students' subjective psychological experiences. Although observation and interviews were identified as supporting data-collection techniques, the questionnaire remained the principal instrument. The intervention also employed goal setting within classroom guidance without combining it with interactive digital media or other guidance techniques. Furthermore, the research design involved a single group without a comparison group. Consequently, the observed score improvement establishes a significant change following the intervention among the participating students, but it does not conclusively demonstrate that the intervention alone caused the change or that it is more effective than alternative approaches. The intervention also involved only 35 students from one class at a single school, which limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other student populations and educational contexts. Future studies could involve comparison groups, include schools with different characteristics, conduct follow-up assessments, and incorporate more extensive qualitative data. Despite these limitations, the findings provide empirical support for the potential of classroom guidance using goal setting as a structured approach to strengthening students' career planning.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that classroom guidance services using the goal-setting technique can help improve the career planning of Grade XI students at SMAN 15 Pandeglang. The pretest results from 68 students indicated that most students had a

moderate level of career planning, accounting for 42 students (62%). Meanwhile, 14 students (20%) were in the low category, and 12 students (18%) were in the high category. Students' difficulties were particularly evident in the dimensions of future planning and self-understanding, indicating that some students had not yet been able to identify their personal potential or develop concrete steps for determining their further education and career choices.

The classroom guidance services using the goal-setting technique were conducted through four sessions based on the dimensions of career planning and Donald Super's career development theory at the exploration stage. The activities began by helping students understand their potential, interests, and talents, followed by exploring information about higher education and employment opportunities. Students were then guided to make decisions by setting career goals based on the SMART principles (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound). Finally, students developed an action plan and career roadmap to outline the steps needed to achieve their career goals.

The hypothesis testing results using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test showed a significance value of 0.001, which was lower than 0.05. In addition, the students' average career planning score increased from 80.17 in the pretest to 122.43 in the posttest. This improvement was also reflected in the shift in students' career planning levels following the intervention. Therefore, classroom guidance services using the goal-setting technique were proven effective in improving students' career planning and can be used as one of the strategies for providing career guidance services in schools.

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