DESIGNING, IMPLEMENTING, AND EVALUATING A CAREER DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION PROGRAM ON CAREER CHOICE READINESS AMONG GRADE 10 STUDENTS

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Abstract

The study aimed to develop and evaluate a needs-based, developmentally attuned career development intervention for Grade 10 students. This study had five phases and employed both descriptive and quasi-experimental research design. The needs analysis survey revealed that Grade 10 students' primary concern is their certainty in making a career choice, especially in choosing the right senior high school career track. This is reflected in their low career confidence and high level of career curiosity and consultation, resulting in a moderate degree of career decision difficulty. Furthermore, Grade 10 students sought the importance of values in career decision making and dysfunctional thoughts cognitive reframing as an effective career development intervention. After the intervention, it was found out that career choice readiness levels improved after implementing the Getting It Right Journey to Career Development Program! for the experimental group. However, no significant changes were found in their level of career adaptability resources and career decision difficulties, indicating that those who have low career maturity got the most benefit out of the program. Predominantly, Getting It Right! was effective in improving career choice readiness among Grade 10 students, but it was not effective in improving career adaptability resources and career decision difficulty. Therefore, the researcher recommends that Getting It Right! Must be revisited to help the students increase their level of career choice readiness.

Keywords Career Development Intervention, Career Choice Readiness, Program Development and Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

Intervention programs are series of activities utilized to change an individual or group's knowledge, attitude, or behavior. To ensure its relevance, there is a need to find out if the intervention is working for the clients and whether there is a need to enhance it further (Chen, 2015). Moreover, in order to build an evidence-based, data-driven, and comprehensive school counseling program, the intervention programs should be focused on the needs of the students and equity gaps as identified by the data, rather than of learning standards as identified by adults (Zyromski & Mariani, 2016).

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) model suggested a Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP) which implies a holistic approach focusing on the four developmental domains which are academic development, career development, personal/social development (Dollahide, 2012). Likewise, in 2003 ASCA identified career development as one of the essentials to the work of school counselors. Furthermore, assessing the impact of the need-based career development intervention program

is grounded on ASCA's school counseling framework, particularly in terms of accountability and delivery systems. Consequently, several studies have been made measuring the effectiveness of career intervention based on the period of intervention (Janeiro, Mota, and Ribas, 2014) and style of the intervention program (Sheftel, Lindstrom, and McWhirter, 2014). Few studies were made on career intervention program, implementation and evaluation (Sheftel, et. al., 2014), but no research were made to evaluate the effectiveness of a career intervention program focusing on career adaptability resources and career decision difficulties with career choice readiness among adolescents.

Apparently, school counselors in the Philippines are guided by RA 9258 and Salazar-Clemeña's National Standard for School Counseling Program. Specifically, in terms of career development, the school counselor's role is to help the individual plan for his or her future. This role is expressed in the standard stating that students must acquire skills in investigating the world of work in relation to self-knowledge and to make informed career decision (Clemeña, 2014). Additionally, there are studies about developing a need-based career development intervention program (Hocson, 2012). Moreover, Arnado and Posadas (2017), conducted a study on the relationship between career development program and career readiness of Grade 10 students using the Philippine standard for School Counseling program. There are no studies conducted to assess assessing how a career development intervention program makes a positive change to a student life; however, several studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of an intervention program focusing on personal and social domains either (Sievert-Fernandez & Sumpaico-Jose, 2016).

In this study, the researcher sought to find out the impact of needs-based career development intervention on the career choice readiness among Grade 10 students enrolled in a private school in Davao City. At this grade level, young adolescents are into the vocational tasks in choosing a career track for senior high school. Hence, developing, implementing and evaluating a career development intervention program for Grade 10 students is necessary as this is also aligned with the recent change in the Philippines educational system. If a well-designed and developmentally appropriate need-based career development intervention program is thoroughly implemented, then students will be ready in choosing a senior high school career track and be able to make informed career decisions. Through this study, the researcher would like to demonstrate the school counselors' accountability to their stakeholders.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded on both program evaluation theory and career development theory. The program evaluation theory serves as a framework of the entire research process. The study was grounded on program theory and logic model which refer to an idealized conceptualization for conducting program evaluation (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Logic model is a graphical representation of the relationship between a program's activities and its outcome. Furthermore, logic model illustrates what the program is expected to work (Chen, 2015).

