



Effectiveness of psychoeducation and SFBCC groups for the improvement of students' career maturity

Oktavia Puspita Dewi^{1*}, Dwi Yuwono Puji Sugiharto², Sunawan³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Article Info	Abstract
Keywords: Psychoeducation, group counseling, SFBCC, career maturity	Career maturity is essential for students to make informed career decisions and develop realistic plans for their future. This study aimed to compare the effectiveness of solution-focused psychoeducation (SFP) and solution-focused brief career counseling (SFBCC) in enhancing career maturity among vocational high school students in Semarang, Indonesia. A three-group pretest–posttest design was employed, involving 24 Grade 11 students selected through purposive sampling and divided equally into SFBCC, SFP, and control groups. Data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank, Kruskal–Wallis, and Mann–Whitney U tests. The results revealed significant improvements in career maturity in both the SFBCC ($Z = 2.536$, $p = .011$) and SFP ($Z = 2.524$, $p = .012$) groups, whereas the control group showed no significant improvement ($p = .079$). The Kruskal–Wallis test indicated significant differences in posttest scores among the three groups, $H(2) = 17.68$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, the SFBCC group achieved significantly higher posttest scores than the SFP group ($Z = 2.227$, $p = .026$), with mean scores of 115.30 and 107.00, respectively. These findings suggest that both interventions are promising approaches for enhancing students' career maturity, with SFBCC demonstrating more favorable posttest outcomes. The results highlight the potential of solution-focused interventions for strengthening career guidance and counseling services in vocational schools.

*Correspondence address:

E-mail: oktaviapuspidewi020@students.unnes.ac.id

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15294/jubk.v15i2.25997>

© 2026 Universitas Negeri Semarang

p-ISSN 2252-6889

e-ISSN 2502-4450

Introduction

Career maturity is an essential developmental competency that enables adolescents to make informed, realistic, and responsible decisions regarding their educational and occupational futures. For vocational high school students, career maturity is particularly important in preparing for the transition from school to employment, higher education, or entrepreneurship. It involves recognizing personal strengths, exploring occupational opportunities, establishing career goals, and making appropriate decisions. Savickas and Porfeli (2011) emphasized that career maturity reflects individuals' readiness to undertake career-related developmental tasks, particularly through career concern, curiosity, and confidence. Although closely related, career maturity primarily concerns developmental readiness, whereas career adaptability emphasizes psychosocial resources for managing career transitions and changing occupational demands (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Therefore, developing career maturity is essential for supporting students' career planning and future readiness.

Despite its importance, career maturity remains a significant challenge among vocational high school students, particularly in identifying suitable career pathways and making informed occupational decisions (Krisphianti & Nurwulansari, 2022). A preliminary study involving 83 vocational high school students in Semarang revealed that only 17 students (20.5%) demonstrated high career maturity, while 57 students (68.7%) were in the moderate category and nine students (10.8%) were in the low category. These findings indicate that most students had not reached a high level of career maturity, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to strengthen their career development. Without adequate support, students may encounter difficulties exploring occupational alternatives, establishing realistic career goals, and preparing for their postgraduation

pathways. Therefore, systematic guidance and counseling interventions are necessary to facilitate students' career maturity.

One promising intervention is solution-focused brief career counseling (SFBCC), which emphasizes personal strengths, available resources, future-oriented goals, and achievable solutions. This approach encourages students to identify desired career outcomes rather than focusing extensively on existing problems (Burwell & Chen, 2006). Through techniques such as miracle questions, exception finding, scaling questions, and collaborative goal setting, students are encouraged to recognize their competencies and develop realistic career plans (Bannink, 2007). Previous studies have demonstrated the potential of solution-focused approaches to improve career-related outcomes. Akyol and Bacanlı (2019) reported the benefits of solution-focused career counseling for reducing career indecision, while Fitriyah et al. (2018) and Aisyah et al. (2023) identified improvements in students' career maturity. Similarly, Budi et al. (2021) found that solution-focused brief career group counseling reduced career indecision among vocational high school students. These findings suggest that SFBCC may provide an effective approach to facilitating students' career development.

