

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DEVELOPED RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY MANUAL ON CAREER INDECISION

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effects of a Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy on Filipino students (n=298) from a state university in the Philippines who are experiencing career indecision. Using a Descriptive Developmental method as its research design, the effectiveness of the six-session rational-emotive behavior therapy intervention which included Mastering Ellis' ABCDE Model, scheduling worry time, refocusing, tapping social support, assertiveness training goal-setting and homework was assessed. It also includes activities that will make group members aware of their irrational beliefs about career exploration and more importantly what they can do to dispute these irrational beliefs and modify them to rational ones. The goal of the intervention is to develop the members' emotional resiliency to career-related concerns by equipping them with cognitive and behavioral skills that will make them dispute irrational thoughts. This could be done once an individual recognizes irrational beliefs and disputes it by applying Ellis' ABCDE Model. Triangulation or the collection of information from multiple sources using a variety of methods was utilized. The following sources and methods were used: (1) Career Decision Profile, (2) Evaluation Form and (3) Observation Notes. Results revealed that there is a significant difference in the career indecision levels of the participants. Discussion centers on the theoretical and practical implications of the results.

Keywords: Career Indecision, Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy, Career Decision Profile

INTRODUCTION

Still not sure what you want to be? This is usual. "Career indecision has been a major concern of career psychologists for many years" (Osipow, 1999). Career counselors are of necessity increasingly interested in helping out people who are undecided about their different career options. Spokane (1991) defined a career intervention as "any activity (treatment or effort) designed to enhance a person's career development or to enable that person to make more effective career decisions" (p.22). Career decisiveness is important since career indecision has also been shown to be negatively related to adjustment and well-being for college students (Kenny & Rice, 1995). Furthermore, Rottinghaus, Jenkins & Jantzer (2009) found that participants who had made a career decision were significantly less depressed than those who were undecided about their career. It can also be inferred that college students who had made a definite career choice were more conscientious than students who had not decided upon a career (Shafer, 2000). The present study aims to test the effectiveness of rational-emotive behavior therapy intervention in reducing adolescent career indecision.

Career Indecision and Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT)

Given that adolescence is the time of change that is exemplified by increased levels of personal searching (Jessor, Donovan, & Costa, 1991) and taking on of more mature life roles (Erikson, 1968), it is important to help adolescents reduce career indecision. Osipow (1999) pointed out that career indecision is a phenomenon in which persons are confronted with challenges in making choices regarding their career which tends to result in failure in achieving vocational commitment; thus perceived difficulties in making career choices exacerbate the need to have interventions that will address such pressing issues/problems. He further added that “career counseling for indecision is usually a cognitive based approach in which logical processes are employed in collecting, sifting, and evaluating relevant career and personal information.” In this study, career indecision will be measured using the Career Decision Profile (Jones & Lohmann, 1998).

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) is a form of Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT). Cognitive Behavior Therapy focuses on the premise that “people are active participants in the construction of their own reality” (Granvold, 1994, p.5). Meaning, since individuals are active agents they are capable of changing or evolving. The objective of this intervention is to pave the way towards self-clarity and decisiveness towards the participants’ career paths. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1987 cited in Kovalski and Horan, 1999) experimentally evaluated a cognitive restructuring program that focused on irrational beliefs related to career indecision. They reported that cognitive restructuring was more effective than both decision-making training and a no-treatment control condition in reducing anxiety about career decision making, encouraging individuals to explore possible careers, and helping clients learn practical skills. In Ellis’ ABCDE Model, A represents the activating event; B stands for irrational belief/s; C represents the emotional and behavioral consequences largely determined by the individual’s beliefs about this event; D stands for disputing the irrational beliefs and E represents an effective rational outlook accompanied by emotional and behavioral changes. Ellis was greatly influenced by Epictetus’ belief that “people are disturbed not by things, but by their view of things.” In effect, if people learn how to have rational thoughts regarding their view of things then they would see events differently.

