

## **An application of the *SWiCi* board game in career decision intervention module for at-risk adolescents**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article introduces the *SWiCi* board game based on the underpinning Social Cognitive Career Theory. The *SWiCi* board game is one of the activities in the Career Decision Intervention Module. The main objective of this *SWiCi* board game is to assist at-risk adolescents in Malaysia to explore their career identity and knowledge in the world of work to increase efficacies in their career decision-making process. *SWiCi* board game can be played individually or in groups of 2 to 6 adolescents. The development of *SWiCi* board game of the Career Decision Intervention module for at-risk adolescents was validated by 10 experts. Then, a group of adolescents from 13 to 17 years was piloted to check the module's reliability movement which ensue onward to a preliminary study. The pilot study demonstrated the process of validation for the Career Decision Intervention Module that contributes to the development of 'best-practices' in guiding adolescents' career decision-making. The *SWiCi* board game received favourable responses from adolescents that brought about a crucial outcome. In addition, brief implications and recommendations for future research and practices are provided.

**Keywords:** *SWiCi board game, career decision intervention, at-risk adolescents, career decision-making efficacy, pilot study*

### **Introduction**

Advancement in the world of work lay the foundation to the nature of challenges faced in the present and foreseeable future career (Hirschi, 2018). The social, economic, and cultural context may exert various impacts on the availability of jobs in the market that influences adolescents' aspirations and career interest or personality. Job competition arises along with the need for the adolescents to adapt with the future career trend and adjust to the underlying issues. Today's world of work challenges conveys trials or tests to adolescents on their career decision-making process. The complexity of the career decision-making process predisposes

adolescents to career-related problems such as career ambiguity, career indecision or career decision-making difficulties issues arising from the process of career decision-making that may lead to psychological, social, and behavioural issues (Anghel & Gati., 2019).

Indeed, the adolescence phase is crucial and vulnerable to an individual's development. The susceptibility in adolescence phase due to multi-personal and contextual issues produces at-risk adolescents adverse to conditions in determining their successful transition into adulthood. In 1968, Erikson demarcated that there is a time when adolescents face many biological, cognitive, and social changes that eventually form their identity. Adolescents not only learn and integrate information about themselves and the world of work but at the same time develop interests in career trajectories (Lent & Brown, 2008). Being aware of the variance instability of adolescents' aspect-based preferences from one choice to another, and from one time to another increases the effectiveness of career guidance or intervention (Gati & Gutentag, 2015).

Every child and adolescent has his or her right to live, grow and develop positively. Under certain circumstances, children and/or adolescents may face adverse life events affecting their cognitive, emotional, and behavioural outcomes (Kiteki, 2021) including occupational domains that are related to career development aspects (Prescod & Zeligman, 2018). These circumstances may lead to difficulties in accessing resources and information on self and world of work, adjusting, and adapting to life and career challenges that will determine their future self and career well-being. Evidently, guiding these at-risk adolescents in identifying, exploring, and determining their career identity and knowledge on the world of work may increase their efficacies to facilitate them in their career decision-making process thus minimizing career decision process difficulties.

## **Literature Review**

### *SCCT*

The social cognitive career theory (SCCT) is widely used as a theoretical framework for explaining students' academic goals and vocational interests, as well as for career planning. SCCT is used to explain how personal and contextual factors interact during three critical stages of the career development process which includes developing academic and vocational interests; selecting and pursuing career-relevant goals; and performing and persevering in academic and career endeavors (Lent et al., 1994). In addition, personal inputs (such as gender or race/ethnicity) and contextual variables (such as supports or barriers) are the key factors that influence career interests and choices (Lent et al., 2000; Sheu & Bordon, 2017). Vocational interest provides valuable information that can assist adolescents in setting clear career goals and career adaptation (Lent et al., 2008), which benefits adolescents career decision-making thus allows them to enter a specific academic or career field. An adolescent can maintain a positive attitude in the face of adversity if he or she receives adequate social support. In a collectivist culture, social support has a strong influence on adolescents' career interests and choices (Sheu & Bordon, 2017).