A program theory is useful for improving the generalizability of evaluation results, uncovering unintended effects, and achieving consensus in evaluation planning Bickman (1987). The advantage of program theory is that it provides indications if a program is effective, which explains the occurrence of program effect (Weiss, 1998). In addition, the benefits of program theory for evaluation are well documented in literature (Chen, 2015). The program model has the following elements: input, activities, output and outcomes. Inputs are resources dedicated to or consumed by the program while activities comprise the services the program provides or the work it performs to fulfill its mission. On the other hand, outputs are defined as the direct product of program activities while outcomes are the benefits resulting from program activities. The relationship among these components are connected by a chain of "if...then..." statement (Chen, 2015; Kettner, Moroney, & Martin 2017),

1.2 Conceptual Framework

In this research, the career development intervention program is the context of evaluation. Applying the logic model, this study defines the following assumptions: If the career needs of the students have been assessed, then counselors can use the data to design a career development intervention program. If students have undergone activities in the career development intervention program, then the school counselor can deliver career counseling services. If students have received a career development intervention program, then students will become more decisive in choosing their career, more adaptable in their vocational task and be more ready in choosing their career.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Generally, the research sought to determine the impact of a career development intervention program on the

level of career choice readiness, career adaptability and career decision difficulty among the selected junior high school students and find out if there is an improvement in the vocational situation by having an informed career choice among the comparison than the experimental group. With this research in mind, it is hypothesized that there will be no significant difference between posttest scores in terms of career choice readiness, career adaptability resources, and career decision difficulties between experimental and comparison groups; and there is no significant difference between pretest and posttest scores in terms of career choice readiness, career adaptability resources, and career decision difficulties among the experimental group.

2 METHOD

2.1 Design

Descriptive and quasi-experimental designs were used in this study. The study utilized the non-equivalent pretest and posttest comparison-group design also known as a type 2 impact program evaluation (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2017). In the experimental phase of this study, experimental Group A and the control Group B were selected without random assignment.

As shown in Figure 2, R indicates that the two intact groups are not randomly selected. The broken lines signify that these groups are not equal in terms of characteristics. Group A is the experimental group and Group B is the comparison group. Likewise, O1 and O3 refer to the pre-test observations before treatment while O2 and O4 refer to the post-test observations. The X stands for the treatment/intervention process to which the experimental group was exposed.

2.2 Participants

The subjects in this study were Grade 10 students enrolled during school year 2017-2018 and Grade 10 students of school year 2018-2019. The first batch were used as the cohort in gathering the needs analysis while the second batch were used in the experimental phase of the study.

The first batch of the participants were 168 Grade 10 students coming from the four sections in School A, with each class having an average size of 40-45. Out of the 168 students only 136 responded to the online survey. Respondent to the online survey included 39 senior high school students, 7 faculty and administrators, and Grade 10 to 12 parents. Moreover, there were 21 guidance counsellors and paraprofessionals across the Philippines who responded the online survey.

The second batch of the participants included 156 Grade 10 students from School B. Among the 156 Grade 10 students, only 122 students took part in the final analysis of the study. These 122 students were low and moderately low in career choice readiness. Likewise, these students completed the program and had the post-test.

The 122 students were divided into two intact groups to form the experimental and comparison group.

Measure

In order to assess the career development needs, the researcher conducted a survey on the level of career choice readiness, career adaptability resources, and career decision difficulty. The needs were determined through a career readiness survey questionnaire of Savcik and Porfeli (2011), and career decision difficulty questionnaire by Gati (2011). In addition, to triangulate the result of the study an online open-ended survey constructed by the researcher was conducted to Grade 10 to 12 students of School Year 2017-2018 of School A. A similar survey was conducted to parents, teachers, and other career advocates across the Philippines who were asked what the pressing needs of Grade 10 students in terms of career development. Through framework of analysis, themes were generated which were the basis in developing the career development intervention. The module underwent validation form experts and pilot-tested before it was implemented to Grade 10 students of School Year 2018-2019 to School B.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main thrust of this study was to design, implement, and evaluate a developmentally appropriate needs-based career development intervention program for incoming senior high school Grade 11 students or the current Grade 10 students of school year 2017-2018. The study underwent five phases. The first phase was

an assessment of the career development needs among Grade 10 students. The second phase was the designing of the career development intervention program. The third phase was the implementation of the career development intervention program. The fourth phase was an outcome evaluation of the career development intervention program, and the fifth phase was a qualitative impact evaluation of the career development intervention program.

