

Career Planning Program to Increase Career Search Self Efficacy in Fresh Graduates

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Individuals with high career search self efficacy (CSSE) will have efficacy to perform career exploration activities. The purpose of this experimental research was to obtain the effectiveness of career planning program in increasing participant's CSSE. Participants of this study were 39 fresh graduate bachelors and were classified into experimental and control group. This research used untreated control group with pre-test and post-test experimental design. Data were analyzed using analysis of variance mix. The result showed that career planning program is effective to increase CSSE ($F=37,243$, $p<0,05$) and more active in career exploration. Implications of these findings for research, practice, and education were discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Work is an important aspect and part of human desires. Work has a role as more than preserving foods, shelters and other fundamental elements necessary for living. Work gives a person a sense of direction, challenge, self-fulfillment and self development (Baruch, 2004). Fresh graduate bachelors will step into the next stage of life, as a prospective new worker. After graduation, they will be forced to make a decision whether to enroll in a higher education or to find a job.

The reality shows that in Indonesia, job opportunities are still very much limited and have not yet covered the fresh graduates from all colleges and universities or the new working forces. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistic on February 2010 shows that the number of open unemployment¹ with a bachelor degrees is about 802.020 (www.bps.go.id accessed on April 6th 2010).

Smith and Gast (1998) said that the technological advancement and change in the labor market along with the global economical transition are the possible reasons why the complex problem of making career decision occurs (as cited in Resse & Miller, 2006). Besides that, Wuthnow (2003) adds that the expected elements from a career are its meaning and its function as extension of identity, not only its financial security anymore nowadays (as cited in Resse & Miller, 2006). This shows that career problem is not only about how to get a job but also to get the right career to fulfill one's desire and expectation. These conditions lead to a more complex problem and a bigger effort to deal with.

Preliminary interviews with three fresh graduate bachelors showed that in general, lack of prior career information leads to career problem. They have limited information about career in their field of interest, they have low effort in finding information about it, and they don't have clear objective or clear career vision and lack of self exploration and have difficulty in finding choice of career. To face these

challenges, fresh graduates need to obtain knowledge about themselves and their working environment so they have an efficacy for getting a job that fits them.

Bandura (1997) explains that self efficacy is a state where a person believes that one have the ability to bring about a certain behavior or its combination. Phillips and Russell (as cited in Mullikin, Bakken & Betz, 2007, p. 368) also stated, "If people believe that they have the ability to successfully complete a given behavior, they will be more likely to engage in that behavior". Main argument of self efficacy theory is that an individual has control over the result want to be achieved. Self efficacy affects a person's stress level in facing problem. An individual with high level of self efficacy considers problem as a challenge rather than threat. Bandura (1997) also states that self efficacy can be modified and learned.

