The Effectiveness of Career Exploration Program for High School Students

Poh Li, Lau 1*, Aqeel, Khan 2, Haslee Sharil Abdullah 3 and Fong Peng, Chew 4

1 University of Malaya Faculty of Education Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 50603

Abstract. The purpose of this study to assess the effects of an 8-week Career exploration Program (CEP) on high school students’ career maturity and self-concept in Malaysia. This study was based on a pretest and posttest design using a control group. Data were collected from 69 high school students representing the experimental group and 70 high school students making up the control group. Measures of measurement consisted of the Crites Career Maturity Inventory and the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale. Data for this study were coded numerically and analyzed using analysis of covariance. The results revealed that the sample’s career maturity and self-concept improved statistically significant. Discussion and implications for school counselor are discussed.

Keywords: career exploration program, career intervention, career maturity, self-concept.

1. Introduction

Career is very important in an individual’s life. It is essential for students to develop career maturity and self-concept during the high school years. Career development and preparation for adolescents can involve such tasks as establishing stable vocational preferences, narrowing one’s occupational choices, developing career goals and engaging in long-term career planning (Skorikov, 2007)[1]. Adolescents are still developing their career awareness and career interests, which can result in their occupational choices continuously fluctuating (Heiwig, 2003)[2]. However, if students are provided with effective career guidance during their state of occupational inconsistency, they can become both knowledgeable and focused in their career development (Trusty, Niles, & Carney, 2005)[3].

One of the important methods suggested in past research in order to help the students to increase their knowledge of potential occupations, as well as to enhance their career maturity and self-concept, is by implementing career counseling interventions or programs. A career intervention could increase students’ awareness of their interests, as well as their career decision-making skills (Loos, 2008; Osborn & Reardon, 2006)[4-5]. Career counseling interventions or programs, however, must be cautiously selected, and research calls for studies that utilize experimental research in order to observe the effects of a career program and/or intervention (D’Achiardi, 2005; Loos, 2008)[6,4].

The majority of research on the efficacy of career program, however, has neglected to utilize populations in Asia, such as Malaysia, as samples. In Asian countries, the students usually choose their career based on their parents’ criteria. It is found that Asian students really need help through services of career counselling according Pope, Cheng, & Leong, 1998[7]. In Malaysia, many research findings showed that secondary school students in Malaysia are facing problems of not being prepared in making career planning (Guan, 2004; Kamarul, 2005; Teo, 2005)[8-10]. From the past research done in Malaysia, it is noted that there is still no experimental research regarding outcome results of specific career interventions that can enhance the career maturity and self-concept among secondary school students.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +6016-6919794; fax: +60379675010.
E-mail address: junicepolly@yahoo.com

226