The Present Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of the developed Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy Manual on career indecision of Filipino adolescents. A Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy Manual with six treatment modules was developed. The aim of these modules is for this population to learn and apply Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy to dispute irrational beliefs and replace them with rational ones to alleviate career indecision. It is hypothesized that the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy intervention can help the participants in determining how decided they are; how comfortable they are with their decision and understanding and having clarity with their career decision needs.

There are a limited number of studies done in the Philippine setting to assess the effectiveness of theoretically-grounded interventions pertaining to career (Garcia, Casas and Santos, 2007), thus it is pertinent to address this pressing concern by designing, implementing and assessing career interventions for this often ignored populace.

FRAMEWORK

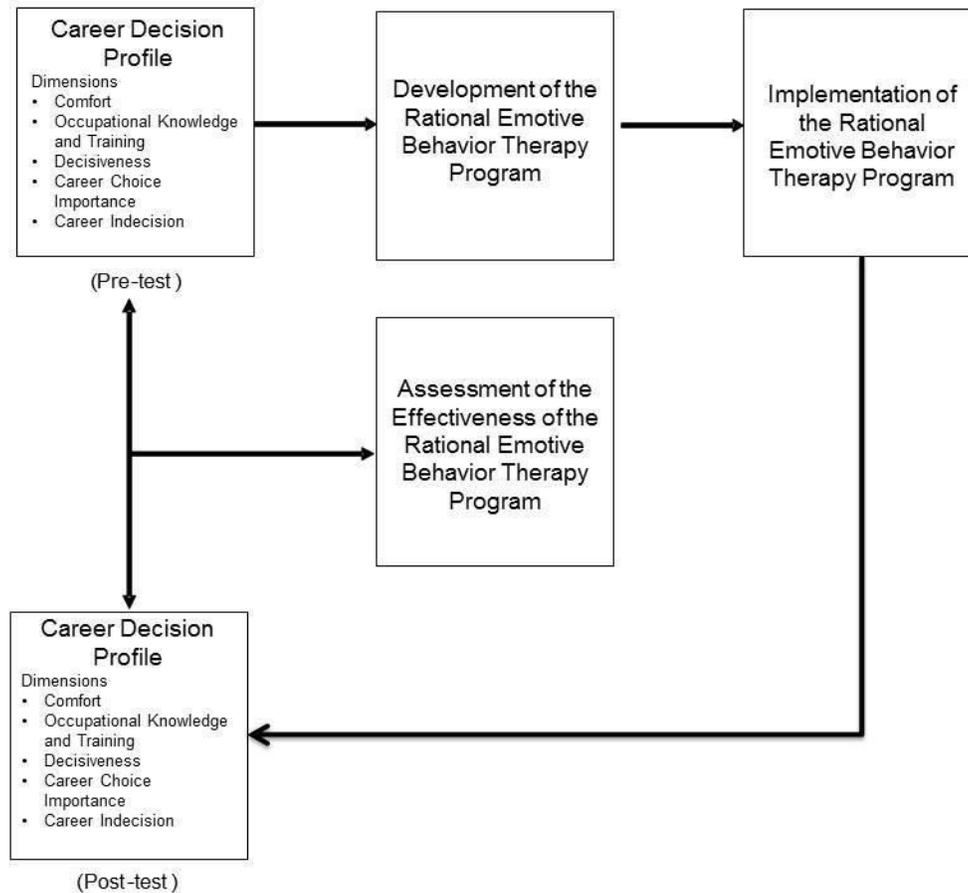


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for the Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy Manual

METHOD

Research Design

This study used the descriptive developmental method as its research design. It sought to assess the effectiveness of the developed Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy intervention in a State University in Manila.

Triangulation or the collection of information from multiple sources using a variety of methods was utilized. The following sources and methods were used:

1. Career Decision Profile (Jones & Lohmann, 1998)
2. Evaluation Form
3. Observation Notes

Participants

There were 298 third year students whose ages range from 17-19 from a State University in Manila. The participants mentioned that they feel that their course is flexible, that is why they are uncertain as to which industry (banking, hotel, airline, and restaurant) to penetrate. Moreover, they feel more pressured since they are already in their third year in college. The participants mentioned that there are vast options and with that comes vast concerns

regarding how decided they are to enter a particular industry and how comfortable they are with their career decision/s.