### *Career Decision-Making*

The career decision-making process significantly influences an adolescent's life satisfaction, academic performance, and future career (Holland, 1972). Career decision-making involves learning about oneself and the world of work while integrating this knowledge to make decisions about future career choices. Difficulties in career decision-making emerge when the exploration process persists for so long that it deviates from the ideal duration for the career decision-making process. These difficulties can be divided into three major clusters: (a) lack of readiness that arises before the decision-making process, (b) lack of information during the

process and (c) inconsistent information during the process (Gati et al., 1996). Although the process is a normal transition, adverse life-suffering adolescents are at higher risk of developing severe career indecision due to the multi-personal and contextual issues they face.

### *Personality*

Personality is an important outcome construct, and vital in adolescents' developmental tasks. Erikson (1959) contended that adolescents struggle to define their identities, and inability to postulate their identities will result to identity crisis. Accordingly, from the standpoint of career education or guidance, career decision-making is a complex process for adolescents, particularly those in high school as they must choose their future academic and career. Adolescents with a strong vocational identity are more likely to overcome their career decision-making process difficulties. As adolescents become more aware of their goals, interests, and talents, these factors collectively may also contribute to their healthy psychosocial status, academic choice congruence and job satisfaction (Milsom & Coughlin, 2017). Hence, forming a clear and stable sense of personal identity in adolescence is the core developmental task during this period, as it will determine their sense of efficacy in the career decision-making process and outcome.

Based on the premise of trait and factor theory, Holland (1992) defined the term 'vocational interest' as an aspect of an individual's personality. An academic or career choice should reflect a match between an adolescents' personality (also terms as vocational interests) and the work environment. Holland used six occupational or personality types to describe both vocational interests and jobs which are realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional or RIASEC. Nevertheless, the social, economic, and cultural context may exert various impacts on the availability of jobs in the market and influence one's aspirations and developments towards a vocational identity or interest (Atitsogbe et al., 2018; Li, M. et al., 2019). Thus, acquiring a clear vocational interest may facilitate the career decision-making process and minimize career indecision.

### **Objectives**

Strength, Weakness, Interest and Career of an Individual (*SWiCi*) board is a developed game based on a combination of snake and ladder, monopoly, and puzzles approach to evaluate and increase the benefits of opportunity by using real-life examples wherever possible. This game will also test adolescents' knowledge or information based on a variety of sources on their life-career options. Generally, the current study aims at accessing *SWiCi* board of career decision intervention module to:

- i. Identify and explore their personal and career self-efficacy.
- ii. Provide knowledge concerning specific occupations of interest.
- iii. Establish plans for coping and adapting adolescents' development phase and career goals.
- iv. Analyse the process of career decision-making through participants' positive talk and provide a suitable way for them to gain confidence in their ability to influence (or play a role) in the development of their careers.
- v. Increase confidence in their ability to solve (any/the) problem (s).

### **Methodology**

This career decision intervention module was developed primarily for at-risk adolescents. Ten experts provided their feedback on the module, where necessary amendments were made for improvements of the module. For calculation of the module's content validity, formula

developed by Sidek Mohd Noah and Jamaludin Ahmad in 2005 is used. A module is said to have a good content validity if and only if the percentage of content validity achievement is greater than 70%. If the percentage of the content validity achievement is less than 70%, it means that the module does not have a good validity result, and it is recommended that the content to be rechecked in accordance with the study's objectives. This recheck activity was conducted two times, namely: first, on an adolescent, and the second time on a group of adolescents.

