

The Effectiveness of WDEP (Wants, Doing, Evaluation, Planning) Reality Counseling Model Career Decision-Making Difficulties in Grade XII Students at PGRI Vocational School

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ABSTRACT

The confusion of the five vocational high school students in determining their career direction is divided into three main categories, namely lack of readiness, lack of information, and inconsistent information. Based on the observation results, the five students showed significant hesitation when asked by the intern about their study and career plans, and did not immediately provide answers when asked directly. This study aims to test the effectiveness of reality counseling using the WDEP (wants, doing, evaluating, planning) model in dealing with career decision-making difficulties of grade XII students of SMK PGRI supported by pre-test and post-test. This research is compiled based on a report presented in the form of a scientific article with participants consisting of five grade XII students of SMK PGRI, identities are disguised to maintain confidentiality and research ethics. The reality counseling intervention of the WDEP (wants, doing, evaluating, planning) model includes an understanding of career decision-making. The results of the study showed that when supported by assessment and intervention, the entire series of assessments (observation, CDMDQ questionnaire, FGD, IST-RMIB-16PF psychological test) and group counseling intervention with a Reality approach (WDEP), it can be concluded that five students (AAF, AM, ARK, FDH, and IPH) experienced difficulties in making career decisions in the high category before the intervention. This obstacle is reflected in low psychological readiness, minimal information about themselves and the career world, and the inconsistency of information from the social environment.

Keywords: Reality Counseling, WDEP Model, Decision Difficulty, Career Decision Making, Vocational High School Students.

I. Introduction

Various complaints arose about the confusion surrounding career paths after graduating from vocational high school. When asked a simple question about post-graduation plans, whether they wanted to work immediately, continue their education to a higher level, or start a business, the five students appeared hesitant in answering the question. They took longer than their peers to answer, even occasionally displaying confused expressions and chuckling before responding. The students reported that they had not actively sought information about available career options, including information on which major to pursue if they



did decide to continue their education to university. This suggests that they are passive students, having not explored opportunities sufficiently based on their interests and competencies. When questioned further, they expressed a fear of making decisions, fearing making the wrong decision regarding their career or further education. This sense of uncertainty is further exacerbated by a lack of confidence in their abilities.

Students experienced confusion when asked about their study plans or career choices after graduating from vocational high school. These five students showed hesitation in their answers, with expressions of anxiety and worry evident. According to researchers, this stems from a lack of clarity about future career paths that align with their potential, interests, and the educational majors they pursue at school. This explains the students' confused expressions when asked about future careers after graduation. Furthermore, some students appeared to lack a detailed understanding of available career opportunities, both in the workplace and in further education. This limited information made it difficult for them to objectively determine their career options. Furthermore, these five students also followed their friends' choices without understanding the precise reasons for their choices. This has the potential to create an internal conflict between their desires and the expectations of their environment.

The five vocational high school students' confusion in determining their career direction can be explained through the Career Decision-Making Difficulties theory by Gati, Krausz, and Osipow (1996). This theory divides difficulties in making career decisions into three main categories: lack of readiness, lack of information, and inconsistent information. Based on observations, the five students showed significant hesitation when asked by the instructor about their study and career plans, and did not immediately provide answers when asked directly. This condition indicates a lack of readiness, where students are not yet psychologically prepared to make important decisions regarding their future. This can stem from a lack of motivation, low self-efficacy, or immaturity in forward-thinking (Gati et al., 1996). Furthermore, several students appeared to not understand the difference between majors or further study options, reflecting a lack of information, particularly regarding the world of work and the relevance of study and career. A brief probing also revealed a conflict between personal desires and parental expectations, indicating inconsistent information due to social pressure from the surrounding environment (Ma'ruf et al., 2022).