3.1 Phase 1 - Needs Analysis

The first phase of the study was a career needs analysis survey among Grade 10 students. Analysis showed that they were highly adaptable in their developmental task in choosing their senior high school career track, which explains their *moderate* career choice readiness. This is mostly likely because they had a *high* level of curiosity and consultation. Since they have a *high* level of consultation this means that they seek advice to their significant others in terms of career choice and decision-making. In addition, close family ties and parental influence among Filipinos most likely contributes to this result. Having a *low* career confidence might be a reason why they have a high degree of career consultation. Additionally, what might contribute to a low career confidence may be brought by their general indecisiveness which may be governed by their dysfunctional beliefs such as getting in the right course/strand and the right senior high school. Thus, they have to be certain in making a career choice specially in choosing a senior high career track. This finding was further validated through an online open-ended survey conducted by the researcher. The survey showed that the students wanted to have a right choice of career and school. This phenomenon is supported by the study of Sampson, McClain, Musch, and Reardon (2012), who indicated that one factor contributing to low readiness in career choice was chronic negative thoughts and feeling.

3.2 Phase 2 – Program Design

The second phase was the design of the Getting it Right! A Journey to Career Development. It was composed of written exercise, structured learning activities. The activities in the Getting it Right! were adapted from various career development activities published in books, and various workshop on career guidance/planning conducted during the annual assembly of the Philippine Guidance and Counseling Association (PGCA). It was anchored on Savickas' Career Construction Theory and Peterson's Cognitive Information Processing Theory. The Getting it Right! Had five modules namely, Career Planning and Decision Making, Self-awareness, Explore Occupations, and Career Thoughts.

3.3 Phase 3– Program Implementation

The third phase was the implementation of the career development intervention. The participants expressed the effectiveness in values clarification and reframing negative career thoughts. In addition, they were satisfied in the exploring career occupation and reframing career thoughts sessions. Moreover, participants were able to find out how career decision model and career goal will relate their interest and preferences. Moreover, satisfaction of participants in terms of exploring career occupation greatly supports the theory of Frank Parsons. According to Trait and Factor theory a person should have an accurate understanding of an individual's work-relevant attributes (skills, aptitudes, interests, etc.) and knowledge of both jobs and the world of work can optimize once career choice. Furthermore, according to Gati and Levin (2014), career decision making is a major task in high school career guidance and the process involved in career decision making will focus on career information and assessment.

3.4 Phase 4 – Outcome Evaluation

The fourth phase was an outcome evaluation of the career development intervention. As shown in Table 1, the experimental group pretest score revealed that grade 10 students had *low* career choice readiness, they had a *moderate* career adaptability resources and career decision difficulties while the comparison group pretest scores had a *moderate* degree of career choice readiness, career adaptability resources and career decision difficulty. This can be inferred that before intervention both groups had a difficulty in making a career choice. The comparison group posttest score, had shown the same trend, the comparison posttest scores increases in terms of career choice readiness, career adaptability resources but career decision difficulty remained to be at the *moderate* level.