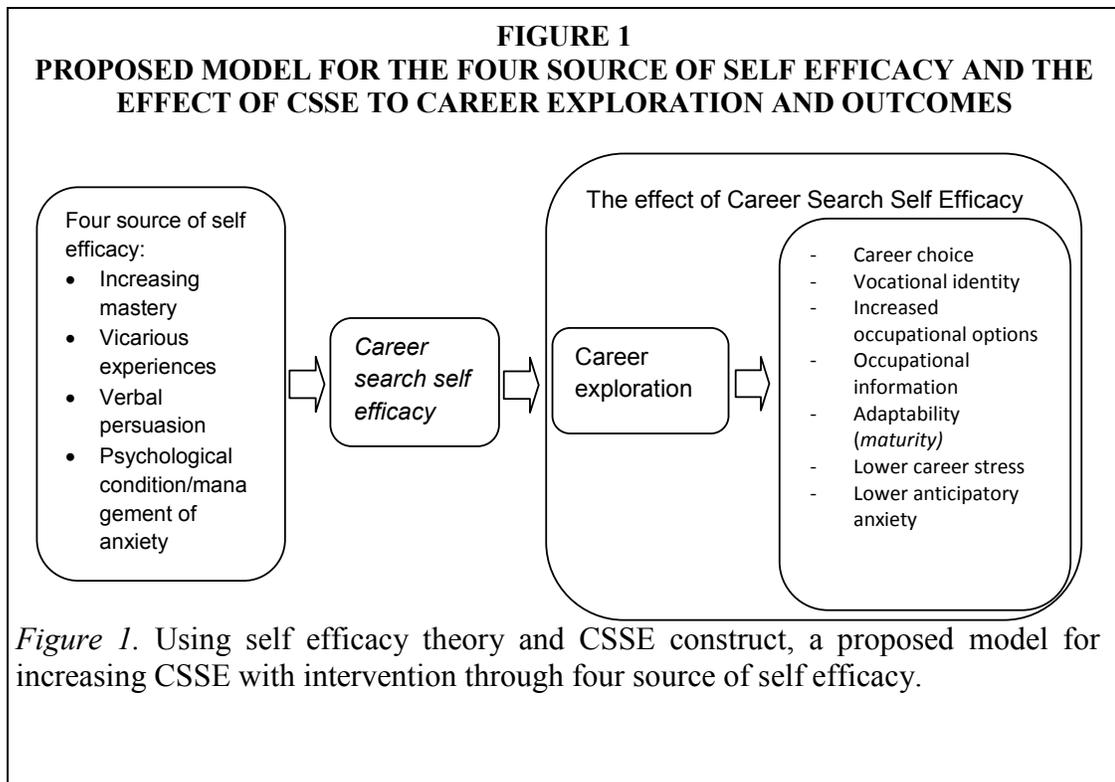
Individuals are expected to be able to adapt with transitions throughout their career journey. Some of the transitions are from freshman to graduate, from the first job to another. Solberg, Good, Nord, Holm, Hohner, Zima, et al., (1994) argues that a theoretical construction which explains how to increase the ability to adapt this kind of situation is self efficacy in career achievement, or a construct from Solberg called "career search self efficacy" (CSSE).

CSSE refers to a person's belief in their ability to successfully perform a variety of career exploration activities. Including their judgment in the ability to successfully explore personal values and interests, to build effective networks with professionals in the field of interest, and to be successful in their interview for a job, etc. (Solberg, Brown, Good, Fiscer, & Nord, 1995; Solberg 1998). It can be said that individual with self efficacy will be more active to explore both him/herself and his/her career options (Ryan, Solberg & Brown, 1996). Research done by Nota, Ferrari, Solberg & Soresi (2007) showed that an individual with career search self efficacy has lower career indecision.

Based on Bandura's self efficacy theory, Solberg (1998) states that individuals with high self efficacy will actively collect information which is beneficial to their choice of career, will build networks and improve his/her self capabilities. Individuals with high self efficacy will also play role as an active agent to decide his/her success in finding a job. Furthermore, CSSE is expected to lower the level of job searching related stress. CSSE enable individuals to enforce all capacities, include cognitive, affective, and behavior needed to manage the problem (Solberg, 1998).

In line with Bandura's theory, Solberg (1998) emphasizes the need to design an intervention strategy to enhance CSSE in order to promote career exploration behavior. An Intervention program should focus on increasing mastery, vicarious and persuasive experience, and improving psychological condition such as improving anxiety management skill (Solberg, Good, & Nord, Holm, Hohner, Zima et al, 1994).

The advantage of self efficacy theory in improving career exploration is that the immediate environment of the individual play an effective role in building stronger CSSE expectations (Solberg, 1998). Solberg (1998, p. 190) also said that "whether an individual's agency is low, family back ground is less then desirable, or identity status is problematic, still it is expected that career exploration will be facilitated by engineering a learning environment designed to build stronger Career Search-Self Efficacy expectation". So, using an intervention program such as career planning program with experiential learning system to build stronger CSSE in individual, considered to be a more effective way than intervention in the individual's agency or identity status.



Bandura (1997) stated that self efficacy grows and develops through four sources, such as: (1) increasing mastery, achievements experienced by the individual; (2) vicarious experiences, other person's experiences with similar characteristic to the related individual; (3) verbal persuasion, both from self-encouragement and other people, or either one of them, and (4) improving anxiety management skill. Therefore, Solberg (1998) argued that intervention strategies to increase CSSE should be based on these four sources of self efficacy introduced by Bandura. Furthermore, Solberg et al., (1995) also stated that a CSSE enhancement program would be more effective for job seekers rather than other personal behavioral enhancement programs. Solberg et al., (1995) also argued that CSSE is the direct determinant in job seeking and career decision.

