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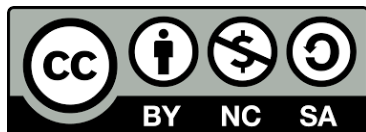
Career Development for Children (CD4C) in Philippine Elementary Schools

Emmy Anne B. Yanga-Domingo, Siegfred Roi L. Codia, and
Lauren Nerisse S. Bautista

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Acknowledgments

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Abstract

This study examines the current situation of supporting Career Development for Children (CD4C) in Philippine elementary schools, primarily to inform the design of developmentally appropriate resources for key stage 1 learners, i.e., kindergarten to Grade 3. Specifically, it aims to examine guidance implementers' perceptions of CD4C, map available human and instructional resources, and analyze how perceived learner career awareness varies across school contexts. Utilizing a multi-methods approach, including a survey of 4,007 guidance implementers and a focus group discussion with identified guidance implementers across island groups and school types in the Philippines, the study shows a strong consensus on the necessity of early, intentional, context-specific, and parent-supported career development. Despite this endorsement, less than half of elementary schools provide career guidance at key stage 1, and where available, delivery through the Homeroom Guidance Program is constrained by limited content, teacher capacity, resources, and time. Other implementation gaps exist, including an 83% reliance on homeroom teachers serving as guidance designates due to a shortage of licensed counselors and high student-to-implementer ratios. Also, perceptions on gender circumscription remain divided, highlighting the need for gender-responsive interventions at key stage 1. The study likewise found that experiential resources, such as manipulatives and multimedia, are more effective in fostering career awareness than traditional materials. Furthermore, a number of existing career topics may be further refined to better match learners' developmental stages across grade levels. To address these constraints, the study recommends, among others, an integrated framework for developmental career guidance in basic education and a CD4C resource starting in key stage 1, featuring experiential, play-based, and inclusive tools to bridge childhood aspirations and future workforce readiness.

Keywords: early career development, lifelong learning, developmental career guidance

1. Introduction

Career development is increasingly understood as a lifelong process that begins early in childhood rather than a one-off decision made in adulthood. Lifespan theorists from Super (1953, 1990) to Gottfredson (2002) and Savickas (Hartung, 2017) posit that vocational behavior originates in childhood, when self-concept, adaptability, and occupational understanding take shape through observation, play, and social interaction. Embedding intentional career-related learning during the primary years broadens aspirations, reduces gender-stereotyped thinking, and strengthens the links children draw between learning and work (Kashefpakdel, Rehill, & Hughes, 2017; Crause, Watson, & McMahon, 2017).

In the Philippines, the 2013 Enhanced Basic Education Act (K to 12 program) sought to produce graduates not only equipped for tertiary study, but also for career and work life (DepEd, 2019). More than a decade on, a persistent job-skills mismatch remains. The missing skills are not predominantly academic but rather “transferable skills” such as adaptability, grit and growth mindset, which are precisely the domains that international and local career development frameworks situate within the scope of career guidance (e.g., Peñano-Ho, 1989, 2017, and UK CDI, 2021).

The Department of Education's (DepEd) Career Guidance Program (CGP), complemented by the Homeroom Guidance Program (HGP), has achieved considerable headway; however, the focus has traditionally been on the secondary level. The primary years, where lifespan theory and practice establish the development of self-awareness and foundational career skills, remain limited; no national, systematic study has yet examined whether and how Philippine elementary schools provide career-related learning at the key stage 1 (kindergarten to grade 3).

Responding to this gap, SEAMEO INNOTECH and DepEd jointly launched a research and development (R&D) initiative, Career Development for Children (CD4C). Based on a national diagnostic study to support CD4C, the project developed and pilot-tested age-appropriate career guidance resources for kindergarten to grade 3 learners.

This discussion paper, under the research phase, is guided and organized around three questions: (1) what are Filipino elementary-level guidance implementers' perceptions of key CD4C dimensions—earliness, intentionality, gender, and parental influence; (2) what human and instructional resources for CD4C are currently available in Philippine elementary schools; and (3) how do perceived levels of key stage 1 learners' career development competency attainment vary across school type, location, size, and the availability of career guidance resources. The first two questions present the situation of CD4C as currently practiced, while the third surfaces school-level conditions associated with stronger attainment, thereby informing the subsequent development phase.

A multi-method design was adopted. The quantitative phase drew on a national online survey of 4,007 elementary-level guidance implementers spanning all 17 administrative regions of the country, while the qualitative phase gathered data from a focus group discussion (FGD) with nine purposively sampled implementers representing diverse school types and community locations.

Following this introduction, the paper commences with a review of the literature focusing on the conceptual foundations of CD4C, the role of schools in early career development, and the Philippine and Southeast Asian policy context. This is followed by a section that details the conceptual framework, data, and analytical procedures. The paper then transitions to the presentation of findings in four parts, which corresponds to the demographic profile of implementers and each of the three research questions. It concludes with a synthesis of findings, interpretation, and a set of policy and design recommendations to guide the CD4C development phase.

2. Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Foundations of Career Development for Children (CD4C)

Career Development for Children (CD4C), often referred to in the literature as Early Career Development or Childhood Career Development, is anchored in lifespan theories that underscore a fundamental change toward viewing career as a lifelong, continuous developmental process rather than a single adult choice. Ginzberg et al. (1951) model of *fantasy, tentative, and realistic stage* was extended by Super (1953, 1990), who argued that vocational behavior originates in childhood and unfolds across *growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline* (Trice & Greer, 2017). Gottfredson (1981, 2002) further specified this phase through her theory of *circumscription*, in which children progressively eliminate occupational possibilities based on their emerging self-concept and social perceptions of gender, status, or ability. Savickas's career construction theory reframes childhood as the "opening act of a career" during which children form self-concept or reputation, develop career adaptability, and author a life narrative through play and role-model identification (Hartung, 2017). Watson and McMahon (2017) note that these traditions meet on the claim that children acquire foundational career knowledge through observation, imagination, and social interaction.

In the Philippine context, Peñano-Ho's (2017) Life Career Development Program (LCDP) localizes these principles as a sequential process of self-clarification extending beyond occupational choice to personal roles, lifestyle, and self-concept. LCDP organizes learning across four domains: (1) basic studies and occupational preparation; (2) self-knowledge and interpersonal skills; (3) knowledge of personal roles, settings, and events; and (4) life career planning

knowledge and skills. The UK Career Development Institute (CDI, 2021) similarly operationalizes lifespan theory through six scaffolded learning areas: grow throughout life, explore possibilities, manage career, create opportunities, balance life and work, and see the big picture. In recent years, increasing evidence affirms that early intervention is consequential. Kashefpakdel, Rehill, and Hughes (2017) report that primary career-related learning increases pupils' awareness of opportunities, strengthens links between education and work, and reduces gender-stereotyped occupational thinking, while Crause, Watson, and McMahon (2017) confirm that childhood career learning shapes later career skills.

Career Awareness

Recognizing that childhood constitutes the foundational stage of lifelong career development, attention now turns to the specific developmental task most appropriate for key stage 1 learners, i.e., kindergarten to grade 3, which is "career awareness."

Career awareness is distinguishable from career exploration and career choice, and career maturity, the latter being Super's (1953) construct describing readiness for career decision-making typically reserved for adolescence (Trice & Greer, 2017). Whereas Ginzberg et al. (1951) framed this period as "fantasy choice," recent literature reframes it as exploratory awareness, which is an orientation toward self, work, and the social world that precedes any concrete decision-making (Watson & McMahon, 2017).

Synthesizing Del Pilar's (unpublished master's thesis, 2026) components with the Career Development Institute's (CDI, 2021) six learning areas yields four coherent domains of career awareness for key stage 1. First, *Grow and Prepare for Life* integrates LCDP's Adaptability, Self-Management, and Relevance of Learning and Skills with CDI's "Grow throughout life," cultivating transferable foundational skills (CDI, 2021). Second, *Create Opportunities for Self and Others* draws LCDP's

Self-Concept, Interpersonal Skills, Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Volunteering together with CDI's "Create opportunities," highlighting positive self-narrative and socio-emotional learning. Third, *Balance of Life and Work Roles* unites LCDP's Equity and Inclusivity with CDI's "Balance life and work," addressing life roles, rights, and fair treatment. Fourth, *Explore and Manage Possibilities* combines LCDP's Career Exploration, Employment and Work Understanding, and Labor Market Trends with CDI's "Explore possibilities" and "Manage career," supporting a sense of agency regarding possibilities and beginning to make choices or engage in tentative exploration and decision-making.

Two contextual influences shape these domains. Gottfredson's (2002) circumscription theory demonstrates that children aged six to eight already eliminate occupations perceived as sex-inappropriate, narrowing aspirations along gendered lines (Trice & Greer, 2017). Parallel evidence indicates that family is the most powerful early shaper of aspirations, with children frequently aspiring to occupations held by parents or close kin (Kashefpakdel et al., 2018).

Philippine evidence corroborates these patterns. Research by the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS) among economically disadvantaged Filipino youth found parental aspirations to be the strongest predictor of children's career goals, alongside significant gender divergence. These aspirations form early and remain stable through young adulthood, while schooling alone without explicit career guidance, beginning in the early years, proves insufficient to broaden career horizons (Melad et al., 2026).

The Role of Schools in Early Career Development

Schools emerge as critical institutional sites where children's career learning can be intentionally structured rather than left to chance or to unfold on its own. Crause, Watson, and McMahon (2017) distinguish between unintentional learning or what children absorb from family and media and intentional learning delivered through formal interventions, arguing that career learning should be viewed as a theme that links existing curriculum (i.e., literacy, numeracy, and life skills) and must move "from a peripheral role as an enrichment activity to a central role as a required element of the curriculum" (p. 193). Hooley (2021) similarly cautions against the misconception that career awareness emerges naturally, noting that without school-based interventions, children's horizons remain shaped by stereotyping, circumscription, and compromise.

The success of intentional career development programs depends on the capacity of those who deliver them. Crause et al. (2017) warn that facilitators of such programs, mostly left to teachers, may not have the necessary skills and knowledge, while parents and other stakeholders may not recognize the necessity of intentional childhood career learning. The Career Development Institute [CDI] (2021) underscores that effective provision requires designated leadership, professional development, and clearly defined staff roles, frameworks, and quality assurance structures.

Policy literacy among implementers is equally critical. Crause et al. (2017) observe that despite policy initiatives across multiple jurisdictions, "the career development needs of elementary school children remain largely unmet" (p. 191), reflecting a persistent gap between program, policy intent, and ground-level awareness. To close this gap, CDI (2021) advocates whole-school approaches in which career learning is embedded across the curriculum through topic work, subject integration, and personal development programs, rather than being

treated as an add-on. Lapan, et al. (2017) reinforce this with evidence that interdisciplinary teams that infuse career constructs into core academic instruction produce stronger learner outcomes, positioning implementers as collaborative agents within a coordinated school-wide system.

Delivery of CD4C

The literature focuses on career learning delivery to young children through experiential learning. It should be anchored in pedagogies that engage learners in experience, reflection, thought and action (National Careers Institute [NCI] 2022). For young children, this translates into play-based exploratory activities such as dress-up days where learners name and discuss the jobs adults do (NCI, 2022). Hooley (2021) similarly highlights simulations, role plays and games as developmentally appropriate, while Lapan et al. (2017) point to guidance classroom curriculum – delivered by counselors and teachers in classrooms and small groups – as an expandable, evidence-supported approach.

Rather than positioning career education at the margins of the curriculum, the literature advocates embedding it across subject areas. Hooley (2021) notes examples of activities such as enrichment of mathematics through salary data and language arts through book characters' career choices.

Instructional resources should align with identified competencies and developmental phases, be evidence-based and pitched at appropriate reading levels (NCI, 2022). Hooley (2021) extends this resource base by involving parents, alumni, employers, and community members as speakers and mentors.

Sequencing follows developmental progression: at the “awareness phase,” kindergarteners might simply name jobs people do, while by Grade 3, children advance towards “exploring, discovering how work contributes to families and communities” (NCI, 2022). Lapan et al. (2017) reinforce this graduated complexity,

with younger learners managing fewer cognitive connections and older children synthesizing relationships between self, education, and work principles that frame implementation challenges in specific national contexts.

The Philippines and Southeast Asian context

The Philippines' K-12 Basic Education Program introduced the Senior High School (SHS) program in 2013 to deal with the persistent job-skills mismatch by preparing learners for either further education or immediate employment, among others (Albert & Martinez, 2019). However, findings from the Youth Education Investment and Labor Market Outcomes Survey (YIELMOS, ADB, 2018) show that students and parents overwhelmingly prefer the academic track over technical-vocational and livelihood options, often without adequate information on labor market patterns, financial aid or postsecondary outcomes (Albert & Martinez, 2019).

To respond to these gaps, the DepEd further strengthened its Career Guidance Program (CGP) for SHS, with the Homeroom Guidance Program serving as its elementary-level counterpart. Albert and Martinez (2019) found that CGP activities largely focus on matching occupations to students' interests, while information on financial aid and postsecondary pathways remains underemphasized. Care and Scoular (2016), in their review of the Basic Education Sector Transformation (BEST) program, recommended replacing aptitude-based testing, namely the National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE), with sustained career counseling that starts earlier and is anchored in student interests and current school progress.

According to an EdTech Hub (2025) rapid comparative assessment of career development programs in Southeast Asian Ministries of Education, most countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Cambodia, do not formally integrate career education at the primary level, focusing instead on foundational

and life skills. Singapore is a notable exception, embedding career guidance from primary grade levels through its MySkillsFuture Portal and Education and Career Guidance (ECG) framework.

Within the Philippines, implementation varies by school context. Albert and Martinez (2019) reported that public and rural schools delivered fewer resource-intensive guidance activities than private and urban schools, especially those requiring industry linkages. These disparities across school types, location, and size shape program reach and learner outcomes, underscoring the need for context-sensitive career development frameworks at the elementary level.

3. Data and Methodology

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) situates the development of a “Career Aware Key Stage 1 Learner” within a multi-layered elementary school ecosystem. Anchored in lifespan career theory (Super, 1990; Gottfredson, 2002) and operationalized through Peñano–Ho’s (2017) Life Career Development Program and the Career Development Institute’s (CDI, 2021) framework, the model posits that career awareness among kindergarten to Grade 3 learners emerges from intentional, school-based provision rather than chance exposure from home and media (Crause, Watson, & McMahon, 2017).

