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Academic Values Clarification as a Group Counseling Technique with Low Academic Need Achievement Level Students

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Introduction and Background

Need achievement motivation is a hypothetical construct designed to explain inter – individual and intra – individual differences in the orientation, intensity and consistency of achievement behaviour. School administrators, teachers, counseling psychologists and other school workers are particularly interested in the patterns of academic achievement behaviours of their students. Counselling as an important service programme in the school setting has to complement the efforts of other school staff in promoting good academic behaviours among students. Achievement motivation being regarded as underlying personality characteristic (Dimmock,2004; Ijaduola,2000) which involves a learned predisposition to attain success in competition with an internationalized standard of excellence and noted by Olatoye (2004) as a critical variable that have important implications for individuals approach, persistence, selection and performance on cognitive tasks, should be of tremendous interest to counseling psychologists. Research oriented practicum efforts directed towards the establishment of solid methodological base for stimulating; developing and strengthening academic achievement motivation among students are indeed urgently required to give a boost to counseling effectiveness in our educational system.

Need Achievement Motivation and Learning

Achievement motivation is a personality construct common to all, which can be developed, stimulated and even measured. Its variation among human population had been attributed to such factors as age, sex, vulture, social class membership, ethnic origin and personality structure (Ausubel, 1998 in Aluede (2006). Within the school setting, achievement motivation drive components are triadic in nature and these are cognitive, Ego-enhancing and Affiliative drive components. The relative degree to which each drive component would be dominant vary with individuals developmental stages. James & Culliland (2005) also postulated that the tendency to achieve success in any activity was a manipulative function of motive to achieve success, the strength of expectancy that performance of a task will be followed by success and incentive value of success. All these support the assumption that people could be helped to help to have enhanced need achievement motivation. Ehwarieme & Ogbogbo (2007) identified low medium and high need achievement persons and noted that the achievement motivated individual has high aspiration level, has a strong striving for upward mobility and likes to perform well among other things. Learners who have little need to know and understand expend little learning effort, manifest an insufficiently meaningful learning set, fail to develop precise meanings and do not devote enough time and effort to practice and review. However, the casual relationship between motivation and learning is typically reciprocal rather than un-directional and most students lose interest in school studies as a result of inability to see any need for so doing. Hence it is anticipated that values clarifications counseling would foster the need to achieve academically and subsequent learning experiences and consequences would re-enforce and motivate further learning.

Academic Values Clarification

Values clarification as a method of teaching values was exposed in Ajayi, Adewale & Muraina (2006) and it can be used on any subject matter that is value related. Academics being one of the concerned of school – going adolescents would definitely be of value to them. Values clarification is a process of helping people identify, choose, price and act values with reference to a specific subject matter. However, due to nature of social and cognitive levels of development of the adolescents, many subject matters and phenomenal would appeal to them on which they would be ready to expend time and energy depending on the degree of values so attached. The assumption is that those low academic need achievement students, if taken through group counseling sessions, employing values clarification techniques, are likely to enhance achievement motivation levels and tendency to achieve success in academics.

Hypothesis Tested

The following null hypothesis was tested at .01 level of significant:

That there will be no significant different between the post- counseling achievement motivation. Mean Scores of subject in the counseling and control groups.

Methodology

Subjects: Thirty two low academic need achievement subjects (18M, 14F) participated in the study. Their ages ranged between 14 and 17 years approximately. They were selected from four arms of form IV of a secondary school. To ensure initial equality of the counseled and control group on the dependent variables, that is achievement motivation and its component; the groups' pre- counseling Mean Scores where compared using t-test. None of the compared Mean Scores was statically significant.

Instrument: To obtain the pre and post counseling scores on academic need achievement and its components. Academic Need Achievements Scale by Bakare (1976) was used. The scale with a reliability co- efficient of .84 when administered twice to a group of V students and test- retest reliability of .79 and .75 respectively when administered on all male and all female groups was designed to measure the three components of Achievement Motivation.

Procedure: Academic Need Achievement Scale was administered to four arms of SSS2 students of school on class basis and scored. Those who scored 35 and below on each of the three components were regarded as low-Need achievement students and were selected for the study. There were 32 of them spreading across the classes A, B, C, & D. A &D, B & C were randomly assigned to counseling and control group respectively.

