



THE EFFECT OF GROUP COUNSELING ON FUTURE ANXIETY AMONG CHINESE
VOCATIONAL STUDENTS



LU ZHENGANG

Graduate School Srinakharinwirot University

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การศึกษามหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาจิตวิทยาการศึกษาและการแนะแนว
คณะศึกษาศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ
ปีการศึกษา 2568
ลิขสิทธิ์ของมหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ

THE EFFECT OF GROUP COUNSELING ON FUTURE ANXIETY AMONG CHINESE
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Title	THE EFFECT OF GROUP COUNSELING ON FUTURE ANXIETY AMONG CHINESE VOCATIONAL STUDENTS
Author	LU ZHENGANG
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Thesis Advisor	Associate Professor Dr. Monthira Jarupeng
Co Advisor	Associate Professor Dr. Patcharaporn Srisawat

This study investigated the effectiveness of group counseling in reducing future anxiety among Chinese vocational students. Future anxiety, defined as apprehension about unfavorable future changes, significantly affects vocational students facing societal stigma and career uncertainty. Using a quantitative experimental design, 12 participants from Botou Vocational Education Center were randomly assigned to an experimental (n=6) and control (n=6) groups. The experimental group received 8 sessions integrating Cognitive Behavioral Theory, Social Cognitive Career Theory, and Existential Psychology, addressing academic, career, and life dimensions. Future anxiety was measured using adapted Zaleski's scale. Results showed a significant reduction in the experimental group's anxiety (M=3.97 to M=1.82, $p<.001$), while the control group remained unchanged (M=3.97 to M=3.97, $p>.05$). Post-intervention comparison revealed significant differences ($p<.001$). Findings suggest that structured group counseling effectively alleviates vocational students' future anxiety through social support and cognitive restructuring, addressing their unique mental health needs in China's vocational education context.

Keyword : future anxiety, group counseling, vocational students, China

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Finally, I dedicate this work to all Chinese vocational students striving to create a better future despite facing societal challenges and uncertainty. I hope this research can offer them support and inspiration, contributing in a small way to their mental well-being and social recognition.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In recent years, vocational schools have received strong policy support for their development. The State Council of the People's Republic of China (2019), in its "National Vocational Education Reform Implementation Plan," stated that as China enters a new stage of development, with accelerating industrial upgrading and economic restructuring, the demand for technical and skilled personnel across various industries is becoming increasingly urgent, highlighting the important position and role of vocational education. However, China's vocational education still faces issues such as incomplete system construction, inadequate vocational skills training facilities, insufficient institutional standards, lack of motivation for enterprise participation in education, incomplete supporting policies conducive to the growth of technical and skilled personnel, and uneven quality of education and talent cultivation. It is now time to make great efforts to address these issues. Without the modernization of vocational education, there can be no modernization of education (China, 2019). The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2023), in its "2022 National Education Development Statistics Bulletin," mentioned that there were 7,201 secondary vocational schools nationwide, with 4.8478 million new enrollments, 13.3929 million students in school (an increase of 274,800 or 2.09% from the previous year), and 3.9927 million graduates (an increase of 239,000 or 6.37% from the previous year) (China, 2023). These documents and data indicate that vocational schools and their students are a crucial part of China's education system, and there is a high possibility that this number will continue to grow in the future. The concept of future anxiety is defined as worry and unease about unpredictable future changes (Zaleski, 1996). Vocational high school students face uncertainty about their future careers, and this uncertainty intensifies their future anxiety. Therefore, it is essential to study vocational school students and the challenges they face.

In Chinese society, the educational path that leads to higher academic qualifications has long been highly valued, significantly influencing school choices after the vocational school entrance examination. Many students and parents choose vocational schools only as a last resort, contributing to the social stereotype of vocational school students as academically poor and without prospects. This perception also puts immense pressure on current vocational school students. This pressure largely stems from societal cognitive biases, which affect not only the student population but also extend to the job market and businesses. Whether or not this prejudice actually exists in the job market, the social circles that students interact with, including parents, relatives, and teachers, construct an awareness of this bias, thereby exacerbating their anxiety about the future. With China's industrial transformation, the development of emerging industries has led to increased demands for vocational skills in the job market. Many industrial technical positions cannot be filled by regular school or undergraduate students but require vocational college or vocational school graduates. This new trend creates conditions for alleviating future anxiety among vocational school students. However, it also raises the vocational skill requirements for these students, increasing their learning pressure in certain fields. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) emphasizes that an individual's career path is the result of multiple interacting factors, with environmental factors playing a key role in career development. Due to factors such as social and economic status, vocational high school students' career choices and interest development may be significantly influenced by external environments, which further intensifies their future anxiety (Wang et al., 2022).

Chinese vocational school students face dual pressures from society and family. In a social atmosphere that tends to undervalue vocational school students, their future anxiety often goes unsupported, prompting them to seek their own value in society. This leads to their dependence on and misuse of social and interpersonal relationships, which often negatively impacts vocational school students and further affects their social status, creating a vicious cycle. Before the emergence of short video platforms and other new media, vocational school students' social cognition and influence were limited.

After the popularity of these platforms, their social awareness expanded, allowing them to glimpse the reality of the job market, creating opportunities to alleviate future anxiety. However, stereotypes long-rooted in the social atmosphere can easily lead to algorithm recommendations that lock vocational school students into specific information bubbles. Some low-quality, vulgar content can easily influence these students whose minds are not yet fully mature. Moreover, some misconduct by vocational school students can spread from local to online networks, intensifying public stereotypes about them. These factors often negatively impact the circumstances of vocational school students.

In student-focused research, scholars often concentrate on the anxiety of regular high school and college students, overlooking the anxiety of vocational school students. The few studies that do exist mostly focus on career anxiety and career development directions. The skewed distribution of educational resources also means that vocational school students have less access to mental health education resources compared to other schools. Currently, the psychological issues of vocational school students, including future anxiety, are mostly addressed through communication with school teachers and staff or by parents seeking professional psychological counseling. Compared to group counseling interventions conducted within schools, the current solution methods are clearly less efficient. The actions parents can take to seek psychological counseling help also vary widely due to social and family factors. Therefore, implementing a professional and systematic group counseling program in schools has significant advantages over current intervention methods. The future anxiety problem of vocational school students is the result of multiple factors working together. It reflects the deep-seated contradictions in the development of China's vocational education and the many challenges in the period of social transformation. Solving this problem is not only about the healthy growth of individual students but also relates to the healthy development of vocational education and the optimization of social talent structure. Therefore, it requires joint efforts from the government, schools, families, and all sectors of society to create a fairer and more inclusive environment for vocational school students to grow.

Faced with all the above situations and problems, Researcher urgently need an effective intervention program to protect the physical and mental health of vocational school students. Group counseling, as a mature and efficient psychological counseling method, has advantages in terms of resource input costs and intervention prevalence compared to other one-on-one psychological counseling methods. Therefore, this study aims to explore the effects of group counseling programs in intervening with future anxiety problems of vocational school students. Similarly, Researcher hope to achieve efficient, stable, and widespread intervention effects. In the long development of psychological counseling, group counseling has been proven effective in counseling adolescent groups and those with anxiety. Zhao et al. (2021) suggests that enhancing self-efficacy has a significant effect in alleviating anxiety, particularly when facing uncertainty or stressful situations. For vocational high school students, helping them identify their strengths through group counseling and enhancing their self-efficacy can help alleviate their anxiety about the future, enabling them to approach their future career choices and development paths more positively. (Zhao et al., 2021)

Group counseling provides a structured and evidence-based approach to addressing psychological challenges. The effectiveness of group counseling is particularly evident in educational settings, where it creates a supportive environment for peers facing similar challenges. This approach is especially valuable for vocational school students who often share common concerns about their future career paths and social status. The collective nature of group counseling allows students to recognize that their anxieties about the future are not isolated experiences, but rather shared challenges that can be addressed together.

The structure of group counseling offers several distinct advantages that make it particularly suitable for addressing future anxiety among vocational school students. First, the group format provides a cost-effective way to reach more students compared to individual counseling, making it an efficient solution for schools with limited resources. Second, the peer interaction within groups creates a natural support system that can continue outside of formal counseling sessions, potentially leading to longer-lasting

positive effects. Third, the group setting allows for immediate feedback and validation from peers, which can be more impactful than feedback from authority figures alone. Through carefully designed modules, group counseling can simultaneously target various components of future anxiety: cognitive restructuring helps students challenge negative assumptions about their career prospects; social skills training enhances their ability to navigate professional relationships; and goal-setting exercises provide concrete steps toward desired futures. These components work together to address both the immediate manifestations of anxiety and its underlying causes. The cognitive restructuring process is particularly crucial for vocational school students who may have internalized societal stereotypes about their educational path. By examining and challenging these beliefs in a supportive group environment, students can develop more balanced and realistic perspectives about their future potential.

Moreover, the group format creates opportunities for collective problem-solving, where students can learn from each other's experiences and strategies, thereby building a repertoire of coping mechanisms that extend beyond the counseling sessions. This collaborative learning environment allows students to share successful strategies for managing anxiety, dealing with societal pressures, and planning for their future careers. The diversity of experiences within the group can provide multiple perspectives on common challenges, helping students develop more flexible and adaptive approaches to problem-solving. The structured nature of group counseling also allows for the incorporation of practical exercises and role-playing scenarios that directly address the specific challenges faced by vocational school students. These experiential learning opportunities can help students develop concrete skills for managing anxiety, making career decisions, and handling professional interactions. Through guided practice in a safe environment, students can build confidence in their abilities and develop practical strategies for navigating their future career paths.

Therefore, Researcher are confident in using this group counseling program to intervene with vocational school students to reduce their future anxiety. In the above introduction, Researcher have provided many explanations for using group counseling

programs to intervene in future anxiety. Researcher expect that group counseling programs can solve or alleviate the future anxiety problems of vocational school students. In addition, Researcher also hope that solving the problem of future anxiety can truly protect vocational school students, help them maintain a relatively healthy psychological state while seeking their life path, provide effective assistance in establishing social identity and integrating into society, and improve vocational school education.

1.2 Research question

Can group counseling reduction future anxiety among Chinese vocational students?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To study the levels of future anxiety of vocational school students.
2. To compare the future anxiety of the experimental group before and after participate the group counseling.
3. To compare the future anxiety of the control group and the experimental group before and after the group counseling.

1.4 Significance the Study

1.4.1 Academic Exploration

Understanding vocational school students from the perspective of future anxiety: This research allows us to gain a deeper understanding of vocational school students through the lens of future anxiety. By attempting to address their future anxiety issues, Researcher may provide directions and practical references for more in-depth studies in the future.

1.4.2 Practical Attempt

Designing a small-scale group counseling program: As part of the research, Researcher will design and implement a small-scale group counseling program tailored for vocational school students. Researcher will test the effectiveness of this program,

which may yield positive results for the target region and schools, ultimately addressing future anxiety issues for some students.

1.4.3 Social Attention

Focusing on a relatively overlooked group: This study targets vocational school students, aiming to draw more attention to the mental health of this group. Although it is a small-scale study, it may provide preliminary insights into the needs of this population.

Attempting to address practical issues: Future anxiety is a real problem faced by many students. Through this research, Researcher hope to offer some initial ideas for addressing this issue. Despite its limited scale, the study may provide useful references for schools and educators.

While this project may not have a significant impact on the academic field or practical work, it provides me with a valuable learning opportunity. I hope it can offer some preliminary insights for future, more in-depth research and contribute, even if modestly, to understanding and helping the vocational school student population.

1.5 Research Scope

The experiment will be conducted at a vocational school called "Botou Vocational Education Center" in Cangzhou City, Hebei Province. Botou Vocational Education Center has a total of 5000 students. According to Taro yamane's sample size calculation formula($n = N \div (1 + Ne^2)$), Researcher will select 370 students as research subjects to complete a survey questionnaire. Based on the results of the questionnaire survey, Researcher will choose 20 individuals from the 370 surveyed students who exhibit more severe future anxiety. These 20 students will be divided into two groups of 10 each: one group will serve as the control group, and the other as the experimental group. Group counseling will be conducted with the experimental group.

1.6 Definition of terms

1.6.1 Future Anxiety

Future anxiety is conceived of as a state of apprehension, uncertainty, fear, worry and concern of unfavorable changes in a more remote personal future. In an extreme case this would be a threat (panic) that something really catastrophic may happen to a person (Zaleski, 1996). In this study, it specifically refers to the concerns of vocational school students regarding their future academic performance, career development, and life perspectives. The researcher's measurement method refers to The 29-item measurement scale (FAS) provided (Zaleski, 1996), which was modified and adapted into a version suitable for Chinese vocational college students.

In the present study, future anxiety is defined as an anxiety state that may be present within the population of vocational school students, potentially exerting influence upon them, and conforming to the definition previously established.

1.6.2 Group Counseling

Group counseling is a form of psychological guidance in which a professional counselor leads a group of members (typically 6-12 people) in organized, purposeful interaction and communication to promote self-awareness, emotional expression, and behavioral change among the members. In this study, it specifically refers to a structured group counseling program designed to address future anxiety issues among vocational school students.

In this study, group counseling intervention will be conducted according to the following steps:

1). Initial Stage

Help all group members understand the group counseling process and rules, establish relationships between the counselor and group members, conduct ice-breaking activities, promote familiarity among group members, and lay the foundation for group counseling work. Establish initial counseling objectives.

2). Working Stage

Carry out counseling work, use group counseling techniques, guide group members to participate in group counseling, advance the group counseling process, summarize at appropriate times, help group members reflect, and ultimately help group members achieve counseling goals step by step through group counseling.

3). Ending Stage

Guide group members to reflect on their gains and feelings, make summaries, organize the ideas, thoughts, and action methods obtained during group counseling, and if there is a next session, schedule the next counseling time. End this group counseling session.

1.6.3. Key Variables

Independent Variable:

Group counseling

Dependent Variable:

future anxiety

1.7 Research Conceptual Framework

1.7.1. Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical framework of this study consists of two theoretical dimensions: future anxiety and group counseling. The future anxiety component is primarily based on Zaleski's Future Anxiety Concept, while the group counseling component mainly includes Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT), Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), and Existential Theory.

Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) will be primarily implemented during the group counseling phase of the Academic Future Dimension. At the beginning of this phase, an ABC model will be established for each participating student. Throughout the group counseling process, cognitive restructuring in the Academic Future Dimension will be gradually achieved. This process will utilize various techniques including, but not limited to, strength-based cognition and stress inoculation training. These interventions

aim to alleviate future anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension among participating students.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) will be primarily implemented during the group counseling phase of the Career Development Dimension. Cognitive restructuring will focus on three key areas: vocational interest formation, career decision-making processes, and pathways to career success. This intervention aims to help students reconstruct positive cognitive-behavioral patterns in the Career Development Dimension, thereby alleviating future anxiety related to career development among participating students.

Existential Theory will be primarily implemented during the group counseling phase of the Life Perspectives Dimension. The researchers aim to address future anxiety in the Life Perspectives Dimension through multiple existential approaches, including: developing existential courage, accepting solitude as an inherent part of life, fostering self-identity, challenging pre-existing value systems, and creating new meaning. This intervention seeks to establish a profound understanding of life's meaning and new perspectives on living. Ultimately, it helps students develop awareness of existential anxiety, enabling them to accept anxiety as a natural part of their lives, thereby reducing both the emergence of anxiety and the impact of future anxiety on students.

1.7.2. Conceptual Model Diagram



Figure 1 Conceptual Model Diagram

1.8 Research Hypotheses

1. At the end of the group counseling intervention experiment, will there a significant decrease in the future anxiety level of the experimental group compared to before participation in the experiment.

2. At the end of the group counseling intervention experiment, will there any significant reduction in the future anxiety level of the experimental group compared to the future anxiety level of the control group.



CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. Future Anxiety

2.1.1 Future Anxiety Concept

Barlow (2000) defined anxiety as a unique cognitive-affective structure within the defensive motivational system, fundamentally characterized by a sense of uncontrollability and unpredictability over potential future threats or dangers. Unlike fear, which is an emergency response to immediate threats, anxiety is a future-oriented emotional state that can be described as "anxious apprehension." This state is accompanied by significant physiological or somatic responses, potentially reflecting the activation of specific brain circuits (such as the corticotropin releasing factor system and Gray's behavioral inhibition system). Anxiety states are also characteristically manifested by increased vigilance (or hypervigilance), indicating that the individual is in a state of readiness to cope with potential negative events. From a functional perspective, anxiety has adaptive significance; however, when it becomes chronic, it may lead to functional impairment, manifesting as avoidance behaviors or uncontrollable worry. (Barlow, 2000)

While Barlow's theoretical framework posits that anxiety inherently encompasses future-oriented characteristics, future anxiety has emerged as a distinct academic construct with its own conceptual specifications. Zaleski (1996) considers future anxiety to be a state of apprehension, uncertainty, fear, worry and concern about unfavorable changes happening in a more distant personal future. In extreme cases, it might be a threat (panic) that something really catastrophic will happen to the person. Zaleski (1996) also mentions that almost all kinds of anxiety have an element of future, e.g. from a signal of a shock to its application, but this future is very limited to minutes, hours or days at most. Future Anxiety refers to the future represented by larger temporal distance. (Zaleski, 1996)

Zaleski (1996) further explains that future anxiety could refer to the anxiety brought about by the futility of efforts made to achieve an ideal state, or the anxiety

stemming from the belief that one cannot change the bad things expected to happen, which are perceived as destined to occur. Vocational school students can serve as a good example to explain this concept of future anxiety. For instance, a vocational school student might worry about not being able to survive in society or being discriminated against, and they feel unable to change these potential social issues. Or a vocational school student might put effort into their vocational education courses, but this effort fails to bring them any advantage or help them secure a decent job in the employment market.(Zaleski, 1996)

Zaleski (1996) believes that the cognitive representation of unfavorable events in the distant future is the source of this anxiety. The future exists only in our minds, conceptually rather than physically, but it can become a powerful force evoking subjective experiences. (Zaleski, 1996)

Future anxiety, as a unique cognitive-emotional pattern, is essentially characterized by excessive worry about uncertain future events. MacLeod et al. (1991) explained how worry influences individuals in the future time dimension: when assessing the probability of future negative events, individuals primarily rely on the "availability heuristic" for judgment. Specifically, highly anxious individuals tend to generate and access explanations for the occurrence of negative events (pro reasons) more easily, while experiencing difficulty in generating explanations for why events would not occur (con reasons). This asymmetry in cognitive processing leads them to overestimate the probability of future negative events, thereby maintaining and intensifying their anxiety state. The research found that when highly anxious groups were asked to generate reasons why events would not occur, their subjective probability assessments significantly decreased to near-normal levels. The researcher suggested that this provides important insights for understanding and intervening in future anxiety.(MacLeod et al., 1991)

In understanding future anxiety, the researcher that this study helps establish connections between future anxiety and general cognitive processing. MacLeod et al. (1991) argued that worry in the future time dimension is not entirely irrational but rather

represents a biased manifestation of normal cognitive mechanisms. The study emphasizes that the formation of worry in the future dimension involves three key elements: temporal orientation (focus on the future), uncertainty (unknown outcomes), and negative expectation (possible negative consequences). This cognitive bias forms a self-maintaining cycle: when individuals face potential threats, they more readily activate explanatory patterns for negative outcomes, which in turn reinforces negative expectations about the future, allowing anxiety to persist. (MacLeod et al., 1991)

2.1.2 Factors Influencing Future Anxiety

Future anxiety, as a complex psychological phenomenon, is influenced by multiple interacting factors that span across individual, social, and environmental dimensions. Recent studies have highlighted various contributing elements, from academic pressures and psychological characteristics to broader societal influences, particularly in the context of vocational education. The COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated this landscape, introducing new challenges and uncertainties that affect students' perceptions of their future prospects. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective interventions, especially for vocational school students who face unique challenges stemming from societal perceptions, educational system characteristics, and evolving labor market demands. The following section examines these factors in detail, providing a comprehensive analysis of how various elements contribute to future anxiety among vocational school students.

1). Academic Pressure and the Context of Online Education

Academic pressure has become one of the primary triggers of future anxiety among students. During the COVID-19 pandemic, schools worldwide generally transitioned to online education models. Research indicates that this shift has imposed significant academic pressure on students, thereby exacerbating their future anxiety. A study by AlAzzam et al. (2021) found that anxiety levels among Jordanian vocational school seniors increased significantly due to the implementation of online education, particularly among students whose parents had lower education levels or who lacked adequate online educational resources. This result suggests that technological

difficulties and insufficient learning support in online education can induce stronger future anxiety. (AlAzzam et al., 2021)

Moreover, research by Alemany-Arrebola et al. (2020) also found that university students experienced a significant decrease in academic self-efficacy during isolation and online education environments amid the pandemic, leading to increased state and trait anxiety. This anxiety further undermined students' confidence in their future career and academic development. (Alemany-Arrebola et al., 2020)

2). The Moderating Role of Psychological Resilience and Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence and psychological resilience are also crucial psychological factors in coping with future anxiety. Research by Fiorilli et al. (2020) shows that students with high emotional intelligence can better regulate their emotions and reduce anxiety levels when facing academic pressure. Psychological resilience, as a mediating variable of emotional intelligence, can enhance individuals' adaptive capacity when facing uncertainty, thereby effectively lowering anxiety levels.

Although this study primarily focused on school burnout and general anxiety, the role of emotional intelligence suggests that emotional regulation abilities may play a similar moderating role in the context of future anxiety. (Fiorilli et al., 2020)

3). The Mediating Role of Learned Helplessness and Self-Esteem

The impact of learned helplessness on future anxiety is equally significant. Research by Demir (2023) indicates that self-esteem plays a significant mediating role between learned helplessness and future anxiety. The study found that learned helplessness further exacerbates future anxiety by lowering self-esteem levels. When individuals have lower self-esteem, they are more likely to feel helpless in the face of uncontrollable environments and exhibit higher levels of anxiety. Conversely, individuals with higher self-esteem can more positively cope with future uncertainties, thereby reducing anxiety. (Demir, 2023)

4). Fear of Disease and Social Uncertainty

The global uncertainty triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified individuals' future anxiety. Research by Mahmud et al. (2021) found that fear of COVID-19 directly affects future career anxiety, especially among young future workforce groups. The health risks and career uncertainties brought by the pandemic have caused them to experience greater anxiety about the future. Moreover, the fear of COVID-19 further exacerbates future career anxiety through depression as a mediating variable. This depression and uncertainty caused by the pandemic have long-term negative impacts on individuals' psychological states, especially for student groups about to enter the workforce or vocational colleges. (Mahmud et al., 2021)

5). Social Support and Demographic Factors

Social support plays a crucial role in alleviating future anxiety. Research by Osborn et al. (2019) shows that Kenyan vocational school students with higher levels of social support exhibited lower levels of anxiety and depression. Social support can provide individuals with emotional support and psychological security, enabling them to cope more composedly with future uncertainties. (Osborn et al., 2019)

Furthermore, research indicates that demographic factors such as gender and age also influence the manifestation of future anxiety. Osborn et al.'s (2019) study explored the impact of gender on anxiety among Kenyan vocational school students. The results show that females are more likely to exhibit higher levels of anxiety than males. This finding is consistent with many other studies, indicating that females typically show higher anxiety when facing stress, which may be related to the multiple roles women assume in society and the social expectations they face. In the Kenyan study, female adolescents showed significantly higher anxiety levels than males, which may also be related to the additional pressure they bear in terms of academics and social responsibilities. (Osborn et al., 2019)

Osborn et al. (2019) research also found that older adolescents showed more pronounced future anxiety. As adolescents grow older, especially after entering higher grades, they face more major decisions related to the future, such as further education and career choices, thus significantly increasing future anxiety. This indicates

that as age increases, the pressure on students in terms of academics and social expectations continually rises, leading to stronger feelings of anxiety due to future uncertainties.(Osborn et al., 2019)

The study by AlAzzam et al. (2021) similarly points out that females exhibited significantly higher anxiety levels than males during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research found that female students were more prone to anxiety when facing the uncertainty and academic pressure brought by the pandemic. This suggests that females are more sensitive when coping with future uncertainties and social pressures, which may lead them to feel more anxious.(AlAzzam et al., 2021)

Similarly, the study by AlAzzam et al. (2021) shows that older high school students, especially those in 12th grade, exhibited higher anxiety levels than younger students. This phenomenon is mainly due to the pressure brought by the impending college entrance examinations and university admission decisions, further increasing their anxiety about the future.(AlAzzam et al., 2021)

6). Future Anxiety in Vocational Education

The prevalent negative perception of vocational education students in society, often viewing vocational education as inferior or even as a "choice for poor academic performers," imposes a significant psychological burden on vocational school students. Research by Zhao et al. (2023) points out that vocational education students often face low expectations and discrimination in the job market, leading to negative cognitions about their career prospects and exacerbating their employment anxiety.(Zhao, 2023)

Vocational school students are often perceived as academically weaker, and this social label puts them at a disadvantage compared to regular school students when seeking employment. Research also shows that social prejudice not only affects students' self-identity but also influences companies' perceptions of vocational education graduates. This negative perception not only intensifies the challenges they face in the employment process but also makes vocational school students feel confused and anxious about their future career development.(Zhao, 2023)

With China's economic transformation and upgrading, although the demand for highly skilled workers has increased, the employment prospects for vocational education students still face many uncertainties. The imperfections in the vocational education system and the low expectations of companies regarding the abilities of vocational education graduates further exacerbate these students' employment anxiety. They often feel underprepared when making career choices and face more severe employment pressure than regular higher education graduates. (Zhao, 2023)

Another study points out that the uncertainty about the future for vocational school students stems not only from labor market competition but also from the education system they receive. Research by Yan et al. (2024) explored the relationship between career adaptability and social support among vocational school students, finding that an education system lacking career planning and vocational adaptation training fails to help students cope with rapidly changing market demands when facing employment. This lack of preparation further intensifies their anxiety about the future. (Yan et al., 2024)

The future anxiety of vocational school students can be alleviated through social support and career adaptability. Research by Yan et al. (2024) shows that social support plays an important role in reducing anxiety and promoting career adaptability among vocational education students. By providing emotional and resource support, society can help students better cope with employment pressure. Although vocational education students face significant social prejudice and employment pressure, a good social support system can significantly improve their career adaptability and reduce their anxiety about the future. (Yan et al., 2024)

2.1.3 Major Issues Arising from Future Anxiety

Future anxiety is influenced by multiple interacting factors across individual, social, and environmental dimensions, with particular significance in the context of vocational education. Recent studies have revealed that academic pressures, psychological characteristics, and broader societal influences all play crucial roles in shaping students' anxiety about their future.

1). Mental Health Problems

Future anxiety is significantly associated with mental health issues, particularly prominent among adolescents with depression and anxiety disorders. Research by Tang et al. (2023) indicates that depressed and anxious young people often struggle to plan effectively when contemplating the future and experience negative future scenarios. This cognitive barrier exacerbates their emotional problems, causing individuals to fall into deeper anxiety and depression. The study further suggests that when anxiety levels are high, individuals tend to focus more on current stressors, leading to impaired thinking about the future.(Tang et al., 2023)

2). Academic and Career Difficulties

Future anxiety has profound effects on students' academic and career choices. Rabei et al. (2020) argue that when facing career uncertainty and academic pressure, students typically exhibit decreased self-efficacy, a phenomenon particularly noticeable among senior students. Their research findings suggest that increased future anxiety is significantly correlated with decreased self-efficacy, which affects students' academic performance and career decision-making. As students progress through their academic years, their anxiety about the future increases significantly, especially as graduation approaches.(Rabei et al., 2020)

3). Social and Emotional Impacts

Future anxiety also negatively affects individuals' social behaviors and emotional states. Research by Mahammad Ahmed Hammad et al. (2016) shows that students who are highly anxious about the future often exhibit social withdrawal, self-negation, and negative expectations about the future. These emotional responses intensify their psychological distress, further leading to increased anxiety levels. Such anxiety is also related to social and economic pressures, particularly when the external environment is unstable, individuals' future anxiety levels rise noticeably.(Hammad & Ahmed, 2016)

4). Coping Mechanisms and Adjustment

Enhancing self-efficacy is considered an effective method for alleviating future anxiety. Research by Rabei et al. (2020) suggests that students with higher self-efficacy can better cope with future uncertainties, thereby reducing anxiety. In Rabei et al.'s (2020) study, nursing college students exhibited higher self-efficacy and lower future anxiety due to practical training in their academic process. In contrast, education college students showed lower self-efficacy and higher levels of future anxiety due to the more theoretical nature of their discipline. (Rabei et al., 2020)

2.1.4 Assessment of Future Anxiety

The assessment of future anxiety has evolved significantly over the years, incorporating various methodological approaches to capture this complex psychological construct. From traditional self-report scales to modern ecological assessments, researchers have developed multiple tools to measure and understand future anxiety. These assessment methods range from comprehensive standardized scales to real-time monitoring approaches, each offering unique insights into how individuals experience and manifest anxiety about their future. The following section examines these key assessment tools and methods that have been validated through extensive research and practical application.

Zaleski's Future Anxiety Scale (FAS) Proposed by Zaleski in 1996, this scale is one of the earliest tools for assessing future anxiety, widely used to measure individuals' reactions to future uncertainties and negative emotions. The scale comprises 29 questions, primarily focusing on individuals' anxiety about the future, worries, and perceptions of uncertainty. This scale has demonstrated good reliability and validity, particularly validated across multiple cultural contexts. (Zaleski, 1996)

Evidence-Based Multidimensional Assessment Current anxiety assessment strategies are gradually moving towards multidimensional, evidence-based approaches. Multidimensional assessment includes a comprehensive evaluation of different aspects of anxiety, such as physiological responses, cognition, and emotions. These methods are not limited to a single scale but combine various tools including self-reports, clinical

interviews, and physiological measurements, providing a more comprehensive assessment of future anxiety. (Antony & Rowa, 2005)

Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7) Although initially designed for screening generalized anxiety disorder, GAD-7 is also used to assess individuals' anxiety when facing the future. The scale includes 7 questions and can effectively measure an individual's overall anxiety level, showing particularly good validity and cross-cultural applicability in studying individuals' concerns about future events. (Mughal et al., 2020)

Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) This method is increasingly used to study future anxiety and its variations, especially in daily life. EMA avoids recall bias through real-time, daily data collection, enabling more accurate capture of individuals' momentary anxiety responses when facing future scenarios. The flexibility of this method makes it an important tool for studying fluctuations in anxiety symptoms and predicting future anxiety changes. (Hall et al., 2021)

2.1.5 Future Anxiety Research

MacLeod et al. (1991) examined the cognitive mechanisms underlying elevated subjective probability judgments of negative events in worry. The study compared 18 high-trait anxious worriers with 18 controls, asking participants to generate reasons why future negative events would or would not occur. Results showed that subjective probability judgments correlated significantly with the availability of reasons: participants who found it easier to generate reasons for negative events occurring and harder to generate reasons against them reported higher probability estimates. Notably, when highly anxious participants were prompted to generate reasons why events would not occur, their probability assessments decreased to near-normal levels. The study concluded that worriers' pessimistic expectations can be understood through the availability heuristic, suggesting that while worry appears maladaptive, it operates through normal cognitive mechanisms. (MacLeod et al., 1991)

Hammad & Ahmed (2016) examined the relationship between future anxiety and academic major choice, with a sample of 380 university students aged 18-22.