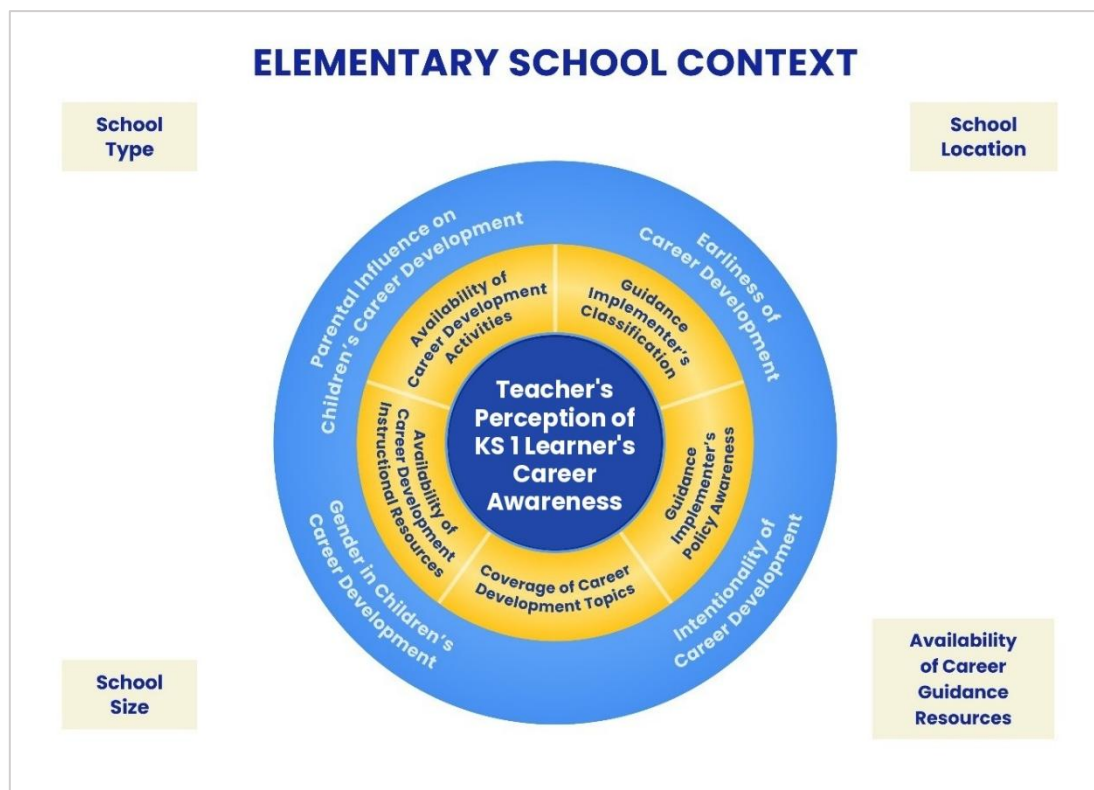
As shown in Figure 1, the framework operates as a series of concentric, interconnected layers that influence the learner from the outside in.

The external environment is defined by the school context, which includes school type, school location, school size, and the availability of career guidance resources. Consistent with documented disparities across Philippine school contexts (Albert & Martinez, 2019), these institutional variables set the baseline logistical realities and boundaries for the entire system, fundamentally shaping the conditions under which career development programming can occur.

Contained within this environment is the framework’s outer ring—the guidance implementer’s perceptions—incorporating earliness, intentionality, gender, and parental influence, which shape how career development is enacted (Hooley, 2021; Kashefpakdel et al., 2018). Because this ring encompasses the internal resource factors, it indicates that an implementer’s professional mindsets and cultural perceptions directly govern how they receive, interpret, and operationalize institutional guidance.

Moving inward, the next layer is the internal resource ring, which represents practical, school-level inputs and actionable elements. This segment is divided into five distinct operational parts, including implementer's classification and policy awareness, availability of career development activities and instructional resources, and the coverage of career development topics. The institutional readiness and policy awareness of the implementers directly influence how these instructional materials, topics, and activities are deployed, shaping the frequency and substance of the career programming.

Ultimately, all these surrounding layers converge on the core at the center of the illustration—the Career Aware Key Stage 1 Learner. This central hub represents the definitive, cumulative outcome of the framework. By organizing the system this way, the model demonstrates how structural school factors condition implementer perceptions, which in turn influence how human and instructional resources are managed, all combining to systematically foster early-stage career consciousness in the kindergarten to Grade 3 student.

Figure 1*Conceptual Framework*

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection proceeded in two complementary phases consistent with the study's multi-methods design. The quantitative phase used an online SurveyMonkey survey in 2024. The survey link was disseminated nationally to all DepEd elementary schools through an official memorandum from the Office of the Undersecretary for Operations (DM-OUOPS-11-01978-2024), which enjoined all elementary-level guidance implementers to participate. This study utilized purposive criterion sampling to select participants who are elementary-level guidance implementers.

The qualitative phase consisted of a focus group discussion (FGD) conducted at SEAMEO INNOTECH in 2024. Nine guidance implementers representing various school types and school-community locations, whose official

representation was approved through DepEd Memorandum DM-OUOPS-11-06158-2024, participated in the in-person sessions. The discussions were facilitated following an approved FGD protocol designed to elicit narratives on the implementation of career guidance for key stage 1 learners.

Participants

A total of 4,007 Filipino elementary-level guidance implementers participated in the quantitative survey, representing a 10.69% response rate against the 37,496 elementary schools nationwide (DepEd, 2023a). Figure 2 shows the regional representation, spanning all 17 administrative regions, with Region VIII (Eastern Visayas) having the largest percentage ($n = 698$; 17.42%) and the Cordillera Administrative Region the smallest ($n = 15$; 0.37%).

As Tables 1 and 2 show, most respondents hail from rural community schools (79.36%) and schools without annexes (50.76%; $n = 2,034$). Complementing the survey, nine purposively sampled guidance implementers from six regions and nine schools division offices joined the FGD, as shown in Table 2.

Figure 2

Distribution of Survey Respondents by Region (N = 4,007)

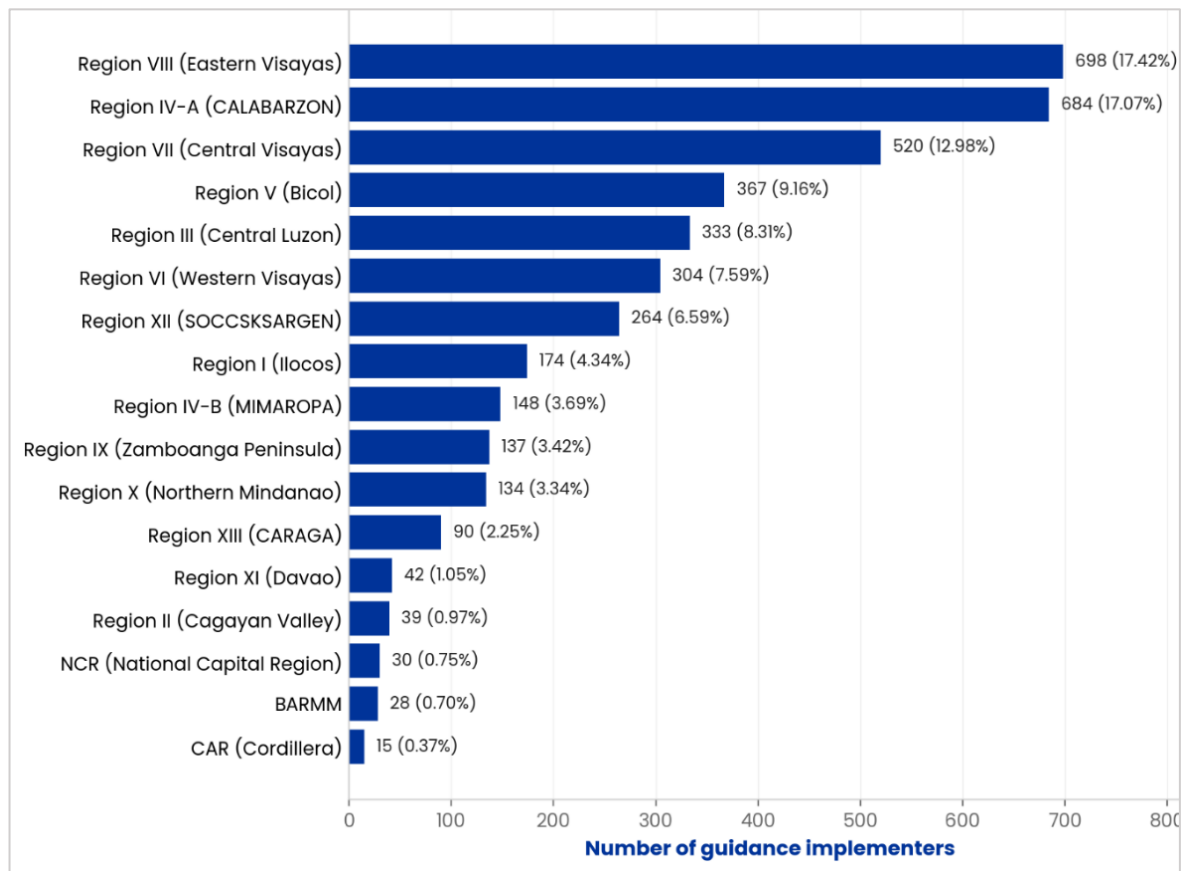


Table 1

Distribution of Survey Respondents by School-Community Location (N=4,007)

School-Community Type	n	%
Rural	3,180	79.36%
Urban	731	18.24%
Partially urban	96	2.40%
Total	4,007	100.00%

Table 2
Distribution of Survey Respondents by School Type (N=4,007)

School Type	n	%
School with no annexes	2,034	50.76%
Mother school	1,201	29.97%
Multigrade school	696	17.37%
Annex/extension school	63	1.57%
Mobile school/learning center	13	0.32%
Total	4,007	100%

Table 3
Distribution of FGD Participants by Designation (N=9)

Role in Career Guidance	n (%)	Plantilla Post	n (%)
Guidance Counselor	1 (11.11%)	Guidance Counselor III	1 (11.11%)
Guidance Designate	8 (88.89%)	Principal II	1 (11.11%)
		Teacher II	1 (11.11%)

Role in Career Guidance	n (%)	Plantilla Post	n (%)
		Teacher III	4 (44.45%)
		Guidance Coordinator I	1 (11.11%)
		Project Development Officer	1 (11.11%)
Total	9 (100%)	Total	9 (100%)

Instrumentation

The study employed the CD4C survey, a researcher-developed instrument organized into four parts aligned with the conceptual framework. Part 1 profiled implementers through eight items on age, sex, DepEd service length, educational background, role in career guidance, and school context. Part 2 measured perceptions of four CD4C dimensions—earliness, intentionality, gender, and parental influence—through 15 statements rated on a four-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Strongly Agree). Part 3 mapped human and instructional resources, covering implementer classification, policy awareness, career activities, instructional materials, and the perceived grade-level placement of 22 Homeroom Guidance Program topics. Part 4 captured perceived attainment of career awareness competencies through 12 indicators conceptually mapped from the LCDP and the UK CDI framework, distributed across four domains—*Grow and Prepare for Life*, *Create Opportunities for Self and Others*, *Balance of Life and Work Roles*, and *Explore and Manage Possibilities*—rated on a five-point frequency scale (1 = Almost Never, 5 = Almost Always). Cronbach's α coefficients ranged from 0.836

to 0.881, confirming acceptable internal consistency. A semi-structured FGD protocol guided the qualitative phase.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the 4,007 survey responses were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential techniques. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and means) summarized the implementers' demographic profile, perceptions of the four CD4C dimensions, and availability of human and instructional resources. Internal consistency for each career awareness domain was assessed using Cronbach's α , and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were used to rank perceived need across instructional resource types. To examine variation in perceived career awareness attainment, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied for multi-category factors (school type and location), independent-samples t-tests for binary factors (registered guidance counselor status, conduct of career activities), and Pearson product-moment correlation for school size. The marginal effects of seven instructional material types were estimated using linear regression. A 0.10 significance threshold was adopted, consistent with exploratory educational research. Qualitative FGD transcripts were thematically analyzed and triangulated with quantitative findings.

4. Results and Findings

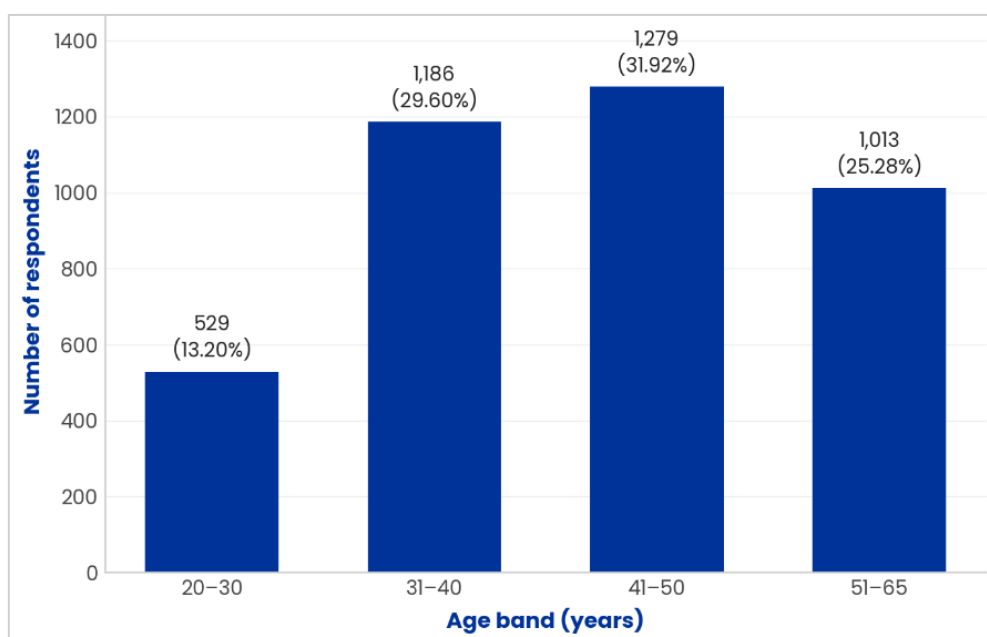
Part 1. Guidance Implementers' Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the 4,007 elementary-level guidance implementers who participated in the survey is characterized by five personal and professional attributes: age, sex at birth, length of service with the DepEd, college degree, and highest educational attainment. These attributes demonstrate the human resource of the conceptual framework, particularly the guidance implementer's classification and capability to deliver career development activities for key stage 1 learners.

Age. Respondents were mostly in the mid-career age range, with 41–50-year-olds constituting the largest cohort ($n = 1,279$; 31.92%) as found in Figure 3. This age range is followed closely by 31–40-year-olds ($n = 1,186$; 29.60%) and 51–65-year-olds ($n = 1,013$; 25.28%). The youngest cohort, 20–30-year-olds, comprised the smallest share ($n = 529$; 13.20%). This focus on older age brackets suggests a guidance resource characterized by long careers at DepEd.