Instruments

There were three instruments utilized in this study to assess the effectiveness of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on Career Indecision.

Career Decision Profile

It is a 16-item inventory devised by Jones and Lohmann (1998) to measure an individual's level of career indecisiveness. The CDP can be used by counselors to (a) explore clients' career indecision, (b) screen for readiness, (c) determine the appropriate level of career services needed, and (d) evaluate counseling outcomes (Jones and Lohmann, 2012). It is a useful tool in career counseling. Upon completion of the intervention, the Career Decision Profile taken at the beginning and at the end of the sessions was compared to check if the members' career decisiveness has improved. The dimensions and its definitions from Jones' and Lohmann's CDP are the following: Decidedness is defined as, "how decided an individual perceives himself or herself to be in choosing an occupation." Comfort is defined as, "how comfortable he or she feels about progress in the process of making a choice." Self-Clarity is defined as, "the individual's perception of the clarity of their understanding of their interests, abilities, personality, and how they fit with different occupations." Knowledge about Occupations and Training is defined as, "how well informed respondents believe they are about they are about their occupations and educational programs that will fit their interests and abilities." Decisiveness is defined as, "how capable participants believe they are in making decisions without unnecessary delay, difficulty, or reliance on others." Career Choice Importance is defined as, "how important choosing and working in an occupation is at the time." Higher scores reflect lower levels of career indecision.

Group Counseling Evaluation Form

At the end of the 6 sessions, the members filled out the Group Counseling Evaluation Form to determine the effectiveness of the group therapy and its area/s for enhancement.

Observation Notes

This was utilized to assess how the respondents participated during the six sessions of the intervention. These observation notes were helpful during the intervention in continuously helping the respondents participate actively and comfortably during the intervention.

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was sought from the State University. Once permission was granted, informed consent forms were given. The next phase was the administration of the Career Decision Profile – CDP (Jones, 1998) to measure the career indecisiveness of the participants. Once the result of the pre-test of the CDP was computed and it showed that participants experience career indecisiveness, the development of the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy Manual was the next phase. Upon the completion and content validation of the developed Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy Manual within 3 weeks, the next step was the implementation of the six-session intervention (2 hours/session). There were 6 different sections utilized in this study. Each section had a pegged class size of 50 participants. For the 1st batch of participants for the intervention, it was held 3 times a day for the first 3 sections for the 1st week, 2 hours/session for each class and the same schedule for the 2nd batch of the remaining 3 sections applied for the following week to be able to complete the 298

participants. After the intervention, the CDP post test was administered. The effectiveness of the intervention was assessed by comparing pretest and posttest results.

RESULTS

The results of the Career Decision Profile of the respondents before and after the intervention are shown in Tables 1 and 2. The pretest or baseline observation allowed the researcher to determine the effectiveness of the intervention by comparing pretest and posttest results. Test of significant differences are also presented in Tables 3 and 4.

The Developed REBT Manual

The aim of the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy manual is for this population to dispute irrational beliefs and replace them with rational ones. With the intention of disputing irrational beliefs that the members hold about themselves in relation to career indecision, various activities (Mastering Ellis' ABCDE Model, scheduling worry time, refocusing, tapping social support, assertiveness training and goal-setting) were prepared. The developed manual for adolescents experiencing career indecision was content validated by three experts in the field of Education and Psychology. These 3 assessed the developed REBT program's validity, as well as each module's organization and quality.

The REBT Manual developed by one of the researchers Santos (2013), entitled Looking After Adolescents' Well-Being: REBT Group Manual for Reducing Adolescents' Career Indecision (published in International Journal of Research in Social Sciences Volume 3, Issue 1 [February 2013]) was utilized as the basis for the different modules with modifications for a bigger class size. The rationale of the intervention is to enhance the students' career decisiveness.

