



Secondary School Students Counseling Needs: What Components Are Important?

Mohd Azli Jailani, Sofea Elias and Nuzha Mohd Taha

EasyChair preprints are intended for rapid dissemination of research results and are integrated with the rest of EasyChair.

November 8, 2019

PAPER TEMPLATE AND AUTHORS GUIDELINE FOR INSITE 2019 PROCEEDINGS

Secondary school students counseling needs: what components are important?

Haji Mohd Azli Jailani¹ Sofea Elias² and Nuzha Mohd Taha³

¹Faculty of Education and Humanities,

²Faculty of Education and Humanities,

³Faculty of Education and Humanities.

UNITAR International University, Malaysia

Email: azli@unitar.my; sofea@unitar.my; nuzha@unitar.my

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the components of counseling needs as perceived important by secondary school students. The understanding of the needs is crucial for school counselors in tailoring the specific counseling programs for students. The study was conducted in qualitative method where the data was analyzed in three phases of reviewing exercises; a) focus group interviews that involved 16 (N=16) students as participants from two different secondary schools in Selangor, b) open-ended questionnaire was distributed randomly to 331 (N=331) respondents from three different secondary schools in Terengganu, Perak and Selangor, and c) interview sessions to gain school counselors' opinions about student counseling needs that had involved 5 (N=5) school counselors. The findings of the study have shown that the components of counseling need as highlighted by the students can be grouped into six different categories; first is personal development, second emotional needs, third career development, fourth learning skills, fifth peer relationship and sixth family.

Keywords: counseling needs, secondary school students, school counselors, personal development, emotional needs, career development, learning skills, peer relationship, family

INTRODUCTION

Erford (2015) described school counseling profession as an exciting career, and full with adventure. The effective school counselor seeks to remove obstacles to education, career, and personal/social development that impede the growth of a single student or an entire society. Therefore, the existence of school counselors in the education system cannot be seen as only routine or stereotype jobs, but it more towards serving the school populations as agents of education reform and social change.

The school counseling services in Malaysia had begun formally in 1960. In tandem with the existence of counseling training programs to meet the current needs of the education policy at that time. In 1969, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in collaboration with UNICEF has taken steps to train 275 secondary school teachers on the basic introduction concept of guidance and counseling. By 1974 a total of 1,772 teachers have been exposed to this course. Under the new proposed plan, every secondary school in Peninsular Malaysia should have at least one trained teacher in guidance and counseling (Sidek Mohd Noah, Nordin Kardi, Mohd Yusoff Ahmad, Shamsudin Hussin & Halimatun Halaliah Mokhtar, 2005; Sew, Jin & Mah, 2013).

A circular, KP8548/1/(25) has been distributed to schools throughout the country. The circular was to inform the school principals that each school will be provided with two teachers who were specifically trained in the field of educational guidance. They were asked to work closely with the school principals in preparing a guidance program in schools (Sidek bin Mohd Noah et al, 2005; Johari Talib, 2009; Saporah Sipon, 2010).

In 1996, through a circular [KP (BS-HEP) 8543/60/ (91)] dated March 18, 1996, full-time counselors were appointed in secondary schools. Following the circular released, all schools were directed to ensure effective guidance and counseling services were provided.

Today, the focus of guidance and counseling services in schools has changed from the three areas (academic, career, and psychosocial) to four components of duties. The components are: (1) personality development; (2) discipline; (3) career education; and (4) psychosocial and mental health. Counselors need to design activities and intervention services that can instill moral values and good discipline among students. Also, counselors need to coordinate activities that can promote socialization, emotional management and positive thinking among students. Among the activities that can be organized are administration of student profile, preventive education, consultation with parents, individual and group counseling and dissemination of information (Ministry of Education, 2015).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

One of the major roles of school counselors is to design a comprehensive program of services with specific goals and objectives that complement the school mission and vision (Schmidt, 2014).

The comprehensive program components that consists of counseling, consulting, coordinating, and assessment services are given to students in response to the identified goals, and objectives of the school stakeholders. The goals and objectives are identified and given priority as the result of prior assessment and analysis of students', parents', and teachers' needs. In other words, the school counselor's decision to focus on specific issues and select specific activities in a program was not randomly done or it was accidentally organized without purpose (Erford, 2015; Schmidt, 2014).

The above-mentioned statement has indicated that needs assessment is crucial since it gives a lot of benefits to counseling services. Erford (2015) and Astramovich (2011) have explained that needs assessment serves as a foundation upon which organizations make decisions about where to invest their resources and what populations to target for their services. In addition, needs assessment information can help organizations and individuals prioritize their services and refine existing programs to meet the needs of various subpopulations.

In the era where budget is really matter, needs assessment can help counselors in identifying the levels of priority to activities that they want to organize. By setting up the scale it would indicate the sense of urgency for counselors to choose programs or activities that can really give maximum impact to the school community (Astramovich, 2011).

In relation to Malaysia, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has emphasized school counselors in identifying their guidance and counseling services through assessments, surveys, discussions and interviews with students, teachers, administrators, staff, parents and school alumni. But, working in longer hours, dealing with some unpredictable crisis which involved students, parents or sometimes teachers, and some other administrative work have made the counselors unaware that they are supposed to make an adequate assessment especially in understanding students' needs (Sakhilah Haji Shahkat, 1999; Abdul Malek Abdul Rahman, Nor Junainah Mohd Isa, & Azizah Atan, 2013).

Today, there are many incidents or issues involving school students that people can read or watch on the mass media or social media. Problems such as bullying, underworld gangs, sexual assaults, and criminal offences were on the news every day, and the numbers are increasing drastically. More students are entering schools with emotional, physical and interpersonal barriers that are like silent killers to students especially those who do not want to share their problems with the teachers or school counselors. In many cases, schools are only informed after the incident had taken place (Nyutu, 2007; Abdul Malek Abdul Rahman, Nor Junainah Mohd Isa, & Azizah Atan, 2013).

The increased of stress among adolescents have led to great challenges for today's educators, and especially for today's school counselors. The school administrators realize that students who bring problems to school that interfere the teaching and learning process need special, competent assistance of professionally trained school counselors (Thompson, 2001; Australia, 2011).