Figure 3

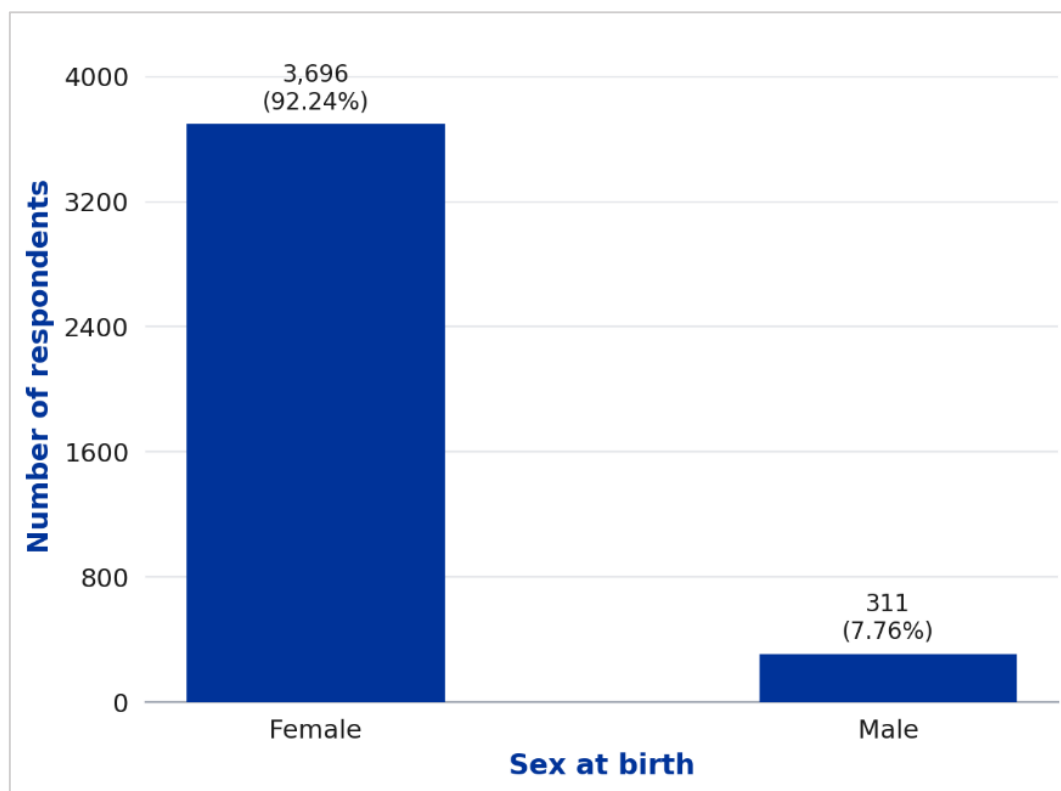
Distribution of Respondents by Age (N=4,007)



Sex at Birth. As Figure 4 shows, the respondent population was overwhelmingly female ($n = 3,696$; 92.24%) compared with male respondents ($n = 311$; 7.76%).

Figure 4

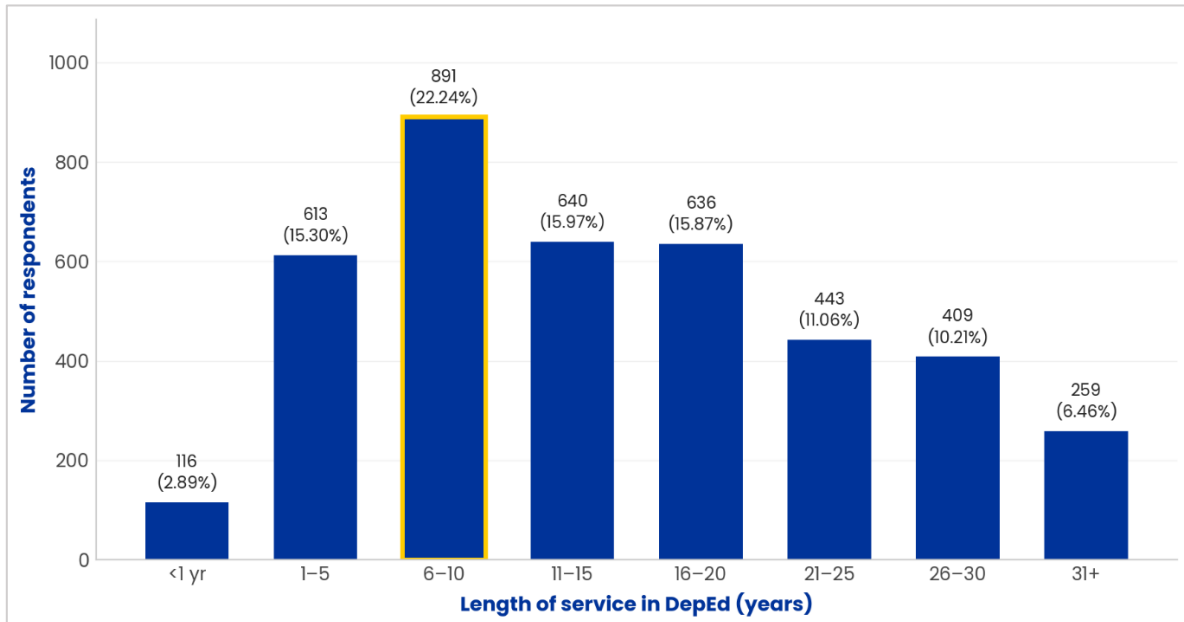
Distribution of Respondents by Sex (N=4,007)



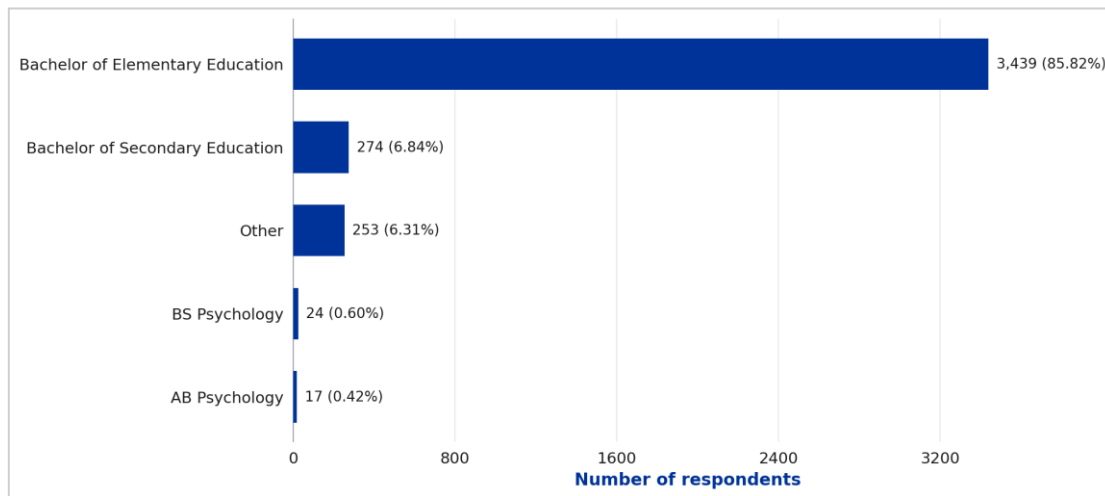
Length of Service. The modal length of service in DepEd was 6–10 years ($n = 891$; 22.24%) as shown in Figure 5, with a near-uniform distribution across the 11–15-year ($n = 640$) and 16–20-year ($n = 636$) ranges. Tenures of 1–5 years ($n = 613$) and 21–25 years ($n = 443$) followed, while implementers with less than one year ($n = 116$) and 31 or more years ($n = 259$) of service represented the extremes. The shape suggests a wide range of experience, with the bulk of guidance implementers in the early- to mid-career range.

Figure 5

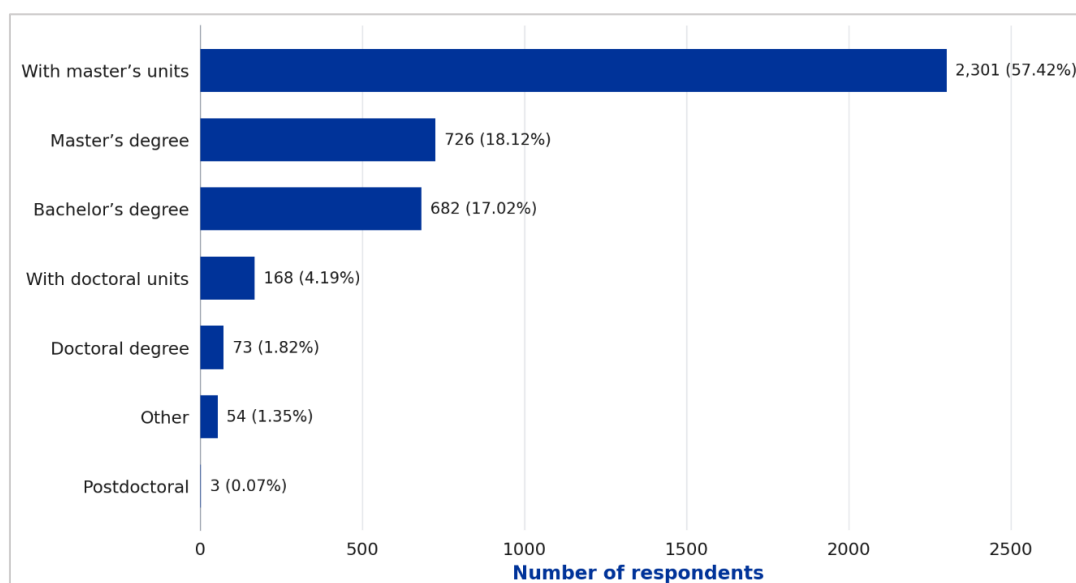
Distribution of Respondents by Length of Service in DepEd (N=4,007)



College Degree. Figure 6 shows that the majority of the respondents earned a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education ($n = 3,439$; 85.82%), with smaller proportions holding a Bachelor of Secondary Education ($n = 274$; 6.84%) or other degrees ($n = 253$; 6.31%). Psychology-trained respondents, i.e., AB Psychology ($n = 17$) and BS Psychology ($n = 24$), comprised only 1.02% of the sample, signaling a limited base of formally psychology- or counseling-grounded preparation among elementary-level guidance implementers.

Figure 6*Distribution of Respondents by bachelor's degree (N=4,007)*

Highest Educational Attainment. Continuing education was widespread: 57.42% ($n = 2,301$) had taken some master's units without finishing the degree, while another 18.12% ($n = 726$) held a full master's degree. Bachelor's-only respondents accounted for 17.02% ($n = 682$), while those with doctoral units ($n = 168$) or completed doctorates ($n = 73$) together represented 6.01% of the sample (Figure 7).

Figure 7*Distribution of Respondents by Highest Educational Attainment (N=4,007)*

The demographic profile of guidance implementers shows a relatively older, predominantly female, elementary education-trained workforce that is actively pursuing graduate studies but remains focused on education rather than counseling-related disciplines, a possibility of low interest among teachers to support counseling work as a future pathway.

Part 2. Perceptions of Filipino Elementary-Level Guidance

Implementers on Key CD4C Dimensions

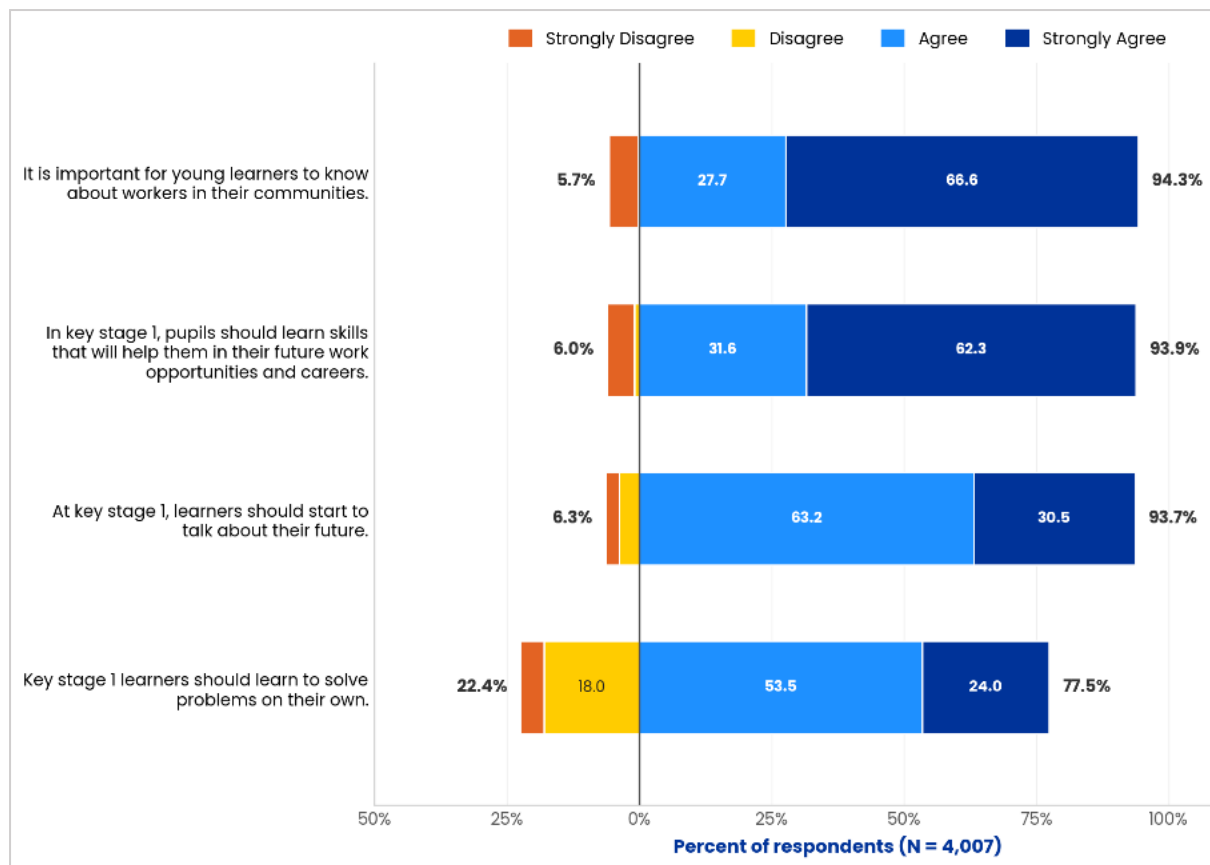
Part 2 examines how Filipino elementary-level guidance implementers perceive four CD4C dimensions, identified in the conceptual framework as constituting the outer layer that shapes how career development happens at key stage 1 (Hooley, 2021; Kashefpakdel et al., 2018): (1) earliness, (2) intentionality, (3) gender, and (4) parental influences. The 4,007 respondents rated 15 indicator statements on a four-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree).

