



Consultation Demand of High School Students (Overview of Some Studies in Vietnam)

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published Online: 02 May 2022	School counseling in Vietnam is still a very new field. Up to now, there are only about 45 high schools in the country that have counseling rooms for students. Meanwhile, recent studies show that over 90% of the students who participated in the survey and interview expressed their desire to be consulted. The main concern to be consulted at this age is mainly related to the relationship of family, friends, teachers; many of them focus on academic and emotional issues. Therefore, there is a large yet justifiable demand for consultation among high school students who should be met as soon as possible.
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PROBLEM

The significant development of the global economy in general and of Vietnam in particular has resulted in many aspects of family, school, and social life. Moreover, it has also put psychological stress on students. In reality, children are stuck in a situation where they must face a bunch of challenges in life but struggle with seeking someone to share their problems with, ways to handle them, and so on. Therefore, the student demand for consultation is completely justifiable and should be met.

Many recent studies indicate that the number of students who get bored of studying accounts for a majority in schools, leading to poorer academic performance. According to statistics from the Ministry of Education and Training, by the end of 2007, the whole country had 64,000 junior high school students and more than 50,000 high school students dropped out of class; and in 2008, more than 86,000 students dropped out of school across the country, according to a report from the Ministry of Education and Training to the Government Office.

There are many reasons why students drop out of school. From a subjective perspective, many students do not have a positive attitude toward learning, or some of them may not find a suitable learning method. Alternatively, the subjective causes of this problem are economic difficulties, family dysfunction, parental ignorance of children's education, a complex society, and so on.

Additionally, not only difficulties in learning and confusion in assigned tasks in class, but also problems

in friendships or feelings with friends of the opposite sex, especially with gender questions, have also contributed to stress in students. Furthermore, they must deal with teacher and household relationships as well as conflicts brought into by parents' expectations and academic pressures. All of these can lead them to anxiety, depression, and even deviant behavior.

To be sharp and active in thinking and learning activities such as practicing knowledge and skills, students must be consulted about their perspectives and attitudes toward life. Otherwise, they will lose their sense of purpose in life and the ability to overcome self-doubt.

1. SCHOOL COUNSELING

In most fields around the world, there is a team of consultants for their personnel. Alutu, A.N.G & Etibhio C, (2006), counselors are professionals who specialize in helping individuals, families, and society as a whole. They work in various fields such as education, politics, business, mental health, and general career affairs. Depending on their specialty and workplace, they would have a different responsibility. In the field of education, particularly in schools, there is a team of academic counselors who counsel and assist students better understand careers and related issues in the training process.

Consultation is quite an unfamiliar term in Vietnam. Currently, not only in Vietnam but also in Western countries, there are still several different interpretations of this term, such as assistance or helping activity. Moreover, volunteers

are also considered professional counselors at centers and social services.

Many authors study counseling worldwide. According to Andrew G., (1996), Egan G. (1994). "consulting" is the process of providing professional expertise to help people with a clear purpose. As a result, it requires counselors to spend a certain amount of time and use their skills proficiently to help clients in identifying problems and implement solutions if conditions allow. Furthermore, "counseling" is also a practical science aimed at assisting people in overcoming their difficulties and living independently in society by using their life skills.

Anthony Yeo, (1993), asserted that the goal of counseling is to change the way people feel, think, and act to help them live a better life. Therefore, counseling is more than a process of intervention to solve problems in a relationship; it is also a special interactive process between the counselor and the object (client). He claims that it can be used at various levels, including a specialized form of work for psychologists, social workers, or even a part of teachers' work, nurses, and volunteers.

School counseling, according to the American Association of School Counselors (ASCA, 1990), is the work of helping all students in their learning, social relationships, work, and personal capacity with the goal of assisting them in becoming responsible and productive people. All of these programs are formed and organized with the help of school counselors, who also provide appropriate counseling interventions.

According to Kate C., Jane V.Oakhill (2001), counseling is a process of interaction between the counselor and the client. During this process, the counselor employs professional skills to assist the client in awakening their potential and enabling them to solve the problem on their own.

Tran Thi Minh Duc (2012) argued that counseling is an interactive process between a counselor (a professional ethical person with expertise in counseling skills who is legally recognized) and a client who has a mental health problem and requires assistance through skills in exchanging and sharing feelings. Clients must comprehend and accept their reality to realize their full potential to solve problems.