For the two counseling groups, A & D there was initial structuring on general group counseling procedures and on values clarification procedures. There were six (35 – 40 minutes) group counseling sessions for each group. Academic Need Achievement Scale was again administered to the group, one week after three weeks counseling sessions. The post-counseling mean scores of the control and counseled groups were compared using t-test statistics.

Results and Discussions

To test the hypothesis that there will be no significant difference between the post counseling mean

score of the subjects in the counseling and control groups on the dependent variable their mean scores were compared using t-test. The result showed that there was statistically significant differences in their Mean Scores (Table 1) on

(i) Cognitive Drive component of need achievement motivation, $t = 13.59$, $P < .01$; (ii) Ego – enhancing drive component, $t = 12.26$, $P < .01$; (iii) Affiliative drive component, $t = 16.36$, $P < .01$; and Academic Need Achievement Motivation, $t = 29.36$, $P < .01$. The hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Table 1: T-test Comparison of Post-Counseling Mean Scores of the Counseled and Control Groups on the Dependent Variables

	Values Clarification Counseling Group N = 17		Control Group N = 15			
Dependent variables	X	SD	X	SD	t	p
Cog. Drive	45.35	5.8	34.55	4.2	13.59	.01
Ego. Drive	40.49	6.15	33.1	3.3	12.26	.01
Aff. Drive	46.61	4.2	34.56	4.5	16.36	.01
Need-Ach Motivation	132.45	10.25	102.21	6.47	29.36	.01

Discussion of Findings

The results that counseled students differed significantly on the dependent variables from those in the control group implied that values clarification technique when used as a counseling technique is helpful in enhancing students' academic achievement motivation. The technique is also useful in instigating the three drive components of achievement motivation as these are similar to what Jacob (2006) described as the ABC of counseling, that is the Affect, the Behaviour and the Cognitive dimension of counseling. Values clarification as a group counseling technique provides didactic and experiencing opportunities where by students attitudes towards academic are influenced positively through exposure to additional information. During the counseling period, clients were encourage to act out some suggestions from the group these seemed to have effect on the ego-enhancing component of their achievement motivation. This is particularly meaningful and helpful to the client as ego-enhancing drive is rated as the dominant component of achievement motivation in adolescent and adult life (Ausubel,

1968). During counseling session, clients were encourage to personally considered values, choose and pronounce publicly is interest and preferences among the alternatives.

The result further suggested that when an individual is been encourage to be aware of a number of possible value of academics, is been asked to choose from among the values, is been asked to price and affirm them publicly in a group counseling situation and later to act this values repeatedly and consistently, as in values clarifications procedures, the individual is been instigated to be more concerned about academic, success and achievement. By increasing awareness in the area of values of knowing and understanding and in the social, economic and psychological expedencies associated with good academic performance in our culture, we are laying foundation for setting appropriate goals with a very strong tendency towards a standard of excellence in achieving the goals. Value clarification can therefore be regarded as a sensitive group counseling technique for fostering academic achievement motivation in general among low need-achievement students.

Conclusion

Low academic need achievement students exposed to values clarification experiences in group counseling situations should be able to manifest stronger desire to know and understand to maser knowledge, to formulate and solve problems than a similar group of students that was not. The counseling effect of academic values clarification had helped the subject to develop perceived need for school learning activities which Crits & Siqueland (2005) recognized as an important factor in shaping motivation to learning among school children. (Jacob, 2006; Young, 2006 & Coon, 2000) further stressed that learning activity should acquire a particular value in the eye of the students that they could recognize and acknowledge. The results of this study have demonstrated that values clarification as a counseling technique could improve students' to learn and it's no exaggeration that the issue of motivation is central to the practicalities of today's class room.

Through group interactions, school counselors can organize values clarification sessions based on specific subject matters. They also can organize brainstorming session on values clarification. However attention should be paid to the sequential stages of values clarification procedures when employed. Values clarification is a relatively new technique especially as adapted to group counseling and it should be made more popular for reasons of its potentials, practicability and applicability.

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