According to a journal by Ma'ruf et al. (2022) from Bosowa University, this condition is common among vocational high school students who have not received adequate career guidance at school. The lack of counseling sessions and the absence of interest and talent mapping programs contribute to students' unpreparedness in making career decisions. Therefore, it can be suspected that these five students are experiencing difficulties in making career decisions stemming from internal and external factors that are not yet well-organized. Interventions in the form of career counseling and increased career information literacy are urgently needed to help them complete the decision-making process optimally. Research gaps and the urgency of the study through various complaints of career decision-making doubts of vocational high school students. This study helps address the lack of research that assesses the effectiveness of reality counseling model WDEP (wants, doing, evaluation, planning) in addressing career decision-making difficulties of grade XII students of SMK PGRI supported by pre-test and post-test. The reality counseling model is a counseling approach that emphasizes personal responsibility. It focuses on present behavior, not past behavior. It helps individuals make more effective choices to meet their life needs. The purpose and benefits of this study are to examine the effectiveness of reality counseling model WDEP (wants, doing, evaluation, planning) in addressing career decision-making difficulties of grade XII students of SMK PGRI. The benefits of this study as a scientific contribution related to how the effectiveness of reality counseling model WDEP (wants, doing, evaluation, planning) in addressing career decision-making difficulties of grade XII students of SMK PGRI.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

According to the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Model (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996), the main obstacles experienced by students are Lack of Information (both about themselves, alternatives, and the decision-making process) and Lack of Readiness (doubt and anxiety that hinder readiness to start). This

condition indicates that students need support in the form of self-exploration, the provision of directed career information, and emotional and social guidance to be able to make career decisions more confidently and appropriately. This group of students exhibits psychological dynamics characterized by a low drive to determine a career. They continue to face various obstacles in the career decision-making process. Cognitively, this group of students demonstrates limited information about the world of work and further education, as well as difficulty thinking logically and systematically, and expressing ideas verbally. Regarding interests and talents, although their creative, imaginative, and information-receptive potential is beginning to emerge, this group of students lacks adequate self-awareness, making it difficult to concretely link their interests and talents to career paths. Behaviorally, students lack a clear understanding of the steps to take to determine a career and tend to go with the flow. Differences in patterns are evident in the tendency of some students to be more passive and independent, while others are more active and prefer social interaction.

Emotionally, there is confusion, doubt, and high levels of anxiety about the future, particularly the fear of choosing the wrong major or career, which can lead to low self-confidence. Socially, although students have the potential to adapt, limited verbal communication and school guidance support prevent them from optimally utilizing social interactions as a source of career information. Reality counseling was developed by William Glasser. It focuses on the decisions a person makes in life, emphasizing that everyone has a responsibility to determine their own direction (Corey, 2016). Career decision-making problems can be resolved using reality group counseling, as has also been done by Sonya et al. (2024). According to the reality counseling approach, a person can change their outlook on life, emotions, and behavior (Marsudi, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to determine the improvement of students' career decision-making abilities by implementing group counseling to provide solutions to students' career problems.

This reality group counseling can be used by students to create structured plans based on their cognitive criteria, interests, talents, and personality. Furthermore, students will be guided in determining new behaviors, enabling them to express their hopes and desires and demonstrate responsible behavior. This can be used as a way to change negative self-perceptions and help develop an optimistic attitude for the future (Astuti & Hastanti in Sonya et al., 2024). Specifically for Reality Counseling with the WDEP (Wants, Doing, Evaluation, Planning) model in Sonya et al.'s (2024) research, students after the counseling had the ability to make career decisions. This was also done in Yuliani's research; 2018 in Sonya et al. (2024) that after reality counseling with the WDEP model for the level of effectiveness of increasing career maturity had a high improvement category.

III. Research Method

This research design uses a pre-experimental method supported by a pretest–posttest. The subjects and research settings are 5 students of SMK PGRI Class XII. Research procedures (using FGD, interviews with 5 students of SMK PGRI Class XII). Description of Reality counseling with the WDEP model (Wants, Doing, Evaluation, Planning). Measurement instruments (using pretests based on materials) using data analysis techniques (Wilcoxon and semi-structured observation). The intervention designed for SMK PGRI Class XII students aims to strengthen career decision-making. The intervention program is designed in the form of interactive training, group discussions, role-plays based on real situations, and media to increase sensitivity to the importance of solving career decision-making difficulties for SMK PGRI Class XII students (Sugiyono, 2022).