Many researchers for examples Thompson (2001); Nyutu (2007); Astramovich (2011); and Wong & Ahmad Jazimin (2015); believe that identifying the needs would help school counselors to develop guidance and counseling programs that could benefits students in facing their personal predicaments, and failure to do so, according to Wright (2012) would give problems for counselors in providing treatment options that tailored to specific issues.

There are many ways or methods for determining needs for examples questionnaires and inventories, analysis of records, personal interviews, counseling statistics, classroom visits, use of outside consultants and systematic evaluation of the guidance program (Erford, 2015). For this study, open-ended questionnaires and personal interviews were chosen to identify the needs components of secondary school students.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To identify and categorize the component of counseling needs that perceived as important by secondary school students.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How the component of counseling needs being identified and categorized as important by secondary school students?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cook (1989) describes all human service programs are developed based on the implicit assumption of needs of the population to be served. The successful of the programs will be determined or depending on how well those needs being addressed.

Need assessment is the first element in the program planning stage and is vital for the effective delivery of services as well as allocation of resources. As per highlighted by Erford (2015), "a good needs assessment directly translates into program development" (p. 251).

Kaufman and English (1976) explain needs assessment is simply a gap analysis. Something is needed in order for a change in condition to occur, whether this is an achievement of a new condition, maintenance of the same condition, or avoidance of a possible condition.

Maslow recommends that human needs can be grouped in hierarchical forms from low-order to high-order needs: (a) physiological, (b) safety, (c) belongingness and love, (d) self-esteem, respect and independence, (e) information, (f) understanding, (g) beauty, and (h) self-actualization. According to Maslow, people must satisfy the lower-level needs before the next need on the hierarchy can be assimilated (Kaur, 2013).

Glasser (1988) argues that human behavior is controlled by psychological or new brain needs, such as the need for belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Associated with these psychological needs is the need for identity, which is a psychological healthy sense of self established by being accepted as a person of worth by others.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Glasser's Choice theory highlight about human needs that can be categorized in the following characteristics; firstly, both theories believe needs exist in the form of human genetic in nature. Secondly, human needs occur in different domains or groups. Maslow categorizes the needs into nine different components and Glasser believes human needs are grouped into five domains. Thirdly, Maslow explains human needs appear in a form sequence, one should be fulfilling the lower tier first before the above tier of needs can be achieved, and Glasser indicates that the five domains of needs perform as pillars that support individual in achieving what he called as success identity. Fourthly, Maslow and Glasser agree that humans are move toward to achieve the ultimate satisfaction in life; self-actualization and success identity.

Previous studies have shown that several designated areas of needs have been identified initially before the needs assessment is implemented. For examples Thompson (2001), she developed a survey questionnaire on counseling needs of elementary school students in the US by three areas or components of focus, they are academic development, career development and personal or social development. Nyutu (2007) was focused on five elements of factors such as human relationships, career development, self-development, social values, and learning skills when conducting a research about counseling needs of secondary school students in Kenya. While Dogar, Azeem, Majoka, Mehmood, and Latif (2011) have used five areas of needs such as education needs, vocational needs, social needs, emotional needs, and behavioral needs when conducting a survey about counseling needs of secondary school students in Pakistan.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in qualitative method. The data was gathered and analyzed through three phases of data gathering exercises; a) focus group interview, b) open ended questionnaire, and c) opinions from school counselors.

Setting

This study involved secondary school students from several locations and geographical areas. For focus group interviews, two schools in Selangor were selected. The schools are Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Meru (SMK Meru) and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Telok Datok (SMKTD). The selections of the schools (SMK Meru and SMKTD) were made since these schools situated in two different locations; urban and rural. The purpose of having both urban and rural schools in this study is to get different views and opinions about counseling needs from students who live in the city and students who live in the 'kampung side' (countryside).

For the open-ended questionnaire, opinions and views were taken from secondary students who are studying at schools in three different geographical locations/states; Terengganu, Perak and Selangor.

For the third exercise that is opinion from school counselors. Counselors who are working at two schools in Selangor were chosen to participate in this activity.

Research participants and data collections

There were two groups of research participants for this study, students and school counselors. All together there were 347 secondary school students ages 13 – 17-year-old had participated in this study. The students were divided into two types of data gathering methodologies; a) focus group interview sessions, and b) distribution of open-ended questionnaire.

For the first exercise, there were 16 participants from two schools had participated in the focus group interview sessions. The participants were chosen by the schools based on the criteria that were earlier set up by the researcher. Table 1.0 below explains the details:

Schools	Participants		Age	Total
	Male	Female		
SMK Meru	2	3	15-year-old	5
SMKTD	5	6	16-year-old	11
Total				16

Table 1.0 – Participants of focus group sessions

Prior to the focus group interview session, informed consent was obtained from the participants to ensure the anonymity of each student, they were identified by their 'nickname' throughout the process of preparing this study report.

In the focus group interview sessions, participants were asked to give their views to a question; "If you have a chance to meet with a counselor that you really trust what kinds of issues/problems that you think you want to share with him/her?" The question is based on the concept of needs assessment as introduced by Gupta, Sleezer and Russ-Eft (2014). This concept explains that 'needs' is a process of comparing the current situation with the desired situation. The gap between the current and the desired situation is called the need. Feedback was recorded and carefully transcribed to the transcript for further analysis.

For the second exercise, 331 respondents (age: 13 – 17 years old) were randomly picked from three schools in Terengganu, Perak and Selangor. Table 2.0 describes the proportions of respondents in total:

No	Gender	Amount
1.	Male	131
2.	Female	200
Total		331

Table 2.0 – Total number of respondents

The respondents were given an open-ended question ("If you have a chance to meet with a counselor that you really trust what kinds of issues/problems that you think you want to share with him/her?") and they were asked to write the response in a survey form. The data then was tabulated based on the frequencies of the response made by the participants/respondents.

The second group that involved in this study was the school counselors. Two separate interview sessions were conducted to five counselors (females) from SMK Meru and SMKTD. The counselors were asked about the types of cases that they have handled, about students' needs and methods to assessing the needs. The responses then were recorded and analyzed.

Trustworthiness of data

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is a term used to describe the validity and reliability of the presented data. This can only be achieved if the data sources were collected from various approaches or mechanisms (Shenton, 2004). As for this research, and to comply with the qualitative research procedures, the trustworthiness elements of the data were established through triangulation data collection methods; they are (a) focus group interviews, (b) open-ended questionnaires and (c) opinions from school counselors.

