

## The Effectiveness Of Group Counseling With A Solution-Focused Brief Counseling Approach To Promote Students' Career Maturity

Siti Aisyah ✉, Sugiyo Sugiyo, Sinta Saraswati

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

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### Abstract

Career maturity is a prominent part of a student's life and career selection. This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of group counseling with a solution-focused brief approach to promote the career maturity of second grade students at SMK Teuku Umar Semarang. It was a quasi-experiment and used a non-equivalent control group design by employing two groups, namely control and experimental groups. In terms of sample, 16 students with low career maturity were chosen from 180 population of second grade students at SMK Teuku Umar Semarang. Following the Wilcoxon Signed Rank and Mann-Whitney Tests, the group counseling with a solution-focused brief approach has been effective to promote the career maturity of the students at SMK Teuku Umar Semarang. For more, the findings, implications and limitations are further in the discussion section of this paper.

✉ Correspondence address:  
Kampus Sekolah Pascasarjana Unnes  
Bendan Ngisor Semrang 50233  
E-mail: [Icha\\_aisyh@students.unnes.ac.id](mailto:Icha_aisyh@students.unnes.ac.id)

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a strategic medium to enhance human quality and skills so that he can be more prepared in career. It is because education is an initial stage of adolescents' career (Sunarto, 2018). Through education, Indonesia national development level is determined because it depends on human resources quality.

Based on the Law no. 20 of 2003, Vocational High Schools (SMK) have different characteristics from Senior High Schools (SMA). Vocational Schools are the ones oriented towards the quality of graduates who are in line with the needs of the world of work and have sufficient competencies and skills according to the major (Depdiknas, 2003).

An SMK consists of adolescents aged between 15-19 years. If they can complete their developmental tasks in this phase, they will surely be happy and be considered as ready to do the next tasks. Oppositely, when they fail, unhappiness will be felt and difficulties seem haunt them (Desmita, 2011).

At the same time, they need career maturity to improve their capability in doing the tasks (Saifuddin, et al., 2017). Career maturity is an individual's success in accomplishing his developmental tasks at the career developmental stage (Maesaroh & Saraswati, 2020).

Career maturity includes self-understanding, job knowledge, job selection ability and plans to execute (Fauziah, et al., 2018). Super (in Savickas, 2011) states that an individual is considered mature if his career decisions are supported by proper information about the designated work as a result of exploration.

Career maturity is crucial to SMK level because this thing will determine students' future careers, including jobs selection or majors in the higher education. Low career maturity will cause failure at making decisions about both study and career (Anggraini, 2019).

The counseling approach applied in this study was solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC). This approach believes that if a

counselee focuses on problems, they will lose their spirit and energy, even he is supposed to find exceptions or solutions to problematic situations (Erford, 2017). The solution-focused brief counseling aims at directing meaningful and resourceful goals for individuals to solve problems (Corey, 2013)

According to Bill O'Connell (in Palmer, S. 2011), Solution-focused brief therapy is a form of brief therapy which functions to gain clients' strength by assisting them to state and construct solutions to problems they face. This therapy emphasizes the importance of future than the past and present times. Also, in this approach, counselors and counselees spend much of their time to seek for solutions rather than explore problems. Both parties will struggle to clearly define what counselees wish to see in their lives.

A study by (Fitriyah, et al., 2018) found solution-focused brief counseling is effective and significant for enhancing Senior High School students career maturity. Another study by Rifa Syafiya (2020) concludes group counseling with a solution-focused brief approach is able to enhance the final year university students career maturity significantly in most of its aspects, except the dimensions of competency and attitudes. Then, a study by (Rusandi, et al., 2019) found group counseling with a solution-focused brief approach can increase planned happenstance skills.

Regarding the findings and limitations of the previous studies, this study strived for identifying and analyzing the effectiveness of group counseling with a solution-focused brief approach to promote the career maturity of second grade students at SMK Teuku Umar Semarang.

## METHODS

The subjects involved in this research were second grade students at SMK Teuku Umar Semarang with a total of 180 students. 16 students were taken as the sample using a purposive sampling technique, including the ones whose age between 14-18 years and career maturity was low.

Students' data were collected using the career maturity inventory scale developed by the researchers based on the theory of Crites, J. O., & Savickas, M. L. (1996) covering 4 aspects: Career Concern (6 items), Career Curiosity (6 items), Career Confidence (6 items), Career Consultation (6 items). This scale was measured using 4 alternative answer scores. Based on the validity test of the career maturity instrument, 20 items were declared valid and the alpha reliability coefficient of the self-concept instrument was 0.836.

This study used a quasi-experimental method with a non-equivalent control group pretest post-test design and was carried out in several stages. First, pretest was conducted using a career maturity inventory scale. Second, 14 students with low career maturity were selected to be the sample and grouped into two, namely experimental and control groups. Third, the group counseling with a solution-focused brief approach was given to the experimental group. Fourth, all students were given a post-test to estimate the latest condition of career maturity level. In the fourth stage, the counseling was given for six times with the time allotment of 2x45 minutes for each. Here, gradual increase in the career maturity were found by the researchers from the beginning until the end of the session.

In the initial stage, the group leader greeted, thanked his members, checked attendance, led introduction, and explained the definition, goals, and principals to follow during activities. He also needed to be friendly, trust his members, and gave other positive things through ice breaking activities.

Transition stage was the second step of the treatment. Here, the group leader reset the goals, filled out informed consent and guided his members to think and express their emotions with other members within a period of time based on the duration given by the leader.