Another relevant intervention is solution-focused psychoeducation (SFP), which integrates structured educational activities with solution-focused principles to develop students' career-related knowledge, attitudes, and competencies. Unlike SFBCC, which emphasizes collaborative counseling and individualized reflection, SFP focuses on guided learning, career exploration, and practical career planning activities. Amalia et al. (2020) demonstrated that psychoeducational groups incorporating problem-solving and self-management techniques improved career maturity among vocational high school students. Although previous studies have established the potential benefits of counseling and psychoeducational interventions, most have examined these approaches separately or compared them with control conditions. Direct comparative evidence regarding SFBCC and SFP, particularly when both approaches share solution-focused principles and target the same career maturity outcome, remains limited. This gap highlights the need to investigate whether their different intervention processes produce different career maturity outcomes.

Therefore, this study aimed to compare the effectiveness of solution-focused brief career counseling (SFBCC) and solution-focused psychoeducation (SFP) in enhancing career maturity among Grade 11 vocational high school students in Semarang, Indonesia. Using a three-group pretest–posttest design involving SFBCC, SFP, and a control group, the study examined changes in career maturity and differences in outcomes across the groups. The novelty of this research lies in directly comparing two interventions grounded in solution-focused principles but delivered through different processes: collaborative counseling and structured psychoeducation. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of evidence-based career guidance and counseling practices and provide practical considerations for school counselors in selecting appropriate interventions to strengthen students' career maturity.

Method

Table 1. Two-Factor Groups Pre-test and Multiple Post-test Design

Experimental Groups	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Group A	<i>O1</i>	<i>X1</i>	<i>O2</i>
Group B	<i>O1</i>	<i>X2</i>	<i>O2</i>
Group C	<i>O1</i>	-	<i>O2</i>

This study uses a quantitative two-factor groups pretest-posttest multiple-posttest design to examine the effects of two treatments on several groups, with measurements taken both before (pretest) and after (posttest) the interventions.

The population involved in this study was 83 eleventh-grade vocational high school students in Semarang. From this group, a purposive sample of 24 students was selected and assigned to groups at random. Eleventh-grade students were chosen based on psychosocial development theory (Savickas, 1997). He stated that late adolescence is a critical period for forming a career identity as students begin to construct their life narratives. They do it in the form of experience, hopes, and social roles. In addition, at ages 16–18 (the typical age for 11th graders), they begin to show a stronger desire to understand who they are, what they want to achieve, and how they will get there. In addition, Savickas saw career maturity is not just about being ready to pick a job; it is about a student's ability to organize their life and identity.

The instrument used in this study was the Career Maturity Inventory-Revised (CMI-R), which is based on the theory of career maturity developed by Crites & Savickas (1996). The inventory consists of 35 items and uses a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" (4) to "strongly disagree" (1). The results of the validity test showed scores between 0.108 and 0.572, while the instrument demonstrated strong reliability with an alpha coefficient of 0.908.

Results and Discussion

According to the research findings, the SFBCC shows stronger effectiveness in enhancing the career maturity of 11th-grade vocational high school students in Semarang than the control group. Similar findings indicated that solution-focused psychoeducation (SFP) was also effective in improving students' career maturity. Therefore, this study shows a clear difference in effectiveness between SFBCC and SFP for students' career maturity. This is based on the hypothesis-testing results in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Group	SFBCC		SFP		Control	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Pre-test	59.88	5.03	58.88	6.85	59.13	5.54
Post-test	115.3	2.3	107	8	66.4	7.2
<i>Z</i>	-2.536		-2.524		-1.755	
<i>P</i>	17.680 (0.001)					
SFP – SFBCC	-2.227 (0.026)					
SFBCC – Control	-3.378 (0.001)					
SFP - Control	-3.368 (0.001)					

To assess the effectiveness of interventions toward career maturity, the hypothesis was tested using three non-parametric tests: the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, the Kruskal-Wallis Test, and the Mann-Whitney U Test. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was used to identify significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores within each group. The results show that the mean score of the SFBCC group increased from 59.88 in the pre-test to 115.3 in the post-test ($Z = -2.536$). In addition, the mean score of the SFP group increased from 58.88 in the pre-test to 107 in the post-test ($Z = -2.524$). Meanwhile, the mean for the control group increased from 59.13 on the pre-test to 66.4 on the post-test ($Z = -1.755$). These results show a significant difference between the SFBCC and SFP groups, confirming that the interventions were effective in raising students' career maturity.

