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**Occupational Aptitude Self-Assessment (OASA)**

**Guide for the Career Counsellors**

1. **Introduction**

The Occupational Aptitude Self-Assessment (OASA) is an online test designed to support young people gain firsthand knowledge and orientation towards work environments, occupations, and jobs. It does so by helping the users identify their interests, inclinations and prominent personality traits. It then suggests occupations that correspond to the identified inclinations and personality characteristics. This way the young people become more self-aware and make informed choices about the potential careers and available programmes at the TVET institution. Therefore, OASA is a helpful instrument for the career counsellors to guide and orient students especially during the student enrolment activities e.g. when visiting secondary schools or during admission campaigns.

The main target is young adolescents, particularly those enrolled in a (lower or higher) secondary school or a TVET/skills development institution.

1. **Format**
2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire comprises of 85 questions divided into five modules. Each module collects a certain aspect relevant for defining the personality orientation type:

(i) personal characteristics and professional inclinations,

(ii) personal interests

(iii) job related tasks of interest

(iv) occupational skills

(v) choosing an occupational field of interest through pictures.

The questionnaire should take approx. 20-25 minutes to complete.

1. Report

The final report is comprised of 3 sections;

1. Top 3 occupational fields of interest that fit the personality characteristics and inclinations. Each occupational field provides a summary of the common professions, work environment and basic salary information. The salary information is based on the research done in 2023 therefore, it can only serve as reference information, especially in the subsequent years. The career counsellors should clarify this to the students undertaking the test.
2. List of other useful information and resources to aid further career development.
3. A brief description of the RIASEC model.
4. **When and how to use OASA?**

OASA can be used as a basic orientation tool for both existing and prospective students in a variety of ways, especially during career guidance related activities. Some suggestions are as under:

1. During the promotional visits to schools and communities
2. During individual and group career counselling sessions
3. When conducting the admission/enrolment campaigns
4. When organizing job matching activities such as “career days” or “employment fairs”

OASA can help narrow down the career options, but it is not enough to make a final decision. One needs to evaluate other factors, such as personal values, goals, and available opportunities in the job market. Therefore, before making a final decision, (prospective) students should be encouraged to gather more information such as by conducting informational meetings with teachers and counsellors, exploring other useful resources (available in the final report), job shadowing, or volunteering.

1. **Concept**

OASA is an adapted version of the validated German “Berufsfeldfinder (BFF)” customized to the TVET and industry landscape of Lao PDR. The underlying theoretical construct is based on the career choice theory and the RIASEC model by John L. Holland. RIASEC is based on the idea that people and work environments can be classified into six categories, each represented by a letter in the RIASEC abbreviation: (R)ealistic, (I)nvestigative, (A)rtistic, (S)ocial, (E)nterprising, and (C)onventional. The detailed description of each category is attached as an annex to this manual. Guided by this hypothesis, 10 broad yet distinct occupational fields were defined and assigned to respective RIASEC types for Lao PDR. These are; (1) Agriculture, Food; (2) Natural Resources, Environment, Energy, Mining, Construction; (3) Production, Manufacturing, Engineering, Mechanics; (4) Sciences, IT, Computer/Technology; (5) Health Care; (6) Education, Training, Labour & Skills Development; (7) Traffic, Distribution, Logistics, Post; (8) Media, PR/Marketing, and Communication; (9) Economy, Administration, Commerce, Finance; (10) Human Services, Tourism, Hospitality, Sales).

Simply put, OASA first assesses the personality orientation type based on the RIASEC model and then matches the results with the top 3 occupational fields suitable to the identified personality type.

**Annex: RIASEC Model**

The decision about what occupational sector is fitting the most to ones personality is based on 6 distinctive career orientation types. These are briefly explained below:

**R: Realistic (practical-technical) orientation**

People with an R-orientation prefer jobs requiring strength and dexterity, and likely produce accurate results. They like to work with (hand-made, digital) tools, machines, and probably like to work with their hands. This type of person may not prefer social activities. They are especially good at mechanical, technical, electrical or agricultural fields and good in handling machines. Money, material things, and their reputation are often important to them. These people are honest, like to think, and are most likely direct in their language.

**I: Investigative (intellectual, researching) orientation**

People with an I-orientation like activities such as observing and analyzing physical, biological, or cultural issues. They enjoy exploring new, unknown things in order to understand and solve the problems involved. They prefer to avoid dealing with people or always doing the same thing. Learning new things, on the other hand, is important for them. They are particularly good at math and science. Type-I-people tend to question and analyze things.

**A: Artistic(-linguistic) orientation**

People with an A-orientation like activities that involve language, creativity, or art. They don't like doing the same activity over and over again. They are usually creative, tend to have (many) new ideas, and further can express themselves well in language. In particular, they are interested in art, music, acting, and writing. These kinds of people are often spontaneous and sensitive.

**S: Social orientation**

People with an S-orientation may be into activities and situations that involve interacting with people, such as teaching or caring for others. They mostly dislike working with machines or tools. They more easily can put themselves in other people's shoes, are patient, and concern about the needs of others. These people are warm-hearted, respectful, and enjoy spending time with others.

**E: Enterprising orientation**

People with an E-orientation enjoy activities like achieving a specific goal, making a profit, and like situations where they can persuade or guide others. They are less good in observing or working according to fixed rules / a fixed system but are good at planning and discussing with others. Often, success and reputation are important to them. These people like to take responsibility.

**C: Conventional orientation**

People with a C-orientation like order, organization, and planning, e.g. such as sorting things, writing things down, or documenting things. They are less good at activities that require a certain amount of creativity and/or spontaneity. On the other hand, they find it easy to keep order and an overview and show good endurance regarding long and precise work. Compliance with rules, order and control are important to them. These people are tidy, conscientious, dutiful and rather cautious by type.