Results showed that humanities students had higher levels of future anxiety than science students, and males had significantly lower future anxiety than females, possibly related to different expectations of future career stability across majors. (Hammad & Ahmed, 2016)

Osborn et al. (2019) investigated the prevalence of depression and anxiety and their relationship with social support among high school students in Kenya, using self-report questionnaires including the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7). Results showed that 45.9% of students exhibited clinical depression symptoms and 37.99% showed anxiety symptoms, with social support having a significant mitigating effect on these symptoms, particularly important for female and ethnic minority students. (Osborn et al., 2019)

Fiorilli et al. (2020) analyzed the impact of Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEI) on academic burnout among high school students, particularly through the mediating effects of academic anxiety and resilience. Using structural equation modeling with a sample of 1,235 high school students, results showed that emotional intelligence could indirectly reduce academic burnout risk by decreasing anxiety and enhancing resilience, suggesting educators should emphasize emotional intelligence development. (Fiorilli et al., 2020)

Parker et al. (2021) analyzed the effectiveness of anxiety treatment in universal healthcare countries, comparing psychological and pharmacological treatments in primary care. The study aggregated data from 18 studies covering 1,308 subjects, showing that professional treatment provided by psychologists was significantly superior to care by non-professionals, while the effects of pharmacological treatment were limited. The study recommended strengthening psychological treatment in primary care and providing more training for professionals. (Parker et al., 2021)

Demir (2023) investigated the mediating role of self-esteem in the influence of "learned helplessness" on future anxiety. Through a questionnaire survey of health science students, the study found that learned helplessness was negatively correlated with self-esteem and positively correlated with future anxiety; when self-esteem served

as a mediating variable, it significantly reduced future anxiety levels, indicating that improving self-esteem helps alleviate future anxiety.(DemİR, 2023)

Tang et al. (2023) This qualitative study explored the impact of depression and anxiety on adolescents' future thinking. The research team conducted semi-structured interviews with 19 adolescents with depression or anxiety, and through thematic analysis found that depression and anxiety reduce adolescents' ability to plan for the future and lead to negative emotions and helplessness. The study emphasized the importance of considering future thinking in adolescent mental health research.(Tang et al., 2023)

2.2 Group Counseling

2.2.1 The Concept of Group Counseling

According to ASGW professional training standards: Group counseling is a broad professional practice involving the application of knowledge and skill in group facilitation to assist an interdependent collection of people to reach their mutual goals which may be intrapersonal, interpersonal, or work-related. The goals of the group may include the accomplishment of tasks related to work, education, personal development, personal and interpersonal problem solving, or remediation of mental and emotional disorders.("Association for specialists in group work professional standards for the training of group workers," 2000)

The development process of group counseling can be traced back to the early 20th century, when it primarily focused on group guidance and education, gradually evolving into a mature form of psychological intervention. According to Berg et al. (2018), the early forms of group counseling mainly concentrated on guidance activities that met group needs, with the purpose of improving individual social functioning and adaptability. (Berg et al., 2018)

In the early 20th century, J. H. Pratt pioneered the prototype of group therapy. In 1905, he established health education groups for tuberculosis patients, and although the primary purpose at the time was to provide information, he noticed that mutual support among patients had positive psychological effects. This laid the foundation for

the formal development of group therapy. Alfred Adler and J. L. Moreno were also important figures in this field. Adler provided counseling services for children in group settings in Europe in the 1920s, while Moreno was known for his "psychodrama," marking the birth of group therapy. (Berg et al., 2018)

By the mid-20th century, with the development of psychology, group counseling gradually shifted from guidance and education forms to more professional psychotherapy methods. Particularly after World War II, the need for trauma treatment drove the rapid expansion of group counseling. Carl Rogers' person-centered theory played an important role at this stage, emphasizing the promotion of members' self-discovery and growth through open and authentic communication in group environments. (Berg et al., 2018)

From the 1960s to the 1970s, the theoretical foundation of group counseling was further consolidated. Yalom proposed 11 key therapeutic factors, including universality, altruism, interpersonal learning, and group cohesion. These theories provided scientific basis for group counseling, explaining the unique role of groups in promoting individual psychological health and emotional processing. (Berg et al., 2018)

In recent years, group counseling has gradually evolved into a diverse form of psychological intervention, widely applied in clinical treatment, education, and corporate environments. Berg et al. (2018) pointed out that modern group counseling not only covers traditional psychotherapy functions but also plays an increasingly important role in personal growth, career development, and multicultural adaptation. (Berg et al., 2018)

According to Berg et al. (2018), group counseling can be divided into four main types:

Task Groups: The goal of these groups is to complete specific tasks or objectives, typically used in workplace or organizational settings. The leader's primary responsibility is to help the group clarify goals and guide members towards them.

Psychoeducational Groups: These groups focus on helping members learn and master new skills or coping strategies, often used in educational and preventive fields.

Counseling Groups: The goal of these groups is to promote personal growth and interpersonal interaction, helping members understand relationships between themselves and others through group dynamics.

Psychotherapy Groups: These groups are primarily used to address serious mental health issues, helping members resolve deep-seated emotional and cognitive problems through in-depth psychological exploration.

These different types of group counseling help meet members' psychological needs at different stages and in different situations, achieving their respective goals through group interaction. Group leaders play a crucial role in the success of group counseling. Berg et al. (2018) emphasize that leaders not only need to possess solid psychological counseling skills but also need to be sensitive to changes in group dynamics to ensure effective interaction within the group and members' psychological growth. (Berg et al., 2018)

2.2.2 Group Counseling Objectives

Group counseling serves multiple therapeutic purposes, each contributing to individuals' psychological growth and emotional well-being. These objectives encompass providing essential social support, developing practical problem-solving skills, and fostering self-awareness through collective learning experiences. Understanding these core objectives is crucial for implementing effective group counseling interventions and achieving optimal therapeutic outcomes. The following section examines the key objectives that make group counseling a uniquely effective approach to psychological intervention.

1). Providing Social Support and Emotional Recovery

The most important purpose of group counseling is to provide social support for individuals, allowing them to experience that they are not alone in a mutually supportive environment. When dealing with emotional issues such as depression, anxiety, and seasonal affective disorder, group therapy provides a safe social environment. Literature indicates that this social support not only helps patients cope with emotional distress but also promotes self-awareness through group interaction. For

example, patients in the group can understand others' emotional experiences and gain a sense of recognition through interactions with other members, thereby reducing feelings of loneliness and helplessness. (Mashinter & Patricia, 2020)

2). Enhancing Problem-Solving Abilities and Behavioral Change

Research on group counseling in school environments shows that counselor-led group interventions help improve students' social skills and problem-solving abilities. Studies have found that although group counseling has limited impact on students' academic performance, it is significantly effective in improving their emotional management abilities and problem-solving skills. Through collective interaction, students can learn how to deal with complex problems in life while receiving feedback and support from peers. This approach not only helps individuals solve current dilemmas but also promotes behavioral adjustment through collective discussion and feedback. (Steen et al., 2021)

3). Promoting Self-Awareness and Behavioral Adjustment through Collective Learning

Another important purpose of group counseling is to help individuals achieve self-awareness and behavioral adjustment through collective learning and interaction. Research comparing individual therapy and group therapy shows that group therapy has unique advantages in promoting behavioral change and emotional regulation. In the group, members can improve their cognitive patterns and behavioral responses by observing and learning from others' coping strategies. Feedback and interaction in the collective environment not only help individuals discover their own problems but also provide new coping methods and solutions. (McRoberts et al., 1998)

2.2.3 Process of Group Counseling

The group counseling process is a dynamic evolution. Mills et al.'s 2016 research divided group counseling into five stages: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning. Each stage has its unique challenges and goals, and the counselor's task is to guide members through the corresponding transitions at each stage, promoting group cohesion and therapeutic effects. (Mills et al., 2016)

1). Forming

The forming stage is the initial establishment of the group. At this stage, members are unfamiliar with each other and may participate with tension and uncertainty. Literature points out that the counselor's task at this stage is to create a safe, non-threatening environment, help members get to know each other, and gradually form initial trust and norms within the group. Counselors typically use low-risk activities, such as counselor-assigned pairing activities and turn-taking speaking methods, to allow members to begin sharing their expectations and concerns about the group. (Mills et al., 2016)

2). Storming

As the group progresses, interactions between members begin to become more genuine, and individual needs, emotions, and opinions gradually emerge. This period is known as the storming stage. During this stage, conflicts and confrontations become common, and members may begin to question group rules or relationships with each other. The counselor's task is to guide members in handling conflicts, encourage open communication, and help members overcome challenges at this stage through high-risk interactions to resolve conflicts. (Mills et al., 2016)

3). Norming

The norming stage is when group members begin to form stable relationships. At this stage, conflicts between members gradually decrease, and group norms and behavioral guidelines begin to establish. The counselor's role is to continue promoting positive interactions within the group and ensure that members can respect and support each other. Success at this stage can help build higher group cohesion, making relationships between members closer and interactions more effective. (Mills et al., 2016)

4). Performing

The performing stage is when group functionality reaches its peak. At this stage, group members can engage in deeper self-disclosure and interaction, and the focus of discussions gradually shifts to "here and now" group interactions. The

counselor's main task at this time is to facilitate mutual learning among members, helping them achieve personal growth and emotional adjustment through group interactions. Groups at this stage typically exhibit high cohesion, with trust and openness between members reaching their peak. (Mills et al., 2016)

5). Adjourning

The adjourning stage marks the end of the group counseling process. The counselor's task at this stage is to help members reflect on and summarize their gains in the group, and prepare emotionally for the group's conclusion. Low-risk activities once again become dominant, helping members organize their learning and growth experiences, and smoothly transition to life after the group disbands. (Mills et al., 2016)

2.2.4 Advantages of Group Counseling

Group counseling has emerged as a powerful therapeutic approach, offering distinct advantages in both therapeutic effectiveness and practical implementation. From its demonstrated efficacy in treating various psychological conditions to its cost-effective nature, group counseling presents unique benefits that complement and sometimes surpass individual therapy approaches. While acknowledging certain practical challenges, understanding these advantages is crucial for maximizing the potential of group counseling interventions.

1). Therapeutic Effectiveness of Group Counseling

In treating depression, Cognitive Behavioral Group Therapy (CBT) has shown significant effects. Research by Thimm and Antonsen (2014) indicates that in routine clinical practice, patients receiving group CBT treatment showed a significant decrease in depression scores, with the effect remaining stable in a 3-month follow-up. The study reviewed treatment records of 143 patients from 2003 to 2013, showing significant alleviation of depressive symptoms. The average Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II) score of participants decreased from 28.5 pre-treatment to 18.5 post-treatment. Moreover, about 30% of patients fully recovered after treatment, and 44% showed significant improvement. (Thimm & Antonsen, 2014)

Another notable advantage of CBT group therapy is the group cohesion and sense of belonging it provides. Through interactions with other members, patients can practice new behavioral patterns and learn from others in the group. These interactions not only help patients improve social skills but also help them gain social support and reduce feelings of isolation. Research shows that social interactions and behavioral experiments in group environments help patients cope with negative emotions and better handle social situations in real life. (Thimm & Antonsen, 2014)

2). Social Support and Sense of Belonging

Mashinter & Patricia (2020) proposed in her research that group counseling is effective because it aligns with human needs as social animals. The study points out that many psychological problems, such as anxiety disorders, depression, and social phobias, stem from how individuals interact with society, making treatment in a group environment particularly appropriate. By sharing similar experiences with others, patients can realize they are not alone, thereby reducing feelings of isolation and gaining a sense of belonging. This "normalization" process is especially applicable to patients with anxiety and depression. (Mashinter & Patricia, 2020)

Furthermore, Mashinter notes that group counseling is particularly effective in dealing with major life changes such as divorce and bereavement. In these situations, individuals often feel isolated and helpless, but through group counseling, they can connect with others in similar situations, support each other, and form strong emotional bonds. For example, group therapy is especially helpful for individuals experiencing bereavement, where participants can share grief and receive emotional support in the group. (Mashinter & Patricia, 2020)

3). Advantages of Trauma-Focused Group Therapy

The application of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) in group form has unique advantages, especially suitable for treating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in children and adolescents. Deblinger et al. (2016) point out that TF-CBT group therapy is not only effective in clinical practice but can also reduce patients' feelings of shame and isolation. Research shows that after traumatic events,

many patients, especially children, often feel ashamed and isolated. Through group therapy, they can share experiences with others who have undergone similar trauma, thereby alleviating these negative emotions. (Deblinger et al., 2016)

Moreover, TF-CBT group therapy has particular advantages in resource-poor environments. For instance, studies in Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo show that TF-CBT group therapy not only effectively reduced trauma symptoms but also helped participants recover better through culturally adapted intervention methods. These studies indicate that although individual TF-CBT may have higher long-term cost-effectiveness, group TF-CBT shows significant cost-effectiveness in the short term due to its ability to cover more patients. (Deblinger et al., 2016)

4). Cost-Effectiveness of Group Counseling

In addition to psychological therapeutic effects, group counseling also has significant advantages in terms of cost-effectiveness. Mashinter & Patricia (2020) points out that group therapy is more economical than individual therapy because therapists can serve multiple patients simultaneously, thereby reducing the treatment cost for individual patients. Thimm and Antonsen's (2014) research also mentions that group CBT is widely applied in clinical practice due to its cost-effectiveness. (Mashinter & Patricia, 2020; Thimm & Antonsen, 2014)

Especially in areas with limited resources, group counseling can significantly reduce medical costs by decreasing therapists' workload and increasing patient coverage. Additionally, TF-CBT group therapy can provide training opportunities for newly employed clinicians, which is particularly important in resource-poor environments. (Deblinger et al., 2016)

5). Challenges in Practice

Despite the numerous advantages of group counseling, there are still some challenges in its implementation. For example, Mashinter & Patricia (2020) points out that the success of group counseling depends on the therapist's organizational and management abilities. Therapists not only need to maintain group dynamics but also ensure that all members benefit from it. Moreover, interactions within the group may

trigger emotional conflicts, so therapists need to constantly monitor group members' emotional responses and intervene promptly. (Mashinter & Patricia, 2020)

In trauma-focused therapy, sharing individual trauma narratives needs to be handled carefully. Deblinger et al. suggest that individual trauma narratives in groups should be conducted in a private manner to avoid secondary trauma to other members. Nevertheless, TF-CBT group therapy still demonstrates its potential and effectiveness in dealing with complex trauma. (Deblinger et al., 2016)

2.2.5 Effectiveness Evaluation of Group Counseling

The evaluation of group counseling effectiveness represents a critical component in ensuring therapeutic quality and demonstrating intervention outcomes. This comprehensive assessment encompasses both process and outcome measurements, requiring careful consideration of evaluation tools, methodological standards, and ethical considerations. Understanding these evaluation approaches and their implementation is essential for validating group counseling interventions and improving their effectiveness through systematic assessment.

1). Process Evaluation and Outcome Evaluation

Delucia-Waack (1997) emphasizes that the effectiveness evaluation of group counseling should include two dimensions: process evaluation and outcome evaluation. Process evaluation mainly focuses on the quality of interaction among group members, group atmosphere, leadership behavior, and member participation. Commonly used process evaluation tools such as the Group Climate Questionnaire (GCQ) are used to assess group cohesion, engagement, and conflict situations. On the other hand, outcome evaluation focuses on the improvement of members' mental health after the group ends, such as anxiety reduction and alleviation of depressive symptoms. (Delucia-waack, 1997)

Caitlyn Bennett et al. (2021) stress the importance of combining multiple perspectives when evaluating results, focusing not only on the reduction of psychological symptoms but also on functional improvements such as social skills and emotional management enhancement. This standard points out that process evaluation

and outcome evaluation are complementary and indispensable. (Caitlyn Bennett et al., 2021)

2). Selection of Evaluation Tools

Delucia-Waack (1997) further points out that the selection of evaluation tools must consider their reliability and validity, ensuring that the chosen tools can accurately reflect important variables in group therapy. She recommends various tools for group counseling evaluation, such as the Group Counselor Behavior Rating Form (GCBRF), which can quantify the leader's intervention effects and interactions with members in the group. She also mentions that the selection of evaluation tools should match the group type, ensuring consistency between measurement dimensions and treatment goals.