Data analysis

Creswell (2014) indicates that data from qualitative research should be analyzed through activities such as immersion, transcribing, identifying themes, categorizing, coding and lastly choosing the right scripts.

The recorded sessions from the focus group interview and opinions from school counselors were analyzed with Thematic Analysis (TA) method as developed by Braun and Clarke (2012). This approach was chosen because it corresponds to the purpose of the research question of this study. TA analyses qualitative data through six iterative and reflective processes (Nowell, Noris, White & Moules, 2017).

The first phase of the process is familiarization. In this phase it requires researchers to 'immerse' into the data by reading and re-reading textual data (e.g., transcripts of interviews, responses to qualitative surveys), and listening to audio-recordings or watching video data. The second phase is generating initial codes. This phase involves the initial production of codes from the data. Codes identify and provide labels for data features that are potentially relevant to the research question. The third phase is searching for themes. The themes are developed from the codes that were initially formed. Some codes form a theme, some others are subthemes, and some are codes that are not included in the theme anymore and they need to be written temporarily to then determine the theme they belong to; or may need to extract themes from them (Javadi and Zarea, 2016). The fourth phase is reviewing themes. This phase involves a recursive or refinement process in which the development theme is reviewed in relation to coded data and the entire

dataset. The fifth phase is defining and naming themes. The final phase is producing the report. The sixth phase starts once the researcher has fully established the themes and is ready to begin the final analysis and write-up of the report (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

To facilitate the process of developing codes and themes, translated verbatim from focus group sessions was analyzed with QDA Miner Lite software and the findings of this study are presented in the next chapter.

The open-ended questionnaire was analyzed with Microsoft Excel. Students' feedbacks have been transferred into five different columns that cover two sections of the questionnaire set, section A; respondent identification number, age, gender and race. While section B basically on the feedback to the open-ended question. All feedbacks were marked by code numbers R1 to R331. These compilations of feedbacks were read several times to identify the themes to produce accurate codes for the researcher to measure the frequencies and proportions of the data. The findings of the study were presented in the next chapter.

RESEARCH FINDING

The focus group interview sessions

Data analysis was conducted into two focus group interview sessions that were organized for 16 students from two secondary schools. SMK Meru, 5 students, and SMKTD, 11 students. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below summarize the participants' backgrounds:

Students' identifications	Gender	Age
Student 1	Male	15
Student 2	Male	15
Student 3	Female	15
Student 4	Female	15
Student 5	Female	15

Table 3.1 – Background of participants (SMK, Meru)

Students' identifications	Gender	Age
Student A	Male	16
Student B	Male	16
Student C	Female	16
Student D	Female	16
Student E	Female	16
Student F	Male	16
Student G	Male	16
Student H	Male	16
Student I	Female	16
Student J	Female	16
Student K	Female	16

Table 3.2 – Background of participants (SMK, Telok Datuk)

Participants were asked to give their thoughts to a question: "If you have a chance to meet with a counselor that you really trust what kinds of issues/problems that you think you want to share with him/her?" Other types of questions were asked spontaneously if the researcher felt it is appropriate and necessary to get the response from the participants.

The audio recorded and transcribed verbatim from the two sessions (SMK Meru and SMKTD) were analyzed with Thematic Analysis method (TA). The process has begun with the researcher familiarizing the data by listening to the recorded audio and reading the transcribed verbatim multiple times to understand the content of the conversations.

The second phase of the TA method is producing the initial codes on the transcribed verbatim that relevant to the research question. The process was done by uploading the transcribed verbatim that were generated from the focus group interview sessions into QDA Miner software.

From the two conversations, several codes were constructed. The codes are; self-management, self-discipline, self-confident, motivation, emotion, personal feelings, relationship with parents, relationship with peers, relationship with siblings, study skills, career exploration, and career awareness. Table 3.3 illustrates the details:

Codes	Transcribed verbatim
Self-management	<p><i>"Saya suka buat hal... mungkin ... nak bincang..."</i></p> <p>(I like to do bad things... maybe...want to talk about it)</p> <p><i>Student 1 - SMK Meru</i></p>
	<p><i>"Perbincangan tentang diri... Kita ni ok ke tak... Dari perbincangan tu boleh naikkan semangat kita balik..."</i></p> <p>(Talking about myself ... Whether I'm good or not ... From the discussion (I hope) I can boost my spirits again)</p> <p><i>Student G - SMKTD</i></p>
Self-discipline	<p><i>"Ponteng kelas je tak ponteng sekolah... macam cikgu masuk kita akan keluar kelas... contoh macam kelas kemahiran hidup... kalau kelas KHP kena pergi bengkel... kami tak pergi bengkel, kami tutup pintu tutup tingkap duduk dalam kelas... kadang-kadang tak bawak bahan, tak siapkan kerja sekolah sebab tu kami ponteng kelas..."</i></p> <p>(We just skip class but not school ... for example when a teacher enters the class, we go out... let's say 'Kemahiran Hidup' class ... if KHP subject, we need to go to the workshop ... We did not go, we closed all doors and windows and we sat in the classroom quietly ... sometimes if we didn't bring the stuff we were told to bring in by the teacher, we didn't finish school work and that's why we skipped our class...)</p> <p><i>Student 4 - SMK Meru</i></p>
	<p><i>Kalau saya... saya akan bincangkan pasal disiplin... Saya selalu lambat dan saya nak bincang macam mana saya boleh mendisiplinkan diri..."</i></p> <p>(If me... I would talk about discipline ... I always come late to schools and I want to talk about how I can discipline myself ...)</p>