Earliness of Career Development. Earliness concerns whether career development should begin in the earliest stages of basic education, which is a position grounded in lifespan career theory (Super, 1990) but contested by views that defer career guidance until the secondary level. As shown in Figure 8, respondents overwhelmingly endorse early career development. The strongest agreement (94.3%; SA = 66.6%, A = 27.7%) was that “it is important for young learners to know about workers in their communities.” High endorsement was likewise registered for the need to provide learning skills relevant to learners’ futures (93.9%) and early conversations about the future (93.7%; SA = 30.5%, A = 63.2%). The fourth indicator that “key stage 1 learners should learn to solve problems on their own” drew weaker but still majority support at 77.5% (SA = 24.0%, A = 53.5%), with 22.4% disagreeing. Taken together, the pattern affirms a strong consensus that Filipino implementers recognize kindergarten to grade 3 as a foundational stage in

career development, in line with the CDI (2021), which positions world of work awareness, future-orientation and early transferable skills as building blocks of the earliest school years. This consensus was strongly corroborated in the FGD, where every participant raised a hand in affirmation of kindergarten as the appropriate starting point. Yet participants flagged a sharp gap between belief and practice, with one principal observing, *“I failed to see if there is any focus at all when it comes to career development... in K-3.”* Other implementers extended this view by pointing out that private schools already begin career-related activities at the kindergarten level—career parades, career week, and sharing of parents’ careers.

Figure 8

Earliness of Career Development (N=4,007)

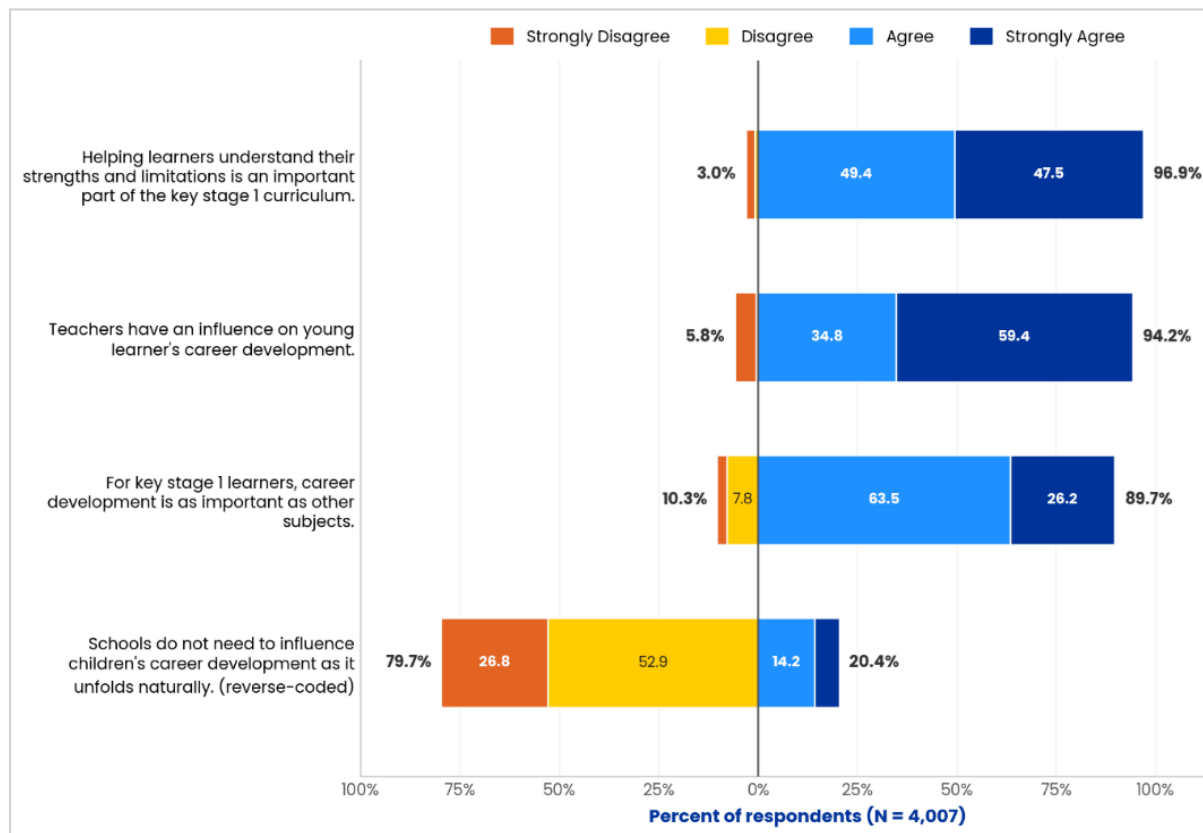


Intentional Career Development Practices. Intentionality concerns whether schools should actively support career development or allow it to unfold naturally among children. Figure 9 reveals strong support for intentional school intervention.

The reverse-coded indicator “schools do not need to influence children’s career development as it unfolds naturally” drew 79.7% disagreement (D = 52.9%, SD = 26.8%); four in five (80%) implementers reject the chance stance and affirm an intentional role for schools in CD4C. Consistent with this, 96.9% agreed that helping learners understand their strengths and limitations belongs in the key stage 1 curriculum (SA = 47.5%, A = 49.4%), and 94.2% recognized teachers’ direct influence on young learners’ career development (SA = 59.4%, A = 34.8%). Treating career development as a curricular complementary subject attracted slightly lower but still substantial agreement at 89.7% (SA = 26.2%, A = 63.5%), with 10.3% disagreement reflecting competing pressures in the 2024 DepEd curriculum. The convergence of these four indicators establishes intentional school-based career development as near consensus, corroborating the framework’s claim that career awareness for key stage 1 emerges through intentional, school-based provision (Crause, Watson, & McMahon, 2017) rather than through chance exposure. The 10.3% who do not yet view career development as part of the curriculum represents a clear target for implementer orientation. FGD participants endorsed intentionality in principle but described current practice as largely unintentional: *“kahit pa sabihin mo HGP, hindi naman po for career development ang nagiging focus ng HGP... more on values development. (Even with the implementation of the HGP, the focus does not actually lean toward career development; rather, it centers more on values development.)”* Participants further noted that while some schools have begun mounting school-wide “career day” or “career week” initiatives, these remain isolated, principal-dependent, and unsupported by a clear DepEd policy, dedicated budget line, or monitoring system.

Figure 9

Intentionality of Career Development (N=4,007)

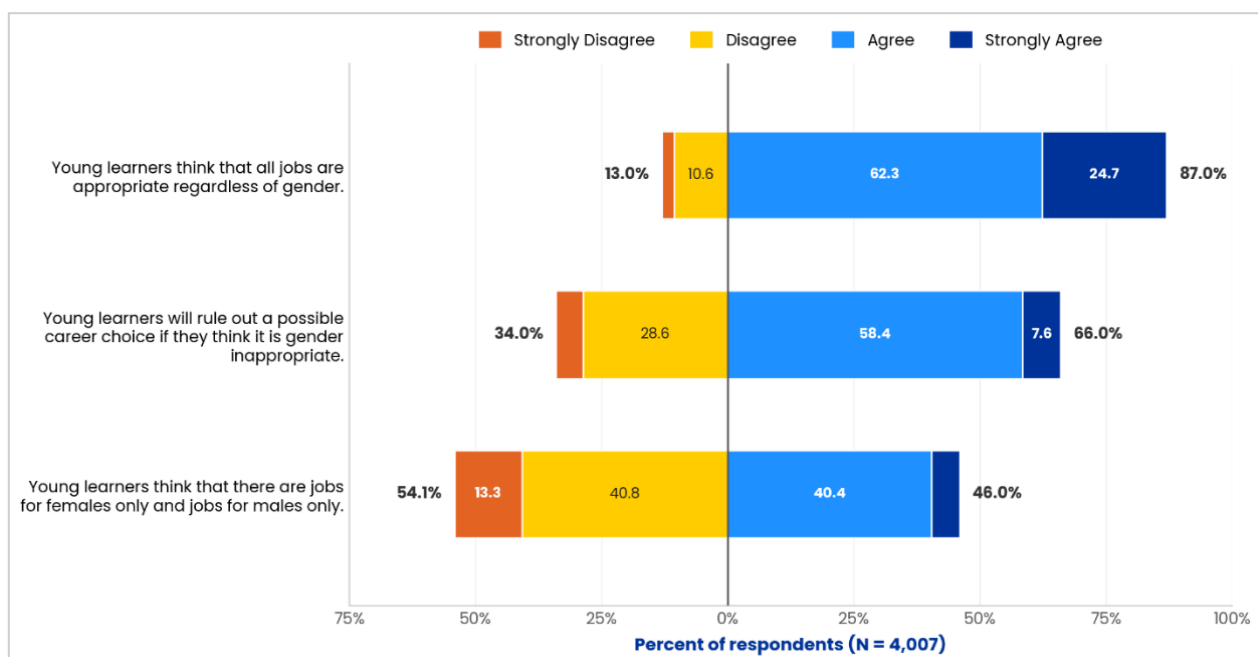


Gender in Children's Career Development. As shown in Figure 10, agreement that "young learners think there are jobs for females only and jobs for males only" was nearly evenly split—46.0% (SA = 5.6%, A = 40.4%) against 54.1% disagreement (D = 40.8%, SD = 13.3%). A clearer majority, 66.0% (SA = 7.6%, A = 58.4%), endorsed the view that learners would rule out a career deemed gender-inappropriate, consistent with Gottfredson's (2002) circumscription theory, which posits that gender is the earliest mechanism by which children eliminate occupations from consideration. Yet 87.0% (SA = 24.7%, A = 62.3%) agreed that learners "think that all jobs are appropriate regardless of gender," a position difficult to reconcile with the first two indicators. This contradiction suggests implementers themselves hold mixed and possibly aspirational rather than observational beliefs about children's gender circumscription. FGD accounts corroborated this

contradiction. Implementers reported actively promoting gender-equal framings, *“as early as kinder, inaano ko na po yung gender sensitivity na equal ang lalaki at babae sa kakayanan (as early as kindergarten, I emphasize gender sensitivity, emphasizing that men and women possess equal capabilities)”*—while observing entrenched stereotypes in learners, as one principal noted that boys aspire to be seamen but *“yung mga girls, hindi pa nila alam na po pwede pala mag-seawoman (young girls do not yet realize that becoming a seawoman is a viable career option for them).”* Perceptions of gender’s role in children’s career development were notably more divided than the preceding dimensions.

Figure 10

Gender in Children’s Career Development (N=4,007)

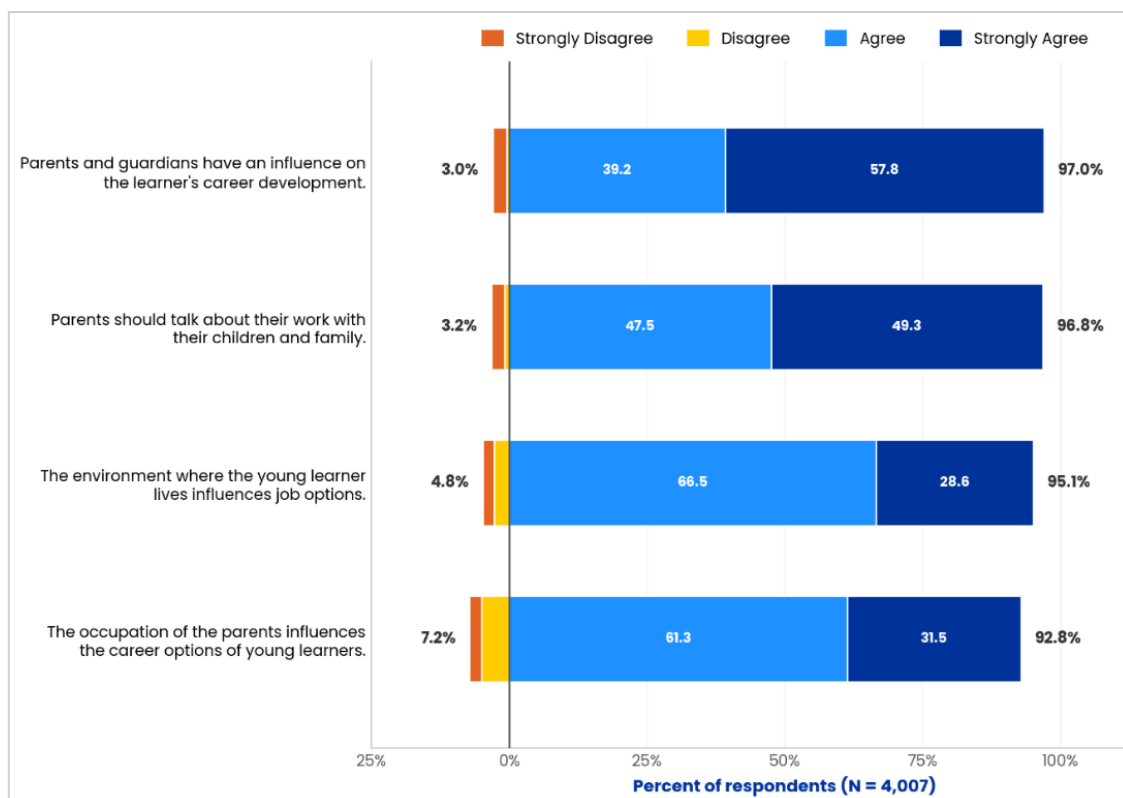


Parental Influences on Children’s Career Development. The fourth dimension examines implementers’ perceptions of parents as influences on children’s emerging career conceptions. As shown in Figure 11, this dimension yielded consistent agreement across the four CD4C dimensions, with implementers strongly affirming the role of parents in children’s career development. Agreement that parents and guardians influence learners’ career

development reached 97.0% (SA = 57.8%, A = 39.2%), and an almost identical 96.8% agreed that parents should talk about their work with their children and family (SA = 49.3%, A = 47.5%). Recognition of wider contextual influences was nearly as strong: 95.1% agreed that the learner's environment shapes job options (SA = 28.6%, A = 66.5%), and 92.8% agreed that parents' own occupation shapes the career options of children (SA = 31.5%, A = 61.3%). With agreement uniformly above 92% and disagreement below 8%, this represents the most cohesive professional view in the perceptions instrument, in line with the framework's positioning of parental and contextual influences as a key external input on the children's career development (Whiston & Keller, 2004).

