

EFFECTS OF GROUP GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES ON STUDENTS' VOCATIONAL MATURITY IN EKITI STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the effects of group guidance and counselling techniques on students' vocational maturity. The purpose of the study was to determine whether the Group Career Guidance (GCG) and Group Career Counselling (GCC) techniques will enhance the vocational maturity of secondary school students. To achieve this objective, quasi experimental of pre-test, post-test design was employed. 120 students were selected from senior secondary school class two (SSS 2) through purposive sampling method. The selected students were grouped into two. The groups were exposed to GCG and GCC respectively in their various locations. The groups were tested twice, that is, before and after treatment. The finding revealed that the two techniques are effective in the improvement of students' vocational maturity.

Keywords: Group Guidance, Group Counselling, Techniques and Vocational Maturity

Introduction

Guidance through groups was designed for preparing students to work with various groups. Throughout life, people belong to one or more groups at a time. In the school setting for instance, a student may belong to one or more student groups such as discussion group, literary and debating societies and students' political group, vocational guidance group was also not left out in the school.

The term group has a variety of meaning depending on the individual usage. *Oxford Dictionary (2000)* defined a group as two or more figures forming a unit in a design and assemblage of persons or things forming a separate unit. For counselling purpose, a group is characterized by the

interaction of its members in such a way that each unit is charged by its group membership. Group was also explained by Oladele (1992) as a collection of individual becoming group when:

- (a) There is interaction which produces change in each individual.
- (b) Members share some common goals.
- (c) Members are present on their own consent and volition and
- (d) A capacity for self- direction.

This implies that in guidance and counselling relationship, a group consists of two or more persons who voluntarily have contact and interaction which produce changes in an individual behaviour.

Alao (1983) defined group as a process of helping individuals, with personal development or distress problem. He classified group based on the nature of problem or concern, nature of social interaction as counselling group, task group, case centre group, therapy groups and guidance group. Since group guidance is one of the central focuses of this study, it is mandatory to discuss it in line with the present content. Group guidance is organised to prevent problems and the purpose of group guidance in school setting is to provide educational and vocational information which is not systematically taught in academic courses. The typical setting is in classroom or counselling laboratory with about 20 – 25 students. The leadership is usually provided by the school counsellors who make use of their wealth of experience to guide the students in resolving their individual educational and vocational problems.

In her own observation, Owuamanam (2003) conceptualized guidance as involving activities which are designed to acquire information, plan and implement programmes, which will enhance the decision process of students in educational or vocational matters. In view of this conception, group guidance or group programme is out to assist students in decision making through the help of a professional guidance counsellor. Owuamanam also went further to describe group guidance as a designed programme to be a preventive measure given to students as opportunity to discuss their common problems and issues relating to their educational and vocational problems. She also stressed the importance of guidance counsellor as the group guidance facilitator based on training and experience.

Group counselling which is the second central focus of this study was defined as a dynamic interpersonal process through which individual within the normal range or adjustment work within a peer group and with a professionally trained counsellor, exploring problems and feelings in an attempt to modify their attitudes so that they are better able to deal with developmental problems (Owuamanam, 2003). The dynamic sum in group counselling implies that there is a force within which group members organise and operate to achieve their goals. It is noted as mentioned in the

early part of this study that students in the nation's secondary schools seem to be faced with problem of vocational and career choice towards the tail end of their secondary school education. It is of the opinion of this study to stress the importance of vocational and career programme which is to be organised in schools especially toward the end or at the starting point of senior secondary school level so as to facilitate in the students the idea of vocational and career readiness that will eventually transform to vocational maturity of these students. To accomplish this, there is need for a programme like group guidance and counselling to be sponsored by school administrators in collaboration with school guidance counsellor on vocational and career planning, at least once in a year for the students in the senior secondary school level, if possible, the programme can be extended to junior secondary section.

Since the problem of vocational and career decision seems to be a general problem among the Nigerian youths, the group guidance and counselling seem to the researchers as appropriate technique to embark upon by the school counsellor to facilitate vocational and career maturity behaviour.

This view was buttressed by Odebunmi (1978) who asserted that among the various type of group work available, the most important to the Nigerian counsellors are group guidance and counselling for vocational exploration. Alao (1981) also remarked on the group as a medium for helping individual and the readiness to work in group will help in fostering vocational maturity behaviour among secondary school students. From all the observations and reviews, group guidance and counselling can be seen as a process of helping individuals or group of individuals to understand themselves and their world. The purpose of this study is therefore, to find out whether the group guidance and group counselling techniques will enhance the vocational maturity behaviour of secondary school students. To also find out which of the two guidance techniques will be the best to facilitate vocational maturity behaviour of the secondary school students.

Based on the observed problems two questions were raised to guide the study:

- (1) What is the level of vocational maturity of students in Group Career Guidance (GCG) and Group Career Counselling (GCC) before and after treatment.
- (2) Would there be difference between the students exposed to Group Career Guidance (GCG) and those exposed to Group Career Counselling (GCC).

Based on the above research questions, the following null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO1: There is no significant difference between the students exposed to Group Career Guidance (GCG) technique and those exposed to Group Career Counselling (GCC) technique.

Methodology

The study used a quasi-experimental design of pre-test, post-test of the students in GCG and GCC groups. The population for the study consisted of all the senior secondary school students in all the 170 senior secondary schools in Ekiti State, where 120 students were selected as sample. The sample was selected through stratified and randomization divided into two Group Career Guidance (GCG) and Group Career Counselling (GCC) groups.

Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was Vocational Interest Inventory (VII) of Bakare (1974). The VII consisting of 100 items grouped into 10 interest areas. However, a likert-type graded response to each statement was used. Scores on the interest areas are calculated and plotted on an interest profile as vocational maturity of students based on their interest.