Figure 1  
*Calculation of content validity assessment*

REVIEWERS	SWICi
R1	9
R2	10
R3	8
R4	9
R5	10
R6	8
R7	8
R8	9
R9	10
R10	10
PERCENTAGE	91%

Total Score from Expert (10)  
 $91 \times 100\% = 91\%$   
Maximum Score (100)

A pilot study was conducted on the *SWICi* game board was aimed at evaluating the suitability of activity in determining the feasibility of a full-scale activity protocol and implementation, which leads to gathering preliminary data (Teijlingen & Hundley 2002). Acquiring preliminary data is important in ensuring that the activity or module had addressed the study's research objectives.

### **Preliminary study**

The pilot study demonstrated that process validation of the CDI module contributes to the development of best practices in guiding adolescents' career decision-making. The positive response during the pilot study from adolescents confirmed a crucial outcome that the *SWICi* game board is suitable for the main study. It expands adolescents' knowledge of their own career identity, knowledge of the world of work, and the process involved in the career decision-making process increases their career decision-making self-efficacy in a fun and educative way. The pilot study is valuable in terms of improving the module design context that adds to the body of knowledge for at-risk adolescents' career decision-making.

### **Procedure in conducting *SWICi* board game**

This section explains the procedure of how the *SWICi* board is conducted to analyse the research objectives. The participants in the study (unit of analysis) were selected through

purposive sampling. These participants played individually in SWICi activity at a different session. After the activity conducted ends, the participants were given the time needed to answer the feedback forms (on the activity). The score from the participants' responses is then analysed through descriptive analysis. The data gauged from the respondents were coded using the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences or the SPSS Version 25.

SWICi board implementation requires a thorough preparation to ensure smooth sessions and success for student(s) to understand the requirements of career interests, feel motivated and clear future career planning. The SWICi board is a structured game exercise that inculcates minds to operate, be ready and alert to any circumstances that transpire in the game. Student(s) may face unexpected conditions where they can be ordered to skip a few ladders to go up or down through the serving of an opportunity card that must have answers to the questions related to personal, career and the world of work. Initially, student(s) starts the game at number one (1) and ends the game when it finally reaches the number one-hundred (100). Then, the student(s) selects one token that represents his/her career character in the game that motivate them. Overall, the SWICi board has 25 pieces of a puzzle. Student (s) must assemble the puzzle before the game starts. Once the puzzle is assembled, the game begins by rolling the dice, and the movement in the game will be based on the cumulative number on the dice. As the student(s) moves, they may stop at certain numbers. Whenever student(s) stop at number 15, 44, 71 and 88, the student(s) will change to a certain step, like a transfer. For example, when the student(s) reaches number 88, s/he moves up to 97. This step exemplifies the strength. But, when the student(s) stop at numbers 10, 47 and 79, s/he must go down. For example, when it reaches number 10, the student(s) must step down to number 6 which exemplifies the weakness. However, the student(s) can use the opportunity cards related to personal, career and the world of work whenever, s/he stops at number 10, 47 and 79 (which demonstrates: weaknesses). The student(s) needs to answer it within 5 seconds. The game will continue as far as the dice rolls when the student(s) successfully reaches the last number of 100. At the end of the session, a survey was distributed to the student(s) who are respondents of this study. This survey is intended to measure the effectiveness of the SWICi game played.

### Results and analysis

The results of the SWICi game have been recorded and summarized systematically in Table 1 below. The mean score for each item is determined to measure its effectiveness of usage and comprehend the information and knowledge on career making. In addition, a descriptive analysis was conducted to measure the effectiveness of the SWICi game. Please refer to the findings that are tabulated and presented here.

