

Full Length Research Paper

A study of role conversion of leaders in group counseling

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Role conversion of leaders in group counseling can develop the potential power of a class, strengthen their cohesion and improve learning environment, which have been proved in a growing number of studies in this field. However, most studies are only confined to theoretical discussions and few studies concentrate on empirical studies on roles conversion of leaders in group counseling. The paper aims to study the functions of role conversions of leaders in group counseling. The study tools are comparative experiment empirical research methods. The result of empirical studies proves the assumptions that the former studies of role conversions of leaders in group counseling can improve the learning environment of a class, strengthen relations between teachers and students, and reduce the burden of study. The practical significances of this study are breaking through the bottlenecks of former studies by theoretical studies and empirical analysis.

Key words: Group counseling, roles conversion, empirical analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Definition of group counseling

Group counseling is psychological counseling under group situation. It is a process of psychological interactions conducted by communications and interactions in order to explore themselves, attempts to change behaviors, learn new behaviors, improve personal relations and solve problems in their life (Fan, 2005). As usual, one or two consultants are the host in group counseling. We call them group leaders (Bai-qiao, 2008). They are responsible for the operation and trend of the whole group. In group counseling, they act as decision-makers, leaders, supporter, experts, evaluators, accompaniers and so on.

Origin of group counseling

Roles conversion of leathers in group counseling first appeared in USA in the west. In 1905, Pratt organized the first group with consumptives. He encouraged those

patients to overcome this illness through roles conversion in group counseling and firstly established group therapy. In the 1920s, Vienna psychiatrist Molino set up psychological drama which was group counseling based on real life. In the late 1940s, German psychologist Lewin realized the significance of interpersonal relations in modern society. He thought interpersonal sensitivity of individuals and other's acceptance could be improved by trainings. So, he founded a training laboratory for group personal relations, which was well-known as NTL. It was also called "National Training Laboratory". In the 1960s, with the rise of humanistic psychology, the theory of roles conversion of leaders in group counseling had stepped into people's daily life (Haertel et al., 1981). In USA, most states require that a full-time counseling staff should equip approximately every 300 students. More than 400 colleges and universities have counseling major, and they hope group members can get psychological counseling through roles conversion of leaders. With the help of such counseling, schools in USA work more effectively in the field of group counseling.

In June, 1991, Professor Tatsuya Matsubara was invited to China to make lectures by Chinese Mental Health Association Professional Committee of Psychological Counseling. This was the first time that Chinese psychologists got theoretical knowledge on the

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roles conversion of leaders in group counseling. Then, the way on how to undertake this counseling started spreading in Tsinghua University by Fan (2007). From 1995 to 2008, 469 articles were posted on group counseling in China. In Ding's (2009) study, he found that roles conversion of leaders in group counseling was effective for promoting college freshmen to adapt to the new environment. In Guan et al. (2008) study, he found that roles conversion of leaders in group counseling was helpful for personal relations for college students. After a group counseling of cognitive behaviors for those college students who were anxious about social activities, Xu (2004) found that group counseling could reduce their anxiety effectively and improve their abilities in other aspects, like interpersonal sensitivity, somatization, coercion, fear and so on.

Summary of former studies

According to retrieved studies published in SCI, SSCI, CNKI and other full-text database in group counseling and roles conversion of leaders in group counseling, we can note that:

- (1) The main objectives in former group counseling by roles conversion were college students and junior students only took a very small portion,
- (2) Theories and researches on group counseling took the largest portion and the next one is interpersonal relations. No studies were concentrated on learning psychology of roles conversion of leaders in group counseling,
- (3) Research methods were comparatively single and they have never tried other methods, and have never in the studies of roles conversion of leaders in group counseling.

Main contents for this paper

The main contents of this research are roles conversion of leaders in group counseling. Based on group counseling in learning psychology pre-primary school students, it adopts empirical research method and SPSS data analysis software. Then, it attempts to explore the effects of learning psychology, relations between students and teachers, relations among students and decrease of study burdens due to roles conversion of leaders in group counseling. The breakthrough performance is mainly expressed in the following three aspects:

- (1) Combination of theoretical research and empirical analysis. It breaks through previous studies which emphasized theories rather than practice,
- (2) Expansion of roles conversion of leaders in group counseling to primary school students. It breaks through the former limitations which gave priority to adults and

young people rather than teenagers and primary school students,

- (3) Concentration on study of learning psychological environment. It breaks through former studies emphasized counseling of interpersonal relations while ignored learning counseling.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methods

Comparative experiment empirical research method is adopted in this paper. It randomly selects experimental classes and regular classes experiment (comparative classes). Before group counseling, it will do a test with the selected two classes, and control independent variables properly. It will take 18 weeks to finish this study. Then, it will do another test with two classes and analyze the data. Meanwhile, it will test the effects (Dart, 2002) on learning environment, relations between students and teachers, relations among students and decrease of study burden in group counseling by roles conversion.