From the perspective of helping students, school counseling is one of the important responsibilities of schools, educational management levels, teachers, school staff, and so on, to help students improve their study performances, improve their social relationships, and make the right decisions about their careers.

Since the 1980s and 1990s, "counseling" or "consultation" services have been known through the programs that help mental patients in large hospitals. For instance, the "Window of Love" program broadcast on FM radio by the Voice of Vietnam, or "Ms. Thanh Tam" section of the "Women" newspaper. These programs counsel in all

fields, including school counseling, in particular love, marriage, and reproductive health counseling.

In 1984, the former Doctor Nguyen Khac Vien, the founder of the NT Center for Child Psychology and Psychopathology, published "Information on Psychological Science." As a result, he is one of the most inspiring people in the practice and development of the counseling profession (child and family psychology field).

In the late 90s, a series of psychological counseling centers and programs were established. The birth of the "Educational-Career Counseling Room" (1998) at Dinh Tien Hoang Private High School (Hanoi) was marked as a first model of counseling in high schools.

After the establishment of the counseling room at Dinh Tien Hoang Private High School, many other schools also applied that model to support students, teachers, and parents. From the pilot model of consultation at two secondary schools, Ha Huy Tap and Truong Cong Dinh (Binh Thanh district) in 2000, until now, Ho Chi Minh City has had many school counseling rooms in schools such as Nguyen Thi high school. Minh Khai, Nguyen Thuong Hien, Bach Dang Secondary School. In Hanoi, the consultation rooms of Nguyen Tat Thanh High School, Tran Hung Dao, Le Quy Don, and Tran Nhan Tong also initially operated with results. Schools with school counseling offices are mainly in two big cities: Hanoi (about 10 schools) and Ho Chi Minh City (about 35 schools).

In addition to primary and secondary schools, recently, consultation rooms have appeared in numerous universities, such as the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, the University of Agriculture, FPT University, the University of Science and Technology, RMIT Vietnam, and so on.

2. A ROLE OF COUNSELOR IN HIGH SCHOOLS

A school counselor is a person who is responsible for assisting students who have academic difficulties. They help students with academic issues, social problems, and other specialized issues. They collaborate with other people and organizations to advance students' academic, career, and personal and social development. Through interviews, seminars, workshops, and even quizzes, school counselors assist students in assessing their abilities, interests, talents, and personality traits to develop their potential in academics and career goals. Career information sessions and career education programs are also held for this purpose.

Students can seek help from school counselors if they are experiencing difficulties in academic, mental health, or other problems in their lives. Gibbons F. X., Gerrard, M., & Lane, D. J. (2003): When students have trouble learning because of mental health issues or to the extent that counselors can help, they will be the ones to address the root cause of the student's poor performance. In the case of indirect causes, counselors could also combine with the influence of teachers to help students overcome obstacles.

Moreover, counselors are responsible for helping students suffering from mental health problems such as behavior problems, attention problems, communication problems, crises because of war, violence, or terrorism, as well as mental illnesses.

In Vietnam, the workplace of school counselors is often mentioned mainly in schools. However, in other parts of the world, schools are not the only ones. It could be places outside school as long as those places cater to students, school age, or even independent practice.

School counselors can work as an organization or as an independent contractor, not only in places such as public and private schools, including universities and colleges but also in community mental health centers, charity, children's hospitals, and crime management systems.

3. COUNSELING DEMAND AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

There existed plenty of research on the status quo of counseling demand of students in general such as “The status quo on psychological counseling demand of students in Vietnam nowadays” of Bui Thi Xuan Mai; “The status quo on psychological counseling demand of students in People’s Police Academy Portal” of Trieu Thi Huong, this research all pointed out that this demand is really essential.

According to research of Bui Thi Xuan Mai (2007) on the status quo on psychological counseling demand of students in Vietnam nowadays, there are above 90% of participants being in a high need for counseling service. Many problems belong to their concern and they need to be counseled. As for adolescent group, some concern that they need for their counseling service is their learning, friend relationship and unbalanced mental state. As for teenagers, they care more about their work, friendships, romantic relationship, their health including unbalanced mental state.

Research by Hoang Anh Phuoc (2014), shows that there are 91,43% of respondents have a need for consultation on certain issues including academic performance, training, relationship with friends, parents, relatives.