Figure 11

Parental Influence on Career Development for Children (N= 4,007)



Across the four CD4C dimensions, the quantitative and qualitative findings converge: Filipino implementers endorse early, intentional, school-based career development and contextual career-related learning, underscoring the role of parents, while perceptions of gender's role in children's career conceptions remain divided.

Part 3. Human and Instructional Resources for CD4C in Philippine

Elementary Schools

Part 3 addresses research question 2 by mapping the human and instructional resources currently available in Philippine elementary schools to support career development for key stage 1 learners. Within the conceptual framework, these resources occupy the middle ring of school-level inputs, translating into actual classroom career-related learning delivery. Findings are organized into two categories: human resources, including guidance implementers' classification and policy awareness; and instructional resources, including availability of activities, instructional materials, and coverage of career development topics. Together, these constitute the existing school-level resource base into which the CD4C Toolkit materials will be introduced. Part 3 reveals both the school system's strengths and its delivery gaps. The findings also inform which components warrant the greatest design investment to inform the development phase.

Human Resources

Guidance Implementer's Classification. The composition of the guidance workforce reveals a significant staffing reality, i.e., career guidance at the elementary level is delivered primarily by classroom teachers or homeroom advisers rather than by Registered Guidance Counselors (RGCs). As shown in Table 4, of 4,007 respondents, only 88 (2.2%) hold a plantilla position formally tied to

guidance services (Guidance Counselor = 40, Guidance Coordinator = 32, Guidance Services Associate = 10, Guidance Services Specialist = 6), while 3,327 (83.03%) hold the plantilla position of Teacher. The pattern is even more emphasized in role allocation: 3,340 respondents (83.35%) serve as Guidance Designates, against only 223 (5.57%) RGCs.

Table 4.

Plantilla Position and Role in Career Guidance Implementation (N=4,007)

Plantilla Position	Guidance Counselor	Guidance Designate	Other	Total	% of N=4,007
Teacher	175	2,859	278	3,327	83.03%
Master Teacher	10	349	34	501	12.50%
Principal	4	23	65	485	12.10%
Head Teacher	11	47	50	112	2.80%
Special Science Teacher	0	1	0	93	2.32%
Guidance Counselor	8	0	0	40	1.00%
Guidance Coordinator	10	20	2	32	0.80%
SPED Teacher	0	15	0	16	0.40%
Guidance Services Associate	0	1	1	10	0.25%
Guidance Services Specialist	3	1	0	6	0.15%
Others	2	24	14	40	1.00%

Plantilla Position	Guidance Counselor	Guidance Designate	Other	Total	% of N=4,007
Grand Total	223	3,340	444	4,007	100.00%
% of N=4,007	5.57%	83.35%	11.08%	100.00%	—

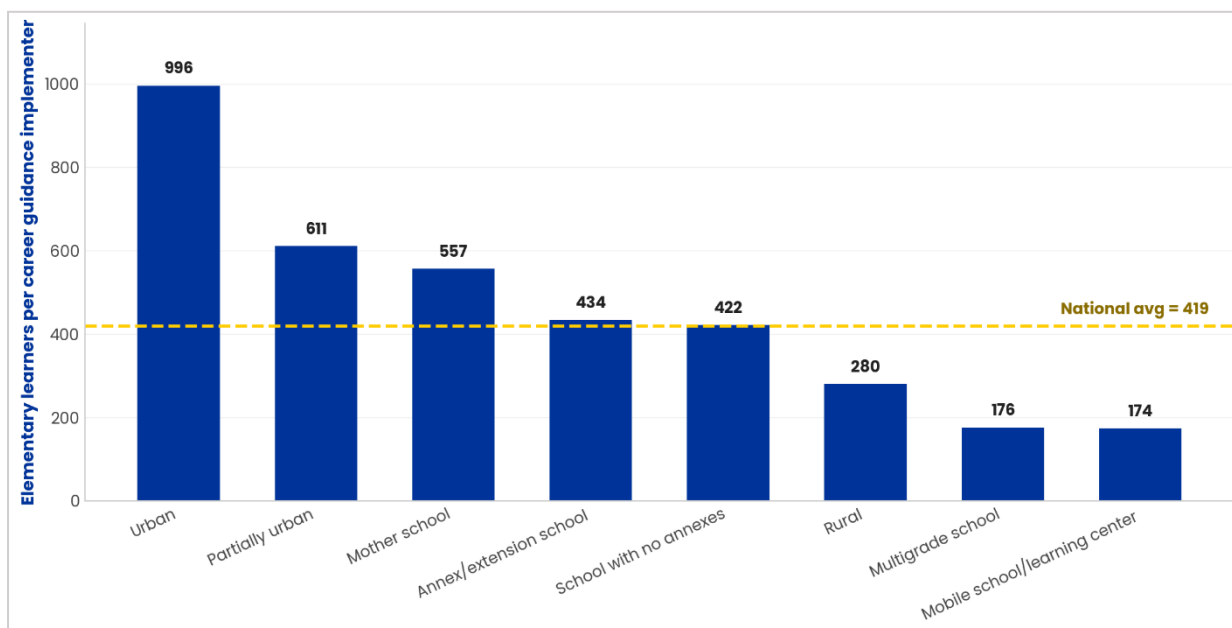
This pattern was corroborated by FGD participants, eight of whom were non-RGCs serving as Guidance Designates, Advocates, or Coordinators, with only one being a registered Guidance Counselor for an elementary school. Four had been appointed verbally, without documentation, and none received additional compensation. Participants noted that the role “is not always clear-cut,” with a single school using “designate,” “advocate,” and “coordinator” interchangeably depending on the principal’s preference. One teacher explained, *“We cannot claim as guidance coordinator because... You are just advocates.”* Implementers also carry full teaching loads in addition to guidance duties, leading one participant to call it “lack of focus due to the workload.”

The staffing constraint is further evident in uneven student-to-implementer ratios across locations and school types. As shown in Figure 12, the national average is 419 elementary learners per guidance implementer; urban schools operate at 996:1, partially urban at 611:1, and rural schools at 280:1. By school type, multigrade schools (176:1) and mobile schools/learning centers (174:1) face the lowest ratios.¹ The implication of this for CD4C is twofold: resources must be adapted to specific school types and locations, and this contextualization must be done by classroom teachers with full teaching loads rather than dedicated guidance specialists.

¹ The mobile-school student-to-implementer figure is driven by an outlier (13 guidance designates in a single school in Romblon province).

Figure 12

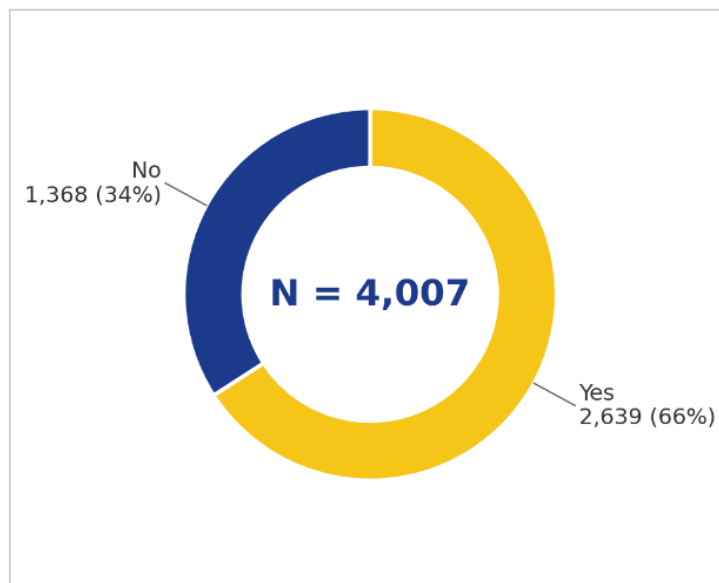
Student: Implementer Ratio by Location and School Type (N=4,007)



Guidance Implementer’s Policy Awareness. Awareness of DepEd’s Career Guidance policy framework is a precondition for coherent implementation. As shown in Figure 13, 2,639 respondents (66%) reported being aware of DepEd OUPS No. 2023-03-8149, the 2023 Guidelines on the Supervision and Implementation of the DepEd Career Guidance Program (CGP), while 1,368 (34%) were unaware. FGD participants described awareness as similarly uneven, with most indicating that “schools are not aware that there is a DepEd memo on CGP every SY, that includes the elementary schools.” One school principal observed that career guidance “is actually for high school,” and without a clear elementary-level mandate, “our hands are tied.”

Figure 13.

Awareness of DepEd Career-related Policy (N=4,007)

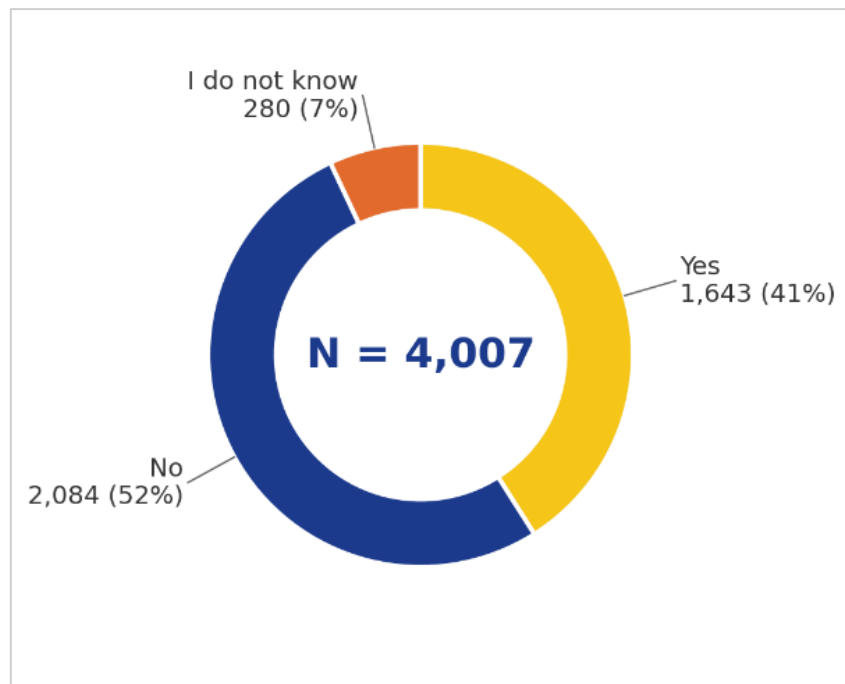


Instructional Resources

Availability of Career Development Activities. Despite moderate policy awareness, the operationalization of key stage 1 career guidance activities is markedly lower. As shown in Figure 14, only 41% (n=1,643) of respondents reported that their school had such activities, while 52% (n=2,084) reported none, and 7% (n=280) did not know. Among schools with activities, the most frequently cited formats were career day events, role-play, and dress-up, which are school-wide formats that emphasize experiential exposure to occupations rather than structured curricular instruction.

Figure 14

Availability of Career Guidance Activities in Key Stage 1 (N=4,007)



In terms of integrating with subject areas, Kindergarten activities are mostly integrated into the socio-emotional development domain, while those for Grades 1 to 3 are predominantly housed within the Homeroom Guidance Program (HGP), followed by *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (Values Education)*, *Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies)*, Filipino, English, and Mathematics. Career development at the elementary level thus operates as curricular integration rather than a dedicated strand. FGD participants confirmed this fragmented, school-initiated character of implementation. Locally initiated “career day” and “career week” programs were described as sustained by parental engagement and principal support, but *“implementation among DepEd schools is uneven; some implement this, and some do not.”*

Availability and Usability of Career Development Instructional Resources.

Material support for the HGP is comparatively accessible. As shown in Figure 15, 78% (n=3,130) of respondents reported that their schools have copies of the HGP self-learning modules, and as Figure 16 shows, 95% of those with copies report actively using them. Among the 5% with modules but not using them, the dominant constraint is training (n=102 cited that teachers are not trained), followed by time constraints (n=62), modules being difficult to teach or understand (n=22), and inappropriate language (n=13). FGD participants underscored that printed copies became scarce after the pandemic; one explained that the modules now exist primarily as soft copies (*"after pandemic... wala nang hard copy [there were no more hard copies]"*). Another principal candidly remarked, "my co-teachers are not trained about the HGP program. We didn't receive any training per se on how we are going to implement it."

Figure 15

Availability of HGP Modules in School (N=4,007)

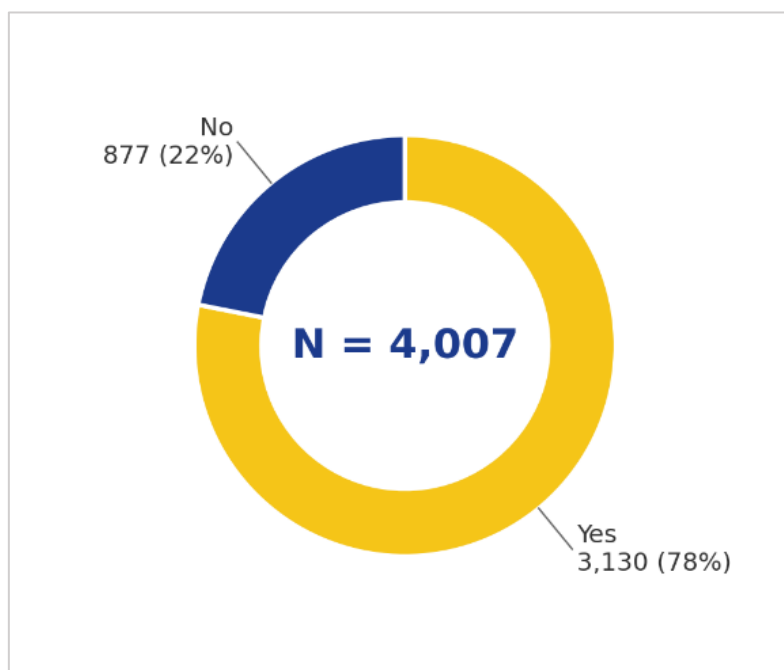
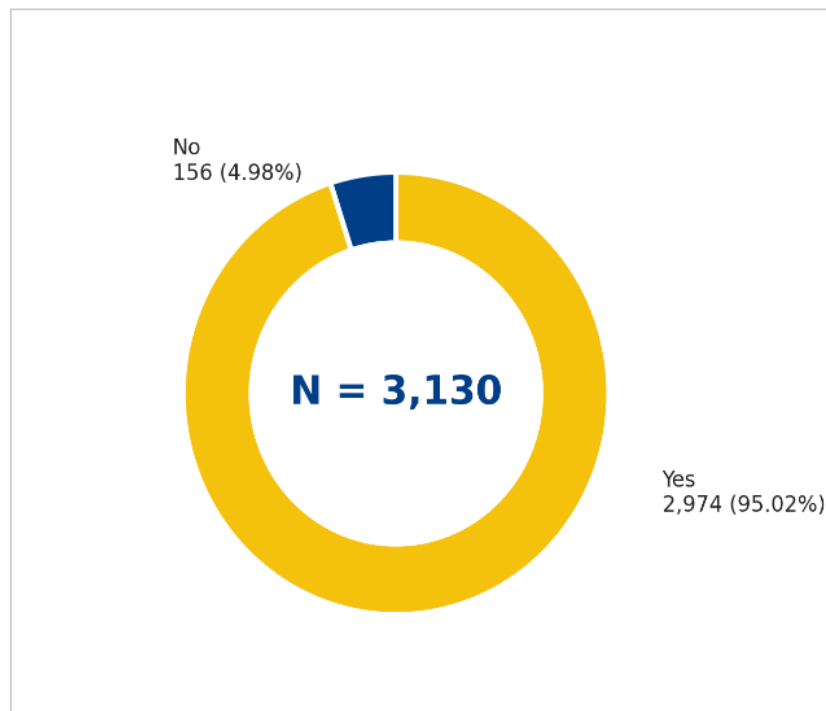