Career planning is a dynamic process, adaptable to changes in the students' experience as they build their professional knowledge, experience, and identity (Waddel & Maggie, 2005). Fundamental element in career planning is self-discovery, where the individual went through self evaluation, a process where he/she check their own personal values, in context with his/her learned expertise and with the professional environment around them. Clark (Waddel & Maggie, 2005) describe the process as "self-conceptualization and identity-formation". Active and structured participation in self discovery could help students to reflect their values and professional attitude that is still growing inside them. And also in learning and improving skills which could help them to be successful and achieve self esteem in participating into the working environment.

Solberg (1998) stated that self efficacy increased when someone successfully reached a targeted behavior. A person's self efficacy in an interview to find information about a job can be increased by role play with the counselor. Verbal persuasion will be effective when the counselor is able to describe how to learn the skills in career search activities. Vicarious experiences include modeling and the opportunity to observe other people's works in career search activities. Solberg, Gusavac, Felch, & Hamann (as cited in Solberg, 1998) added that anxiety management can be facilitated through combination of respiration, relaxation, and cognitive construction exercises.

Career planning is a phased process. Jaffe & Scott (1991) stated five stages in career planning; (1) self assessment, in this stage the individual will explore his/her dreams, objectives, interests, capabilities, values, and weaknesses; (2) explore possibilities, after seeing inside the self and explore what are his/her interests and objectives, the individual then needs to see the outside world and explore opportunities; (3) create a plan, in this stage the individual separates all things that have been learned about him/herself and career opportunities, then arranging the career plan; (4) take action, the plan that had been made have to be put into action. The key is to find daily activities that support the objectives, to divide plans into weekly activities and to keep looking for new chances; and (5) evaluate the outcome, after implementing the above stages, the next step is to ask one's self on how one's feels, seeing the options, and the things that had been done.

Career planning program is given through workshop, based on experiential learning method. A learning process takes place when an individual does activities, pays attention, analyzes the on going activities critically, and then finds understanding that can be concluded as a lesson for behavioral modification for the near future (Kolb, 1984). Bandura (1987) said that experiential learning can help building self efficacy. This career planning program also intended to increase self efficacy by increasing the process of self evaluation or assessment and self discovery, knowing the professional environment, designing the future and preparing the self for action. This research developed a career planning program based on five stages of career planning from Jaffe and Scott (1991) and based on Solberg's CSSE theory (1998).

Career planning program will increase the source of self efficacy by increasing mastery, verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences. The increasing sources of self efficacy will result in the increased CSSE. Based on above explorations, the objective of this research is to increase CSSE through career planning program. The alternate hypothesis is that career planning program increases CSSE in fresh graduate.

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

The process of sampling was started by publishing the career planning program in the website owned by career center institute for one week. People who were interested applied via e-mails. Out of 180 people applied for this program, 40 were randomly selected to be participants. The participants were then randomly assigned into an experimental group and a control group with 20 participants in each group. Then the chosen participants were contacted by phones to ask their consent to participate in career planning program. All participants in both group are given CSSE scale as a pre test after that the participants from the experimental group were asked to join the first phase and the control group the second. All participants from experimental group consented to involve throughout career planning program process and 19 out of 20 participants in the control group involved in the whole career planning program.

After carrying out the career planning program, the experiment group was given a post test. Then the day after, the experiment group was divided into three groups to carry out focused group discussion for about one and a half hours for each group. And after that the experiment groups were asked to fill in the diary for about fifteen days. After three weeks, the participants from the experiment group were given follow up test to see if the changes that happen after the intervention was given still stay on the participants. The three weeks before the follow ups to see whether the intervention stays or not after the intervention given is considered to be adequate by the researcher. The three weeks considered to be adequate to represent job seeking appropriate with the career choice because of the dynamic of job seeking competition in the working field that gives the opportunity for the job seeker to readily join the working selection. The three weeks given before carrying on the follow up test were also meant to reduce the possibility of losing another participant able to participate in the follow up test for reasons such as already find a job and moving out to other city. Meanwhile the control group after receiving the pre test

was asked to fill in the diary for fifteen days. After two weeks, the control group was given the post test before carrying out the second phase while collecting the diary.