	<p><i>Student K – SMKTD</i></p>
Self-confident	<p><i>"Tak confirm nak kerja apa.."</i></p> <p>(I don't know what I will do in the future...)</p> <p><i>Student 4 - SMK Meru</i></p>
	<p><i>"Saya ada cita-cita tapi tak confident kadang-kadang macam tu... Kadang-kadang macam ni, ia bergantung kepada result saya kalau result saya down, saya macam blank tak tahu nak jadi apa"</i></p> <p>(I have an ambition but I'm not sure ... sometimes like that ... Sometimes like this ... depending on my exam results, if it is ok, I'm ok but when my results aren't good, I just don't know what need to be done)</p> <p><i>Student C - SMKTD</i></p>
Self-motivation	<p><i>"Kalau disiplin kat sekolah ni macam ponteng kelas, ponteng sekolah, tak dengar cakap cikgu, tak ikut peraturan sekolah... Saya rasa nak suruh kaunselor bagi nasihat kat saya macam mana nak baiki diri..."</i></p> <p>(Discipline issues at school are for example skipping classes, truancy, not listening to teachers, not following school rules ... I feel like I want to ask my counselor for an advice on how I can improve myself)</p> <p><i>Student 4 - SMK Meru</i></p>
	<p><i>"Saya pernah mengalami kegagalan dan saya nak ubah kegagalan tu jadi kejayaan"</i></p> <p>(I have failed before and I want to change that failure to success)</p> <p><i>Student A - SMKTD</i></p>
Emotion	<p><i>"Panas baran, cepat merajuk, macam-macam..."</i></p> <p>(Hot tampered, easy to sulk, and all sorts of things)</p> <p><i>Student 1 and 2 - SMK Meru</i></p>
	<p><i>"Pasal personaliti saya sebab mungkin saya seorang yang pemarah ke tanpa saya sedari"</i></p> <p>(It's about my personality, maybe I'm a hot-tampered kind of person without me realizing it)</p> <p><i>Student C - SMKTD</i></p>
	<p><i>"Adik saya kelas depan, saya kelas belakang... kalau result adik saya baik emak saya selalu banding bandingkan..."</i></p>

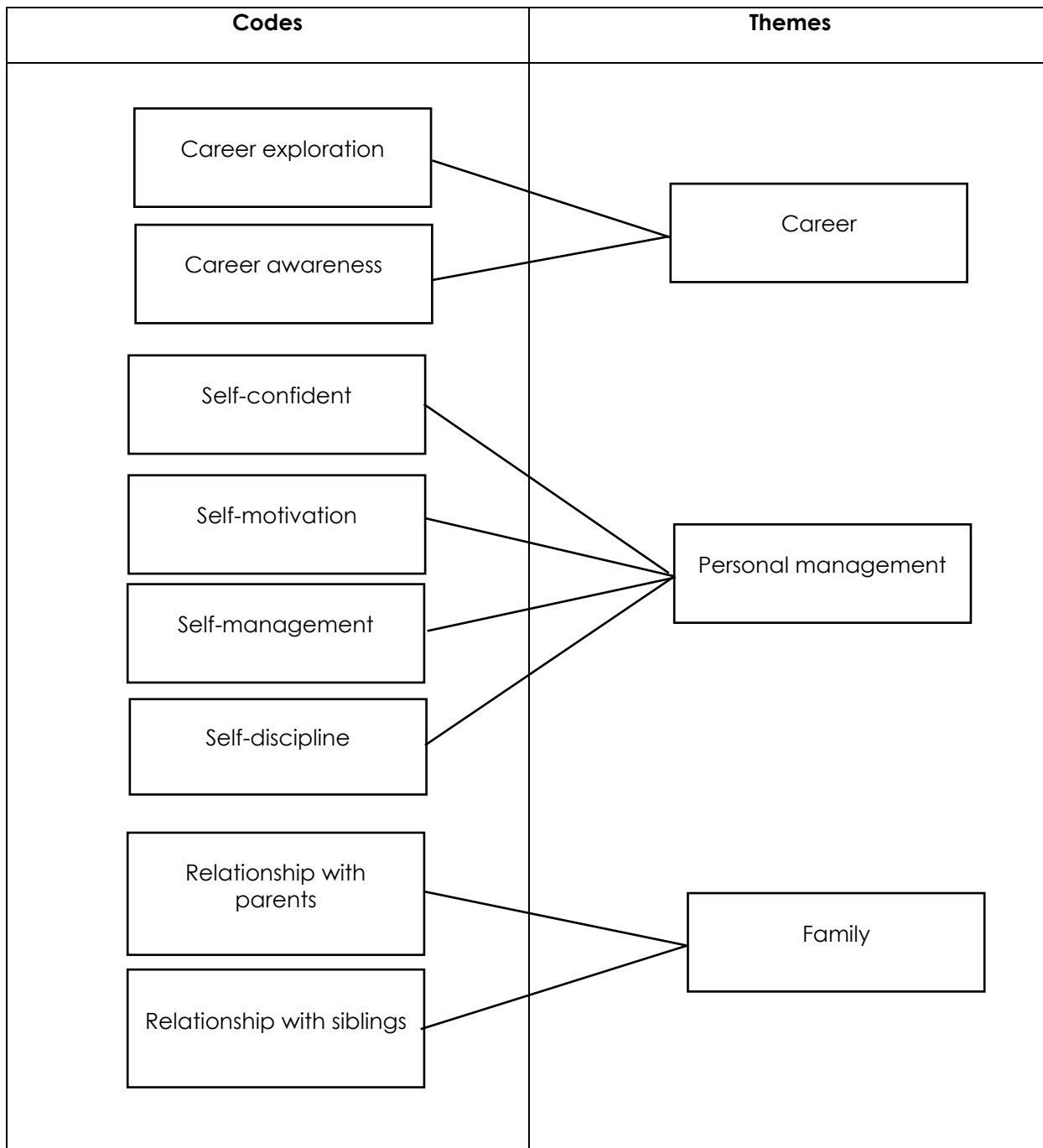
Personal feeling	(My sister is better than me, I'm not as good as her ... if she gets good results, my mom will compare it to my results) <i>Student 4 - SMK Meru</i>
	"Ada. Cikgu-cikgu asyik nak marah je..." (Yes, I have. My teachers always scolding me) <i>All students - SMKTD</i>
Relationship with parents	"Masalah keluarga, macam parent lebihkan orang lain dari saya..." (Family problem, my parents pay attention to other people more than myself...) <i>Student 3 - SMK Meru</i>
	"Isu keluarga penting untuk dibincangkan" (Family issue that important to discuss) <i>All students - SMKTD</i>
Relationship with peers	"Haaa... ada...masalah pergaulan antara lelaki perempuan..." (Haaa...Yes... problems between male and female friends...) <i>Student 3 and 4 - SMK Meru</i>
	"Masalah perhubungan dengan kawan-kawan lah..." (Problems in peers' relationships...) <i>Student F - SMKTD</i>
Relationship with siblings	"Masalah keluarga yang menyebabkan saya tak berdisplin kat sekolah, macam bergaduh adik beradik, stress terus ponteng sekolah..." (Family issues that kept me from being disciplined in school, when I was quarreled with my siblings, I felt pressure and then I decided not to go to school.) <i>Student 2 - SMK Meru</i>
	"Emmm! Masalah peribadi ... dengan family tak ada sangat, saya ada sorang adik, saya anak sulong...Kami dua beradik je, kadang-kadang susah nak masuk dengan dia..."