Figure 16

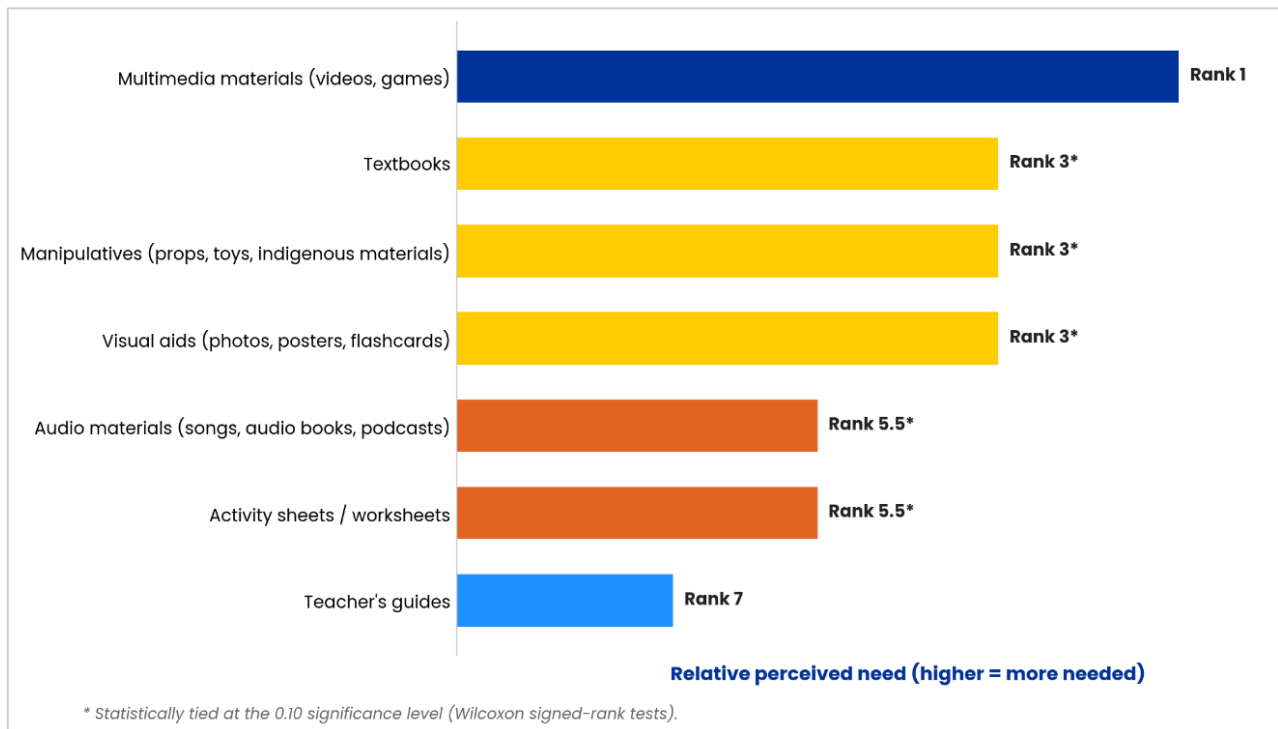
Use of HGP Modules (N=4,007)



Beyond the HGP modules, respondents reported using a range of supplementary resources, with activity sheets the most common and manipulatives the least. As Figure 17 shows, when asked to rate the level of need for various resource types on a five-point scale, multimedia materials emerged as the most-needed resource, statistically distinct from all others (Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, $p < 0.10$). Textbooks, manipulatives, and visual aids formed a statistically tied second cluster, followed by audio materials and activity sheets, with teacher's guides ranked last.

Figure 17

Ranking of Career Development Resource Needs (N=4,007)



Coverage of Career Development Topics. To help examine the developmental appropriateness of the HGP topics, respondents were asked to identify the grade level at which each of 22 career development topics, drawn directly from the HGP curriculum guide in effect at the time of the survey, should first be introduced. As shown in Figure 18, the aggregate distribution indicates that 31% of topics are most appropriately introduced in Kindergarten, 23% in Grade 1, 15% in Grade 2, and 31% in Grade 3. Self-focused topics anchored in self-awareness—“My talents” (Kinder = 46%), “My favorite places” (42%), “My ambitions” (40%), and “My hobbies” (38%)—are predominantly assigned to Kindergarten, consistent with early childhood career development theory which positions self-concept formation as a precursor to occupational exploration. Conversely, work-oriented and future-integrative topics such as “Things I want to do when I am already an adult” (Grade 3 = 51%), “Exploring the occupation/job I can do in the future” (47%),

“Types of work that I want to do in the future” (40%), and “My strengths” (37%)—cluster in Grade 3, reflecting implementer judgment that such abstractions require greater cognitive and social maturity.

A side-by-side comparison of the current DepEd mapping against the implementer-preferred mapping (Table 5) reveals divergence in 14 of 22 topics (64%), indicating a need to review of the developmental appropriateness of the topics for particular levels perceived by those tasked with implementation.

Figure 18

Coverage of Career Development Topics by Grade Level First Introduced

(N=4,007)

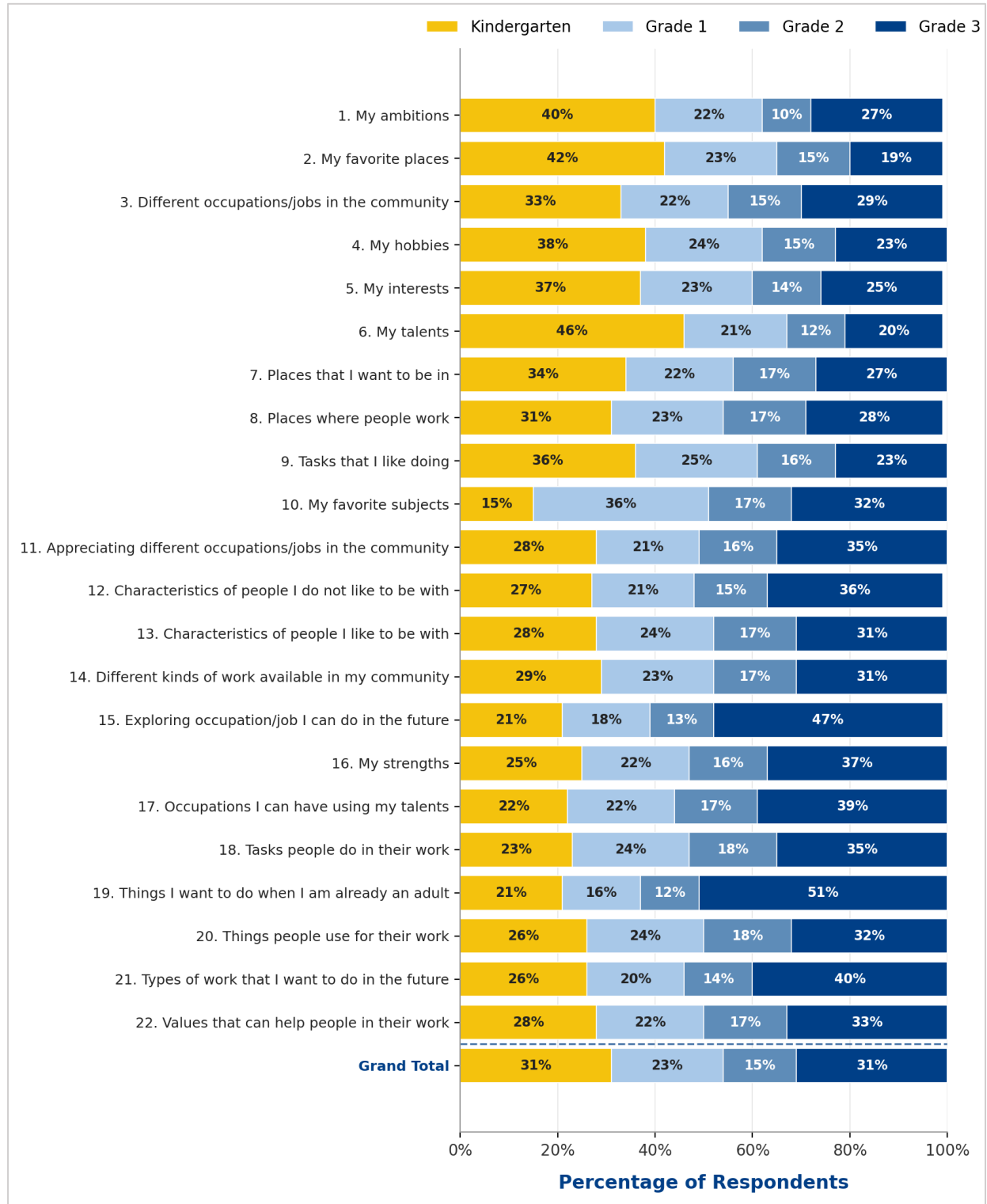


Table 5

Mapping of Current HGP Topics with Guidance Implementers' Perceived Grade Level

Career Development Topic	Current Mapping in DepEd Curriculum	Preferred Mapping per Guidance Implementers
My talents	Kindergarten	Kindergarten
Occupations I can have using my talents	Kindergarten	Grade 3
Different occupations/jobs in the community	Kindergarten	Kindergarten
Appreciating different occupations/jobs in the community	Kindergarten	Grade 3
Exploring occupation/job I can do in the future (role play)	Kindergarten	Grade 3
My hobbies	Grade 1	Kindergarten
My interests	Grade 1	Kindergarten
My favorite subjects	Grade 1	Grade 1
My strengths	Grade 1	Grade 3
My favorite places	Grade 1	Kindergarten
My ambitions	Grade 1	Kindergarten
Characteristics of people I like to be with	Grade 2	Grade 3
Characteristics of people I do not like to be with	Grade 2	Grade 3

Career Development Topic	Current Mapping in DepEd Curriculum	Preferred Mapping per Guidance Implementers
Tasks that I like doing	Grade 2	Kindergarten
Places that I want to be in	Grade 2	Kindergarten
Things I want to do when I am already an adult	Grade 2	Grade 3
Different kinds of work available in my community	Grade 3	Grade 3
Tasks people do in their work	Grade 3	Grade 3
Places where people work	Grade 3	Kindergarten
Things people use for their work	Grade 3	Grade 3
Values that can help people in their work	Grade 3	Grade 3
Types of work that I want to do in the future	Grade 3	Grade 3

Part 3 reveals an elementary school system with reasonable material infrastructure and broad teacher availability, but with deep gaps in the availability of developmentally appropriate materials, registered guidance counselors, training, policy awareness and curricular topic-grade alignment with developmental appropriateness. The qualitative findings support these patterns, with implementers articulating workload pressure, unclear designation, unavailability of printed modules and lack of training as recurring challenges.

Part 4. Perceived Levels of Attainment of Career Development across School Type, Location, Size, and Availability of Career Guidance Resources

Part 4 addresses research question 3, by examining how perceived levels of key stage 1 learners' career development competency attainment vary across (a) school type, (b) school location, (c) school size, and (d) the availability of career guidance resources—specifically the (d1) presence of a registered guidance counselor, (d2) conduct of career development activities, and (d3) the availability of career development instructional resources. Perceived attainment was measured along 12 indicators distributed across four identified CD4C domains based on the literature: *Grow and Prepare for Life*, *Create Opportunities for Self and Others*, *Balance of Life and Work Roles*, and *Explore and Manage Possibilities*. Each indicator was rated on a five-point frequency scale (1 = *Almost Never* to 5 = *Almost Always*). Because the indicators do not directly capture learners' behavior but rather the implementer's observation thereof, all subsequent interpretations refer to *perceived* attainment.

Group differences were tested using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for multi-category factors and independent-samples t-tests for binary factors, while the school-size-attainment relationship was examined through Pearson product-moment correlation. The contribution of specific instructional materials was modeled through linear regression. A 0.10 significance level was adopted throughout, consistent with exploratory educational research conventions for studies seeking to inform the development phase.

Internal consistency of each domain was examined to verify that its indicators reliably represent the parent construct. As Table 6 shows, Cronbach's α coefficients ranged from 0.836 (*Grow and Prepare for Life*) to 0.881 (*Explore and Manage Possibilities*), all comfortably exceeding the 0.70 threshold for acceptable

reliability. Item-deletion analyses produced no substantial gain in α for any indicator, confirming that all 12 items contribute meaningfully to their respective domains. Each domain score was therefore computed as the arithmetic mean of its three constituent indicators.