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Analysis Result

The participant characteristics consisted of 5 Grade XII students of SMK PGRI. The assessment was structured, with the practitioner distributing pretest and posttest questionnaires. The assessment process took place during free class hours at SMK PGRI, with the number of sessions according to the predetermined



activity plan. The results of environmental observations, student interviews, and FGDs showed that students were still in a state of career unpreparedness characterized by doubt, confusion, and uncertainty in making decisions about their future. Most students admitted that they did not feel ready to make career decisions, and when faced with questions about future plans, they tended to respond with feelings of confusion, fear of being wrong, or even choosing to remain silent.

a. Reality Counseling Model WDEP (Wants, Doing, Evaluation, Planning)

Reality counseling, developed by William Glasser, focuses on the decisions a person makes in life, emphasizing that each person has the responsibility to determine their own direction (Corey, 2016). Career decision-making problems can be addressed using reality group counseling, as has also been done by Sonya et al. (2024). The reality counseling approach states that a person can change their outlook on life, emotions, and behavior (Marsudi, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to determine the improvement of students' career decision-making abilities by implementing group counseling to provide solutions to students' career problems. This reality group counseling can be used by students to create structured plans based on their cognitive criteria, interests, talents, and personality. Furthermore, students will be guided in determining new behaviors, enabling them to express their hopes and desires and demonstrate responsible behavior. This can be used as a way to change negative self-perceptions and help develop an optimistic attitude for the future (Astuti & Hastanti in Sonya et al., 2024).

Specifically, in the study of Sonya et al. (2024), Reality Counseling with the WDEP (Wants, Doing, Evaluation, Planning) model demonstrated that students improved their career decision-making skills after counseling. This finding was also confirmed in Yuliani's study in 2018, in which Sonya et al. (2024) found that after reality counseling with the WDEP model, the effectiveness of increasing career maturity was high. Therefore, according to practitioners, the WDEP approach in group counseling not only provides a clear structure for the intervention process but also helps students understand themselves and gain information about their future careers, thus enabling them to make informed career decisions and assume responsibility for their future.

b. Assessment of Handling Difficulties in Career Decision Making

Observations were conducted by the intern in a participatory manner during a psychology service activity in a 12th grade vocational high school attended by 30 of the 40 registered students. The intern acted as a facilitator in the counseling session, which aimed to introduce psychology services at the school and conduct initial observations on students' career readiness. During the session, the intern asked all students open-ended questions about their plans after graduating from vocational high school. The questions were exploratory, covering the options of continuing their studies, working, or starting a business. Most students responded confidently, both verbally and nonverbally, and were able to convey the direction of their career plans specifically, such as mentioning the name of the college, type of work, or business field of interest.

However, five students consistently displayed different responses. When asked about future plans, they displayed nonverbal expressions such as confused faces, hesitant laughter, and even prolonged silence before finally answering "I don't know." Even after further probing by the intern, these five students still did not provide concrete answers. Their responses remained statements of ignorance or answers indicating confusion, in contrast to their peers, who tended to be confident and clear in their answers. The pattern was consistent: these five students appeared passive in discussions, exhibited closed body language (e.g., looking down, avoiding eye contact), and appeared unenthusiastic about their future. This indicates possible difficulties in the career exploration and decision-making process. These findings provide initial indications that these five students may be experiencing obstacles to career readiness, both in terms of motivation, self-awareness and career choices, and social influences. These results will serve as the basis for further assessments to further explore the factors influencing their unclear career direction.