	<p>(Emmm! Personal problem... I don't have problems with my parents, but I have a brother, and I'm the eldest... Only two of us in the family, sometimes it's hard to get along with him...)</p> <p><i>Student E - SMKTD</i></p>
Study skills	<p><i>"Masalah dalam pembelajaran... Susah nak dapat cikgu ajar cepat sangat..."</i></p> <p>(Problems in learning... It's hard for me to catch up with teachers who taught in class...)</p> <p><i>Student 5 - SMK Meru</i></p>
	<p><i>"Setiap orang ada cara belajar masing-masing jadi saya nak guna peluang ni nak tanya apa yang boleh saya buat untuk belajar dengan lebih cemerlang"</i></p> <p>(Everyone has his or her owns learning style, so I would to take this opportunity to ask about what I shall do to improve my performance)</p> <p><i>Student H - SMKTD</i></p>
Career exploration	<p><i>"Cita-cita saya naik turun naik turun..."</i></p> <p>(My ambitions are always ups and downs)</p> <p><i>Student 5 - SMK Meru</i></p>
	<p><i>"Kalau saya lah ... Kalau saya berjumpa kaunselor... Saya akan berbincang pasal kerjaya, dalam umur yang macam saya, baru nak kenal dunia... kadang-kadang tengok tu nak... Tengok ni nak... Tapi yang sebenarnya apa yang sesuai dengan diri saya. Tak tahu apa yang benar-benar sesuai..."</i></p> <p>(If I have a chance to see a counselor... I'll discuss about career, I'm still young, I just want to know about my world... What should be appropriate for me, I really don't know what is suit with my life)</p> <p><i>Student H - SMKTD</i></p>
Career awareness	<p><i>"Mak saya selalu cakap pasal pentingnya kerjaya... kalau tak macam nak hidup senang masa depan..."</i></p> <p>(My Mom always says about the importance of work... If you want to live happily in the future)</p> <p><i>Student 3 - SMK Meru</i></p>
	<p><i>"Saya nak cakap pasal kerjaya sebab saya nak tahu apa bidang yang sesuai dengan saya"</i></p>

	<p>(I want to talk about career because I want to know what suits with my needs)</p> <p><i>Student 1 - SMKTD</i></p>
--	--

Table 3.3 – Transcribed verbatim with codes

The third phase of the proses is searching for the themes. In this phase, the constructed codes were analyzed and arranged in a consistent pattern to form a variety of themes. Table 3.4 explains the details:



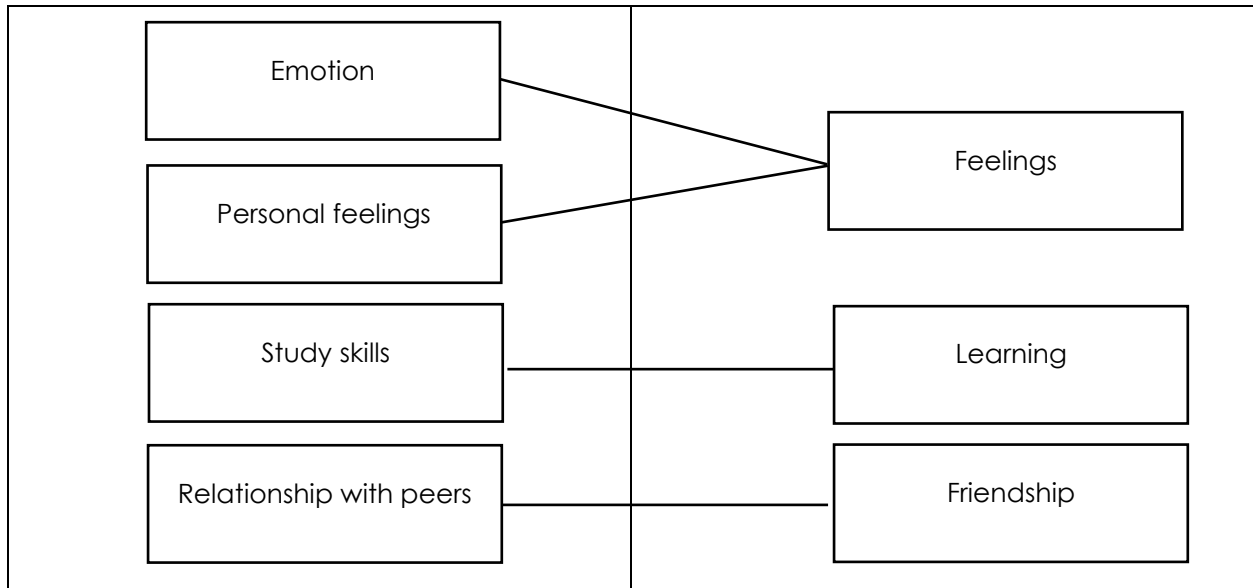


Table 3.4 – Codes and themes

As depicted in the above figure, some clustering and standalone codes have formed six different themes all together, they are; career, personal management, family, feelings, learning and friendship. The themes were constructed basically by collating together all codes that seemed similar, and then it was carefully analyzed so that it can be re-linked to the research question.

The fourth phase of TA method is reviewing themes. This phase involves a recursive process in which the initial themes are reviewed in relation to coded data and the entire set of data. The six themes that were consolidated earlier were reviewed again to ensure the data inside the themes would be meaningfully related to each other, and it should be clearly and expelled differentiable. To work on this process, Braun and Clarke (2012) have advised researchers to consider the following sample of questions; Is this a theme? What is the quality of this theme? What are the boundaries of this theme? Are there enough (meaningful) data to support this theme? Are the data too diverse and wide-ranging?