Measures

CSSE Scale

This scale is modified from Solberg's (1994) CSSE scale (35 items). This scale consists of four dimensions: job search efficacy (14 items), interviewing efficacy (9 items), networking efficacy (7 items), and personal exploration efficacy (5 items). The higher score an individual obtains the higher level of CSSE the individual has, and vice versa. This scale consists of 5 continuums of answers, from very certain to very uncertain.

The reliability of the CSSE scale is tested using *Cronbach's Alpha* technique formula with 145 participants. The result shows that the alpha reliability of the scale is 0.963. None of the items fail from the total 35 items. All the items meet the requirement with total items correlation coefficient from 0,377 to 0,787.

CSSE scale which is used before and after the test, and the follow up has different formats, either its display or item sequences. It is done to prevent a carry over effect that can threat the internal validity.

Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion is used as a tool to support the quantitative findings of the research (Waddel & Maggie, 2005). Focus group discussion is also used to understand participant's personal perceptions and experiences throughout career planning program (Waddel & Maggie, 2005). The open-coding technique was used to analyze the data.

Daily Journal

To monitor their career exploration activities, participants were asked to write their daily activities on a diary for fifteen days. Participants in the experimental group started to write on the diary right after the completion of career planning program. Participants in the control group started to write on the diary after the pretest. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. Furthermore, cross tab analysis method was also used to produce the frequencies distribution table. The frequency distribution table consists of factors of CSSE approved on each participant's journal. The frequencies from the control group and the experimental group will then be compared.

Experimental Design

This research used untreated control group with pre-test and post-test experimental design (Cook & Cambell, 1979). We gave the experimental group the career planning program as the intervention and the control group was given none.

TABLE 1
EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN: PRETEST – POSTTEST CONTROL
GROUP DESIGN OF CAREER PLANNING PROGRAM TO
INCREASE CSSE

Group			
(EG)	O1	(X)	O2
(CG)	O1	(-)	O2

Note: (EG): (experimental group); (CG): (control group); O1: CSSE pre test; O2: CSSE post test; O3: CSSE follow up test; (X): career planning program; and (-): without intervention

Intervention

Module Compiling

Modules in career planning program were developed based on Jaffe and Scott's (1991) theoretical framework and Solberg's theory (1998). The materials consist of exploration and self valuation, the exploration of opportunity, career planning arrangement and self preparation for action phase. Career planning program is arranged in four sessions and carried out in two days.

Professional Judgment and Module Try Out

Modules try out was applied to participants with similar characteristic to research participant. The objectives of the try out is to test and to identify the sufficient time for each session, the flow and connections, conformation between the participant's understanding on the objectives from each sessions and the use of it, input for career planning book and to obtain inputs and feedbacks from participants. All kind of adjustments was done after the testing. In addition, professional judgment was also used to test the modules.

Implementation of Career Planning Program

The program was conducted by a trainer with ten years experience in training and in the career needs. Career planning program was divided into four sessions in two days. The four sessions of career planning program consist of:

- a. Exploration session and self evaluation which contain materials which facilitate participants to understand themselves and their career interest. Participants were also urged to do the SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat) analysis on themselves and were asked to make a list of their capabilities and activities they have done and other things they need to have and to achieve. Then participants were guided, by the inventories on characteristics of jobs that can help them to decide the objectives of their careers. Afterwards, they were asked to arrange their career visions and plans using the SMART technique (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely). Imagery reflection was then used to help finding their career objectives. This session was ended by reflections and temporary career objectives determination;
- b. Opportunities exploration session is a session that encourages participants to explore their career opportunities. In this session participants were asked to make their own career map. In this process, participants were also helped by the result of their inventory, in order to have a picture of a career that might suit them. This session introduced tricks on how to gather information on the

career they interested in so they won't choose the wrong career objectives. In this session, participants exercised informational interview. This session was ended by reflections on career choices;

- c. career arrangement session contains of how to plan some measurable and appropriate actions in details to achieve the career objectives;
- d. preparations and in action session contains materials that could boost the capability of the participants in promoting themselves trough excellent curriculum vitae, simulation on job interview and doing real action by making daily and monthly plans. This session was ended by evaluations on participants' career choice.