Furthermore, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to determine if there were differences among the three groups after treatment. The results show an H value of 17.680 with a p -value of 0.001. This indicated a significant difference among the SFBCC, SFP, and Control groups on the post-test, showing the differential effects of different types of interventions on students' career maturity (Pranowo et al., 2024).

A follow-up analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to examine the specific differences between pairs of groups. The comparison yielded a $Z = -2.227$ and $p = 0.026$, indicating a significant difference; it is concluded that SFBCC had a greater effect than SFP. In addition, the comparison yielded $Z = -3.378$ and $p = 0.001$, indicating a significant difference and reinforcing the higher effectiveness of SFBCC compared with no treatment. Furthermore, the comparison yielded $Z = -3.368$ and $p = 0.001$, demonstrating the effectiveness of SFP compared to the control group.

The results from the three tests lead to a clear conclusion: SFBCC was the most effective method for improving the students' career maturity. This was followed by SFP, which was also effective. Meanwhile, the control group showed no significant improvement. This demonstrates that the treatments provided played a crucial role in the students' career development (Wang & Wang, 2025).

The findings confirm that SFBCC is an effective intervention for enhancing career maturity. It proved to be more valuable than the SFP intervention and the no-intervention group (the control group). It aligns with research by Bian (2023), who found that SFBCC is effective in addressing career-related issues. Other studies by Fitriyah et al. (2018) also showed that SFBCC effectively improves career maturity, while Xu & Bhang (2019) stated that SFBCC helps students make more mature career decisions. The intervention helps students focus on solutions rather than problems, thereby speeding up the counseling process. This is supported by Setya Budi et al. (2021), who noted that SFBCC contributes to greater career maturity and confidence in career exploration.

A more nuanced analysis of the results reveals the specific strengths of each intervention. SFP was particularly effective in improving general career-planning skills, especially for students with a moderate to high level of career maturity (Aisyah et al., 2023). Its informative approach helps students identify goals and explore concrete steps. Conversely, SFBCC proved more efficacious for students with a low initial level of career maturity because the group dynamics foster reflective processes, empowerment, and the reinforcement of a positive internal narrative (Saripah et al., 2023).

This research was conducted exclusively with 11th-grade vocational high school students in Semarang; thus, limiting the generalizability of its results. Therefore, this study recommends involving larger, more diverse

samples, extending the duration and frequency of interventions, and developing digital or technology-based intervention media that are more engaging, innovative, and better suited to the characteristics of the current adolescent generation in future research (Umu Amalia et al., 2020).

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion concerning the effectiveness of SFP and SBFCC groups, several conclusions are drawn. First, the findings indicate that both the SFP and SBFCC groups are effective at enhancing students' career maturity. Furthermore, a significant difference in effectiveness was observed between the experimental and control groups. The experimental interventions yielded higher gains in career maturity than the control condition. Lastly, a significant difference in effectiveness between the experimental groups and the control group was discovered. The experimental groups were more effective in enhancing career maturity, especially the SFBCC group.

Author Contributions Statement

Oktavia Puspita Dewi contributed to the formulation of the research objectives, research methodology, data collection, statistical analysis, and drafting of the manuscript. **Dwi Yuwono Puji Sugiharto** provided academic supervision, methodological guidance, and critical feedback on the research and manuscript. **Sunawan** contributed to research supervision, interpretation of the findings, and review of the manuscript. All authors reviewed the manuscript and approved its final version for publication.

Declaration of Generative AI

ChatGPT was used as an auxiliary tool during manuscript preparation to support language editing and enhance the readability of the academic text. The authors reviewed the generated suggestions and take full responsibility for the accuracy, validity, and integrity of the content presented in the final manuscript.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known financial, professional, or personal interests that could have improperly influenced the research process, interpretation of the results, or conclusions presented in this article.