To reflect on whether the themes developed actually benefit the research objective, the researchers conducted several comparative studies on various sources found in the literature review. For example, Thompson (2001), the themes that were used to gauge elementary school students counseling needs are firstly, career development, secondly academic development and thirdly personal/social development. While Nyutu (2007) whom has done a research on counseling needs of secondary school students in Kenya have used five interconnected components of counseling needs themes such as human relations, career development, self-development, social values, and learning skills. Another study was conducted by Dogar, Azeem, Majoka, Mehmood, and Latif (2011) which have assessed students' counseling needs based on five different domains of needs themes. They are educational needs, vocational needs, social needs, emotional needs, and behavioral requirements.

After looking at the evidence, the researchers believe that the six previously constructed themes have met the criteria as described by Braun and Clarke's model. Some of the themes have been reworded to ensure it will be working perfectly in relation to the generated data, for examples

personal management to personal development, feelings to emotional needs, career to career development, learning to learning skills, and friendship to peer relationship. Another theme that is family remains unchanged.

Original themes	Reworded
Personal management	Personal development
Feeling	Emotional needs
Career	Career development
Learning	Learning skills
Friendship	Peer relationship
Family	Family (remains unchanged)

Table 3.5 – Verification of themes

Nowell, Noris, White and Moules (2017) recommend that in order to accept the constructed themes as trustworthy and credible, the data need to be vetted by other people. In this case, all codes and themes that were deliberated in this study were shown to Associate Professor Dr Zaida Mustafa the former Dean of Graduate School of Education (GSE) for comments and verifications. Based on the discussion, it has been agreed that the six themes; personal development, emotional needs, career development, learning skills, peer relationship and family are adequate to carry out their functions in relation to the research question.

Open ended questionnaire

The survey forms of the open-ended questionnaire were carefully sorted, and each form was given an identification number starting from R1 to R331. A file name “feedback – pelajar sekolah” was created under the Microsoft excel software. The raw data were keyed into 5 columns covering both parts, section A and B (section A: respondent identification number, age, gender, race and section B: the feedback to the open-ended question). The details of section A as described in table 4.0 below:

No	Age	Gender		Race		
		Male	Female	Malay	Indian	Others
1.	13-year-old	16	38	54	-	-
2.	14-year-old	24	45	69	-	-
3.	15-year-old	39	94	131	1	1 (Iban)
4.	16-year-old	47	22	68	1	-
5.	17-year-old	5	1	6	-	-
Total		131	200	328	2	1
Grand total		331				

Table 4.0 – Participants of open-ended survey

As explained in the earlier chapter, 318 respondents have given their answers to the question while another 13 respondents have not responded to the question as per required. From 318 respondents, 375 types of answers were obtained from the survey forms. The answers or responses were studied carefully to identify and determine the correct themes. After a few cycles of

verifications, the six components of needs/themes as highlighted in the focus group interviews were found workable to measure the frequency values from this study. The six themes that were used are personal development, emotional needs, career development, learning skills, peer relationship and family.

To quantify the frequency values, the six themes that have been constructed earlier were changed into several codes such as PD for personal development, EN for emotional needs, CD for career development, LS for learning skills, PR for peer relationship and F for family. One additional code was added to cater a few responses that have not answered the question correctly. The code is NR for no response.

The codes were typed one by one (in accordance with the types of responses) in the excel file. All 388 types of answers with 7 different codes were measured to produce frequency and proportion report. The details of the report are as follow (table 4.1):

Themes	Codes	Frequency	Proportion
Personal development	PD	72	18.6%
Emotional needs	EN	37	9.6%
Learning skills	LS	123	31.7%
Peers relationship	PR	44	11.3%
Family	F	78	20.0%
Career development	CD	21	5.4%
No response	NR	13	3.4%
Total		388	100%

Table 4.1 – Frequency and proportion data

From the table, the data shows that the respondents have highlighted the same response as highlighted in the focus group interview sessions when they were asked to give answer to the question, and the question that was given to them is similar to the question that was asked to the students in the focus group interview sessions. Based on the frequency tally, seeking assistance in learning skills is the highest response (123 or 31.7%), then followed by family - 78 responses or 20.0%, personal development - 72 responses or 18.6%, peer relationship - 44 or 11.3%, emotional needs - 37 responses or 9.6% and career development - 21 responses or equivalent to 5.4%.

Opinions from the school counselors

There were five school counselors involved in the study. One counselor (SMKTD) was interviewed individually, and four counselors (SMK Meru) were interviewed in a group session. The details of those counselors involved are as follows:

Schools	Gender	Identification
SMK Telok Datok	Female	Counselor 1
SMK Meru	Female	Counselor 2
SMK Meru	Female	Counselor 3
SMK Meru	Female	Counselor 4
SMK Meru	Female	Counselor 5

