



APPLYING SOCIAL COGNITIVE CAREER THEORY TO MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Social Cognitive Career Theory SCCT (Lent, Brown, and Hackett 1994, 1996) proposes that career interests, goals, and choices are related to self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. It suggests that people's self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations with regard to self-employment would predict their goals to become self employed. This study

aimed to determine the effectiveness of Career counseling program depending on social cognitive career theory with 6th and 7th grade students. The experimental research has been used by researcher. The sample of study selected randomly (15) students from 6th and 7th. The study results found that the mean of pre test (19.87) less than the mean of post test (29.86). It's been shown that the students after participation gained new skills to know how to put their goals and how to achieve it. Also students felt after the participation with the career counseling program more confidence and their self efficacy raised than before.

Key words: SCCT, Career counseling, Counseling program, Self efficacy.

Introduction

The world is fast becoming like a global village and the problem surrounding work in one country are often issues in other countries. In all countries these important issues like unemployment, career indecision, career decision making, work adjustment, and career education, need more work and focusing attention (Stead and Harrington, 2000, p.323). As the reviews of Herr (2000) that different career issues are shared across nations involving globalization and restructuring of the workforce.



In recent years, Psychologists' studies are moving towards a new approach aims building education system on new scientific and rational bases, in addition to the development of science and the advent of the age of technology. (Melhem, 2001). In the 21st century, the emotional and psychological status of many students in primary and secondary schools have been vastly affected by various aspects. This condition has caused many students feeling emotionally and psychologically disturbed. The consequences of this distress are dire and far-reaching. This is supported by a body of evidence that demonstrate increasing levels of mental, emotional and physiological distress among students (Wambui, 2015). Different strategies have been discussed and enacted by the education sector in an attempt to address issues that affect students. On top of these strategies featured the strengthening and streamlining guidance and counseling services in schools as a potent panacea for the problems being faced by students (Tan and Goh, 2002).

In the Guidance Services, counseling should be a dynamic process within which the Counselor works together with a group or an individual to examine issues of concern and to facilitate the task of finding alternative solutions. The counseling service helps people to define the nature of the difficulty they are facing, to appraise the possible solutions and to select the most appropriate for themselves. The Counselor does not commit him/herself to one particular solution, respecting instead the choice of the person who has sought counseling. (Soumeli L., 2006). Counseling is part of a broad sector of applied psychology, which has been developed in the frames of career counseling as well as of guidance and support of the individuals during their effort to pursue a career according to their dexterities and abilities, or their effort to resolve psychological problems associating with the academic and professional life. (Kantas A., 1998).

Social Cognitive Career Theory

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) is a relatively new theory that is aimed at explaining three interrelated aspects of career development: (1) how basic academic and career interests develop, (2) how educational and career choices are made, and (3) how academic and career success is obtained. The theory incorporates a variety of concepts (e.g., interests, abilities, values, environmental factors) that



appear in earlier career theories and have been found to affect career development. Developed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett in 1994, SCCT is based on Albert Bandura's general social cognitive theory, an influential theory of cognitive and motivational processes that has been extended to the study of many areas of psychosocial functioning, such as academic performance, health behavior, and organizational development

Social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994) was developed in response to and as an extension of other vocational research on self-efficacy. Albert Bandura in an article (1977) discusses social learning theory: people learn behaviors by observing others and continue a behavior if they are rewarded. In his article, Bandura also posits that self-referent thought about one's abilities (self-efficacy) influences an individual's behavior (Bandura, 1977).

Personal, environmental and situational factors that interrelate and change over the time are effect the career development process. A number of theoretical works exist on the career development and selection process; however, the empirical evidence remains sketchy. Hackett and Lent (1992) suggested that the field would profit from theory-building efforts that bring together conceptually related constructs, more fully explain outcomes that are common to a number of career theories, and account for the relations among seemingly diverse constructs. They presented a theoretical framework that attempted to explain central, dynamic processes and mechanisms through which career and academic interests develop, career-relevant choices are forged and enacted, and performance outcomes are achieved. The model is anchored in social cognitive theory and highlights the importance of self-beliefs and self-thought in fostering an individual's motivation and subsequently guiding their behavior (Segal, Borgia, Schoenfeld, 2002).