Funding Statement

No dedicated funding was received from government bodies, commercial entities, or nonprofit organizations for this research or the preparation of the manuscript.

References

- Aisyah, S., Sugiyo, S., & Saraswati, S. (2023). The effectiveness of group counseling with a solution-focused brief counseling approach to promote students' career maturity. *Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling*, 12(2), 114–119. <https://doi.org/10.15294/jubk.v12i4.74697>
- Akyol, E. Y., & Bacanlı, F. (2019). Building a solution-focused career counselling strategy for career indecision. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 28(1), 73–79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1038416218779623>
- Amalia, R. U., Puji Sugiharto, D. Y., & Sunawan, S. (2020). Psychoeducational group with problem solving and self management techniques to improve career maturity. *Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling*, 9(3), 175–181. <https://doi.org/10.15294/jubk.v9i3.44286>
- Bannink, F. P. (2007). Solution-focused brief therapy. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 37(2), 87–94. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10879-006-9040-y>
- Bian, X. (2023). Career indecision: An integrative review and research agenda. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 47(1/2), 166–182. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-06-2021-0084>
- Budi, L. S., Puji Sugiharto, D. Y., & Sunawan, S. (2021). The effectiveness of solution-focused brief career group counseling to reduce student career indecision. *Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling*, 10(3), 206–213. <https://doi.org/10.15294/jubk.v10i3.54724>
- Burwell, R., & Chen, C. P. (2006). Applying the principles and techniques of solution-focused therapy to career counselling. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 19(2), 189–203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070600917761>
- Crites, J. O., & Savickas, M. L. (1996). Revision of the Career Maturity Inventory. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 4(2), 131–138. <https://doi.org/10.1177/106907279600400202>

- Fitriyah, F., Wibowo, M. E., & Japar, M. (2018). The effectiveness of counseling group solution focused career to increase career maturity students of SMA Negeri 4 Pamekasan. *Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling*, 7(1), 81–87. <https://doi.org/10.15294/jubk.v7i1.22655>
- Ifdil, I. (2010). Pendidikan karakter dalam bimbingan dan konseling. *Pedagogi: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 10(2), 55–61.
- Krisphianti, Y. D., & Nurwulansari, F. A. (2022). Vocational school student career maturity scale. *Nusantara of Research: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri*, 9(1), 8–17. <https://doi.org/10.29407/nor.v9i1.16315>
- Pranowo, T. A., Jana, P., Azman, M. N. A., Kassymova, G., Kurniawan, D. E., & Febrianto, A. (2024). Techniques in group counseling to develop student career maturity: Systematic literature review. *Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.51214/00202406765000>
- Saripah, I., Priliani, D. R., & Nadhirah, N. A. (2023). Problematika kematangan karir peserta didik sekolah menengah kejuruan: Implementasi pada layanan bimbingan dan konseling karir. *Indonesian Journal of Guidance and Counseling: Theory and Application*, 12(1), 95–118. <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijgc.v12i1.70437>
- Savickas, M. L. (1997). Career adaptability: An integrative construct for life-span, life-space theory. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 45(3), 247–259. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.1997.tb00469.x>
- Savickas, M. L. (2023). Career construction theory. https://www.marksavickas.com/files/1_Savickas_bio/Career%20Construction%20Theory/Publications/Monograph/Career_Construct_Theory_Monograph.pdf
- Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2011). Revision of the Career Maturity Inventory: The adaptability form. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 19(4), 355–374. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072711409342>
- Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2012). Career Adapt-Abilities Scale: Construction, reliability, and measurement equivalence across 13 countries. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(3), 661–673. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.01.011>
- Wang, D., & Wang, G. (2025). Improving career readiness in middle school students: A systematic review of intervention approaches. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, Article 1582195. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1582195>
- Xu, H., & Bhang, C. H. (2019). The structure and measurement of career indecision: A critical review. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 67(1), 2–20. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12159>