Research process

Select experimental classes and regular classes (do a pre-test)
 →Design programs for roles conversion in group counseling
 →Undertake the designed program for roles conversion of leaders in group counseling →Post-test →Data analysis.

Study subject

Experimental class: Class 1, grade 3.

Ordinary class: Class 2, grade 3.

Basic conditions of the two classes:

Experimental Class: Class 1 with 50 students, including 33 boys and 17 girls.

Regular classes: Class 2 with 55 students, including 32 boys and 23 girls.

In order to reflect the effects of roles conversation of leaders in group counseling, the experimental class in this paper does badly in the study of the atmosphere, class atmosphere and other aspects. Ordinary class is quite an experimental class.

Four steps in the study

Firstly, discussion with the principal, director of dean's office and three teachers. They will agree that class 1 does badly in each aspect and consider it as an experimental class. Also, they should get recognition from the head teacher of this class who agrees to this evaluation and is willing to cooperate with this study. Meanwhile, they should consider class 2 as ordinary class, for it is quite as class 1. The two classes are quite as each other in test scores, class atmosphere and study atmosphere. It is difficult to run them and both head teachers are physical education teachers. They share the same math teacher and English teacher.

Secondly, do a questionnaire named "My Class" to test. Thirdly, make evaluations and draw conclusions according to the data in the test. This is a review and outlook of the process. Through the data analysis, we can find out what should promote and what should improve the test. Last but not least, tracking and consolidating work after the test and keep continuing counseling.

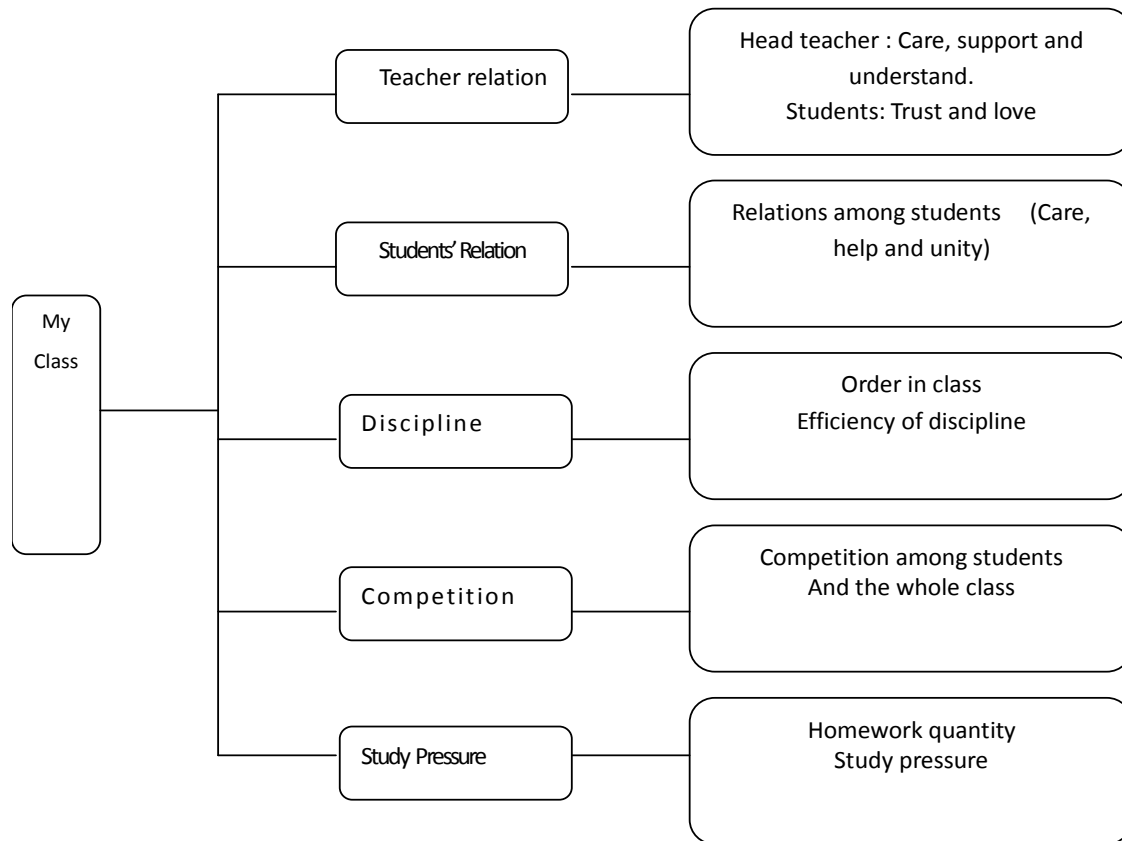


Figure 1. "My Class" with five dimensions.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire named "My Class" is to test collective social psychological environment and class atmosphere. It consists of five dimensions and 20 questions (Figure 1), namely:

- (1) Relational dimension between students and teachers. It is the standard to test kindness, consideration, support and understanding in the head teacher's attitude and also trust and love from students,
- (2) Relational dimension among students. It means the how much students help each other, care about each other and unite together,
- (3) Discipline dimension which stands for orderly and efficiency in classroom activities and class disciplines,
- (4) Competitive dimension. It represents competitive atmosphere in study and other aspects among students and competition inside the class,
- (5) Pressure dimension in study. It means the quantity of homework and subjective feeling of pressure in study.

Scoring in the questionnaire

Questionnaire adopts 5-point scoring:

- 0: "Never so".
- 1: "Occasionally so".
- 2: "Sometimes so".
- 3: "Often so".
- 4: "Always so".

When making analysis of data, we should plus all scores for each

question under each dimension. And then, we can get scores for each dimension. Both individuals and the class can be the unit of analysis.

Description for reliability and validity of the questionnaire

As the most widely used measure tool, "My Class" questionnaire has been proven with good reliability and validity by numerous studies. In Holloy and Steiner (2005) report, if using individuals as the unit of analysis, coefficient will be 0.70 to 0.93 for each dimension. If using the class as unit of analysis, it will be 0.73 to 0.98. Therefore, "My Class" questionnaire (Table 1) is a mature tool and can fully meet this study's need, no matter the use of individuals or the class as the unit of analysis.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Comparison before test

Through Table 2, we can conclude that dimensions of relations between students and teachers, disciplines and competition do not have a significant difference ($P > 0.05$) through individuals test. Dimensions of relations among students and study pressure have significant differences ($P < 0.05$). That is to say, remarkable differences exist between ordinary class and experimental class. However, for the rest three aspects, no difference exists between

Table 1. “My Class” investigation.

Questions	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. Students like head teacher.	0	1	2	3	4
2. If someone has problems in mind, the other students will care for him/her.	0	1	2	3	4
3. Our classroom is a little disordered.	0	1	2	3	4
4. Intense competitions among students.	0	1	2	3	4
5. We don't have too much homework.	0	1	2	3	4
6. Our head teacher is sensible.	0	1	2	3	4
7. Lack friendship and love among students.	0	1	2	3	4
8. Noisy in the class.	0	1	2	3	4
9. Competition happens everywhere.	0	1	2	3	4
10. So much homework from teachers.	0	1	2	3	4
11. Our head teacher is nice and kind.	0	1	2	3	4
12. Our class is united.	0	1	2	3	4
13. Teachers spend much time in maintaining orders in class.	0	1	2	3	4
14. Competitive atmosphere is strong in our class.	0	1	2	3	4
15. Additional classes and makeup in our class.	0	1	2	3	4
16. Head teacher is easy to get close.	0	1	2	3	4
17. Students with difficulties can get consideration and help from others.	0	1	2	3	4
18. Our class is in order.	0	1	2	3	4
19. Everybody fears fall behind.	0	1	2	3	4
20. We have many exams and tests.	0	1	2	3	4

them. The experimental data show that no difference exists between ordinary and experimental classes before group counseling. It means their situations are similar in the dimensions of relations between students and teachers, disciplines and competitions.

However, in the light of relations among students and study pressure, the pressure from ordinary class is higher than that from the experimental class. As a remarkable difference exists in relations among students and study pressure, the way to deal with data will be different. For dimensions of competitions, disciplines and relations between students and teachers, we can adopt independent sample T inspection process as by equal set of experiments. For dimensions of relations among students and study pressure, we should adopt covariance test process by arranging a set of experiments.

Comparisons among dimensions of competitions, disciplines, and relations between students and teachers after tests

Table 3 shows that no remarkable differences exist in dimensions of competitions and disciplines after independent sample T inspection. However, the dimension of relations between students and teachers is remarkable. It means no differences exist in dimensions of competitions and disciplines between ordinary class and experimental class in the post test. But they differ from each other in the dimension of relation between

students and teachers. Through comparative study of data in Tables 2 and 3, we find that for experimental class, relations between students and teachers gained great improvement (Fasrer, 1986) after group counseling by roles conversion.