Validation of the Instrument

Bakare had attested to the validation of the instrument. Several studies of relationships between Bakare's VII and job satisfaction are criterion that supports its validity. The Kuder-Richardson technique has been used to determine the reliability of the inventory. Findings are in the 70s and 80s and cluster around 90s. Shifts in high and low interest areas are relatively frequent when retests are in several years apart.

Procedure for Experiment

There two experimental groups, Group Career Guidance (GCG) and Group Career Counselling (GCC). There are 40 students in each group. The pre-test of vocational interest inventory was administered on both groups. For the purpose of this study all the students that scored from 500 – 1500 are regarded as been vocationally matured but those that scored below 499 were regarded as poor and immature students vocationally. The subjects that were regarded as vocationally immature were randomly selected for treatment in each of the groups using Group Career Guidance technique. The two experimental groups were attended to in their different school locations.

Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Result :

To determine the level of vocational maturity and career interest area of the students before and after treatment, the scores collected were described using frequency table and relative percentage for each group.

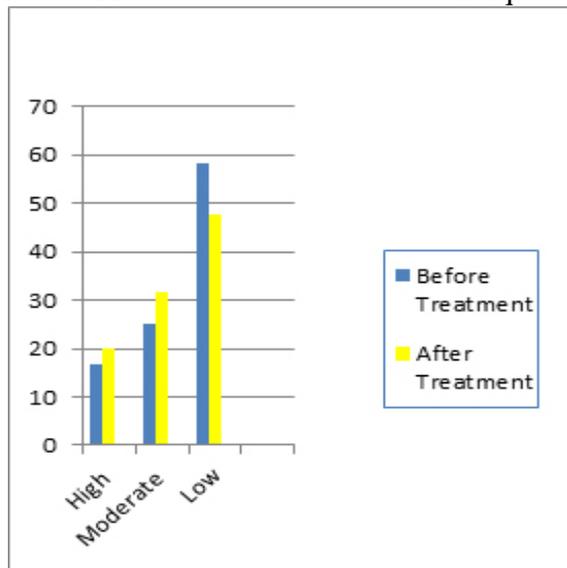
Students Level of Vocational Maturity in Pre and Post Test

Maturity Level	Range of Scores	Frequency Counts Pre – Test		Frequency Counts Post – Test	
		No.	%	No.	%
High	750 – 1500	20	16.7	25	20.8
Moderate	749 – 525	30	25	38	31.6
Low	524 – 100	70	58.3	57	47.6
Total		120	100	120	100

Table 1: Frequency counts and percentage of students level of vocational maturity in pre and post tests.

The table revealed that 16.7% of respondents at pre – test had a high vocational maturity; 25% had moderately vocational maturity while 58.3% had low level of vocational maturity. The results showed that majority of the students in the Senior Secondary Schools had low level vocational maturity. However, after treatment in the two experimental groups, there is improvement in vocational maturity among the students. At the post – test after treatment as revealed in the table that 20.8% had a high level of vocational maturity and the moderate level increased to 31.6% while the low level of vocational maturity decreased from 58.3% to 42.6%. The results therefore showed that the respondents improved on their vocational maturity based on treatment with GCG and GCC techniques.

Bar chart illustrates respondents’ level of vocational maturity before and after treatment with level of GCG and GCC techniques.



The bar chart illustrated the level of vocational maturity of students before and after the treatment. The illustration clearly showed that there was improvement in the vocational maturity of students based on the treatment using both GCG and GCC techniques.

The hypothesis formulated to test for the difference between the two treatment techniques used revealed as follows:

Table 2: t – test comparison between vocational maturity of students treated with GCG and GCC techniques.

Groups	No	X	sd	df	t-cal	t-tab
GCG	62	90.5	16.9	118	3.52	1.96
GCC	58	101.1	18.4			

P < 0.05 (significant)

The table 2 above revealed that the t – calculated value of 3.52 is greater than the t-table value of 1.96. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. That is, there is significant difference in the vocational maturity of students exposed to Groups Career Guidance (GCG) and those exposed to Group Career Counselling (GCC) techniques.

Discussion

The results of the study revealed a general low level of vocation maturity of the students at Senior Secondary School. This implies that majority of secondary school graduates in Ekiti State of Nigeria lack career decision making skills. This revelation was in line with the observations of Okon (2001) that majority of secondary school students left school without the knowledge of what await them in the world of work. The results based on the only hypothesis in the study, there was indication that GCC treatment is more effective to improve students’ vocational maturity than GCG. This means that group interaction and information giving strategy promote understanding better than mere information giving. School counsellor or career master should stick to the Group Career Counselling (GCC) method which seems better in improving students’ career maturity behaviour. This finding disagrees with Egbochukwu (1998) in one of his studies on the effects of group guidance and initial career maturity behaviour on self – appraisal of secondary school adolescents but agree with Adedibu (1986) in his study on unemployment issues, calling for the use of group counselling alone in the improvement of vocational decision behaviour of students. Group approach used in this study also explain the success of students’ work together to facilitate cooperation and share of knowledge that brought about positive change among the group members. This was also in line with Jacobs, Masson and Hewill (2002) suggestion in their book Group Counselling Strategies and Skills, where they emphasized the classroom

should be a place of comprehensive problem solving and peer group behaviour control.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Group Career Guidance (GCG) and Group Career Counselling (GCC) techniques lead to improvement in the students' vocational maturity and career decision-making skills. On the basis of the findings, it is recommended that Group Career Guidance (GCG) and Group Career Counselling (GCC) techniques should be put in use for students in Senior Secondary Schools to improve their vocational maturity behaviour. Group work among the students should also be encouraged to facilitate cooperation and sense of belonging among group members for better adjustment.

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