Career Decision Profile

The results of the Career Decision Profile of the respondents before and after the intervention are shown in Tables 1 and 2. The pretest or baseline observation allowed the researcher to determine the effectiveness of the intervention by comparing pretest and posttest results. Test of significant differences are also presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Before Intervention

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents' Career Indecision prior the Intervention

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Comfort	4.02	298	5.24
Self-Clarity	4.04	298	4.98
Occupational Knowledge and Training	4.50	298	5.18
Decisiveness	4.12	298	5.32
Career Choice Importance	4.00	298	5.23
Career Indecision	72.07	298	5.07

After Intervention

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents' Career Indecision after Intervention

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Comfort	5.30	298	4.65
Self-Clarity	6.85	298	3.98
Occupational Knowledge and Training	5.69	298	4.11
Decisiveness	5.45	298	4.84
Career Choice Importance	5.10	298	4.51
Career Indecision	83.89	298	4.03

Assessing the Effectiveness of the Developed REBT Manual

Table 3. Significant Difference Test for Career Indecision among Participants

<i>Career Indecision</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>Sig. (2 tailed)</i>
Pre-test	72.07	5.17	2.53	297	0.67	0.05
Post-test	83.89	4.35				

Self-Clarity

As shown in Table 3, there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test levels of career indecision after receiving the Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy Intervention. One dimension that contributed to this is self-clarity. This is in harmony with empirical data that indicates that self-clarity is a construct that strongly correlates with decisiveness (Jones & Lohmann, 1998).

Table 4. Significant Difference Test for Self-Clarity among Respondents

<i>Self-Clarity</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
Pre-test	4.04	4.98	2.16	297	.55	.05
Post-test	6.85	3.98				

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of the developed REBT Manual among adolescents experiencing career indecision. After the implementation of the developed REBT program, a post test was given to the participants. Results of the post test showed that the participants' career decisiveness has improved. Prior the implementation of the developed REBT Program, the participants' score in the Career Decision Profile is M=72.07 (SD=5.17). After the implementation of the developed program, the score in the post test was found to be M=83.89 (SD=4.35). The t-test for dependent samples was used to determine whether or not there is a significant difference between two groups of correlated scores in terms of means.

The results of the pre-test and post test revealed that there was a significant difference in the test scores between the pre-test and post-test ($p=.05$).

The results of the study are in harmony with that of Mitchell and Krumboltz' (1987 cited in Kovalski and Horan, 1999) which reported that cognitive restructuring focused on irrational beliefs related to career indecision was effective. Based on the results, it appears that the participants tend to gain a better understanding of themselves which lead to clarity in choosing a career (Patton and McMahon, 1999). This is reflected in the participants' score on self-clarity after the REBT intervention ($t(297) = 2.16, d=.55, p <.05$). Patton & McMahon (1999) pointed out that this could be due to the students gaining of better self-understanding which paves the way to a clearer career path.

Findings call for student programming and opportunities that foster the development of students' sense of self-awareness and understanding which tends to lead to self-clarity. Self-understanding paves the way for self-clarity which in turn paves the way for career decisiveness. This hypothesis was formulated because of the empirical data that indicated that self-clarity is a construct that strongly correlates with decisiveness (Jones & Lohmann, 1998). Self-understanding and Self-clarity is truly essential since we have to consider individual differences. We all have different aspirations, motivations and interests thus understanding oneself is a salient step in having career decisiveness. It is pertinent for adolescents to hone career decisiveness since it appears that higher levels of career decidedness are associated with higher levels of life satisfaction. Moreover, being indecisive may be a correlate of anxiety and depression (Fuqua, Seaworth, & Newman, 1987).

The implication of this would be for these adolescents to identify and modify their irrational beliefs to battle career indecision. It is important for this population to develop personal coping strategies that would enable them to focus and work on their rational beliefs with the end goal that eventually they could have clarity on their career choice/s and be comfortable with their career decision. Gaining a clearer and better understanding about the career decidedness and the intervention (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) used to reduce career indecisiveness will hopefully help career counselors better help students make a career decision.

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