Table 5.0 – School counselors as participants

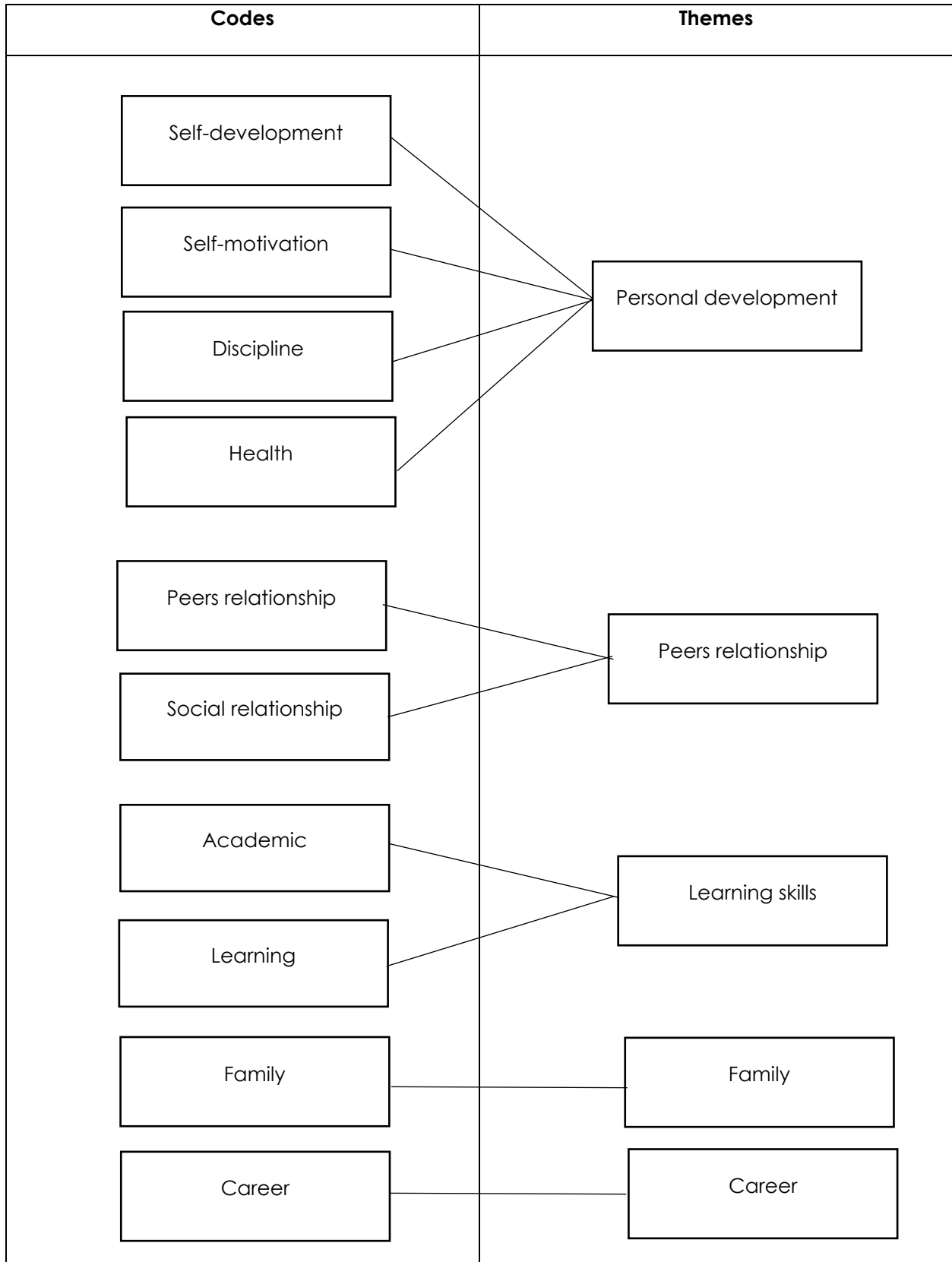
Questions asked were about the types of counseling cases that they have handled, about students' needs and the mechanisms to assess the needs. For data analysis, the transcribed verbatim of the interview sessions were analyzed with TA method. Under TA method, the process has begun with the transcribed verbatim was read several times to identify some specific codes that then transferred to form several meaningful themes.

On the question about the types of cases that were handled by the school counselors, feedbacks from the counselors have generated several codes:

Transcribed verbatim	Codes
<p>"I have been working in three different schools before. What I can say about the types of cases that I have handled... It varies depending on the school locations. For the rural schools the problems are more on students' discipline likes <u>truancies, self-motivations</u>, for the urban schools the problems are more on issues likes <u>loves, social relationships, and gang fights</u>. For the sub-urban schools, the cases are more related to <u>students' discipline, attitudes in the classrooms... lazy, sleeping when teachers teach in front</u>" (Counselor 2)</p>	<p>Self-motivation Discipline Peers relationship Social relationship Discipline Learning</p>
<p>"Students' <u>attitudes, disciplines</u> were the most cases that I have handled as far as I can remember. Usually it started with these issues than we managed to dig some concurrent issues likes <u>family problems, academics and etc.</u>" (Counselor 3)</p>	<p>Self-management Discipline Family Academic</p>
<p>"<u>For me careers are seasonal issues</u>... The students come after they got their results, SPM and PT3. Other than this season, I seldom get students who want to talk about careers" (Counselor 4)</p>	<p>Career</p>
<p>"Based on my research about 74% of my students' populations are doing part time jobs... I received quiet number of students who being referred by their teachers with several of <u>attitudinal problems</u>... didn't do <u>homework, truancy, being lazy, sleeping in class are among of the issues</u>" (Counselor 5)</p>	<p>Self-management Learning Discipline Self-motivation</p>
<p>"(While looking at her records) The cases, based on the list of cases that I have handled so far can be grouped into several categories... <u>academics, careers, family, self-development, emotions, loves and health</u>" (Counselor 1)</p>	<p>Academic Career Family Self-development Emotion Peers relationship Health</p>

Table 5.1 – Transcribed verbatim with codes

The codes generated cover several numbers of topics such as self-motivation, discipline, peer relationships, social relationships, academics, learning, self-development, family, career, emotion and health. To develop some meaningful themes, codes that are similar were grouped together and carefully examined to identify the right identical themes. The identifications of themes were illustrated in table 5.2 below:



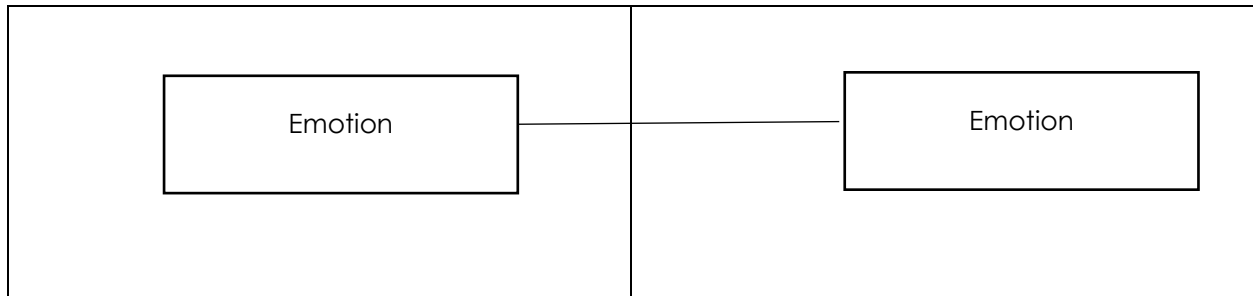


Table 5.2 – Codes and themes

The developed themes were reviewed several times and it has been shown to Associate Prof Dr Zaida Mustafa for verification. After some deliberations, the previously developed code was relevant to build six different themes. The themes are personal development, emotional needs, career development, learning skills, friendships and family.