Table 6

Internal consistency of CD4C career awareness domains and item-level reliability

Career awareness domain	Cronbach's α	Code	Item	α if item is removed
Grow and Prepare for Life	0.836	CG1	Participates in classroom activities	0.797
		CG2	Shows teamwork and cooperation	0.725
		CG3	Develops confidence from successes in learning	0.793
Create Opportunities for Self and Others	0.839	CO1	Identifies how to be safe and considerate of others' feelings	0.758
		CO2	Identifies and shares hobbies, interests, favorites, talents, and strengths	0.770
		CO3	Demonstrates good manners and behavior	0.800
Balance of Life and Work Roles	0.861	CB1	Identifies different roles of family members at home and in other settings	0.825
		CB2	Recognizes the rewards from doing different roles	0.789
		CB3	Explores new and emerging roles	0.797

Career awareness domain	Cronbach's α	Code	Item	α if item is removed
Explore and Manage Possibilities	0.881	CE1	Learns that jobs are made up of tasks	0.835
		CE2	Looks forward to learning new and challenging things	0.817
		CE3	Identifies ways of making decisions for themselves	0.843

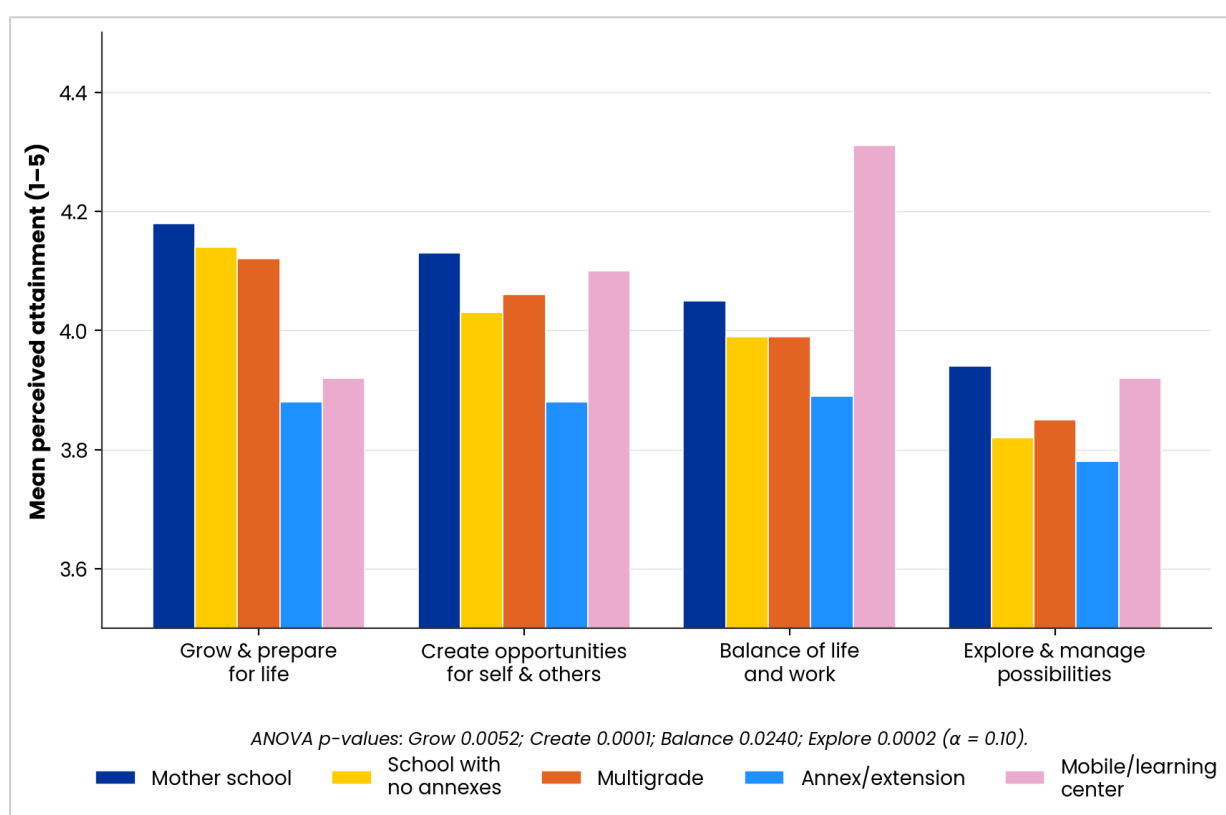
School Type

A one-way ANOVA tested whether perceived attainment of career awareness differs across the five school types. School type was found to be a significant factor in all four domains: Grow and Prepare for Life ($p = 0.0052$), Create Opportunities for Self and Others ($p = 0.0001$), Balance of Life and Work ($p = 0.0240$) and Explore and Manage Possibilities ($p = 0.0002$). As shown in Figure 19, mother schools ($n = 1,201$) recorded the highest mean ratings in three domains—Grow (4.18), Create Opportunities (4.13), and Explore (3.94)—suggesting that school centrality and a larger personnel member and resource base are associated with stronger perceived attainment. The lone exception is Balance of Life and Work, where mobile schools and learning centers posted the highest mean (4.31), possibly reflect the integrated, role-blended pedagogy of small, community-embedded sites. Annex or extension schools ($n = 63$) consistently registered the lowest means (3.78–3.89), echoing concerns about resource constraints in satellite arrangements; multigrade schools and schools without annexes occupied intermediate positions.

FGD participants further explained that mother schools typically have school heads with access to HGP training and resource networks, whereas annex implementers self-identified as *“kami ang mga [we are the ones who are] guidance designated po”*—designates rather than counselors—operating without the institutional backing that mother-school placement provides.

Figure 19

Mean Career Development Competency Attainment by School Type



School Location

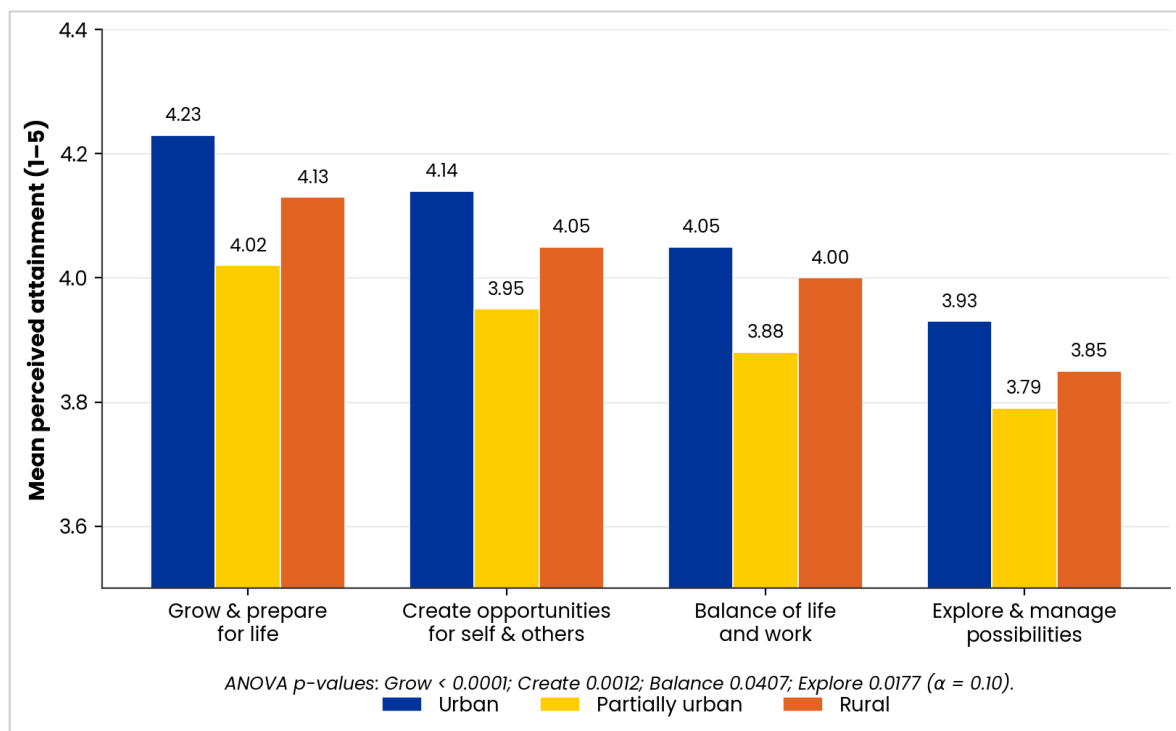
The school's location was also tested as a contextual factor. As Figure 20 reveals, mean attainment differed significantly across urban, partially urban, and rural communities in all four domains, with ANOVA p-values ranging from < 0.0001 (*Grow and Prepare for Life*) to 0.0407 (*Balance of Life and Work*). Urban schools ($n = 731$) consistently posted the highest mean scores—4.23 (*Grow*), 4.14 (*Create Opportunities*), 4.05 (*Balance*), and 3.93 (*Explore*)—while partially urban schools (n

= 96) recorded the lowest. Rural schools ($n = 3,180$), which dominate the sample and constitute the bulk of the national elementary school population, occupied a middle position with means consistently close to those of urban schools.

Qualitative evidence deepens this picture. An urban registered guidance counselor described a fully institutionalized program of school-wide Career Awareness Days, alumni guest-speakers, and graded culminating activities. A rural principal, by contrast, acknowledged that their schools division *“hindi talaga siya nabibigyan pa ng focus [it is not truly being given focus yet] (ang career development for children).”*

Figure 20.

Mean Career Development Competency Attainment by School Location



School Size

Because both the elementary student population and domain scores are continuous variables, Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine whether school size relates linearly to perceived attainment. As Table 7 shows, correlation coefficients are uniformly small ($|r|$ 0.026) and statistically inconsequential, indicating that the size of the elementary student population is not significantly associated with perceived attainment in any of the four CD4C domains. The finding is consistent with the view that career awareness practices at key stage 1 hinge less on enrollment volume than on the quality and intentionality of the guidance program. FGD evidence clarifies how size operates in practice. Participants observed that smaller schools may afford teachers more contact time to mount activities outside the regular curriculum, whereas in larger schools, “double-shift” schedules constrain time for career-related initiatives; conversely, larger mother schools tend to enjoy stronger administrative support and access to HGP training. These offsetting dynamics likely cancel at the population level, producing the negligible linear association.

Table 7.

Pearson Correlations between Elementary Student Population and CD4C Domain Scores

Grow and Prepare for Life	Create Opportunities for Self and Others	Balance of Life and Work	Explore and Manage Possibilities
0.0259	0.0262	0.0114	0.0189

Availability of Career Guidance Resources

Registered Guidance Counselor

Of the 3,563 implementers who reported their official designation, only 223 (6.3%) are registered guidance counselors (RGCs); 3,340 (93.7%) serve as guidance designates. Independent-samples t-tests (Table 8) indicate that role is associated with perceived attainment in two of the four domains: Balance of Life and Work ($p = 0.0193$) and Explore and Manage Possibilities ($p = 0.0846$), in both of which RGC-led schools reported higher means (4.11 vs 3.99; 3.94 vs 3.85). No significant differences emerged for Grow ($p = 0.6893$) or Create Opportunities ($p = 0.1797$). Counseling preparation thus matters most in domains requiring advanced developmental scaffolding—imagining future work roles and decision-making—while domains rooted in classroom routines appear robust to credentialing differences.

The FGD corroborates this differentiated influence. The lone full-time RGC in the discussion described initiating a school-wide Career Awareness Day across kindergarten to Grade 6 and proposing an annual Career Week deliberately oriented toward future-role exploration: *“nag-initiate uli ako, gumawa ng proposal na mag-start kami ng career awareness [I took the initiative again and drafted a proposal for us to launch a career awareness initiative].”* Guidance designates, by contrast, noted role constraints: *“we are guidance designate[s], advocate[s], we are not allowed to handle, [or] to conduct counseling... But, wala namang magagawa, kung kaya naman namin [we have no choice but to step in if we are capable of doing so].”*

Table 8.

Mean Attainment by Implementer's Official Role in Career Guidance

Role	n	Grow and Prepare for Life	Create Opportunities for Self & Others	Balance of Life and Work	Explore and Manage Possibilities
Registered Guidance Counselor	223	4.12	4.12	4.11	3.94
Guidance Designate	3,340	4.14	4.06	3.99	3.85
p-value (t-test)	—	0.6893	0.1797	0.0193*	0.0846*

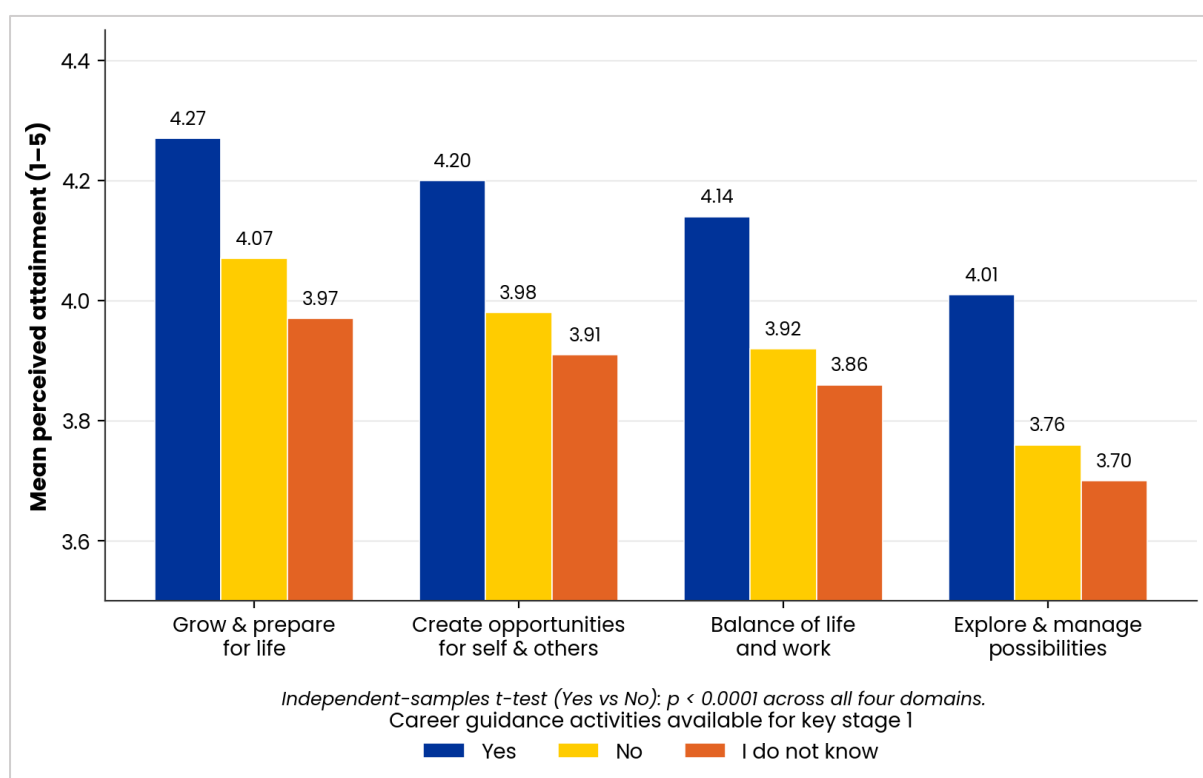
Availability of Career Development Activities

Implementers were asked whether their school conducts career guidance activities for key stage I. Of 4,007 respondents, 1,636 answered “Yes,” 2,107 answered “No,” and 264 reported not knowing. Differences in perceived attainment between schools with and without such activities are pronounced (Figure 21): in every domain, Yes-schools outscored No-schools by roughly 0.20 to 0.25 scale points, with all four t-tests significant at $p < 0.0001$. The “I do not know” group registered the lowest means overall, suggesting that limited institutional visibility into career-related activities may itself signal weaker program implementation. Both statistically and practically, the systematic conduct of grade-appropriate career activities emerges as one of the strongest school-level correlates of perceived CD4C attainment. FGD evidence frames the implementation gap. Within one urban

division of 82 elementary schools, a principal estimated that only about “12.5%” were able to mount a Career Awareness Day, lamenting that *“pagdating sa elementary [when it comes to elementary level], it’s an afterthought.”* Where activities did occur, participants described them as principal-dependent and locally initiated: *“Implementation among DepEd schools is uneven; some implement this, and some do not.”*

Figure 21.