Table 1 Pretest and Posttest Scores		
	EXPERIMENTAL	COMPARISON

	Pretest (n=64)			Posttest (n=64)			Pretest (n=66)			Posttest (n=66)		
	Mean	Sd	Desc.	Mean	Sd	Desc.	Mean	SD	Desc.	Mean	Sd	Desc.
Career Choice Readiness	4.02	2.32	M	4.41	2.223	M	4.92	2.74	M	5.82	2.47	M
Career Adaptability Resources	7.11	2.945	L	8.17	2.914	M	9.00	3.70	M	10.06	3.44	M
Career Decision Difficulties	5.44	1.167	M	5.39	1.313	M	4.89	1.28	M	4.70	1.12	M

As revealed in Table 2, the researcher found out that there was significant difference between experimental and comparison group's career choice readiness, career adaptability resources, and career decision difficulties posttest scores before using pretest score as covariate. However, when pretest scores were used as covariate, it shows that there is a *significant difference* between the experimental group and comparison group career choice readiness posttests scores only. However, there was no enough evidence to prove statistically that the career development intervention program is effective in changing the level of career adaptability resources among the Grade 10 students. This results corroborated with the study of Cardoso, Janiero and Duarte (2017).

Table 2 Summary of ANCOVA Results								
		Main (Unadjusted) Effect						
Source: Treatment Group		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Effect (d)	Power (1 β - err prob)
Career Choice Readiness		38.452	1	38.452	7.113	.009*	0.243**	0.76
Career Adaptability Resources		72.805	1	72.805	7.371	.008*	0.245**	0.77
Career Decision Difficulties		11.484	1	11.484	7.747	.006*	0.252**	0.79
		Adjusted Effect (After Controlling Pretest Scores)						
Career Choice Readiness ^a		23.732	1	23.732	6.722	.011*	0.236**	0.73
Career Adaptability Resources ^b		22.428	1	22.428	3.039	.084	0.160**	0.42
Career Decision Difficulties ^c		6.144	1	6.144	4.482	.300	0.201**	0.60
*Significant at $p < .05$ **Small Effect Size								
^a $R^2 = .388$ Adjusted $R^2 = .378$, Adjustment based on pretest mean = 4.21, Homogeneity of regression tested and not significant: $F = 1.393$ $P > .05$. Pretest regression coefficient = .546.								
^b $R^2 = .202$, Adjusted $R^2 = .057$, Adjustment based on pretest mean = .050, Homogeneity of regression								

tested and not significant: $F=0.19$, $P>.05$, Pretest regression coefficient $F=2.166$.

$^c R^2 = .202$, Adjusted $R^2 = .189$, Adjustment based on pretest mean $=5.25$, Homogeneity of regression tested and not significant: $F=.019$, $P>.05$, Pretest regression coefficient $F=2.166$.

As revealed in Table 3, the researcher found that the Getting It Right! program was effective for low career maturity group only. This means that the program had no significant effect in terms of increasing the level of career adaptability resources as measured by CMI-C. The finding was in contrary with the result of the study of Santilli, Nota and Hartung (2019), Hartung and Santilli (2018). Likewise, this study negated the findings of Silva, Coelho and Taveira (2017).

Moreover, the researcher found that there was no significant difference between experimental group and comparison group in terms of career decision difficulties. This suggests that the program had no significant effect on the career decision difficulties as measured CDDQ. The present finding of the study was similar to Gati, Ryzhik, Vertsberger (2013). This finding did not corroborate with the results of Adeun and Aremu (2013).

Table 3

Significant testing of experimental group pretest and posttest scores

Variable	Test	Low Career Maturity Group				Moderate Career Maturity Group			
		Md	Z	p-value	Desc.	Md	Z	p-value	Desc.
Career choice readiness	Pre	2	-3.068	0.002	S	5	-1.023	0.306	NS
	Post	3				6			
Career adaptability resources	Pre	5	-3.291	0.001	S	9	-0.496	0.62	NS
	Post	7				9			
Career decision difficulties	Pre	6	-1.822	0.068	NS	5	-0.762	0.446	NS
	Post	6				5			

3.5 Phase 5 - Impact Evaluation

The fifth phase was a qualitative impact evaluation of the career development intervention. Getting It Right! made an impact for the students' lives particularly the session on values clarification and altering negative career thoughts since these were very helpful in aiding them to make career choice. This finding is similar to existing literature of Peterson, Sampson, Lenz and Reardon (2002), who examined that cognitive reframe, was effective in modifying dysfunctional career thoughts.