Meanwhile, Caitlyn Bennett et al. (2021) emphasize that cultural background and individual differences should be fully considered when choosing evaluation tools. For example, for groups with multicultural backgrounds, the standard recommends using assessment tools with cross-cultural applicability to reduce the impact of cultural bias on evaluation results. (Caitlyn Bennett et al., 2021)

3). Technical Standards for Evaluation: Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are key attributes of effective evaluation tools. Delucia-Waack (1997) emphasizes that any evaluation tool should undergo reliability and validity testing before application, especially for use in different cultures or specific groups. For example, tools for evaluating group leadership behavior should ensure sufficient reliability across different group structures and leadership styles. Additionally, she mentions that tools should have sufficient sensitivity to capture subtle psychological changes within the group.

Caitlyn Bennett et al. (2021) provide detailed technical standards for evaluation tools, emphasizing that the reliability and validity of tools must be supported by sufficient literature. When conducting evaluations, counselors should understand measurement errors and use tools reasonably based on their technical characteristics to ensure the reliability and consistency of evaluation results. (Caitlyn Bennett et al., 2021)

4). Ethical and Cultural Considerations

Caitlyn Bennett et al. (2021) provide detailed explanations of ethical issues in the evaluation process, emphasizing that privacy and data confidentiality of members must be ensured during evaluation. Moreover, members should understand the purpose of the evaluation before accepting it and sign informed consent forms to ensure their rights are protected. Cultural sensitivity is also an important consideration in the evaluation process. The standard suggests that group workers should ensure that evaluation tools are applicable to members from different cultural backgrounds, avoiding bias against specific cultures or groups. (Caitlyn Bennett et al., 2021)

5). Interpretation and Application of Evaluation Results

Delucia-Waack (1997) points out that the ultimate purpose of evaluation is to provide data support for the effectiveness of group counseling, thereby improving the quality and efficacy of counseling. She suggests that evaluation results should be fed back to group leaders to help them adjust counseling strategies, and the long-term effects of group counseling on members should be assessed through long-term follow-up. She also mentions that the interpretation of results should be based not only on quantitative data but also combined with qualitative feedback, such as members' self-reports and leaders' observations.

Caitlyn Bennett et al. (2021) add that evaluation results should consider factors at both individual and group levels, and comprehensive analysis should be conducted combining results from multiple dimensions. When reporting and applying results, group workers should discuss evaluation results with members and adjust subsequent counseling plans based on the results. (Caitlyn Bennett et al., 2021)

2.2.6 Related Group Counseling Theories

Various theoretical frameworks have been developed and applied in group counseling, each offering unique perspectives and approaches to understanding and facilitating psychological change. From cognitive behavioral interventions to career development and existential approaches, these theories provide structured foundations for group counseling practice. Understanding these theoretical frameworks is essential

for implementing effective group interventions and achieving optimal therapeutic outcomes.

1). Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT)

Cognitive Behavioral Theory is one of the most widely applied theories in group counseling. Its core is to adjust individual thought patterns through cognitive restructuring and behavioral training, thereby changing negative emotions and behavioral responses. Whitfield's research thoroughly explored the implementation methods of Cognitive Behavioral Group Therapy (CBT) and its application in treating anxiety and depression (Whitfield, 2018). The study points out that CBT is not just an intervention model centered on cognitive restructuring, but also provides a mutually supportive environment for participants through group interaction, encouraging them to conduct behavioral experiments and emotional regulation through mutual feedback (Whitfield, 2018). This interaction not only allows patients to gain emotional recognition but also further optimizes their cognitive processes by observing others' behaviors and feedback. (Whitfield, 2018)

Moloud et al. further explored the effects of CBT group therapy on patients with major depression, especially the improvement of self-esteem and optimism (Moloud et al., 2022). They found that patients participating in CBT showed significantly improved self-esteem and optimism after treatment, but these effects gradually weakened over time, indicating that continuous treatment is crucial for maintaining positive effects (Moloud et al., 2022). The study also found that self-esteem played a mediating role between optimism and depression, suggesting that CBT can not only improve depressive symptoms through cognitive adjustment but also enhance emotional regulation ability by improving patients' sense of self-worth. (Moloud et al., 2022)

Furthermore, Mohamad Yusop et al., through a systematic review, further demonstrated that the application of CBT in group counseling has widespread effectiveness, especially in dealing with anxiety, mood disorders, and interpersonal problems (Mohamad Yusop et al., 2020). Through the structured process of the group,

participants can not only solve problems by sharing experiences with each other but also learn new skills through collective discussions and task-oriented activities, thereby enhancing problem-solving abilities and confidence in coping with emotional challenges (Mohamad Yusop et al., 2020).

Similarly, these three articles also provide specific group counseling techniques, application areas, and counseling processes based on Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT):

Whitfield's Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) group counseling method primarily includes six core mechanisms: cognitive restructuring (challenging and modifying automatic thoughts and underlying beliefs through behavioral experiments), normalization (reducing stigma and isolation through observing similar experiences of other members), collaborative relationships (peer support interactions being more persuasive than therapist suggestions), in-vivo exposure (desensitization through direct confrontation of feared situations within the group), positive reinforcement learning (members gaining vicarious learning through observing others' success while receiving group support and encouragement), and mastery experience (building self-efficacy through practicing problem-solving skills by helping others). (Whitfield, 2018)

Mohamad Yusop et al. suggest that Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) group counseling can be applied in areas such as emotional issues (anxiety, depression, anger management), psychological disorders (social phobia, post-traumatic stress disorder), behavioral problems (disruptive behavior, externalizing and internalizing problems), adaptation issues (school adjustment, social skills), special populations (visually impaired individuals, obese females, early psychosis patients), physiological issues (premenstrual syndrome), and decision counseling (pregnant women's delivery mode choices). (Mohamad Yusop et al., 2020)

Moloud et al.'s Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) group counseling process can be summarized as:

The study implemented 90-minute group sessions twice weekly for eight weeks, with ten participants per group. The process began with establishing therapeutic

relationships and group norms, followed by progressively exploring depression-related cognitive and emotional issues. Each session followed a basic structure of "review-new topic-discussion-summary" and included homework assignments to consolidate effects. Content progressed from understanding depression symptoms through identifying and correcting cognitive distortions, developing self-esteem and optimism, ultimately aiming to improve emotional states. Each session emphasized interactive discussion and experience sharing among members, promoting individual change through group dynamics. The entire process systematically utilized CBT's core techniques while fully leveraging the advantages of the group format. (Moloud et al., 2022)

2). Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) focuses on individual self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals in career development and decision-making processes. Wang et al. pointed out in their research that SCCT has strong applicability in group interventions for career decision-making, especially in contemporary career development and educational contexts. SCCT helps individuals overcome obstacles in the career choice process by enhancing their self-efficacy and achieve career goals through the interaction of environment and behavior. (Wang et al., 2022)

In group counseling, the application of SCCT improves participants' career decision-making ability by helping them identify and utilize environmental resources. For example, in a career counseling group, members can help other members build confidence and overcome challenges in career choices by sharing personal career development experiences. The research also points out that SCCT is particularly suitable for group counseling in multicultural backgrounds because it can fully consider the influence of environmental and cultural factors on career choices. (Wang et al., 2022)

3). Existential Psychology

Existential psychology focuses on exploring individual psychological responses when facing core life issues (such as death, loneliness, and meaning). In groups facing life crises, such as cancer patients, existential group therapy helps alleviate their existential anxiety by assisting patients in reflecting on the meaning of life.

Nakamura and Kawase's research explored the application of short-term existential group therapy in breast cancer patients and found that this therapy significantly improved patients' mental health and quality of life, especially for those feeling hopeless. (Nakamura & Kawase, 2021)

The study also points out that through mutual support and sharing among group members, existential group therapy can effectively reduce patients' sense of loneliness and help them find new meaning and purpose in life during the disease process. In this way, patients can better understand themselves through others' experiences in the group and enhance their ability to cope with future challenges. (Nakamura & Kawase, 2021)

According to Nakamura & Kawase (2021), their Short-term Existential Group Therapy Program (Short-term EGP) is a structured group counseling program consisting of 90-minute weekly sessions over five weeks, with each group comprising 5-7 breast cancer patients facilitated by a psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist. The program features progressive weekly themes: from free sharing in week one, anxiety exploration in week two, reconstruction of interpersonal relationships in week three, stress coping in week four, to self-awareness and life meaning exploration in week five (p.3). During the therapeutic process, therapists primarily employed encouraging approaches to guide patients in expressing existential anxieties (such as helplessness and fear of losing peaceful life), facilitate mutual resonance and support among group members, and promote self-reflection and confidence building through conversations (p.3). The study demonstrated a high completion rate of 91.2%, with significant improvements in patients' Quality of Life (QOL) scores and spiritual well-being, showing particular effectiveness for patients experiencing hopelessness, and helping patients reconstruct their cognition of daily life and life goals (pp.7-8).(Nakamura & Kawase, 2021)

2.2.7 Group Counseling Intervention Plans for Future Anxiety

Various intervention approaches have been developed to address future anxiety through group counseling, ranging from cognitive behavioral therapy to character strengths-based interventions. These diverse approaches, implemented

across different settings from schools to primary care facilities, offer systematic strategies for managing and reducing future anxiety. Understanding these intervention methods and their applications provides a foundation for developing effective group counseling programs tailored to address future anxiety concerns.

Group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (GCBT) as a widely applied intervention method has shown significant effects, especially in dealing with anxiety and various emotional disorders. Interventions based on cognitive behavioral therapy help individuals identify and adjust negative thinking patterns, thereby reducing anxiety symptoms. The transdiagnostic CBT (tCBT) approach demonstrates flexibility and efficiency by focusing on common features of multiple emotional disorders, such as emotional regulation and cognitive restructuring. This transdiagnostic approach is not only applicable to different types of emotional disorders but can also enhance therapeutic effects through social interaction and experience sharing in groups. (Joaquim et al., 2023)

2.2.8 Group Counseling Research

"Association for specialists in group work professional standards for the training of group workers," (2000), a publication issued by the American Association for Group Work Professionals, aimed to establish professional standards for group workers, covering ethics, cultural sensitivity, and diversity training to ensure group workers can provide effective psychological support across different backgrounds. The literature provided detailed recommendations for standardized training in group counseling, with particular emphasis on social justice and respect for cultural diversity. ("Association for specialists in group work professional standards for the training of group workers," 2000)

Thorngren and Kleist (2002) examined Multiple Family Group Therapy (MFGT) as an effective treatment modality. Their research demonstrates that MFGT combines family systems theories with therapeutic group factors, providing opportunities to explore interpersonal relationships between families. The authors present an 8-week MFGT model based on interpersonal and postmodern theories, including activities focused on telling family stories, improving communication, exploring roles and

expectations, building trust, and addressing conflicts. This approach emphasizes the importance of social support and multiple perspectives, allowing all members to give and receive feedback about strengthening family ties. Research confirms this method's effectiveness in various contexts, including reducing schizophrenia relapse, improving parent-child interactions, and enhancing family resilience.(Thorngren & Kleist, 2002)

Thimm and Antonsen (2014) conducted a retrospective analysis of data from 2003 to 2013, studying the effectiveness of CBT group therapy for depression in routine clinical settings. Using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II) to assess treatment outcomes, results showed significant reduction in depressive symptoms post-treatment, with effects persisting at three-month follow-up. While the study demonstrated good outcomes for group CBT in routine clinical practice, it also found that 17.5% of patients dropped out during treatment. The research emphasized the importance of group cohesion and behavioral experiments while noting limitations in individualized intervention.(Thimm & Antonsen, 2014)

Deblinger, Pollio, & Dorsey (2016) studied the application of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) in group treatment, particularly for children with traumatic experiences. TF-CBT is an evidence-based treatment method originally designed for individual therapy, aimed at helping children process post-traumatic stress symptoms. In this study, TF-CBT was adapted for group format, and findings showed this method remained effective in group settings, significantly reducing children's trauma symptoms and enhancing their coping abilities. Through group interactions, children could share their experiences in a safe environment and receive support, while also making the treatment more cost-effective. The research suggests that applying TF-CBT in group format can serve more patients in resource-limited environments and provides an effective alternative for trauma treatment.(Deblinger et al., 2016)

Whitfield (2018) studied the effectiveness of CBT in group therapy for anxiety and depressive symptoms, pointing out that group cohesion, behavioral experiments, and social identity play important roles in alleviating psychological symptoms. Through group interactions, patients can observe and imitate others, conduct behavioral

experiments in a safe environment, ultimately achieving cognitive restructuring and emotional relief.(Whitfield, 2018)

Whitfield (2018) studied the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) group applications in school settings, particularly in alleviating anxiety and depressive symptoms among adolescents. The research indicates that CBT group therapy can provide adolescents with a structured and supportive environment for behavioral experiments and cognitive restructuring through peer interaction. In this setting, adolescents can observe similar experiences from other members, helping reduce feelings of isolation and enhance self-efficacy. The study also found that through behavioral practice and task-oriented interventions, CBT can significantly improve adolescents' emotional states. This research supports the application of CBT group therapy in school settings to help students better cope with mental health issues.(Whitfield, 2018)

Mohamad Yusop et al. (2020) studied the effectiveness of CBT in group counseling, finding that group CBT showed significant effects in alleviating mental health problems, particularly in improving anxiety, depression, and other psychological symptoms. The research indicates that CBT provides a structured intervention framework that can achieve significant therapeutic effects in relatively short periods, offering effective psychological support methods in resource-limited environments.(Mohamad Yusop et al., 2020)

Steen et al. (2021) revisited the effectiveness of school counselor-led academic interventions on student academic performance, focusing on how group counseling supports students' multifaceted development. The literature review indicates that school counselors can effectively improve students' academic performance through group interventions targeting academic issues while helping them develop social skills and emotional management abilities. The research also points out that counselors face main challenges in resource and time constraints when implementing interventions, making group counseling an effective way to serve more students with limited resources. The study recommends further research on the effectiveness of different intervention

methods to better optimize school counselors' workflows and enhance intervention outcomes.(Steen et al., 2021)

Caitlyn Bennett et al. (2021) discussed assessment criteria in group therapy, with particular attention to how cultural diversity impacts evaluation, noting that single assessment methods (such as self-reporting) may lead to biased results. The research suggests improving assessment accuracy through multiple data collection methods while emphasizing the methodological differences between group and individual assessments. These standards, jointly developed by associations (AARC and ASGW), aim to help group therapists adopt best assessment practices to ensure therapeutic effectiveness and reliability across different cultural contexts.(Caitlyn Bennett et al., 2021)

Zhao et al. (2021) studied the application of Character Strengths-Based Group Intervention (CSBGI) among Chinese adolescents, finding that the intervention significantly reduced participants' anxiety levels and had an indirect effect through enhanced self-efficacy. The intervention content was optimized to align with Chinese culture, making it more relevant to local adolescents' daily life contexts. The study shows that this intervention method reduces anxiety by promoting self-efficacy and offers possibilities for integration into school mental health curricula.(Zhao et al., 2021)

Steen et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review analyzing the effectiveness of school counselor-led group counseling programs in improving student academic achievement. They reviewed 12 studies that used comprehensive tests and GPA as measures of academic achievement. Results showed these group interventions had medium to large positive effects on students' academic performance. Additionally, the study explored the types of manuals or protocols counselors used in implementing group interventions, the number of group sessions, and background information of students and leaders. The article suggests future research should focus on more international literature to further understand the effectiveness of such group interventions in global contexts. In summary, school counselors, through structured group interventions, not only improved students' academic performance but also promoted their personal growth and social-emotional development.(Steen et al., 2021)

Nakamura & Kawase (2021) studied the impact of existential short-term group therapy on the mental health of breast cancer patients. The goal of existential group therapy is to help patients explore life meaning and purpose, thereby enhancing their psychological resilience when facing illness and death. In this study, researchers applied existential therapy to breast cancer patients and found that the treatment significantly improved patients' life satisfaction and mental health levels. Through sharing their conditions and life experiences with others, patients gained support and rebuilt their sense of self-worth. The study shows that existential short-term group therapy has positive psychological effects on cancer patients, particularly in helping them cope with illness-related emotional distress.(Nakamura & Kawase, 2021)

Moloud et al. (2022) applied CBT group therapy to patients with major depression, focusing on improving self-esteem and optimism. The study found that patients receiving CBT showed significant improvements in self-esteem and optimism levels, with notable reduction in depressive symptoms. Through randomized controlled trials, the research validated CBT's effectiveness in psychological support while emphasizing the importance of continued treatment in maintaining positive effects.(Moloud et al., 2022)

Joaquim et al. (2023) systematically reviewed the effectiveness of transdiagnostic CBT in group interventions, particularly for adults. The research found that transdiagnostic interventions (tCBT) showed significant therapeutic effects across various psychological disorders, especially in alleviating anxiety and depressive symptoms. Transdiagnostic CBT, by focusing on shared pathological features (such as emotion regulation and ruminative thinking), provides a treatment approach that doesn't rely on specific diagnostic labels, making therapy more universal and flexible, significantly reducing waiting times and improving service accessibility.(Joaquim et al., 2023)

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative experimental research design, including both a control group and an experimental group, aimed at investigating the impact of group counseling on future anxiety levels among vocational school students. The research design incorporates pre-assessment before the group counseling and post-assessment after the intervention to compare the effects of group counseling on the future anxiety levels of vocational school students.