Table 1

#### *Descriptive analysis*

Items	Totally disagree				Totally agree	Mean score
I understand the description in relation to the career interest test.			3	28	10	<b>4.1</b>
I managed to answer the career interest test within the allocated time.				8	40	<b>4.8</b>

I understand the ways of analysing career interest tests.			12	24		<b>3.6</b>
I was able to interpret career interest test scores against myself.			12	24		<b>3.6</b>
I understand the description in relation to SWiCi activities.			3	24	25	<b>4.4</b>
I managed to match the puzzle within the allocated time.					50	<b>5</b>
I was able to answer the questions given in the SWiCi card within the allocated time.				20	25	<b>4.5</b>
This activity was able to test my knowledge on my career interests.			3	28	10	<b>4.1</b>
I was able to increase my knowledge of career interests.			3	32	5	<b>4.0</b>
I am willing to seek career information through various channels such as through counsellors, internet, scholarly books, and others.				28	15	<b>4.3</b>

In terms of the effectiveness of the SWiCi game, students agreed that they are satisfied with the activities where they can learn about career information and knowledge. In addition, they are able to interpret the career interest test, match the puzzle and able to answer questions within the allocated time. This trains them to be more active, and disciplined and not give up easily, while indirectly, makes the students learn about making efforts and put more attention to succeed. This specifies how this career decision intervention may help them. In addition, the students/ players agreed that this game can increase knowledge of career interests which later can further extend career information seeking through other mediums so that it allows students to get better understanding on career interests. It becomes a starting trigger for the student/ player to choose a career. They will foresee and get more ideas that simultaneously bring them to a closer look in career decisions which further seek information later through counsellors, internet, scholarly books, and others which they may not think of before. Overall, research findings exhibited students' expressed satisfaction that benefits them to boost their motivation in career decisions.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Difficulties in career decision-making or career indecision is a state of being unable to decide related to one's vocational or career choices when confronted with the need to do so (Gati et al., 1996; Osipow, 1999). Although career indecision is considered a normal transition in career development, it has been linked to many constructs such as self-efficacy, personality traits,

vocational interest, parenting style and many other concepts (Atitsogbe et al., 2018). This proves that efficacy in career decision-making should be placed as an important aspect of development to minimize career indecision. It is for them to have a better understanding of the complex associations of their personality, vocational interest, personal and external circumstances on their career decision-making process. These associations will help career counsellors directly address the problem area(s) this will guide career counsellors to initiate interventions to support such adolescents.

Besides enhancing career decision-making ability, self-efficacy may also consequently improve students' perception and awareness of career goals and interests. Adolescents need to recognize, be aware of their identity and the world of careers in order to adapt and self-improve in starting their future career since career indecision affects their social, personal, and professional life. To achieve career decision-making self-efficacy, students need to have a clear and stable identity that engages actively with positive, personal, and contextual factors (Li et al., 2018). From that, they will know the career direction and choose what is the best for them. Furthermore, efficacy in career decision-making will affect adolescents' overall academic performance and long-term career success (Milsom & Coughlin, 2017). It provides insightful and comprehensive information that makes students find it easier to make career decision changes or whenever they are faced with difficulties in making career choices. They will start by putting efforts because now they know the direction and feel motivated to become a successful person in the future.

A well-planned and developed career counselling activities within career decision intervention module is needed so that counsellors and practitioners can guide adolescents in exploring adolescents' career knowledge, and interest that will increase their career decision making efficacies. This will assist students in making wise decisions and planning what is good for them concerning their career in the future. The focus on career decision link to intended steps/actions make them prepare to choose, change, and decide what type of job that is best-fit based on their skills, needs and desires. Acquiring efficacies in self and career in the career decision-making process will help adolescents to successfully postulate the transition to a good career choice outcome whenever guidance is provided as a comprehensive process to make them more matured, self-responsible and goal oriented. This assists them to explore more to identify their ability and knowledge to successfully improve one's career decision. Indeed, empirically supported career decision intervention module is crucial in enhancing and improving career counsellors approaches while working with targeted population. The session provides an opportunity for them to offer advice on career decision and improves confidence of the adolescents in exploring ways to career choices. This is very supportive because when choosing the best or most fitting career, it may lead to anxiety or depression as it proves frustrating or unsatisfying. Thus, outlining and discussing one's potential career options, will establish the information on the skills set and education needed where this valuable information can be provided.

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