Definition

Self-efficacy : defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize



and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura,1986, pg 391). Self-efficacy beliefs are about what one can do with the abilities they have, and are beliefs about specific tasks. For example, an individual may have high self-efficacy beliefs about his or her ability to solve a math problem but have very low self-efficacy beliefs about his or her ability to create a piece of art. Unlike relatively stable traits such as self-esteem, a person’s self-efficacy beliefs may vary significantly depending upon the task (Lent & Brown, 2006).

Outcome expectations : defines an outcome expectation as “a judgment of the likely consequence a behavior will produce. Outcome expectations are important determinants of career interests and goals . People will have stronger interests in activities and careers and will develop goals to enter careers in which they anticipate desirable outcomes. (Lent & Brown, 2006).

Goals : are the single best predictor of planned behavior. While environmental factors and personal experiences help to shape one’s behavior, the setting of specific goals helps the individual to organize and direct their behavior in a sustained manner and increase the likelihood that desired intentions will be achieved (Lent et al. 1994). Goals are an important element of many career choice and decision-making theories although many terms have been utilized including career plans, career decisions, and career aspirations.

Purpose

The study has been done on the purpose of determining the effect of applying counseling program structured depend on one of career counseling theories called social cognitive career theory, counseling program for developing career interest and skills to make plan for future career and decision making process for 6th and 7th grade students . Considering on the main assumptions of SCCT (Self efficacy, personal goals and outcome expectations) are an important for developing different growth approaches to the personality of students, the results of this study is important to understand interest



development, academic and career choices, and performance for the students, also result will help determine the effect of the theory, and how to implement it through activities with counseling program on adolescents, demonstrate decision making, how to make the personal goals and problem solving is an improve quality and present a source data for the scientists and psychological counselors who will study on this topic, and they will also contribute to fund of knowledge about problem solving training in the related literature.

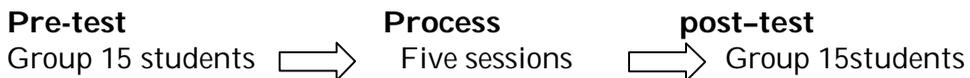
The questions below are answered in this study according to the aims mentioned above.

- What is the effectiveness of career counseling program in self efficacy and developing personal goals skills for middle school students ?

Methodology

The study is a pretest-posttest-control group experimental study. The study group is formed of 15 students that have studied at one of Arabic middle schools in Ankara in 2015-2016 academic years. All of students selected randomly into the experimental study groups.

Table 1. Experimental Processes Administered to Study Groups



Procedure

As part of the study, specific procedures have been applied on the study group. At first, five sessions group counseling activities based on the related literature have been developed by the researchers to improve the self efficacy through explore their believes, interests ,goals and to make action plan to looking for their expectation in the future of the students in the experimental group. These activities have been



carried out as a single session around 90 minutes a week, in total for 5 weeks. The contents of the career counseling program carried on the experimental group are: 1. Session; meeting of the group members and did the pre test by fill out the scale before starting program, and after that the session aimed to prepare the group to process in the session and identifying the program, 2. And 3. Sessions; explaining self efficacy through explore the beliefs, interests and abilities activities. 4. Session; goals session aimed to gain students how to write their goals depend on SMART criteria (specific, measurable, achievable, reliability and time table). 5. Session; in the last session, has action plan and how to know the steps of taking a decision and process of doing each phase in the plan, after that the ending and evaluation activated, and did the post test to know the effect of program on the student.

Data Collection Instrument

In the study, Self efficacy questionnaire developed from previous studies by the researcher, and approved from five experts in this field. It consists of 10 questions, which is easy and fast to answer them.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data for pre-posttest of the survey to know if the program had positive or negative or nothing he did any effective after the implementation of the program. After the analyzed the data, it was a significant for the posttest, it mean the implementation of program effected positively.