3.1 Population and Sampling

The experiment is divided into two phases and will be conducted at a vocational school called "Botou City Vocational Education Center" in Cangzhou City, Hebei Province. This school is a local vocational school with a total of 5000 students.

Phase One:

In the first phase of the experiment, Researcher will randomly select 370 students from the 5000 students in the school as research subjects to conduct a questionnaire survey.

Selection Criteria for Phase One Volunteers:

- A. Voluntarily participate in the experiment, understand the experimental content, and have signed relevant experimental agreements and written explanations.
- B. Are students of the Botou City Vocational Education Center.
- C. Can fully understand the experimental requirements and content.
- D. Agree to participate in the second phase of group counseling experiment.

Phase Two:

In the second phase, based on the questionnaire results from the first phase, 20 students who exhibit significant future anxiety will be selected from the 370 participants. These 20 students will be divided into two groups of 10 each: a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group will undergo group counseling.

Selection Criteria for Phase Two Volunteers:

A. Voluntarily accept the group counseling program, understand the content of the second phase experiment, and have signed relevant agreements and written explanations for the second phase.

B. Are students of the Botou City Vocational Education Center and have participated in the first phase of the experiment.

C. Possess the ability to understand and participate in the experiment.

D. Have been identified as participants with significant levels of future anxiety based on the results of the future anxiety survey questionnaire.

This sampling method ensures a random initial selection followed by a targeted selection based on anxiety levels, allowing for a focused study on students with significant future anxiety.

3.2 Research Tools

3.2.1 Group Counseling Intervention Program for Reducing Future Anxiety

In this study, the main approach to alleviate future anxiety is the use of a group counseling intervention program. During the group counseling activities, the aim is to explore students' inner thoughts and feelings, help them reduce future anxiety, and establish an environment for problem-solving and communication. Throughout the research process, there will be 8 group counseling sessions, with each session lasting 90 minutes. After the completion of all 8 group counseling sessions, students will be provided with an anxiety level test.

Table 1 Group Counseling Program for Reducing Future Anxiety

Session 1 : Building Relationships	
Key concept	Begin counseling, establish relationships between students and between students and counselors, create a safe and trusting counseling environment, clarify the purpose and importance of group counseling

Objectives	<p>O Establish familiar, comfortable, and mutually trusting counseling relationships for subsequent group counseling, initially promote understanding among students, and clarify the purpose of group counseling and the importance of future anxiety.</p>
Skills and Techniques	<p>Sk Active Listening, Unconditional positive regard, Listening with empathy, Empathic assertion</p>
Evaluation	<p>Ev Whether solid trust relationships have been established among members, whether the first group counseling achieved smooth and reasonable communication, whether trust in the counselor has been established.</p>
Session 2 : Exploring Future Anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension	
Key concept	<p>Ke Guiding Students to Recognize Future Anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension.</p>
Objectives	<p>O Starting from internal cognition, help students face their future anxiety in the Academic Future dimension, search for internal factors that cause future anxiety in the Academic Future dimension, attempt to guide students to understand and face the cognitions and behaviors that trigger their future anxiety. And make the group relationship established after the first counseling ice-breaking more solid.</p>
Skills and Techniques	<p>Sk Cognitive Behavioral Theory, Modeling, Behavior Rehearsal, Coaching, Feedback, Reinforcement, Cognitive Restructuring, The Buddy System</p>
Evaluation	<p>Ev Whether students can face their future anxiety in the Academic Future dimension, whether they have established appropriate self-awareness, and whether the group relationship has further warmed up.</p>
Session 3 : Relieving Future Anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension	
Key concept	<p>Ke Guide students to explore external awareness of future anxiety in the Academic Future dimension, establish a combination of internal</p>

		and external awareness, and propose solutions.
Objectives	O	Starting from external awareness, guide students to explore external awareness of future anxiety in the Academic Future dimension, search for the influence of external factors on students' cognitive behaviors in the Academic Future dimension, establish a combination of internal and external awareness, help students reconstruct appropriate cognitive behaviors that can relieve the Academic Future dimension.
Skills and Techniques	Sk	Cognitive Behavioral Theory, Active Listening, Unconditional positive regard, Listening with empathy, Feedback, Reinforcement, Cognitive Restructuring
Evaluation	Ev	Whether students have established new cognitive behaviors that can relieve future anxiety in the Academic Future dimension, and whether future anxiety in the Academic Future dimension has been relieved.
Session 4 : Exploring Future Anxiety in the Career Development Dimension		
Key concept	Ke	Guiding Students to Recognize Future Anxiety in the Career Development Dimension.
Objectives	O	Guide students to recognize their career interests, analyze their career choices, help them gradually analyze the sources of their future anxiety in the Career Development dimension, and guide them to gradually establish the relationship between Career Development and current study, self-interest and future anxiety.
Skills and Techniques	Sk	Social Cognitive Career Theory, Active Listening, Unconditional positive regard, Listening with empathy, Clarification, Empathic assertion, Illustration, Interpretation, Confirmation, Confrontation, Explanation
Evaluation	Ev	Whether students have found their career interests, and whether they have gained a relatively clear understanding of future

	anxiety in the Career Development dimension.
Session 5 : Relieving Future Anxiety in the Career Development Dimension	
Key concept	Using Social Cognitive Career Theory to Help Students Relieve Future Anxiety in the Career Development Dimension.
Objectives	Based on the previous counseling, help students explore and understand future career development, help students establish appropriate career expectations, and establish appropriate personal goals. Help students gradually recognize how career success can be achieved. Finally help students relieve future anxiety in the Career Development dimension.
Skills and Techniques	Social Cognitive Career Theory Specification, Confrontation, Explanation, Illustration, Interpretation, Crystallization
Evaluation	Whether students have established appropriate career expectations and personal goals, whether students have recognized how to achieve career success, and whether future anxiety in the Career Development dimension has been relieved.
Session 6 : Exploring Future Anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension	
Key concept	Guiding Students to Recognize Future Anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension.
Objectives	Guide students to explore their expectations, concerns and understanding of Life perspectives. Understand students' future anxiety in the Life perspectives dimension, gradually explore the causes of future anxiety in the Life perspectives dimension.
Skills and Techniques	Existential Psychology, Modeling, Behavior Rehearsal, Coaching, Feedback, Reinforcement, Cognitive Restructuring, The Buddy System
Evaluation	Whether students have clearly recognized their future anxiety in the Life perspectives dimension, and whether they can realize the

	causes of this future anxiety.
Session 7: Relieving Future Anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension	
Key concept	Helping Students Relieve Future Anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension
Objectives	Based on existentialist theory, help students sort out their life meaning and goals, seek to establish connections between students and life, social activities, guide students to recognize their existential value and the diversity of life. Help students establish achievable positive life expectations. Finally help students relieve future anxiety in the Life perspectives dimension.
Skills and Techniques	Existentialist Theory, Modeling, Behavior Rehearsal, Coaching, Feedback, Reinforcement, Cognitive Restructuring, The Buddy System
Evaluation	Whether students have established achievable positive life expectations, whether they have developed positive life goals and attitudes, and whether it has helped students relieve future anxiety in the Life perspectives dimension.
Session 8: Problem Solving	
Key concept	Summarize counseling results, help students solve problems, and conclude the counseling.
Objectives	Summarize and analyze the counseling results obtained from the three stages, systematically solve or relieve students' future anxiety, and conclude the counseling.
Skills and Techniques	Modeling, Behavior Rehearsal, Coaching, Feedback, Reinforcement, Cognitive Restructuring, The Buddy System
Evaluation	Whether students' future anxiety has been solved or relieved.

3.2.2 Future Anxiety scale

This study uses a future anxiety measurement scale adapted from: The 29-item measurement scale (FAS) (Zaleski, 1996).

Example:

Academic Future Section

I worry that my academic performance will be difficult to meet the graduation.

I feel anxious about whether I can get admitted to my desired higher-level school.

I worry whether my current field of study can lead to good professional choices.

.....

Career Development Section

10. I am concerned that I will need to face prolonged difficulties or challenges in my chosen career position.

11. I am fearful of the difficulties I may face in my future career.

12. I am concerned that my career prospects will deteriorate in the future.

.....

Life perspectives Section

20. I am concerned that it may be difficult to fulfil my family's expectations of my career.

21. I worry about the social status of my future career.

22. I worry that my future career won't allow me to live independently.

.....

Scoring guide:

The scores of all 30 items are added together and divided by the number of items, and the average score is used as a basis for judgement.

0.0 - 2.0: Low level of future anxiety

2.1 - 4.0: Medium level of future anxiety

4.1 - 6.0: High level of future anxiety

In this study, the researcher will select students with High level of future anxiety from the test results as members of the experimental group and control group.

3.3 Tool Validity

3.3.1 Group Counseling Program

The group counseling program was examined by 5 experts, and the IOC values after examination ranged from 0.67-1.00, indicating good validity.

3.3.2 Future Anxiety Scale

The scale used in this study was adapted from Zaleski's (1996) Future Anxiety Scale, and the Cronbach's Alpha of the questionnaire was 0.892. This version is suitable for vocational school students and has good reliability. The scale was examined by 3 experts, and the IOC values after examination ranged from 0.67-1.00, indicating good validity. The scale consists of 29 questions, including three dimensions: Academic Future, Career Development, and Life Perspectives. Each item is scored on a 7-point scale, ranging from 0 (absolutely wrong) to 6 (absolutely correct). The level of future anxiety is assessed by calculating the average score of all items, with higher scores indicating higher levels of future anxiety.

3.4 Research Design

The experimental design of this study is as follows:

O_1 × O_2 Experimental Group

O_3 — O_4 Control Group

O_1 represents the future anxiety level of the experimental group before receiving group counseling

O_2 represents the future anxiety level of the experimental group after receiving group counseling

× represents the group counseling intervention program

O_3 represents the future anxiety level of the control group before the intervention period

O_4 represents the future anxiety level of the control group after the intervention period

3.5 The First Phase of the Experiment

At the beginning of the study, 370 students will be randomly selected from the Botou City Vocational Education Center as research subjects. After signing relevant experimental agreements and informed consent forms, they will be given the future anxiety measurement scale.

After completing data collection, 20 students will be selected for the second phase of the experiment based on the data from the future anxiety measurement scale.

3.6 The Second Phase of the Experiment

After the first phase, the 20 selected students with more significant levels of future anxiety will be randomly divided into two groups of ten each. One group will be the experimental group, and the other will be the control group. The group counseling program will be implemented for the experimental group. After the group counseling is completed, both the experimental and control groups will fill out the future anxiety measurement scale again.

3.7 Data collection

After the completion of the first phase of the experiment, Researcher will conduct the following data collection:

Use the Future Anxiety Level Test Scale (Future Anxiety scale) to collect data on students' future anxiety levels before the group counseling experiment.

After the completion of the group counseling experiment in the second phase of the experiment:

Use the Future Anxiety Level Test Scale (Future Anxiety scale) again to collect future anxiety level data for both the experimental and control groups.

3.8 Data analysis

1). Approve research tools using statistics including IOC, Cronbach's Alpha Reliability and corrected item-total correlation.

2). In this study, Statistical Product and Service Solutions was used for data analysis. Shapiro-Wilk was used for initial consistency testing, followed by paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test to comparatively analyze the future anxiety level scores of the experimental and control groups for quantitative data analysis.



CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This research was conducted at the Vocational Education Center in Botou City, Cangzhou City, Hebei Province. During the initial stage of the experiment involving data collection through the "Vocational School Students Future Anxiety Scale," a total of 370 questionnaire responses were gathered, achieving a questionnaire validity rate of 72.97%. A total of 12 students participated in the data collection phase of group counseling, and they were randomly and equally divided into an experimental group and a control group. In the subsequent data analysis tables, the experimental group will be referred to as G1, and the control group as G2.

4.1 Data analysis

The researcher provided some basic information about volunteers participating in the second phase of the experiment, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Basic information about volunteers (n=12)

Category	Information	Percentage (%)
Age	18	100
Grade	High School Senior Grade 3	100
Household Registration	City	77
	Village	33
Family	Single-parent family	33
	Regular/intact family	77

All information collected in this study was analyzed using paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test. Before using t-tests for data analysis, the researcher applied the Test of Normality using Shapiro-Wilk to verify initial consistency between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group had a sig. of .692, and the control group had a sig. of .681. From the data, all sig. values are greater than 0.05,

indicating that there was no significant difference in future anxiety level scores between the experimental and control groups before group counseling, showing a normal distribution. This does not violate the statistical basis of t-tests, therefore, this study will use paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test for data analysis.

This study has two research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Whether students in the experimental group who participated in group counseling show significantly reduced future anxiety levels compared to the control group.

Hypothesis 2: Whether there is a difference between the changes in future anxiety levels of students in the experimental group and those in the control group.

To verify these research hypotheses, the researcher will analyze the data collected from the experimental and control groups through paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test.

First, the future anxiety level scores of the experimental and control groups before and after participating in group counseling are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Experimental and Control Groups' Future Anxiety Level Scores Before and After Group Counseling (n=12)

Future Anxiety Assessment	Group	M	SD	Future Anxiety level
Before the experiment	G1(n=6)	3.972	.323	MID
	G2(n=6)	3.965	.299	MID
After the experiment	G1(n=6)	1.816	.500	LOW
	G2(n=6)	3.972	.295	MID

In Table 3, it can be preliminarily found that after the completion of group counseling, the average future anxiety level score of the experimental group members decreased from 3.97167 to 1.81633, which is an encouraging data performance.

However, in order to further verify the effectiveness of the counseling program and provide support for the research hypotheses, the researcher will continue to provide more data analysis results.

Therefore, the researcher used independent samples t-test to analyze the data of the experimental group members before and after participating in group counseling, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Analysis of Future Anxiety Level Scores of the Experimental Group Before and After Participating in Group Counseling (n=6)

Future Anxiety Assessment	Group				t	p
	Before (n=6)		After (n=6)			
	M	SD	M	SD		
G1	3.972	.323*	1.816	.500	8.875*	.000*

P<0.001

The analysis of future anxiety level scores of experimental group members before and after participating in group counseling shows that the p-value < 0.001, therefore, there is a significant difference in future anxiety level scores of experimental group members before and after participating in group counseling. Before participating in group counseling, the average future anxiety level score of experimental group members was 3.97167, which ranks as medium-high future anxiety level, while after participating in group counseling, the average future anxiety level score of experimental group members changed to 1.81633, which ranks as low future anxiety level, $1.81633 < 3.97167$. Therefore, the future anxiety level of experimental group members was reduced, which verifies the effectiveness of the group counseling program.