Comparison of dimensions for study pressure and relations among students after tests

As remarkable differences exist in the dimension of study pressure and relations among students between ordinary class and experimental class before the test; undoubtedly, we should take self-differences into consideration when processing data. So, we adopt covariance test in which we will make a comparison using data after the test to minus data before the test.

Dimension comparison of relations among students

According to Table 4, we can see that relations among students changed positively in the experimental class. However, negative changes exist in ordinary class in the same aspect. It means that the relations among students in the experimental class changes to be better, while it changes for worse in the ordinary class. We take relations among students before the experiment as a covariate, and establish a covariance analysis model. The results are shown in Table 5. From the results shown in Tables 4

Table 2. Comparison between ordinary class and experimental class.

Parameter	Ordinary class		Experimental class		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Relations between students and teachers	15.65	6.456	19.06	7.268	1.629	0.102
Relations among students	18.73	6.326	18.92	4.297	-2.981	0.023
Discipline	14.34	5.397	14.87	4.862	-1.382	0.203
Competition	14.65	5.341	13.56	5.289	-1.353	0.130
Study pressure	15.80	4.791	14.57	4.892	-2.492	0.034

Table 3. Comparison among competitions, disciplines and relations between students and teachers after test.

Parameter	Ordinary class		Experimental class		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Competition	15.62	4.732	23.75	3.745	-1.793	0.061
Discipline	16.07	3.976	16.77	2.056	1.380	0.204
Student-Teacher relations	16.97	6.896	13.78	4.692	4.862	0

Table 4. Standard deviation and mean difference of relations among student before and after the test of ordinary and experimental classes.

Class	Standard deviation	Mean difference	People
Ordinary	6.87920	-2.5354	55
Experimental	4.28934	0.2987	50

Table 5. Covariate analysis of relations among students between ordinary and experimental classes.

Parameter	Squares	Freedom	Mean squares	F	p
Covariates	1772.308	1	1772.308	110.728***	0
Process	9.024	1	9.024	0.628	0.482
Deviation	1347.983	85	17.672		

Table 6. Standard deviation and mean difference before and after the test between ordinary class and experimental class.

Class	Standard deviation	Mean difference	People
Ordinary	6.82924	-1.873	50
Experimental	6.72930	-1.537	55

and 5, we can conclude that if we treat relations among students as a covariate, which means eliminating the effect due to different relations among students, no changes will happen to both classes. Namely, roles conversion of leaders in group counseling did not change relations among students.

Dimension comparison of study pressure

From Table 6, study pressure from experimental class

reduced. So did ordinary class. That is to say, study pressure from both classes reduced. Consider study pressure before the test as a covariates, and set up a covariance analysis model. The results are shown in Table 7. From the result in Tables 6 and 7, we can see that if we treat study pressure as a covariate, which eliminates the differences before the test, ordinary class will differ from experimental class remarkably. It means roles conversion has a great effect on study pressure (Harris, 1995) in group counseling. That is to say, roles conversion can reduce study pressure in group

Table 7. Covariates analysis of study pressure between ordinary class and experimental class.

Parameter	Squares	Freedom	Mean squares	F	p
Covariates	1754.068	1	1761.080	107.462***	0
Process	107.478	1	108.567	6.627*	0.013
Deviation	1370.875	85	16.462		

counseling.

DISCUSSION

According to the results shown in Tables 2 to 7, role conversion has a remarkable positive effect on relation between students and teachers and study pressure for experimental class in group counseling. Their students-teachers relations have been greatly improved and study pressure also decreased. Even though no outstanding changes in relations among students and disciplines, it is much better compared with before the test. Dimension of competition reduced slightly. But in the light of the whole situation, roles conversion has a positive effect in group counseling for experimental class. It improved the study environment of the whole class. For different dimensions, their effects and degrees are totally different.

Analysis of roles conversion's effect on relations between students and teachers in group counseling

From Table 5, we can see that the relations between students and teachers have been improved due to roles conversion in group counseling in experimental class. It means that roles conversion has a remarkable effect on the adjustment and improvement of relations between students and teachers in group counseling. This result is consistent with many theoretic analysis made by scholars at present (Shui and Jia-ling, 2009). Good relations between students and teachers are helpful for students' study and other aspects. Through this study, we find that the relations are closer after roles conversion. Close relations between students and teachers are much better than ordinary relations or conflict relations in study, learning attitudes, and social behaviors. Relations between students and teachers can make predictions on the aforementioned three aspects.