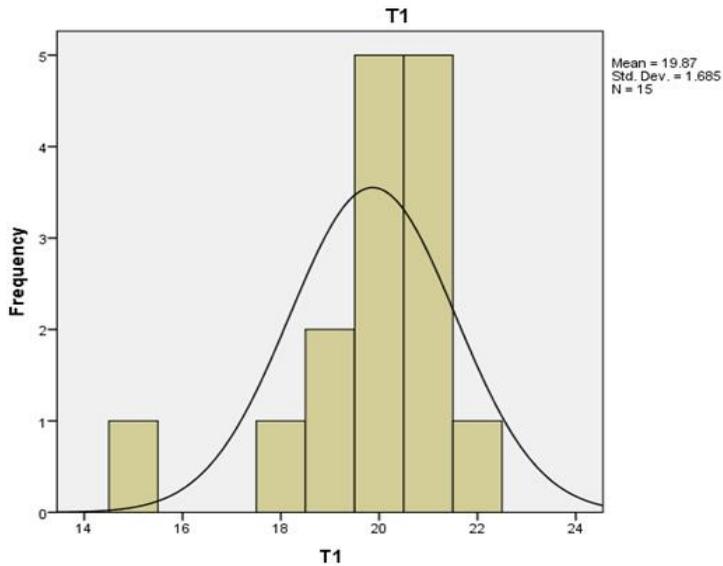


Table 2: The mean for pretest was 19.87, it meaning that their answers closed to Hardly true

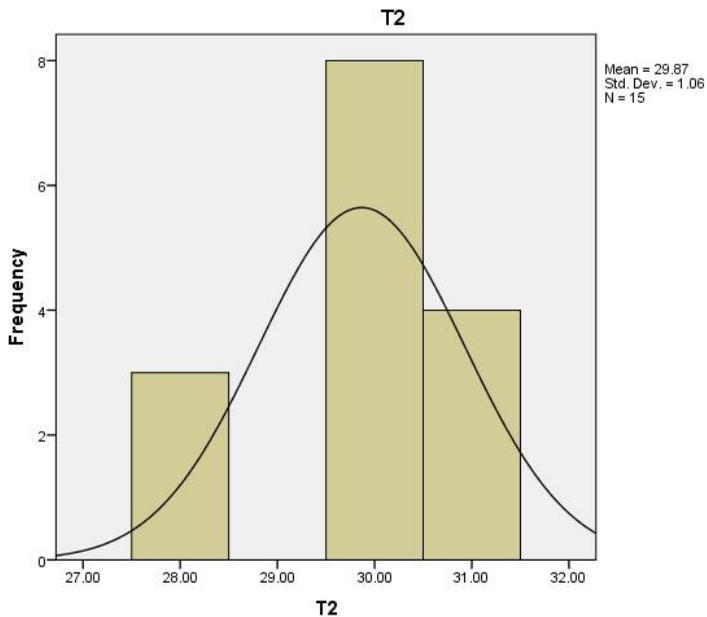




Table 3: The mean for posttest 29.8667, it meaning that their answers closed to Moderately true

Table 4 : Descriptive Statistics for Pretest Posttest

	Pre test (T1)	Post Test (T2)
N	15	15
Mean	19.87	29.8667
Std. Error of Mean	.435	.27372

Table 4: The table no.4 mean , the program had positively effect on the participant with the program.

Result

The results show that according to the above table(4), the mean of pre-test is 19.87, the mean of post-test is 29.8667, so that the mean of post-test is the highest. According to that result mean the program has effectiveness on the students participants at the counselling program. So that mean is the program help students who participant with the sessions of program to enhance their problem solving skills.

Conclusion

The result of this study has several implications for the way we understand how students choose future goals and how they are looking for themselves, and the majority of effectiveness of counseling program showed that the mean of post-test more than pre-test. This is because the input of the program activities are help in effectively running their services. Counseling intervention is required to carry out various development programs and growth in students. So it mean that the core of social cognitive career theory generally fits well for predicting students goals and developing self efficacy.



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