Mean Attainment by Availability of Career Guidance Activities for Key Stage 1



Availability of Career Development Resources

To examine the contribution of specific instructional materials, four regression models were fitted—one per CD4C domain—with seven resource types (teacher's guides, activity sheets, textbooks, visual aids, audio materials, multimedia materials, and manipulatives) as binary predictors. Each model takes the form $Y = \beta_0 + \sum_k \tau_k$. The β_0 is the expected domain score for a school with no listed material and τ_k is the marginal effect of having material k .

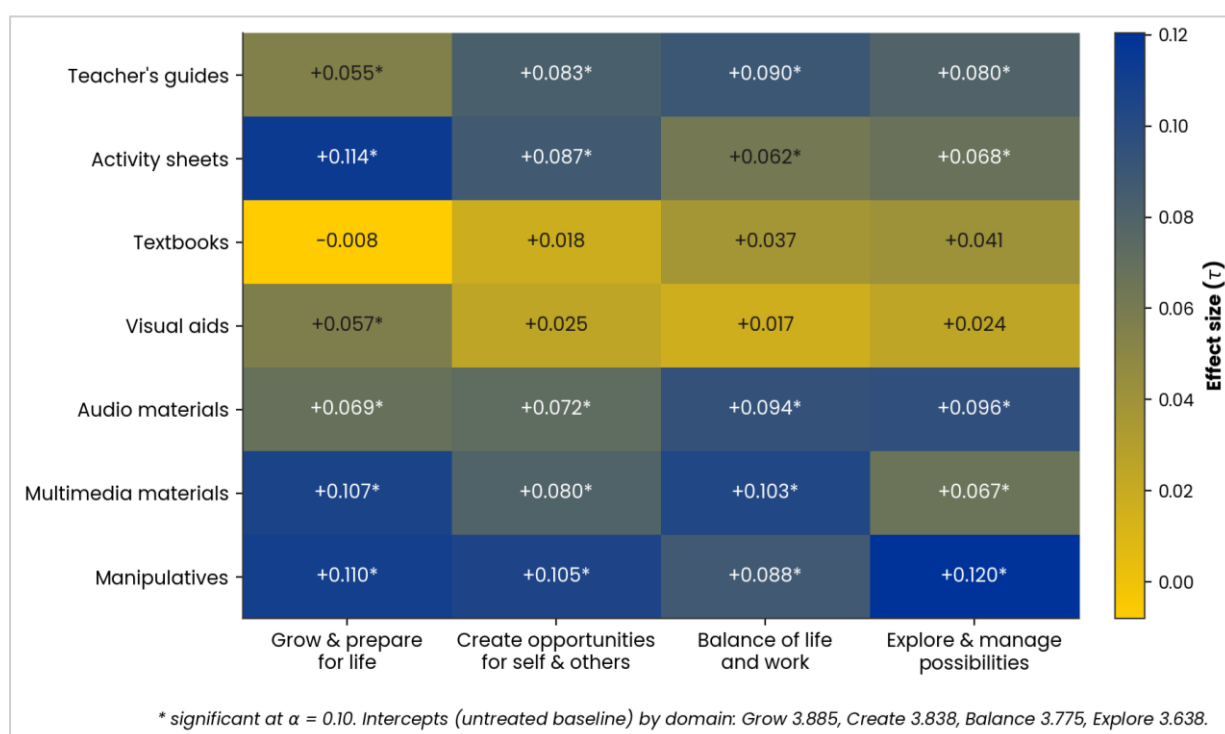
The β_0 is the expected domain score for a school with no listed material and τ_k is the marginal effect of having material k . For example, if a school has teacher's guides, visual aids, and manipulatives, then the expected score in a domain is $\beta_0 + \tau_{guide} + \tau_{visual\ aid} + \tau_{manipulatives}$. For simplicity, we only interpret each τ_k , which represents the specific increase (or drop) in a school's expected domain score that comes simply from having that particular resource available.

Figure 22 summarizes the estimated effects ($\hat{\tau}$) as a heat map; cells marked with an asterisk are significant at $\alpha = 0.10$. Two consistent patterns emerge. First, **manipulatives** exert the largest positive influence in three of the four domains—*Grow*, *Create Opportunities*, and *Explore*—with $\hat{\tau}$ values from 0.105 to 0.120, and remain significant in the fourth domain (*Balance*). This affirms the developmental appropriateness of hands-on, tactile materials for kindergarten to Grade 3 learners. **Multimedia materials** likewise emerge as a strong driver, particularly in *Balance of Life and Work* ($\hat{\tau} = 0.103$). Second, **textbooks** and **visual aids** display the weakest effects, with neither attaining significance in three of the four domains; textbooks even register a small, non-significant negative coefficient for *Grow and Prepare for Life*. The implication for the development phase is clear: prioritize manipulatives, multimedia, audio resources, teacher's guides, and structured activity sheets over textbook-centered or static visual provision when developing materials intended to support all four competency domains. FGD participants

converged on the same hierarchy. Wish-list materials clustered around hands-on and narrative formats: “storybooks per profession,” “dress-up dolls” with male and female community-worker costumes, career journals, and video explainers in Filipino or local mother tongues. Participants reported that HGP modules are “available only in soft copy” and therefore underused after the pandemic, explaining the muted utility of textbook-style provision in the regression. They also observed that “students prefer answering in printed activity sheets,” consistent with the positive coefficient for activity sheets. The convergence affirms a design priority: materials to be developed should privilege manipulatives, multimedia, audio resources, teacher’s guides, and structured activity sheets over textbook-centered or static visual provision.

Figure 22

Estimated Effects of Career Guidance Materials on Four CD4C Domains



Perceived attainment of key stage 1 CD4C competencies varies systematically with school type, location, the implementer's professional designation, and the availability of career guidance activities and resources, but not with school size. The strongest school-level signals are the systematic conduct of intentional career activities and the availability of manipulatives and multimedia materials. Triangulated FGD accounts reinforce these patterns: mother schools, urban locations, RGC presence, school-wide activities, and printed hands-on resources emerge as enabling conditions. These findings ground the CD4C's development phase's calibration by school type and location, privileging experiential, play-based, and hands-on materials over text-only provision.

5. Summary

This study examined the state of Career Development for Children (CD4C) in Philippine elementary schools through four interconnected lines of inquiry, undertaken under a joint research and development initiative of SEAMEO INNOTECH and the Department of Education to inform the design of an evidence based CD4C resources for key stage 1 learners.

Part 1 profiled 4,007 elementary guidance implementers across 17 regions as a predominantly female (92.24%), mid-career, elementary education-trained workforce actively pursuing graduate studies. Yet only 1.02% held psychology degrees and only 5.57% were RGCs, showing a training base for general instruction.

Part 2 examined implementer perceptions across the four CD4C dimensions of earliness, intentionality, gender, and parental influence. More than 90% of Filipino implementers endorsed early, intentional, contextual, and parent-supported career development for key stage 1. Perceptions of gender's role, however, were divided, with 66% of implementers recognizing that young learners persistently view jobs through gendered lenses FGD narratives consistently highlighted a belief–practice gap, with implementers endorsing earliness in principle while acknowledging that career development, although present, remains uneven and limited in elementary-level classrooms.

Part 3 mapped human and instructional resources. While 78% of schools reported having HGP modules, a clear capability gap emerged as implementers cited limited training on the modules themselves. Deeper structural gaps surfaced as well: 83% of career guidance is delivered by guidance designates rather than RGCs, with a national student-to-implementer ratio of 419:1, rising to as high as 996:1 in some urban areas; 34% of implementers were unaware of the Career Guidance policy; only 41% reported career activities for key stage 1; and 59% of HGP

topics were perceived as needing improved grade-level alignment. Implementers ranked multimedia materials as the most-needed resource and textbooks the least.

Part 4 examined how perceived attainment of CD4C competencies varies across contexts. School type, school location, RGC availability, and the availability of career activities and resources significantly differentiated attainment across the four CD4C domains, while school size produced no effect. Linear regression isolated manipulatives and multimedia materials as the strongest material drivers of attainment.

Together, the four parts converge on a coherent diagnosis: Filipino elementary schools have a strong consensus on the importance of career development for children but experience systemic gaps, particularly in the developmentally aligned delivery of career-related activities and resources.

Implementers' strong endorsement of earliness, intentionality, contextuality, and parental engagement affirms that the conceptual ground for CD4C is already in place; the obstacles are operational rather than ideological. The belief–practice gap repeatedly surfaced in the FGDs indicates that career awareness fails to translate from policy and pedagogy into classroom practice, not because teachers reject it, but because they lack the structural enablers—policy clarity, capacity building, time, and developmentally appropriate materials, beginning at key stage 1—needed to enact it. The split perceptions on gender carry distinct theoretical weight. They suggest that implementers, while professionally subscribing to gender-equal framings, recognize Gottfredson's (2002) process of circumscription operating within their classrooms, presenting a clear challenge that any CD4C intervention must explicitly address.

The strong contextual differentiation surfaced in Part 4—favoring mother schools, urban locations, and RGC-led programs—mirrors disparities documented by ADB (2019) and signals the need for adaptable resources. Crucially, the regression evidence on materials, paired with FGD narratives, underscores a model in which intentional school provision compensates, at least partially, for the lack of registered specialists: RGC presence matters most for the cognitively demanding career management domain of Balance and Explore, while the other domains can be reliably delivered by trained teachers equipped with developmentally appropriate materials. The convergence of regression results and FGD wish-lists on hands-on, multimedia, and narrative formats reframes CD4C not as a textbook-based curricular addition but as a play-based, experiential strand consistent with children’s development.

6. Recommendations

The findings translate into three sets of recommendations: (1) the CD4C entry point in DepEd policy and program; (2) the seven design principles directing the development phase; and (3) the underlying gaps in the implementer capacity.

CD4C Entry Point in DepEd

First, DepEd could consider further institutionalizing an integrated framework for Career Guidance Program (CGP), with the Homeroom Guidance Program (HGP) serving as a complementary program throughout basic education beginning at key stage 1. The evidence is strong: more than 90% of implementers endorse early, intentional, contextual, and parent-supported career development, yet only 41% of schools currently conduct key stage 1 activities, 34% remain unaware of DepEd career-related policies, and 10.3% do not yet view career development as a curricular complement, presenting an immediate target for policy orientation. Rather than relying on localized or school-head-contingent initiatives, early career development would benefit from being positioned as a sustained, complementary component within the HGP and integrated across core subject areas. Such policy initiatives could be accompanied by clear implementation guidelines and a supportive monitoring framework to help track both the reach and the quality of delivery across varied school types and locations.

Informing the CD4C Development Phase

Second, material development could emphasize creating resources that are developmentally appropriate and play-based, with clear grade-level progression from Kindergarten to Grade 3, anchored in experiential activities, stories and social interaction structured around experience, reflection, thought and action. HGP topic placement should be recalibrated using implementers' developmentally informed mapping (Table 5), particularly for the 13 topics where current and perceived

placements differ; self-focused topics anchor Kindergarten, while future-integrative topics sequence into Grade 3. Based on the empirical data, it would be beneficial to prioritize manipulatives, multimedia, audio materials, and structured activity sheets, alongside qualitative feedback favoring localized storybooks, gender-inclusive role-play resources, and video explainers.

Third, integrating these resources within the HGP and across other core learning areas would allow career learning to complement, rather than compete with, existing instruction. Embedding these concepts within subjects such as *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (Values Education)*, *Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies)*, Filipino, English, and Mathematics ensures a more seamless curricular infusion (CDI, 2021; Lapan et al., 2017).

Fourth, designing materials to be highly adaptable would facilitate smoother customization across diverse school contexts and varying levels of career awareness. Developing tailored, resource-efficient variations for annex, multigrade, and mobile schools, while dedicating focused attention to rural schools (which represent 79.36% of the sample but show only intermediate attainment), could help ensure a more balanced and equitable national rollout.

Fifth, the proposed resources could explicitly foster collaborative home-school partnerships. Given that parental aspirations serve as a significant driver of student attainment and that 93–97% of implementers endorse parental involvement, incorporating practical take-home activities can gently draw families into early career exploration, framing the home as a foundational career-learning environment.

Sixth, adopting an inclusive-by-design framework would ensure authentic representation for diverse occupations, individuals with special needs, indigenous peoples, and varied faith communities. This approach offers a valuable opportunity to gently counter early gender circumscription by featuring diverse role models in

non-traditional careers and encouraging children to reflect on gendered occupational assumptions, effectively addressing the observed tension between implementers' aspirational beliefs and their real-world classroom observations.

Addressing Gaps in Implementer Capacity

Seventh, with 83% of CD4C delivered by guidance designates carrying full teaching loads, it would be advantageous for these resources to be highly accessible to non-specialists. Designing materials with clear, step-by-step instructions ensures they remain practical and user-friendly for classroom teachers and designates. This approach could be paired with scalable, modular capacity-building activities that help educators smoothly integrate career concepts across core subject areas rather than treating them as an additional administrative responsibility, while also embedding helpful policy orientations to steadily build familiarity with the CGP and HGP frameworks.

In parallel, current staffing dynamics, reflected in the national student-to-implementer ratio of 419:1, which reaches 996:1 in some urban contexts, suggest a valuable opportunity for medium-term workforce planning. Such efforts might include exploring accessible professional development or alternative credentialing pathways for existing designates, alongside division-level strategies to gradually enhance RGC deployment at the elementary level over time.

7. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, learners' career awareness was measured solely through the perceptions of guidance implementers. While insightful, future research should incorporate measures drawn directly from learners through developmentally appropriate assessment tools, as well as from parents, who emerged in both the literature and this study as having strong association with higher career awareness. Second, while the career awareness indicators were anchored in local and international frameworks and showed acceptable internal consistency, the instrument remains researcher-developed; further studies may enrich and validate these indicators within the Philippine context and through psychometrically tested studies. Third, the correlational design and exploratory 0.10 significance threshold prevent causal conclusions from being drawn. Finally, the nature of the voluntary online survey may underrepresent low-connectivity schools and the nine-participant FGD, while representatives of location and school type, limit transferability of narratives.

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