Education concepts and teaching methods of a teacher can be expressed by his working attitude and behaviors. If a teacher is good at spreading his positive effects to his students by proper behaviors, he will gain recognition from his students. Besides, he will make his student sense his love and expectations. Through roles conversion, he can meet his need for respect and produce power for self-improvement. Meanwhile, students will

adjust and improve their behaviors according to their own practical situation in order to develop as their teachers' expectations. During roles conversion in group counseling, a positive emotional range and simulated situation are established. At this situation, both teachers and students are promoted to communicate, understand and support each other. Besides, teachers are promoted to examine students, especially those with problems in a new perspective. They will find their merits and satisfy them properly.

At the same time, students treat their teachers, the teachers' management and requirements in positive attitudes. They cooperate with their teachers actively, get close to them and admire them. In this way, the teachers are encouraged and the students feel pleased and relaxed. Then, a new good relation between them has formed. Therefore, roles conversion in group counseling can improve relations between students and teachers. This relation will be closer with a higher grade.

Analysis of the effect on relations among students due to roles conversion of leaders in group counseling

One of the most important functions due to roles conversion of leaders in Group counseling is improving interpersonal relations among each member, which has proved in many studies. Roles conversion of leaders in group counseling promotes relations between students and teachers. However, this study finds that only relations among excellent students have been improved due to roles conversion of leaders in group counseling. No improvement is brought to the whole relations among students in the experimental class.

Even though they have learnt the importance of communication and problems in communications, still no apparent improvement happens in the process. The results of the test show slight improvement, but they are not consistent with former results and our assumptions. The reasons are that the basic relations among students are bad. According to Table 2, the ordinary class does badly in some aspects. However, their relations among students are better than those in experimental class, which has significant differences. So, it is difficult to gain a substantial breakthrough in such short a time. Another reason is that the students are too young, and they do not know how to get along well with each other.

Analysis of the effect on disciplines due to roles conversion of leaders in group counseling

From the data, we can note that positive changes are brought to orders and disciplines in experimental class. However, no conspicuous differences are shown when compared with ordinary class. Namely, we cannot attribute the positive changes to roles conversion of leaders in group counseling. Some students from experimental class confessed that they often sleep and make faces in class in order to cause their teachers' attention. But their teachers do not care about that, which makes them sad and have low self-esteem. So, they will bring more disorders.

To sum up, teachers should be more patient and study their student's characteristics and demands. Also, they should take measures both for reward and punishment. They should create more opportunities, cultivate their students' potential abilities and establish good environment, so that students can show themselves as possible as they can. Meanwhile, the behaviors which disorder will be less and less until they disappear.

Conclusions

Through the aforesaid analysis and comparison, we can draw the following conclusions:

- (1) Roles conversion of leaders has positive effects on group counseling in the experimental class. However, the degree and effect vary from dimensions. They are more remarkable for the relations between students and teachers and study pressure. For relations among students, competitions and disciplines, the positive effects are not conspicuous,
- (2) Role conversion of leaders in group counseling improved relations between students and teachers apparently in experimental class. That is to say, it is helpful for the adjustment and improvement of the mentioned relation. Through roles conversion of leaders, students can understand their teachers better,
- (3) Roles conversion of leaders in group counseling did not improve relations among students in experimental class. Though, slight changes were shown in the test data, no apparent improvement was brought even though students knew the importance and their own problems in interpersonal communications,
- (4) Roles conversion of leaders in group counseling reduces study pressure in the experimental class apparently. It means it has remarkable effect on the decrease of study pressure,

- (5) Role conversion of leaders in group counseling had a more widely and apparent effect on ordinary students than excellent students. It only improved relations among excellent students, but improved relations between students and teachers and disciplines remarkably for ordinary students.

Further studies and expectations

Through experimental analysis, we draw conclusions that roles conversion of leaders in group counseling has positive effect on the study environment, relations between students and teachers, relations among students and study pressure, especially study psychology. It breaks through former limitations that gave priority to theories and adults, as well as high school students rather than practice and younger students. For further studies, we will increase the numbers of classes and students and make empirical exploration of the conclusions in a wider scope. Then, further empirical analysis will be made for the fuzzy conclusions based on control of independent variables properly.

Last but not least, quantitative and qualitative analysis will be made on the roles conversion of leaders in group counseling in an attempt that a system of roles conversion of leaders in group counseling will be formed in lower grades to form a leadership role through these steps in the conversion of low-grade study group counseling in a system.

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