However, to verify the research hypotheses, the researcher will also use independent samples t-test to analyze the data of future anxiety level scores of control group members before and after the group counseling, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Analysis of Future Anxiety Level Scores of Control Group Members Before and After Group Counseling (n=6)

Future Anxiety Assessment	Group		Group		t	p
	Before		After			
	M	SD	M	SD		
G2	3.965	.299*	3.972	.295	-0.39*	.970*

P>0.05

The analysis of future anxiety level scores of control group members before and after group counseling shows that the p-value is .970, $p > 0.05$, therefore, there is no significant difference in the future anxiety level of control group members before and after group counseling. This further verifies the effectiveness of the group counseling program. Furthermore, the average future anxiety level score of control group members after the completion of group counseling was 3.97167, compared to the average future anxiety level of experimental group members after the completion of group counseling at 1.81633, which is significantly lower. We can preliminarily determine that compared to the control group members, the experimental group members showed a reduction in future anxiety levels after the completion of group counseling.

Next, the researcher will analyze the data between experimental group members and control group members before and after group counseling through paired samples t-test to further verify the effectiveness of the group counseling program and support the research hypotheses.

First, the researcher will analyze the future anxiety level scores of experimental group members and control group members before group counseling through paired samples t-test, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Analysis of Future Anxiety Level Scores of Experimental Group Members and Control Group Members Before Group Counseling (n=12)

Future Anxiety Assessment	Group		Group		t	p
	Before(G1)		Before(G2)			
	(n=6)		(n=6)			
	M	SD	M	SD		
G1&G2	3.972	.323*	3.965	.299	.459*	.666*

P>0.05

According to the data, the average future anxiety level score of experimental group members before receiving group counseling was 3.97167, and the average future anxiety level score of control group members before group counseling was 3.96500. In the data analysis results of the two groups, $p = .666$, $p > 0.05$, therefore, this again indicates that there was no significant difference between the experimental group members and control group members before group counseling, demonstrating initial consistency and comparability.

This once again provides data support for further analysis of the future anxiety level score data of experimental group members and control group members after group counseling.

Finally, the researcher will analyze the future anxiety level scores of experimental group members and control group members after the completion of group counseling through paired samples t-test, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Analysis of Future Anxiety Level Scores of Experimental Group Members and Control Group Members After Group Counseling (n=12)

Future Anxiety Assessment	Group				t	p
	After(G1)		After(G2)			
	M	SD	M	SD		
G1&G2	1.816	.500	3.972	.295	-8.485*	.000*

P<0.001

In the ninth paragraph of this chapter, the researcher compared the average future anxiety level scores of experimental group members and control group members after the completion of group counseling, and preliminarily believed that the future anxiety level of experimental group members was reduced compared to the future anxiety level of control group members. In this data analysis, the p-value < 0.001, which indicates that after the completion of group counseling, there is a significant difference between the future anxiety level scores of experimental group members and the future anxiety level scores of control group members. Therefore, at this point, the researcher can consider that the future anxiety level of experimental group members compared to the future anxiety level of control group members shows a significant reduction, and there is a significant difference between the change in future anxiety level of experimental group members after the completion of group counseling compared to the change in future anxiety of control group members after the completion of group counseling.

At this point, we have provided support for the two research hypotheses of this paper: "Whether students in the experimental group who participated in group counseling show significantly reduced future anxiety levels compared to the control group" and "Whether there is a difference between the changes in future anxiety levels

of students in the experimental group and those in the control group," and have reached research conclusions.

4.2 Discussion of the Results

After completing the group counseling experiment and data analysis, this research has confirmed the effectiveness of group counseling in intervening with vocational high school students' future anxiety levels. This study aimed to verify whether the group counseling program was effective in intervening with vocational high school students' future anxiety levels, conducting group counseling practice and performing detailed analysis of the research data. After completing the group counseling program designed in this research, the future anxiety levels of experimental group members were significantly reduced.

When initially designing the group counseling program, researchers hoped to enhance the effectiveness of the group counseling program through various counseling theories, and during the implementation of the group counseling program, different counseling theoretical techniques were employed in different counseling stages according to the program design. During the group counseling process, researchers realized that this type of group counseling program designed with multiple counseling theories placed strong skill requirements on counselors, especially the need to be familiar with group counseling theoretical concepts and applications. When conducting group counseling in a school setting, as a counselor who is not a teacher or staff member with school-related identity, creating a safe and relaxed environment for students to express themselves and establish communication is an important condition for promoting the effectiveness of group counseling programs targeting student groups in a Chinese cultural environment. Additionally, enhancing the recognition of problem universality among students participating in group counseling and paying attention to the pressure brought by receiving group counseling in a traditional culture are important means to reduce students' resistance and anxiety toward group counseling. This point is consistent with the research conducted by Shih-Hua Chang and Christine Suniti Bhat in

Taiwan, also under a Chinese cultural background. Chang and Bhat (2023) emphasized in their article the importance and functions of leaders conducting the group being familiar with group counseling theory in group counseling, and also provided suggestions, believing that in a Chinese cultural background, attention should be paid to cultural aspects to eliminate students' anxiety when receiving group counseling (Chang & Bhat, 2023).

In group counseling, the first issue addressed was the future anxiety problem in the Academic Future dimension among experimental group members. Under Cognitive Behavioral Theory, researchers allowed each experimental group member to fully express their thoughts and helped students establish internal and external cognition of the Academic Future dimension in two group counseling sessions. During this period, a series of design goals were completed, helping experimental group members recognize themselves, recognize future anxiety, recognize the external environment, etc., allowing experimental group members to gradually recognize their true level and real situation in the Academic Future dimension. This increased the self-confidence of experimental group members and gave them the courage to face the future in the Academic Future dimension. Even at this stage, some experimental group members provided feedback to researchers, feeling that their future anxiety had already been significantly improved at this stage, and increased their confidence in future group counseling and Academic Future. This research finding is consistent with past research results. The study by Selly & Karina (2024) emphasized that self-confidence is not an innate trait but is gradually formed in the learning process from childhood to adulthood. In Selly & Karina's (2024) study, before students received group counseling, their average self-confidence score was 79.9 (categorized as "low"), but after participating in group counseling, students' average score significantly increased to 113.5 (multiple participants reached the "high" category), and statistical analysis also confirmed that this improvement was significant, $\text{sig} < 0.05$ (Selly & B, 2024).

During this stage of the group counseling process, researchers noticed that some experimental group members were from single-parent families or had siblings who

had passed away. Before this, researchers found that compared to other experimental group members, they were more willing to listen rather than actively speak, could get along well with other members, but found it more difficult to express themselves. One member also expressed multiple times that if their deceased siblings were still alive, their current predicament would be significantly alleviated. Through ensuring that each member had equal speaking opportunities and repeatedly requiring members to discuss with each other, researchers enabled members who had difficulties participating in group counseling discussions to gradually open up their hearts based on the relatively successful establishment of initial trust relationships, and to express themselves and get along harmoniously with experimental group members while maintaining communication. In the gradual group counseling process, each member's individual problems also improved step by step, thereby reducing their future anxiety levels. This research finding is also consistent with the research by Selly & Karina (2024), which found that broken family situations have a negative impact on students' blood performance and self-confidence, and they have fewer friends (Selly & B, 2024). The study by Selly & Karina (2024) also mentioned that the effectiveness of group counseling in improving self-confidence can be attributed to giving all members equal rights to discuss problem topics, a method that not only solves immediate problems but also contributes to personal development (Selly & B, 2024).

In the subsequent group counseling process, researchers found that among the experimental group members participating in group counseling, a considerable portion came from rural areas. One member had even faced isolation and social difficulties in past campus life, causing some negative impacts on them personally. During the group counseling process, researchers further discovered that members from rural areas needed more team cohesion to enhance their sense of participation and counseling effectiveness in group counseling. When discussing topics or counseling content related to career development, career future, career ideals, and other career-related topics, they also often needed more help and guidance. Therefore, researchers believe that vocational high school students from rural areas face certain challenges in

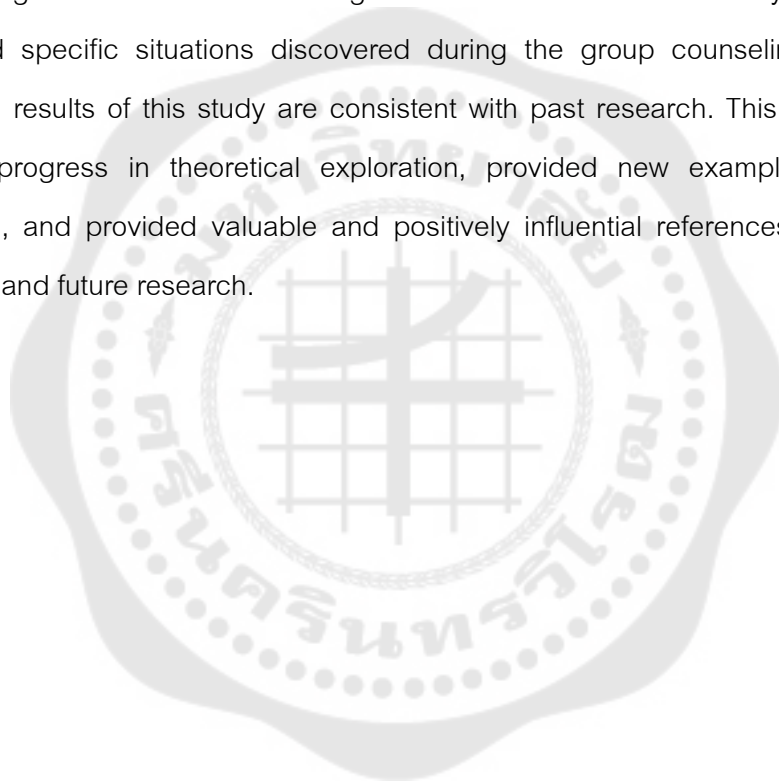
group counseling about future anxiety. For vocational high school students, researchers found that their initial thinking in the career field is often rather blank, and this issue is more pronounced among students from rural areas. This research finding is consistent with past research. The study by Grant et al. (2021) pointed out that rural adolescents face unique challenges in career development, that middle school age is the most critical age for students to gain career awareness, develop career knowledge, and begin the process of setting career planning goals, and that cohesion is very important for rural students(Grant et al., 2021).

In the previous paragraph, researchers briefly described the fact that students from rural areas were isolated in campus life and faced social difficulties as discovered during group counseling. Researchers believe it is necessary to elaborate on this difficulty. During the counseling process, the impact of this problem led this student to exhibit characteristics such as often hiding in corners, not actively speaking, difficulty expressing themselves, and only daring to speak softly in group counseling, which posed challenges for them in integrating into group counseling. However, researchers could sense that they had certain expectations for integrating into group counseling and making friends in this environment, and these expectations developed urgently in the middle and late stages of group counseling. After more than half of the group counseling sessions, this student's situation improved significantly, they resisted isolation, established stable social relationships with group members during the group counseling process, and deep friendships were born. Therefore, researchers believe that this phenomenon further indicates that for students from rural areas, they may have more needs to establish social relationships with peers, but these needs often face challenges. This research is consistent with past research. The study by Grant et al. (2021) pointed out that students in rural areas may have more need and desire to belong and establish social connections with peers, and the rich sense of community and connection in rural towns and schools contrasts sharply with the obvious individualism in many suburban middle-class and upper-middle-class schools(Grant et al., 2021).

In the sixth and seventh group counseling sessions designed in the group counseling program, researchers hoped to help students using existentialist theory. Researchers hoped to help students establish a positive and optimistic attitude toward life through group counseling, guide students to establish the concept of existence in self-cognition, thereby helping students to transform from a passive attitude to an active attitude when facing difficulties and life, allowing students to possess stronger spiritual strength to face the future and the unknown psychologically, thereby improving students' future anxiety levels. In previous group counseling sessions, researchers had already helped experimental group members find the source of anxiety, so in the Life Prospects dimension, researchers began to help students understand and accept difficulties and anxiety in the future time dimension, and help students find the meaning of their existence, or something that is very important to their lives. After the group counseling ended, the future anxiety level of experimental group members in the Life Prospects dimension was significantly reduced, and they had a more positive attitude and more active stance toward the future. The mentality of abandoning the future, giving up choices to others, or going with the flow was greatly changed. This result demonstrated in the experiment is consistent with past research results. Pirsaghi (2024) study pointed out that existentialist group counseling programs are effective for students' subjective vitality, existentialist interventions help students move away from a passive state in facing life problems, adopt a responsible and active posture to achieve authentic participation in life, and existentialist group counseling can help students realize that they have been passive in many life situations, passively accepting conditions, and sometimes giving control to others and the environment (Pirsaghi, 2024).

In conclusion, the group counseling program designed by researchers for vocational high school students with the purpose of intervening in future anxiety problems is effective in reducing the future anxiety levels of vocational high school students. Results show that after participating in group counseling, the future anxiety levels of experimental group members who participated in group counseling were all significantly reduced. Additionally, the group counseling program's comprehensive use

of multiple psychological counseling theories and the design method of designing group counseling program stages by dimensions provided relatively flexible solutions for addressing students' personal special problems, providing certain guarantees for the smooth progress of group counseling. In summary, this study deeply analyzed the effectiveness of group counseling intervention in reducing vocational high school students' future anxiety levels, providing effective references and specific tools for intervening in Chinese vocational high school students' future anxiety levels, and also analyzed specific situations discovered during the group counseling process. The research results of this study are consistent with past research. This study has made certain progress in theoretical exploration, provided new examples for empirical research, and provided valuable and positively influential references for educational practice and future research.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Conclusion

This study employed the "Vocational School Students Future Anxiety Scale" as the data collection instrument, gathering 370 questionnaires with a validity rate of 72.97%. A group counseling intervention program was designed specifically for vocational school students to address future anxiety, and six volunteer students in the experimental group received group counseling intervention for future anxiety.

Throughout this research, the following objectives guided the entire experimental study: To study the levels of future anxiety of vocational school students; To compare the future anxiety of the experimental group before and after participating in group counseling; To compare the future anxiety of the control group and the experimental group before and after the group counseling.

Following the completion of the group counseling intervention, the study collected the required data through the "Vocational School Students Future Anxiety Scale." Through data analysis, we obtained future anxiety level data for experimental group members before and after the group counseling intervention, as well as future anxiety level data for control group members before and after the group counseling period, and conducted analyses of these data.

In the first phase of the study, the mean score for future anxiety levels among volunteers from the valid questionnaires collected was 2.663. This indicates that the average future anxiety level of volunteers participating in this study was at a moderate level. Despite the limitations of the research sample in this study, this result still provides strong evidence that the average future anxiety level of vocational school students in the Cangzhou area of Hebei Province, China, is at a moderate level.

Through data analysis, the future anxiety level scores of experimental group members showed significant changes before and after participating in group counseling ($p < 0.001$). In contrast, the future anxiety level scores of control group members showed no significant changes before and after the group counseling period (sig.: 0.970,

$p > 0.05$). Furthermore, there was a significant difference between the post-intervention future anxiety level scores of the control group and the experimental group ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, this study achieved its initial research objectives and concluded that the group counseling program designed in this research demonstrates significant effectiveness in intervening with future anxiety among vocational school students.

This study also yielded several additional findings during the experiment.

In the first phase of the experiment, the researcher found that students exhibited curiosity and positive attitudes toward psychological questionnaires and psychological counseling, providing advantages and a foundation for conducting psychological research and psychological interventions.

During the group counseling sessions, the researcher discovered that using internet memes familiar to students or other communication styles and terminology that students were accustomed to during ice-breaking activities accelerated the ice-breaking process and enhanced students' identification with and acceptance of the counselor.

Through interactions with experimental group students, the researcher also found that the impact of future anxiety on students did not manifest obvious external signs. These effects primarily influenced their choices about the future, self-evaluation, and thoughts about the future. These psychological activities related to future anxiety were difficult to detect through daily observation and required discovery and recognition through communication in group counseling sessions.