4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions have been drawn. The Grade 10 students' career development needs include career choice readiness and career decision difficulties; hence, they still need to be assisted when it comes to choosing a senior high school career track. The career development needs of the students are better addressed through a comprehensive career development intervention program. This includes awareness of oneself, education, and occupational opportunities. When students are informed about various jobs, it will keep them knowledgeable with their possible options. In addition, the program was found to be effective particularly in addressing the students' career choice readiness. Participants were satisfied with the values clarification and reframing negative career thoughts to positive career thoughts. Hence, being aware of one's value is important for Grade 10 students because they must be mindful in carrying out any decision especially in choosing a career. Moreover, before the intervention

was conducted, the experimental group indicated that they had a limited ability to prepare themselves in choosing a career, yet they were able to cope with the task of choosing one. Thus, they need to be guided every step of the way. Whereas the comparison group indicated that they were more capable in choosing a career, a moderate supervision of career development intervention program may benefit this group. Additionally, after the intervention, the experimental group manifested some improvements in terms of their career choice readiness. However, the Getting It Right! was not effective in addressing career adaptability and career decision difficulty. Hence, it can be concluded that blending two theories in one career development intervention may not be effective. There is a need to design a different module anchoring on career adaptability resources and the taxonomies of career decision difficulties. Moreover, the comparison group remained at status quo after the intervention. This is most likely because the comparison group yielded higher pretest scores compared to the experimental group thus a different set of activities may be needed for them. The program was effective in the career choice readiness among Grade 10 students, but it was not an effective intervention in increasing career adaptability resources and career decision difficulty. Specifically, the program was effective in increasing the career choice readiness among the low career maturity group. The Getting It Right! Program outcome shows that what greatly influenced the participants were the internal processes that happened within themselves which included values clarification and altering negative career thoughts. It can be realized that a customized intervention program is needed for each client group (low, moderate, high). Hence, based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the Getting It Right! Program is effective for the low career maturity group in addressing their career choice readiness.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the researcher recommends the following: Future researchers may consider conducting an exploratory research to determine the factors affecting the low career confidence or efficacy among Grade 10 students. Focus group discussions or in-depth interview maybe employed to explain the phenomenon and results from the interview and focus group discussions may further analyzed using exploratory factor analysis. In addition, a comparative study between male and female may also be conducted which can include intelligence quotient as a confounding variable in the study may also be explored. Moreover, researcher may conduct a study on the mediating effect of gender and intelligence on the relationship between career decision difficulties and career confidence.

A research on conducting a path analysis considering the taxonomies of career decision difficulty such as readiness, lack of information, and inconsistent information as the independent variable and career confidence as the dependent variable can be explored. Also, minor revision of the Getting It Right! Program maybe done before replicating is recommended. This includes house rules, processing questions and sequence of the activities. There is a need also to strengthen the evaluation and validation study of the Getting It Right! Module.

Furthermore, Getting It Right! indicates its effectiveness on low career choice readiness. Hence, there is a need for future researches to develop a different program for Grade 10 students who have moderate and high career choice readiness. The program content may include the career adaptability resources (concern, curiosity, confidence). In addition, part of the intervention may be a one-on-one career counseling to alleviate career decision difficulties. Generally, schools may integrate a topic about career awareness in their class. School counselors are encouraged to design a career intervention program that would increase the career choice readiness of Grade 10 students by giving them activities that may enhance their knowledge about themselves and knowledge about the world of work. This can be done through intensifying information services by providing Grade 10 students with career briefs, and by organizing symposium in collaboration with the Department of Labor and Employment on hard to fill and in demand jobs. Moreover, they may strengthen testing and individual inventory services by including into their testing program career interest test like Self-Directed Search, COPEs System, and career decision making inventories such as Career Thoughts Inventories, Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy into their testing program.

Cognitive reframing can be carried through schools counseling program to mend the pressing issue on dysfunctional career thoughts. School Counseling programs/Guidance Program in school may enrich their program by addressing irrational thoughts among Grade 10 students, targeting negative career thoughts. This can be easily integrated in the counseling services/ group guidance service. Through cognitive reframing, cognitive behavioral rehearsals may address dysfunctional career thoughts among Grade 10 students. In addition, an individual in-depth career counseling session can be done to address career decision difficulty among Grade 10 students. Through this, they may be able to express their concern thoroughly and may benefit from individualized career counseling plan.

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