Statistic and Data Analysis

Mix analysis of variance was used to analyze the differences of CSEE between control and experimental group before and after intervention (Sani & Todman, 2006). Content analysis was used to analyze data obtained from focus group discussion and diary report to compare career exploration activities of experiment and control group.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

TABLE 2
MINIMUM, MAXIMUM, MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF CSSE SCALE SCORE FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND CONTROL GROUP

CSSE Scale	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre Test Experimental Group	20	77.00	165.00	115.95	18.12087
Post Test Experimental Group	20	125.00	169.00	145.00	13.85261
Pre Test Control Group	19	81.00	170.00	127.21	23.68445
Post Test Control Group	19	97.00	171.00	127.21	20.68703

Table two shows that the average pre test of the experiment group is 115.95 and the average on the final test is 145. It can be concluded that there is 29.05 points increase on the average of CSSE in the experimental group, while there is no increase of CSSE in the control group.

Hypothesis Testing

The normality test shows pre-test's p value = 0.884 and post test's p value = 0.994. Both of these values are bigger than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed. Homogeneity test was done by using *Levene's test* with testing conduct value of $p > 0.05$. The result shows that the distribution of data's were homogeneous with pretest's p value = 0.121 and pretest's p value = 0.94. Normal distribution and homogeneity test shows that the sample complies with parametric statistic requirements. Therefore, Mix ANOVA was used to test hypothesis.

Table three provides the result of Mix analysis of variance between pre and post-test of the experimental group and control group ($F=37.243$, $p < 0.05$). The value of the group interaction and partial eta squared was 50.2%. *Post hoc* analyses are summarized in table four. There's a significant difference between pre and post-test of experimental group ($p < 0.05$), but there is no significant difference between pre and post-test of control group ($p > 0.05$). These test show that there is enough evidence to support the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between means of pre and post-test scores of the experimental group and control group. Therefore, it is evidently appropriate to conclude that the career planning program increases the CSSE.

TABLE 3
SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE MIX OF CSSE SCALE SCORE

Source		JK	Db	RK	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
In the group	Test	4111.320	1	4111.320	37.243	0.000	.502
	Group test *	4111.320	1	4111.320	37.243	0.000	.502
	Error (test)	4084.475	37	110.391			
Between group	Group	207.671	1	207.671	.326	.572	.009
	Error	23600.791	37	637.859			

TABLE 4
THE RESULT ON POST HOC TESTING USING TUKEY TECHNIQUES FOR CSSE SCALE SCORE

Group	Group	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Pre Test Experimental	Pre Test Control	-11.2605	6.19654	.274
	Post Test Control	-11.2605	6.19654	.274
Pre Test Control	Post Test Control	.0000	6.27548	1.000
Post Test Experimental	Pre Test Experimental	29.0500*	6.11658	.000
	Pre Test Control	17.7895*	6.19654	.027
	Post Test Control	17.7895*	6.19654	.027

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Follow Up

After three weeks, a follow up test was conducted to confirm the persistence of the intervention effects on participants in experimental group. Table five shows that there's no significant difference between means of CSSE scores of the post and follow up test (0,994, $p < 0.05$).

TABLE 5
SIGNIFICATION IN THE PRE, POST AND FOLLOW UP TEST

Test	Test	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
follow up	pre test	28.55000*	4.65097	.000
	post test	-.50000	4.65097	.994

The mean of pre test in the experiment group is 115.95, the mean in the post test is 145, and the mean of follow up test is 144.50 as shown in the figure three. This mean that the effect of the career planning program in participants CSSE score are settled at least for three weeks.