4.2. Discussion

Interpretation of research results with interventions was carried out through a series of qualitative practices, conveying descriptive, evaluative, and quantitative methods. The quantitative assessment method was carried out by administering the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDMDQ) questionnaire as during the assessment to all subjects and applying it as a posttest after the intervention series was completed. All students experienced a decrease in career decision-making difficulty scores from pretest to posttest, but there were still some students who scored in the moderate category despite the intervention. This indicates that although the intervention has had a positive impact, not all obstacles have been optimally overcome. Several possible causes of this condition include fatigue during the post-test, which can affect concentration in answering questions, as well as unstable psychological conditions such as anxiety or a lack of confidence that persist when facing the post-test questionnaire. This may have caused a decrease in focus and motivation during the test process and during the intervention, which can affect the results obtained. Thus, although the post-test results showed a positive score, indicating a decrease in career decision-making difficulty scores for all students, this situation still requires a continuous approach to these students. Additional support in the form of individual counseling, increased learning motivation, and more intensive mentoring will help students who are still in the middle category to become more confident, self-assured, and able to make the right career decisions in the future.

Practical implications for schools include the need for guidance counselors to regularly monitor students' progress in implementing their career plans. Monitoring involves reviewing the progress of the planned steps, including providing guidance to students to stay on track and prevent them from returning to the confusion or doubt experienced before the intervention. This includes strengthening career guidance services in schools through the provision of more systematic career education programs. These programs can include post-vocational high school education pathways, introduction to the world of work according to vocational programs, soft skills training, and workshops to prepare for continuing studies or entering the workforce. These programs are expected to enhance students' career resources and help them connect assessment results with opportunities and demands in the workforce.

The study's sample size was limited to 12th-grade students at SMK PGRI, so the assessment results and interventions ensured that these students' career readiness improvements continued after the intervention. Some students remained in the moderate category, requiring additional guidance to strengthen their career choices. Therefore, guidance counselors are advised to provide simple individual counseling to help students re-explore their interests, potential, and any remaining obstacles. Furthermore, regular monitoring should be conducted every two to four weeks to assess the progress of the career plan, including evaluating the steps students have taken and any obstacles they encounter. Schools can also support this process by providing easily accessible career information, such as information on college majors, job opportunities, or training programs. Parents are expected to be involved by providing emotional support and open discussion so students feel safe expressing their choices. Students are also encouraged to take small but consistent steps, such as seeking additional information, participating in self-development activities, or strengthening basic skills relevant to their chosen career.

V. Conclusion

Based on the above description, the intervention results were demonstrated through a series of qualitative practices delivered descriptively, evaluatively, and quantitatively. The quantitative assessment method was conducted by administering the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDMDQ) questionnaire, as in the assessment, to all subjects and applying it as a posttest after the intervention series was completed. All students experienced a decrease in career decision-making difficulty scores from pretest to posttest, but some students still had moderate scores despite the intervention. This indicates that although the intervention has had a positive impact, not all obstacles have been optimally addressed. Several possible

causes of this condition include fatigue during the post-test, which can affect concentration in answering questions, and unstable psychological conditions such as anxiety or a lack of self-confidence that persist when facing the post-test questionnaire. This may have caused a decrease in focus and motivation during the test process and during the intervention, which can affect the results obtained. Thus, although the post-test results showed a positive score indicating a decrease in career decision-making difficulty scores for all students, this situation still requires a continuous approach to these students. Additional support in the form of individual counseling, increased learning motivation, and more intensive mentoring will help students who are still in the moderate category become more confident and able to make informed career decisions in the future. Recommendations for program development and further research include building on the assessment results and interventions that have been implemented, ensuring that these students' career readiness improvements continue after the intervention. Some students remain in the moderate category, requiring additional mentoring to help them become more confident in their career choices. Therefore, guidance counselors are advised to provide simple individual counseling to help students re-explore their interests, potential, and any perceived obstacles. Furthermore, regular monitoring is necessary every two to four weeks to assess the progress of their career plans, including evaluating the steps students have taken and any obstacles that arise. Schools can also support this process by providing easily accessible career information, such as information on college majors, job opportunities, or training programs.

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