On the question, what they (school counselors) understand about student counseling needs. Majority of them believe the needs evolved within the family circles (environments). If the students come from a normal family circle the needs would be different from those who come from a broken family circle:

“I think students' needs were influenced by his/her family environments” (Counselor 2)

“Yes, I can see the different. Usually, students who were caught with disciplinary problems will have at the same time problems or issues with their parents” (Counselor 3)

“Programs that we organized can help students to realize about those needs” (Counselor 1)

The third question was on the mechanism to assess student counseling needs. The counselors were commented on the appropriateness of the existing instruments to assess students' needs. They informed that the existing instruments have created some forms of confusions. Not only that some of the counselors believed the instruments were already out dated in assessing what the students want from Guidance and Counseling Unit:

“I found that the instruments are quiet confusing... Why don't we just have one instrument instead of three” (Counselor 1)

“I think the existing instruments are out dated already” (Counselor 2)

“I prefer another version of needs assessment instrument” (Counselor 3)

Conclusion from the three studies (semi structured interview, open ended questionnaire and opinions from school counselors)

As mentioned in the preceding chapters, in order to gain an in-depth knowledge of the secondary school students' counseling needs domain/component, the data from three types of qualitative assessments have been compared (triangular method), and the analysis details are as follows:

Semi structured interview	Open ended questionnaire	Opinion from school counselors
Method: TA method	Method: Frequency analysis	Method: TA method
The themes that were derived from the study are:	The themes that were derived from the study are:	The themes that were derived from the study are:
Personal development	Personal development	Personal development
Emotional needs	Emotional needs	Emotional needs
Career development	Career development	Career development
Peer's relationship	Peer's relationship	Peer's relationship
Family	Family	Family
Learning skills	Learning skills	Learning skills

Table 6.0 – Components of needs

The triangulation study has proven the trustworthiness of the data, therefore the descriptors used to build an instrument that is reliable and valid in assessing secondary students' needs were personal development, emotional needs, career development, peer relationship, family and learning skills.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study have shown counseling needs as perceived important by secondary school students can be categorized into six components; first is personal development, second emotional needs, third career development, fourth learning skills, fifth peer relationship and sixth family. Such data seems to be consistent with Maslow and Glasser theories that human needs occur in different groups or domains. The components of needs as derived from this study seem to be similar with the components of needs found in Thompson (2001), Nyutu (2007) and Dogar, Azeem, Majoka, Mehmood, and Latif (2011). The identification of counseling needs attributes would help school counselors and school administrations to conduct needs assessment exercises in comprehensive manner. Needs assessment can help counselors identify gaps in services and help them to refine their services to fit the needs of millennium students or teenagers. Needs assessment findings can also be integrated into a larger counseling program evaluation that strengthen the quality of services offered to various groups of school populations.

REFERENCES

- Abdul Rahman, A.M, Mohd Isa, N.J & Atan, A. (2013). A Guidance and Counseling Model Practiced within Malaysian Schools. *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 1 No. 4 April 2013.
- Astramovich, R.L. (2011). Needs assessment: A key evaluation tool for professional counselors. Retrieved from http://counselingoutfitters.com/vistas/vistas11/Article_41.pdf
- Australia. (2011). *The Psychological and Emotional Wellbeing Needs of Children and Young People: Models of Effective Practice in Educational Settings*. URBIS.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2012). *Thematic Analysis*. APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology: Vol. 2.
- Cook, D. (1989). *Systematic Need Assessment: A Primer*. *Journal of Counseling and Development*. April 1989. Vol. 67.
- Creswell, W.J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publication Inc.
- Dogar, A.H., Azeem, M., Majoka, M.I., Mehmood, A. & Latif, S. (2011). Need assessment of students' guidance and counseling. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2011.
- Erford, T.B. (2015). *Transforming the school counseling profession*. Pearson Education, Inc.
- Glasser, W. (1988). *On Students' Needs and Team Learning: A Conversation with William Glasser*. *Educational Leadership*, March 1988.
- Gupta, K., Sleezer, M.C. & Russ-Eft, F.D. (2014). *A Practical Guide to Needs Assessment*. CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Javadi, M., & Zarea, K. (2016). Understanding Thematic Analysis and its Pitfall. *J. Clie. Care*. 2016 (January-March); 1 (1): 34-40.
- Kaufman, R. & English, F. (1976). *Needs assessment: A guide to improve school district management*. American Association of School Administrators.
- Kaur, A. (2013). Maslow's need hierarchy theory: applications & criticisms. *Global Journal of Management & Business Studies*, Vol. 3, Number 10 (2013), pp. 1061-1064.
- Ministry of Education, Malaysia (2015). *Panduan Perkhidmatan Bimbingan dan Kaunseling di Sekolah Rendah dan Sekolah Menengah*. Bahagian Pengurusan Sekolah Harian, KPM.
- Noah, M.S., Kardi, N., Ahmad, M.Y., Hussin, S. & Mokhtar, H.H. (2005). Status dan keberkesanan perkhidmatan bimbingan dan kaunseling di sekolah menengah di Semenanjung Malaysia. *Jurnal Penyelidikan Pendidikan, Bahagian Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Dasar Pendidikan Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia*.

- Nowell, L.S., Norris, J.M., White, D.E., & Moules, N.J. (2017). Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* Volume 16: 1–13. Sagepub.com.
- Nyutu, P. (2007). *The Development of The Student Counseling Needs Scale (SCNS)*. USA: University of Missouri-Columbia.
- Schmidt, John. (2014). *Counseling In Schools: Essential Services and Comprehensive Programs*. New York: Allyn & Bacon.
- Sew, K.L., Jin, K.K. & Mah, N.L. (2013). A holistic approach to school-based counseling and guidance services in Malaysia. *School Psychology International* 34(2) 190–201.
- Sipon, S. (2002). Gejala social dikalangan pelajar dan keperluan perkhidmatan Bimbingan dan Kaunseling. Seminar Hala Tuju Kaunseling di Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 17-18 Jun 2002.
- Talib, J. (2009). Profesionalisme Kaunselor Sekolah Rendah. *MALIM Bil.* 10 (2009).
- Thompson, D.W. (2001). *The Development of a Survey Instrument to Assess the Counseling Needs of Intermediate Elementary School Students*. USA: University of Florida.
- Wong, M.S. & Jusoh, A.J. (2015). Validity and Reliability of Basic Needs Questionnaire Based on Choice Theory in Malaysia. *International Journal of Contemporary Applied Sciences*. Vol. 2 No. 5 May 2015.
- Wright, R. J. (2012). *Introduction to school counseling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.