In work stage, the leader started discussion with a neutral topic, reminded his members to focus on the goals, learned new materials, discussed various topics, completed tasks, and practiced new behavior. In this stage,

all members were expected to mind, share ideas, suggestions, and opinions regarding problems discussed by a model until it can be clearly solved and all members felt satisfied due to their ability to actively participate and gain new insights.

In the final stage, the leader summarized the results obtained in group activities that day and shared his impressions to the members. Next, the activity was ended with an evaluation, namely filling in the assessment evaluation sheet immediately to determine changes and the latest attitudes of the members attitudes before finally praying.

The implementation of the group counseling with a Solution-Focused Brief Counseling (SFBC) approach was as follows:

In the first meeting, the leader built a positive relationship with group members, asked the members to actively participate in the group, directed the group to fill out the sheet containing problem identifications, and decided the goals.

In the second meeting, the leader encouraged his members to share the previous meeting reflections. Here, the leader further inspected self-concept and career maturity problems of the members. Then, he helped the members to synthesize solutions to the problems using miracle question, scaling question, and feedback techniques.

In the third meeting, the leader reflected the members' understanding about the previous meeting and asked what they have practiced in the last meeting until now. In this session, the leader helped the members to build solutions to their problems using the techniques of except question, scaling question, and feedback. Besides, he reinforced as a reflection and observed how his members practice it in the real life.

In the fourth meeting, the leader asked the same question, but sought for exceptions and exploited them effectively.

In the fifth meeting, the group leader revisited the problems experienced and the things that have been discussed in the group counseling process of group members, especially exceptions, strengths, successes, goals and

composes meaningful messages to achieve the future goals.

In the sixth meeting, a discussion of achievements was held during the counseling process. The group leader helped group members to develop specific plans in order to implement changes, get answers to solutions to problems and overcome possible setbacks.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The pretest mean for the career maturity in the experimental group was 38.50 (SD=1.71), while the control group was 36.88 (SD= 2.42). Both groups had a low level of career maturity.

The level of effectiveness of the group counseling with a solution-focused brief counseling approach to promote career maturity in the subjects was determined from calculations using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. Then, the Mann-Whitney test was used to compare the differences in the effectiveness of the treatment in promoting self-concept and career maturity.

**Tabel 1.** The Effectiveness of the Group Counseling with a SFBC Approach to Promote Career Maturity

VT	Group	T <sub>1</sub>		T <sub>2</sub>		Z <sub>1</sub>
		M	S	M	S	
Career Maturity	Experim ental	38. 50	1. 77	63. 25	4. 06	- 2.5 3*
	Control	36. 88	2. 42	45. 38	4. 27	- 2.5 2*
Z <sub>2</sub>		-1.49		-3.36**		

Note: \*p<0.05, T1: Pre-test, T2: Post-test, Z1: Wilcoxon test value, Z2: Mann-Whitney Test value, VT: Dependent Variable, KE: Experimental Group and KK: Control Group..

The results of Wilcoxon data analysis indicated that the intervention in the solution-focused brief counseling group was effective in promoting career maturity. For more, there was an increase in the level of career maturity in the two groups (Z=-2.53, p<0.05). Similarly, there

was an increase in the level of career maturity in the control group (Z1=-2.52, p<0.05). In details, the SFBC group gained a higher level of career maturity (Z=-2.524, p<0.05) than the control group in the post-test (Z=-2.521, p<0.05). However, the results of the Mann-Whitney test also confirmed that the post-test results were higher (than the control group at post-test (Z= -3.36, p<0.05).

The research findings (Nugroho, Puspita, & Mulawarman, 2018) found that the solution-focused brief counseling is able to provide solutions and effective to enhance students' self-concept to be an individual with positive self-concept in a short time and rise possibilities to make changes to different things. This finding strengthens a study done by Sofianti (2021) that a miracle question technique can improve adolescents' self-concept using an approach of pre-experiment pretest post-test design and Wilcoxon test for the analysis. Another study by Hsu & Wu (2018) aims to investigate the immediate and follow-up training effects of solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) training on full-time school counselors in junior high schools.

An investigation conducted by Mulawarman, et.al (2016) shows that the SFBC approach is an intervention to develop career adaptability that is effective both qualitatively and quantitatively. Fitriyah's study (2018) shows that SFBC group counseling is effective in increasing the career maturity of SMA 4 Pemekasan students. However, based on the differences in post-test results and follow-up strategies, solution focused brief counseling only focuses on solutions that only have a short-term impact and is not recommended for the long term.

Syafiya, R (2020) conducted a study on students to increase career maturity using SFBC group counseling. She found that the increase in the career maturity score is higher in the experimental group than the control group, showing a significant result in the dimension of competency. Then, Budi, L.S, et al., (2021) conclude that group counseling with an SFBC

approach is effective to reduce career indecision in students at SMK.

The results of this research can be applied to students who have a low level of career maturity as an effort to handle the career maturity of SFBC students. It is also hoped that it can be applied independently to students. The use of various strategies is also recommended so that all aspects of career maturity show significant improvement.

## CONCLUSION

This study was done to decide the effectiveness level of the group counseling with a SFBC approach in promoting the career maturity of second grade students at SMK Teuku Umar Semarang. Based on the findings, this treatment is effective to promote students' career maturity.

According to the findings, school counselors can implement this group counseling intervention to counter the low level of career maturity, so that students can achieve optimal developmental tasks related to student career maturity. It is suggested to compare the effectiveness of SFBC group counseling techniques with other group career counseling. In addition, further research is expected to test the effectiveness of SFBC to enhance career maturity in different subjects such as high school, MA, and boarding school students. Future research should conduct follow-up measurements between 3-6 months to monitor the effects in the medium term.

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