FIGURE 2
THE AVERAGE IN PRE, POST AND FOLLOW UP TEST IN THE
EXPERIMENT GROUP OF CSSE SCALE SCORE

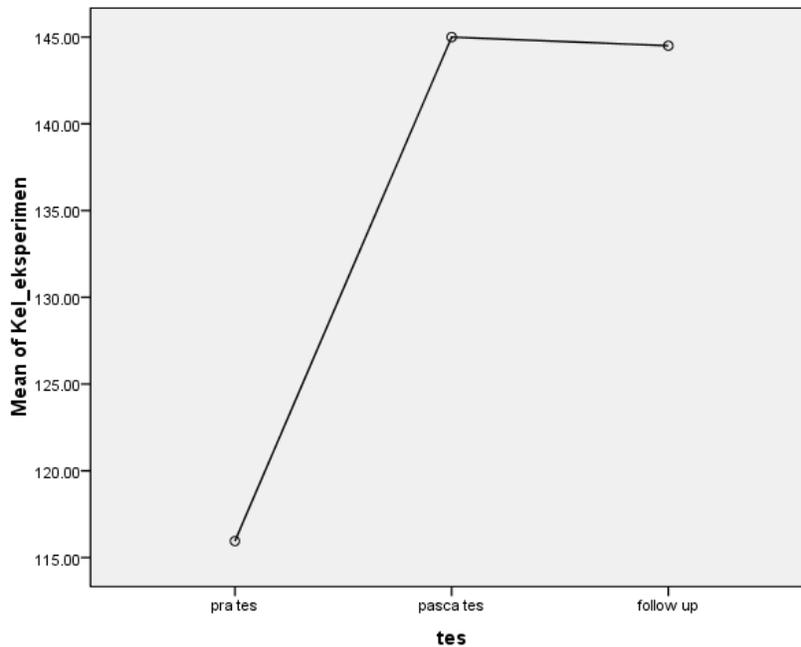


Figure 2. The differences mean of CSSE score from pre test and post test shown the increase of CSSE in participants from experimental Group. Meanwhile, mean difference of CSSE score in post test and in follow up test in participants from experimental group shown that the CSSE score are not significantly decreasing three weeks after career planning program.

Qualitative Data Analysis Result

Focus Group Discussion

Based on three focus group discussions in the experiment group, were obtained that the career planning program had brought certainty of career choice, determination of career objectives. The program had also increased Bandura's four sources of self efficacy. They are: knowledge about the self, the capability, successful experiences and interests. This knowledge lead the ability to choose the right career based on their interests. This focus group discussion suggest that career planning program could improve self esteem to achieve career objectives, facilitate participants in finding their career objectives, and increase the four source of self efficacy of participants.

Daily Journal

Results of content analysis on participants' diaries confirmed that career planning program increases CSSE. Content analysis on daily journals of participants shows that career planning program promotes positive feelings in doing CSSE related activities. Content analysis on daily journals of experimental group after the career planning program shows about 39% of 853 important activities noted by participants are CSSE related activities. Such activities are job search, job interview preparations, support career objectives and self exploration. The percentage of CSSE activities of experiment group is 19%

higher than the CSSE activities of control group, which is only about 20% of 532 important activities done by participants in control group. In addition, it also shows that career planning program promotes positive feelings in doing CSSE related activities. Table six and seven shows the percentage of feelings. Positive feeling in experiment group (89.7%) is 27.7% bigger than the percentage of positive feelings in the control group (62%). Table six provides the details.

TABLE 6
PERCENTAGE COMPARISON OF THE POSITIVE FEELING BETWEEN THE
EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP

Positive Feeling	Experiment Group	Control Group
Optimistic/certain/high self esteem	21,5%	3,7%
Curious/more capability	16%	10,2
Happy	10,6%	6,5%
Enthusiastic	8,5%	20,4%
High Hopes	7,6%	9,3%
Inspired	6,9%	2,8%
Focused on the career objectives	6,3%	0,9%
Relaxed	5,4%	1,9%
Fulfilled	4,5%	3,7%
Common	2,4%	2,8%
Total	89,7%	62%

The feeling of certainty or optimism are the highest percentage (21.5%) in the experiment group, this could mean that the feeling of certainty and optimism underlay activities related to the CSSE. Compared to the percentage in the control group which is only 3.7%, the experimental group has more confident in doing activities of CSSE.