The researcher also discovered that future anxiety represents a long-term, continuously changing psychological state for students. The most optimistic outcome in group counseling is for students to accept and become accustomed to the long-term presence of future anxiety after the group counseling ends, while acquiring the ability to regulate and accept future anxiety, thereby achieving the capacity for long-term effective reduction of future anxiety.

In communications with experimental group students some time after the researcher concluded the experiment, students demonstrated obvious positive and lasting changes in their future planning and life attitudes.

5.2 Discussion

The main finding of this study is that after participating in eight sessions of group counseling, the future anxiety levels of students in the experimental group decreased significantly (from $M = 3.97$ to $M = 1.82$, $p < .001$), whereas the anxiety levels of the control group remained unchanged ($p > .05$). This result indicates that the group counseling program, designed based on the integrated theories of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), and existential psychology, has a significant intervention effect in reducing future anxiety among vocational school students. The intervention not only helped students clarify their negative cognitions about the future but also enhanced their positive expectations regarding academics, career planning, and life meaning.

The observed reduction in anxiety may be closely related to improvements in students' self-efficacy and self-esteem brought about by the group counseling. During the sessions, students were encouraged to identify and challenge irrational beliefs about the future, acquire practical coping strategies, and build confidence in their ability to exert control over their lives. Demir (2023) pointed out that self-esteem mediates the relationship between learned helplessness and future anxiety, and that enhancing self-esteem can effectively alleviate the fear of uncertainty. Rabei et al. (2020) also found a significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and future anxiety, suggesting that improving efficacy beliefs can help reduce students' anxiety responses and strengthen their confidence in facing future challenges. The present findings demonstrate that group counseling can play a vital role in promoting students' self-awareness and psychological adjustment.

Notably, participants exhibited high levels of engagement and emotional openness during the group sessions. They became more willing to share their anxieties

and confusions, began setting short-term goals, and actively sought external resources. These positive behavioral changes may be explained by improvements in emotional intelligence. Fiorilli et al. (2020) found that students with higher levels of emotional intelligence were better able to mitigate academic anxiety and burnout through psychological resilience, which enabled them to adopt more proactive attitudes toward academic and future development. This provides psychological support for the increased motivation and emotional expressiveness observed in this study.

From an intervention design perspective, the group counseling program in this study was characterized by a multidimensional and integrative approach. Specifically, sessions six and seven incorporated existential therapeutic elements that encouraged students to reflect on personal values, the meaning of life, and existential concerns. Nakamura and Kawase (2021) found that short-term existential group therapy significantly reduced hopelessness and enhanced meaning in life among breast cancer patients. Although the change in anxiety levels was not statistically significant in their study, the authors highlighted its preventive potential and recommended broader application in non-clinical populations. The exploration of life meaning in this study aligns with their research, suggesting that existential approaches can also be beneficial for healthy individuals in managing future-oriented anxiety.

Moreover, the social support system established during the group sessions played a key role in the success of the intervention. Students developed a sense of belonging and trust within the group, which extended into their daily lives and encouraged them to seek help and express their concerns. Osborn et al. (2020), in their study of Kenyan adolescents, found that a low sense of social support was a significant predictor of anxiety and depression. Although their research did not directly examine group counseling, they emphasized the importance of strengthening school and community-based support networks. In this study, the peer support system created through group activities may have compensated for the lack of emotional support in students' family or school environments, thereby relieving psychological stress.

Finally, from a theoretical integration perspective, the group counseling model in this study combined core elements from three psychological paradigms: CBT offered pathways for cognitive restructuring and emotional regulation; SCCT emphasized the interaction between personal beliefs and environmental influences on career development; and existential psychology facilitated deep reflection on meaning and purpose. This composite intervention provided students with comprehensive support across cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and value-oriented domains. Whitfield (2018) affirmed that structured, goal-oriented group CBT is effective in enhancing adolescents' emotional regulation and coping skills. Although her study focused on interventions for anxiety and depression, the mechanisms she highlighted—cognitive restructuring, peer interaction, and group cohesion—also support students' adaptability in the face of future uncertainty.

In summary, this study not only confirmed the effectiveness of group counseling in alleviating future anxiety among vocational school students but also revealed the underlying psychological mechanisms of the intervention across multiple dimensions. These findings offer both theoretical insights and practical guidance for the broader application of structured mental health programs in vocational education contexts.

5.3 Recommendations

This study is committed to providing new and effective empirical research in the fields of education and psychological counseling, aiming to focus on students' mental health and provide new directions and empirical support for helping and supporting students in educational work.

Therefore, the researcher has decided to provide some research recommendations at the conclusion of this study.

First, the researcher recommends that future researchers conducting studies involving psychological counseling interventions should enter campuses as non-school personnel to conduct academic research, thereby ensuring the effectiveness of students' participation in psychological counseling and the validity of the resulting data.

Second, the researcher suggests that in future studies, the questionnaire and group counseling program designed in this research can be modified according to subsequent researchers' research needs and objectives to ensure their effectiveness.

Additionally, the researcher suggests that researchers conducting new studies in the fields of education, group counseling, and student psychological research may refer to this study's research design and utilize or adapt the survey questionnaire and group counseling program developed in this research.

Finally, this study possesses other explorable research directions for future investigation. The researcher suggests that future research can focus on students' future anxiety and conduct new studies across different student populations and geographical regions. Similarly, introducing more differential variables is also an important option for broadening research directions.

Ultimately, it is merely a suggestion to future researchers that future anxiety is a broad psychological state worthy of investigation that has long-term effects on human psychological conditions. Although choosing future anxiety as the core research direction presents certain challenges, we must always believe that the future is bright, and this research possesses both value and promise.

In closing, I wish to express my respect to all researchers who have read through to this conclusion. Regardless of whether you work in the field of education or psychology, let us strengthen our shared commitment and devote our dedication to creating a brighter future for humanity.

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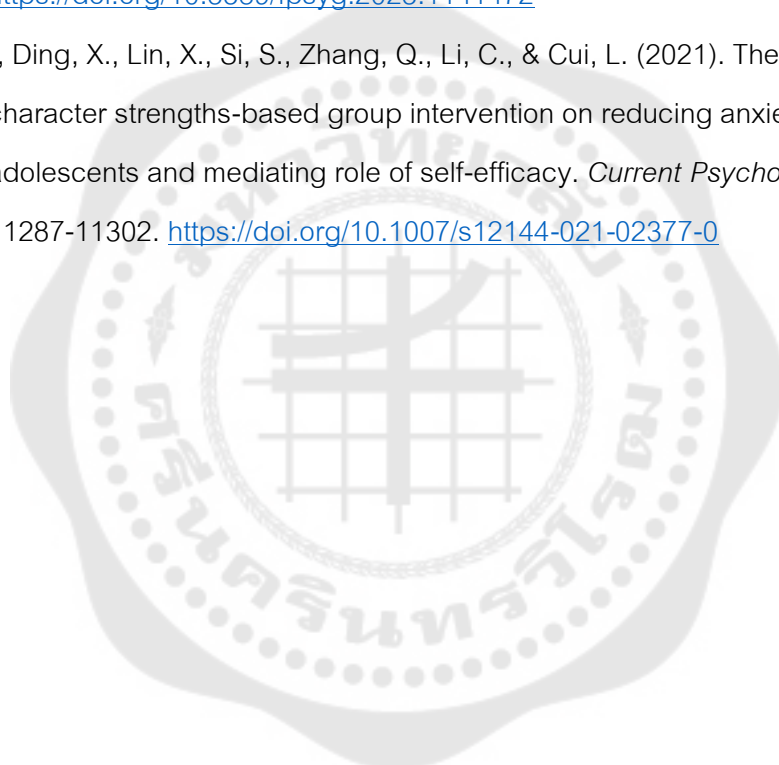
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APPENDIX

Group Counseling Program for Reducing Future Anxiety

Session 1: Building Relationships

Concept

This counseling session is the first group meeting between the leader and members, requiring the establishment of group relationships and trust among members. The leader needs to create a safe, trusted environment where members can build relationships, strengthen connections, share experiences, feelings, and insights.

The leader will express authenticity and empathy in this session, rather than dominating the group therapy. They will actively listen to members' sharing, maintain unconditional positive regard for members, and practice empathic assertion.

Objectives

1. Inform members of counseling rules and confidentiality principles, supplement and reach consensus on group rules.
2. Inform members about the goals and expected outcomes of the Group Counseling Program for Reducing Future Anxiety.
3. Conduct ice-breaking activities to establish connections and bonds between the leader and members, and help members become familiar with each other.
4. Create an open, safe, and trusted environment for group members to share experiences and feelings.
5. Enable members to begin building relationships or better understand each other, establishing a foundation for future group counseling.

Materials

1. Paper
2. Pencils

Group Counseling Process

1. Beginning stage
 - 1.1 The leader welcomes members positively and begins the counseling.

1.2 The leader greets members appropriately and formally, and introduces themselves.

1.3 The leader informs members of group counseling rules and asks if members have anything to add.

1.3 The leader informs members about group counseling goals, expected outcomes, and required duration.

1.4 Ask one member to summarize the rules and confidentiality principles to be followed in this group counseling session.

2. Working stage

2.1 The leader asks each member to introduce themselves.

2.2 The leader asks each member how they prefer to be addressed and why.

2.3 The leader distributes paper and pencils, leads members in an ice-breaker game, selecting a willing member to draw on paper with a one-minute time limit.

2.4 After completion, the drawing is passed around for all members to see, then the next member clockwise makes modifications while others close their eyes. After one minute, it's passed around again, and each member describes what changes they notice.

2.5 Following this pattern, after completing the ice-breaker, observe students' state. If they've entered the counseling mindset, the leader initiates discussion, inviting members to share their views and understanding of future anxiety.

2.6 If members remain reserved or uncomfortable, initiate a second ice-breaker game, seeking all members' opinions on whether to proceed clockwise, counterclockwise, or in random order.

2.7 Ask the first member to say a random word, then others follow in sequence saying either one character or a two-character word to form a sentence.

2.8 After completing ice-breakers, the leader initiates discussion, inviting members to share their views and understanding of future anxiety.

2.9 After all members share, praise their contributions, encourage their confidence and sense of security, and ask them to identify which dimension their future anxiety falls into.

2.10 After all members speak, affirm their contributions and summarize categories, guiding members to understand that in subsequent counseling sessions, we will address future anxiety through Academic Future Dimension, Career Development Dimension, and Life Perspectives Dimension.

2.11 Help members categorize their future anxiety into these three dimensions and establish initial counseling goals.

2.12 Have members summarize their gains and affirm their insights from this session.

3. Closing Stage

3.1 The leader provides opportunities for members to raise questions and lets other members help resolve these questions.

3.2 The leader asks members to continue helping each other after the group counseling ends and before the next session.

3.3 The leader invites each member to summarize their feelings about this group counseling session and encourages all members to boost their confidence.

3.4 The leader thanks members for their contributions and arranges the time and location for the next group counseling session.

Evaluation

1. Whether members established harmonious relationships through ice-breakers and feel the counseling space is safe and trustworthy.

2. Whether members expressed their understanding of future anxiety and categorized their anxiety into the three dimensions.

3. Whether members are willing to participate in the next group counseling session.

4. Whether members trust the leader and have adapted to group counseling rules and format.

Session 2: Exploring Future Anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension

Concept

Cognitive behavioral theory emphasizes the role of cognitive activities in psychological or behavioral issues. The leader aims to use cognitive behavioral theory to help members explore future anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension, help members understand how future anxiety affects them, and guide members to reflect on what causes their future anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension.

The leader will help members model their future anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension, cultivate new positive behaviors through Behavior Rehearsal, help members initially change cognition through Coaching, receive members' Feedback, attempt to Reinforce counseling outcomes at the end, prepare for Cognitive Restructuring, and help members establish The Buddy System among themselves.

Objectives

1. Help members understand and face their future anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension
2. Help members reflect on which cognitions contribute to their future anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension
3. Help members recognize how cognition influences behavior
4. Guide members to recognize cognition's impact on their behavior and propose positive behaviors
5. Help members establish a stable and sustainable Buddy System that can continue after counseling, enabling ongoing mutual support relationships.

Materials

1. Pencils
2. Paper
3. Academic Future Dimension questionnaire results

Group Counseling Process

1. Beginning stage
 - 1.1 The leader welcomes members positively and begins counseling.

1.2 The leader reiterates the group counseling rules and asks if members have anything to add.

1.3 The leader informs members about this session's objectives and required duration.

2. Working stage

2.1 The leader invites each member to share their gains, changes, or questions since the last group counseling session.

2.2 The leader asks all members to consider in which aspects of the Academic Future Dimension they feel future anxiety.

2.3 The leader distributes individual Academic Future Dimension questionnaire results and asks each member to share their thoughts.

2.4 The leader praises all members, affirms their expressions, and briefly summarizes each person's discoveries.

2.5 The leader asks all members to imagine which problems or scenarios in their academic life, if eliminated, would relieve or resolve their future anxiety, with a ten-minute time limit.

2.6 The leader asks members to share their imaginings and invites others to provide suggestions, carefully addressing and redirecting any impolite or incorrect suggestions through further questioning and guidance.

2.7 After members' exchanges, the leader again asks members to imagine if their future anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension would be relieved by facing their academics as just discussed, with a fifteenminute time limit.

2.8 Ask each awakened member to write down their feelings while waiting for others still imagining.

2.9 After all members complete their imagination exercise, ask each member about the differences between their first and second imaginings.

2.10 Summarize each member's sharing and encourage them. Continue asking members about the differences between their feelings when first considering their future anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension and this imagination exercise.

2.11 Have different members summarize others' sharing and express their feelings about changes in others and themselves.

2.12 Ask members to write down suggestions received during previous group counseling and summarize individually.

2.13 Request that all members continue helping each other as friends after counseling ends.

3. Closing Stage

3.1 The leader encourages all members, assuring them they will experience changes before the next session.

3.2 The leader provides opportunities for all members to raise questions.

3.3 The leader bids farewell to all members and informs them of the next group counseling time and location.

Evaluation

1. Whether members have strengthened their understanding of each other, recognized their future anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension, and identified the cognitive sources of their future anxiety.

2. Whether members recognize cognition's impact on behavior and psychology.

3. Whether members received helpful suggestions and can implement positive behaviors.

4. Whether members have established good, sustainable relationships and can help each other after counseling.

Session 3: Relieving Future Anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension

Concept

Following the last group counseling session, members recognized cognition's impact on behavior and psychology, identified cognitive sources of future anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension, and received suggestions for positive behaviors. The leader will continue using cognitive behavioral theory to help members reinforce positive behaviors, establish correct cognitions in the Academic Future Dimension, further strengthen relationships between members to ensure mutual help and supervision, and

build a solid foundation for subsequent group counseling. In this session, the leader hopes to guide members to explore external awareness of future anxiety in the Academic Future dimension, establish a combination of internal and external awareness, and propose solutions.

Additionally, cultivating positive behaviors helps their academic development. Good relationships between members and other group members also provide support for potential future adversities.

Objectives

1. Help members understand external environment's influence on their cognition in the Academic Future Dimension and guide members to provide mutual suggestions.

2. Help members integrate internal and external cognitions of future anxiety in the Academic Future Dimension and help them establish effective behavioral plans.

3. Reinforce members' new positive behaviors and strengthen partnerships between members.

Materials

1. Pencils

2. Paper

Group Counseling Process

1. Beginning stage

1.1 The leader welcomes members positively and begins counseling.

1.2 The leader reiterates group counseling rules and asks if members have anything to add.

1.3 The leader informs members about this session's objectives and required duration.

2. Working stage

2.1 The leader invites members to share changes and feelings since the last session.

2.2 The leader briefly summarizes each member's sharing and encourages each member.

2.3 The leader asks members if new issues arose after the last session, especially regarding new behaviors and cognitions.

2.4 The leader briefly summarizes each member's sharing and affirms their efforts since the last session.

2.5 The leader asks all members to consider why new behaviors and cognitions face difficulties in daily life.

2.6 Invite members to first record on paper, then share, followed by inviting other members to provide suggestions.

2.7 Encourage each member's suggestions and ask each to summarize all advice received from the previous and current sessions.

2.8 Again encourage each member and praise their attitudes.

2.9 The leader invites members in clockwise order to organize opinions mutually and discuss how to smoothly and reasonably adapt and adopt new behaviors to face academics.

2.10 After discussion, the leader invites each member to summarize their behavioral plans and encourages their ability to implement them in real life.

2.11 Finally, ask each member to summarize their challenges and invite others to provide encouragement and additional suggestions.

3. Closing Stage

3.1 The leader invites each member to summarize their gains and encourages all members.

3.2 The leader suggests members maintain good friendships after group counseling for mutual help and supervision.

3.3 The leader provides opportunities for members to raise questions.

3.4 The leader informs members of the next group counseling time and location.

Evaluation

1. Whether members recognize their internal and external challenges.

2. Whether members received executable positive behavioral plans.

3. Whether good, sustainable partnerships between members were strengthened.

4. Whether members feel confident and hopeful about themselves.

Session 4: Exploring Future Anxiety in the Career Development Dimension

Concept

Future anxiety in the Career Development Dimension refers to members' uncertainty and worry about the future during their career planning and development process. This anxiety often stems from unclear understanding of personal career interests, confusion in career choices, and uncertainty about future career development paths. The leader aims to use social cognitive career theory as a guiding framework to help students better understand and alleviate this anxiety, hoping to assist members in relieving future anxiety in the Career Development Dimension by addressing aspects such as how to develop career interests, how to make choices between continuing education and employment, and how to achieve career success.

Objectives

1. Help members understand their development direction and future anxiety in the Career Development Dimension.

2. Help members identify their career interests.

3. Help members understand how to acquire needed professional skills.

Materials

1. Paper

2. Pencils

Group Counseling Process

1. Beginning stage

1.1 The leader welcomes members positively and begins counseling.

1.2 The leader reiterates group counseling rules and asks if members have anything to add.

1.3 The leader informs members about this session's objectives and required duration.

2. Working stage

2.1 The leader guides members to envision their future careers, inviting each member to discuss their aspired careers.

2.2 The leader briefly summarizes members' sharing, then invites members to discuss careers they might actually pursue.

2.3 After members share, comfort any negative emotions expressed, and guide students to consider commonalities or intersecting development directions between their aspired and likely careers.

2.4 The leader invites members to share and asks other members to express their thoughts.

2.5 The leader briefly summarizes members' sharing, helping them establish connections between development directions and aspired careers.

2.6 The leader asks members to consider which courses in their current major relate to their aspired careers, which align with their interests, which can help them acquire more complete professional skills, and invites other members to provide suggestions.

2.7 Ask each member to summarize their gains and provide encouragement.

2.8 The leader asks members about specific factors hindering their career choices.

2.9 The leader briefly summarizes each member's sharing and encourages members to provide mutual suggestions.

2.10 After exchanges, the leader invites each member to summarize their gains.

3. Closing Stage

3.1 The leader invites each member to summarize their gains and encourages all members.

3.2 The leader provides opportunities for members to raise questions.

3.3 The leader informs members of the next group counseling time and location.

Evaluation

1. Whether members have established connections between their career interests and their major direction.

2. Whether members have better understood their future anxiety in the Career Development Dimension.

Session 5: Relieving Future Anxiety in the Career Development Dimension

Concept

This group counseling session is based on social cognitive career theory's concept of future anxiety relief, emphasizing multi-level intervention to help students establish positive career development cognition. Through three core objectives - exploring and understanding career development patterns, establishing reasonable career expectations, and setting appropriate personal goals - using counseling techniques such as concretization, questioning and clarification, interpretation and examples, integration and refinement, help students establish reasonable expectations and clear goals, relieve anxiety emotionally and enhance confidence. This process emphasizes the combination of theory and practice, ultimately achieving the purpose of relieving future anxiety in the Career Development Dimension.

Objectives

1. Help students explore and understand future career development.
2. Help students establish appropriate career expectations and personal goals.
3. Help students gradually recognize how to achieve career success.
4. Help students relieve future anxiety in the career development dimension.

Materials

1. Paper
2. Pencils

Group Counseling Process

1. Beginning stage
 - 1.1 The leader welcomes members positively and begins counseling.

1.2 The leader reiterates group counseling rules and asks if members have anything to add.

1.3 The leader informs members about this session's objectives and required duration.

2. Working stage

2.1 The leader asks members about their feelings and any new questions since the last session.

2.2 The leader affirms members' responses, lets other members help resolve concerns, and provides encouragement.

2.3 The leader asks members about their understanding of career development and has all members take turns providing suggestions and additions.

2.4 After exchanges, the leader asks each member to summarize their gains.

2.5 The leader guides each member to express specific future career concerns and anxieties, letting members take turns sharing.

2.6 Summarize each member's sharing and provide affirmation.

2.7 The leader invites each member to take turns giving suggestions.

2.8 The leader asks each member about their views and feelings regarding future career development after two counseling sessions.

2.9 Invite other members to provide suggestions for members who still have concerns.

2.10 After exchanges end, the leader invites each member to articulate their desired future career and reasons why.

2.11 Members freely exchange ideas, providing suggestions and additions for each other.

2.12 The leader asks each member to summarize their gains and career goals, and provides encouragement.

3. Closing Stage

3.1 The leader invites each member to summarize their gains and encourages all members.

3.2 The leader provides opportunities for members to raise questions.

3.3 The leader informs members of the next group counseling time and location.

Evaluation

1. Whether members received opinions and suggestions about career development and established a more complete understanding.
2. Whether members established positive career expectations.
3. Whether members received suggestions on how to achieve career success.
4. Whether members' future anxiety in the Career Development Dimension has been relieved.

Session 6: Exploring Future Anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension

Concept

This group counseling session will begin helping members address issues in the Life perspectives Dimension. Based on existential psychology theory, the leader aims to focus on exploring future anxiety in the life perspective dimension. Through systematic guidance, help students deeply explore their expectations and concerns about life meaning, personal values, and future development, understanding the deeper reasons behind anxiety. Through demonstration, behavioral rehearsal, and other techniques, combined with the partner support system, guide students to recognize the intrinsic connection between future anxiety and life perspective, thus better understanding their life attitudes and value orientations, laying a cognitive foundation for subsequent anxiety relief.

Objectives

1. Guide members to explore their expectations, concerns, and understanding in the Life perspectives Dimension.
2. Understand members' future anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension and gradually explore the causes of future anxiety in this dimension.

Materials

1. Paper
2. Pencils

Group Counseling Process

1. Beginning stage

1.1 The leader welcomes members positively and begins counseling.

1.2 The leader reiterates group counseling rules and asks if members have anything to add.

1.3 The leader informs members about this session's objectives and required duration.

2. Working stage

2.1 The leader asks all members to imagine their aspired life for five minutes.

2.2 Each member takes turns sharing their imagination.

2.3 The leader encourages all members and asks each to recall these imaginings again, express their current feelings, and record them on paper.

2.4 The leader asks members what they think their future life will be like, with members answering in turn.

2.5 Ask each member to compare their dream life with their expected future life and express the differences.

2.6 The leader summarizes each member's sharing and asks each member to identify commonalities between their dream life and expected future life.

2.7 The leader summarizes each member's sharing and has members take turns offering suggestions about others' dream lives.

2.8 Ask each member to summarize their gains.

2.9 The leader asks each member about aspects of their current life they're dissatisfied with or find painful.

2.10 The leader asks all members to consider and take turns sharing any similarities between current life's pain, anxiety, or dissatisfaction and disappointment or pessimism about future life.

2.11 The leader summarizes each member's sharing and encourages members to exchange opinions and perspectives.

2.12 All members summarize in turn and perform progressive muscle relaxation.

2.13 Ask members about their feelings and gains from this session, encourage each member, and request all members use counseling gains to help and observe each other.

3. Closing Stage

3.1 The leader invites each member to summarize their gains and encourages all members.

3.2 The leader provides opportunities for members to raise questions.

3.3 The leader informs members of the next group counseling time and location.

Evaluation

1. Whether members can face their future anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension.

2. Whether members have sufficient confidence to face their future anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension.

3. Whether members have eliminated negative emotions by the end of counseling.

Session 7: Relieving Future Anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension

Concept

Based on existential theory, the leader aims to relieve future anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension by helping students clarify life meaning and goals, establishing positive connections between individuals and their life/social activities, and guiding them to recognize their existential value and life's diversity. This concept utilizes demonstration, behavioral rehearsal, and other techniques, combined with feedback reinforcement and partner support systems, to help students establish feasible positive life expectations and develop healthy life attitudes, thereby effectively relieving future anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension.

Objectives

1. Help students clarify their life meaning and goals.

2. Seek to establish connections between students and their life/social activities.

3. Guide students to recognize their existential value and life's diversity.

4.Help students establish achievable positive life expectations.

5.Help students relieve future anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension.

Materials

1.Paper

2.Pencils

Group Counseling Process

1. Beginning stage

1.1 The leader welcomes members positively and begins counseling.

1.2 The leader reiterates group counseling rules and asks if members have anything to add.

1.3 The leader informs members about this session's objectives and required duration.

2. Working stage

2.1 The leader asks members about their feelings since the last session.

2.2 The leader guides members to consider which cherished, indispensable parts of their lives bring them happiness.

2.3 The leader summarizes each member's sharing and asks how they view the relationship between these parts and their future life.

2.4 The leader invites members to summarize the previous member's sharing in turn.

2.5 The leader asks each member how their views differ from the previous member's views.

2.6 After sharing, the leader affirms all members.

2.7 The leader guides members to imagine how these positive aspects develop in their future lives.

2.8 After imagination, the leader asks members what these positive life aspects can bring them.

2.9 After sharing, the leader asks other members to raise questions or suggestions.

2.10 Ask each member to summarize their gains.

2.11 The leader asks each member whether unpleasant aspects mentioned in the last session appeared in their recent imagination.

2.12 Have members provide mutual suggestions and summarize.

2.13 Ask members whether their Life perspectives Dimension anxiety would be relieved in their desired life after receiving help from other members.

2.14 Affirm and encourage members, and ask if they have other questions.

3. Closing Stage

3.1 The leader invites each member to summarize their gains and encourages all members.

3.2 The leader provides another opportunity for members to raise questions.

3.3 The leader informs members of the next group counseling time and location.

Evaluation

1. Whether members' future anxiety in the Life perspectives Dimension has been relieved.

2. Whether members have established aspirations for future life.

3. Whether members can accept the existence of sad aspects in life.

Session 8: Problem Solving

Concept

The final group counseling session serves as a summary stage for the entire counseling process, aiming to help students deepen their mastery and application of acquired relief strategies through systematic review and in-depth analysis of previous counseling outcomes. It focuses on consolidating counseling effects, addressing remaining issues specifically, thereby achieving effective closure of the entire group counseling process and ensuring students obtain sustained anxiety relief effects.

Objectives

1. Consolidate and deepen the effects of group counseling

2. Conclude the counseling process

Materials

1.Paper

2.Pencils

Group Counseling Process

1. Beginning stage

1.1 The leader welcomes members positively, begins counseling, and informs members this is the final group counseling session.

1.2 The leader reiterates group counseling rules and asks if members have anything to add.

1.3 The leader informs members about this session's objectives and required duration.

2. Working stage

2.1 The leader asks members to share their feelings and changes from the first counseling session until now.

2.2 The leader affirms members' narratives and encourages their ongoing changes.

2.3 The leader asks members if they have questions about past counseling content and gains, and invites other members to offer suggestions and help.

2.4 The leader invites each member to summarize their gains from past counseling sessions and provides encouragement.

2.5 The leader summarizes each member's sharing and proposes one final ice-breaker game.

2.6 The leader distributes paper and pencils, leads members in an ice-breaker game, randomly selecting a member to draw for ten minutes.

2.7 After completion, the drawing is passed around for all members to see, then the next member clockwise makes modifications while others close their eyes. After three minutes, it's passed around again, and each member describes what changes they notice.

2.8 Transition to the closing stage in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere.

3. Closing Stage

3.1 The leader provides opportunities for each member to raise questions.

3.2 The leader asks each member if they will maintain good relationships after group counseling ends.

3.3 The leader thanks members for their participation.

3.4 The leader bids farewell to each member.

Evaluation

1. Whether members received sufficient feedback and gained enough benefits.
2. Whether members can clearly complete summaries of previous counseling sessions.
3. Whether members concluded group counseling in a relaxed and pleasant manner.

Table 8 Vocational school students Future Anxiety scale

Vocational school students Future Anxiety scale							
Instructions: Note: Please rate based on your real.							
Rating Criteria: 0 - absolutely wrong, 1 - Error, 2 - Some errors, 3 - Difficult to state, 4 - Somewhat correct, 5 - Correct, 6 - Absolutely correct							
Question	absolutel y wrong	Erro r	Som e error s	Difficul t to state	Somewha t correct	Correc t	Absolutel y correct
1. I am confident about continuing my studies.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I worry that my academic performance	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

will be difficult
to meet the
graduation
requirements.

3. I feel
anxious about
whether I can
get admitted 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
to my desired
higher-level
school.

4. I worry
whether my
current field
of study can 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
lead to good
professional
choices.

5. I worry that
even if I
successfully
advance to
higher
education, I 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
might not be
able to keep
up with the
pace of
learning.

6. I worry that
my
educational
background
will lead to
discrimination
in future
studies or
face negative
judgments.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

7. I worry that
what I'm
learning now
is outdated
and won't be
applicable to
future
practical
learning.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

8. I worry that
I have no
advantage in
national
standardized
tests and
won't be able
to achieve
good scores.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

9. I feel

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

confused and
lost about my
future
academic
path,
constantly
wondering
what
challenges I'll
face at
different
stages of
learning.

10. I am
unwilling to
make any
plans for my
future
academic
studies.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

11. I am
concerned
that I will
need to face
prolonged
difficulties or
challenges in
my chosen
career

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

position.

12. I am

fearful of the

difficulties I

may face in

my future

career.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

13. I am

concerned

that my

career

prospects will

deteriorate in

the future.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

14. I am

concerned

that changes

in the Chinese

job market

threaten my

future career.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

15. I am

troubled by

the idea that I

may not be

able to

achieve my

career goals

after

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

graduation.

16. I am

concerned

that my

vocational

education

may not

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

adequately

prepare me

for the

challenges of

the future.

17. I am

concerned

that

technological

change may

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

render my

chosen

profession

obsolete in

the future.

18. I am

concerned

that the

competition in

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

my field may

be so fierce

that I will not

be able to
succeed.

19. I worry that
my learning
ability will not
be sufficient
to learn more
advanced

and

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

continuously
developing
professional
knowledge
throughout
my career.

20. I am
concerned
that I may not
be able to
adapt to the
rapidly
changing
work
environment
in China.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

21. I am
concerned
that it may be
difficult to fulfil

my family's
expectations
of my career.

22. I worry
about the
social status 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
of my future
career.

23. I worry
that my future
career won't
allow me to 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
live
independently
.

24. I worry
about the
growth 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
potential of
my future
career.

25. I feel there
is no hope for 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
my future.

26. I feel
confused 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
about my self-
worth.

27. In the 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

future, no one
will love me,
and I have no
worth being
loved; my
love is as
worthless as I
am.

28. I worry
that I won't
gain
recognition in
the future,
whether in my
career or
personal life.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

29. I feel that
society or this
world will be
beautiful and
continuously
developing.

6 5 4 3 2 1 0

30. I believe
that even if I
try my best, I
still cannot
break free
from the
quagmire of

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

fate.

Scoring guide: the scores of all 30 items are added together and divided by the number of items, and the average score is used as a basis for judgement.

0.0 - 2.0: Low level of future anxiety

2.1 - 4.0: Medium level of future anxiety

4.1 - 6.0: High level of future anxiety



VITA

NAME Zhengang Lu

INSTITUTIONS ATTENDED Srinakharinwirot University