TABLE 7
PERCENTAGE COMPARISON OF THE NEGATIVE FEELING BETWEEN THE
EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP

Negative Feeling	Experiment group	Control group
Disappointed	4,2%	9,3%
Confused/Difficult/Complicated	3,6%	4,6%
Bored/Tired/Lazy	-	8,3%
Burdened/Perforce	-	6,5%
Anxious/Uncertain/Hesitant	-	5,6%
Tense	-	1,9%
Total	7,9%	36,1%
Blank (not answer)	2,4%	1,9%

The most occurring negative feeling in the daily journal of participants was disappointment, both in the experiment group (4.2%) and in the control group (9.3%). Compared to experimental group, the control group shows more negative feelings when doing the activity related to the career search. Table seven shows that negative feelings in the control group have more variety. This reflects that the control group feels more negativity compared to the experiment group.

DISCUSSION

Not only statistically significant, the content analysis from the daily journal also shows that after completion of career planning program, participants are more active in CSSE activities such as job search, exploration of career information, network and relation development and self exploration. This data is consistent to a theory by Bulstain and Jordan that those who has self efficacy will be more effective in doing career exploration (as cited in Ryan, Solberg & Brown, 1996). Furthermore, career planning program has also made participants feel more positive about their self confidence, curiosity, and happiness. They also feel satisfied, spirited etc. Vice versa, it also lessen negative feeling such as disappointment, uncertainty, anxiety, tension etc. This is in line with self efficacy theory from Bandura (1997) that the individuals with high self efficacy are more open, spirited and diligent when facing the difficulties and to share experiences with others, and will direct bigger energy to face challenges.

In the evaluation, participants appraised positively to the process of career planning program. The evaluation scores are ranging between the good levels to very good. This means that the process, which happens during the intervention complies the principals of learning and training. The evaluation confirms that the career planning program benefited participants. And from the focus group discussion, researcher found that the career planning program gives the participants a belief to achieve their career objectives successfully, and also brings optimism with their choice of career. Some of the participants even have undergone career objectives changes, after seeing their interest and capability objectively. Meanwhile, those participants who don't have career objectives now have clearer career objectives.

There are several methods of experiential learning like simulation, tasks, relaxations, and reflection which are applied in career planning program. Moreover Silberman (1998) stated that in simulation method, participants are encouraged to face the attitudes and values given in program. It helps participants to experience the whole materials and an opportunity to discuss or getting feedback for self learning. The writing tasks method gives advantages for the participants to reflect slowly on themselves, their environment and their career. The task method in career planning program is applied in some materials such as building network to support the career, scheduling and targeting career objectives etc. The whole activities in career planning program make participants carry out, pay attention, analyze, find an understanding, learn the change of behavior through the cycle of experiential learning.

One of the learning methods in career planning program is direct experience. In this method, the participants were asked to experience the activity of exploring their selves and their career. Participants were also practicing how to do the imagery relaxation and role playing for job interview. According to Silberman (1998), an active training involves learning by doing process, where participants fully involved in every step of program. Participants were asked to experience capability, feeling and intervention which were given in the program.

As the theory stated by Silberman (1998), the transfer process of the learning in career planning program results in effective and continuous appliance of what has been learned in the program to real life. Career planning is a cyclical process with stages. It is dynamic in adjusting changes along career experience. One of the materials given in this career planning program is a task to write a long term and short term plan to achieve their career objectives by applying what had been learned in the workshop. This helps participants to keep doing the stages in career planning that had been learned in the career planning program.

In this research, career planning program increased participant's ability and capability to make career planning which involves the four source of self efficacy. This is in accordance with the theory stated by Solberg (1998) that CSSE can be increased by increasing the four source of self efficacy.

When a person has clear goals and perceive high self efficacy, he/she will be cognitively motivated to act more persistent and directed. During the career planning program, participants were facilitated to have objective goals in career and high self efficacy in achieving those goals. This is supported by researches result which found that the perceptions of the individuals play important role in a person's action when achieving their goals. (Shell, Brunning, & Calvin, 1995; Marsh, Dowson, Pietsch, & Walker, 2004). Moreover, research from Bandura and Wood (as cited in Lodewyk & Winne, 2005) showed that a

controlled belief would help individuals in finishing their assignment through the positive effect of high self efficacy, personal target, and a belief that there is compatibility between efficacy and achievement.

ENDNOTE

¹ person who are still searching for jobs, preparing for business, person that feels they cant have job, already have a job but not yet starting to work

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