Research by Huynh Ngoc Thanh (2016). share Consulting needs of students in some high schools in Hanoi city shows that the children who are very satisfied and very secure about their current life account for only 3.2%; Meanwhile, the ones that are mix satisfaction and anxiety mixed and frequently feeling worried and unsettled accounts for over 65%. This proportion reflects that their lives have been dominated by too much pressure. The results of this study also show that the cause of some psychological difficulties for students is pressure from family, school from themselves. . . The main areas for consultation are also the relationship with parents, family, with friends and teachers, about self-development.

In the topic for the master's thesis on "Study on the causes of anxiety disorders in high school students" (subject is 600 students at Quang Binh High School for the Gifted)

also showed that their counseling demand is really great. Up to 25% of children with anxiety disorders (according to the results of 2 anxiety scales DASS 42 and Zung) told that they really need someone to talk and a specialist in the field of psychology to share their thoughts and express their feelings. In this article, we focus on analyzing the information obtained from this thesis to clarify the counseling needs of the children.

In the topic "Causes of anxiety disorders in high school students" in students at High School for the Gifted at Quang Binh province, the authors used the main research methods: test method to investigate the status of anxiety disorders in students; survey method with questionnaire and in-depth interview for students with anxiety disorders according to the results of 2 test measures; case analysis method (case study); method of discussion and interview. . . The method to reduce stress and anxiety is to use psychological counseling sessions. The study has conducted over 30 direct consultations and it was free of charge for students with anxiety disorders about family, friends, study issues. . . Most of the children said that “this is the first time I first talk about this problem with other people”; "I have never talked to strangers before" . . .

Nguyen Thi Hang Phuong (2009), the results of practical research on counseling needs at Quang Binh High School for the Gifted are 37 students come to see a counselor and 55 meetings, each meeting lasted from 30 to 60 minutes (depending on the problem). The problem students shared including: There were 15 students sharing related issues of anxiety because of poor study, about the results of the upcoming exam for excellent students, about the graduation and university exams; They are also worried because they must orient their career, choose a career for the future and are stuck because they don't know what to do. The children talked about their personal stress when thinking about the pressures they had to endure, like their parents asking them to pass the national contest next year. There were 9 students talking about family relationships, conflicts between parents and children, conflicts with siblings and relatives. 6 students shared problems related to their relationship with their friends (getting angry at their best friend...), related to their lover (wanting friends of the opposite sex to know about their feelings, wanting to break up because they have a new relationship). The other five students talked about other things like wanting to change schools, worrying about getting pregnant, having conflicts with their landlord, having friend been in an accident and passing away or having conflicts with teachers.

Tran Thi Minh Duc (2007) Through counseling sessions for students, we have listened to and shared with them their concerns as well as their worries. In many cases that we consulted, the students felt that they are being thoroughly listened and then can find way to handle with their problem. Many students expressed that “I feel really grateful now as I can express these feeling and all of my concern, actually I can't trust anyone to talk about my problem before”,

“I feel much more comfortable because now I am truly being myself again, not feeling desperate as before”. Another student told “You helped me see my problems more clearly the thing I was most afraid of before was that the secret I told would be revealed”.

Additionally, we have cooperated with the school delegation and the homeroom teachers to organize talk show and discussions to help the children express themselves, talk about their problems and ask questions. Thereby, they are bolder, more confident in communicating with friends and more believe in themselves.

4. DISCUSSION

Regarding the consultation work in general in Vietnam today, we find that everyone all has a need to share their heart-to-heart as well as wants to be listened and understood by others. Among the subjects participating in the study, most have a desire to be consulted for the problem they are facing. Especially with the target audience being high school students, over 90% of the students have the desire to be consulted (through the above-mentioned studies), so it is very necessary to develop a system that support students, who are school counselors.

A professional school counselor is a certified counselor or one who was trained in school counseling with specialized qualifications and skills to support student learning, their educational needs and their personal, social and professional development needs. Therefore, experts and scientists must develop their own training programs to train school counselors. Simultaneously, it is necessary to organize consultation activities, pay attention to factors such as facilities, management organization, and establish a school counseling training program for Vietnam.

5. CONCLUSION

High school students have a high need for psychological counseling on issues such as study, friendship relationships; family relationship; career orientation. The reality shows that when being counseled, students are willing to share lots of their issues, they have vented much of their worries and become more confident... However, these counseling activities are still facing lots of difficulties including lack of counselor in some high schools, students still do not trust the counselor; school counselors are not skilled enough to advise students or the facilities for the consultation room are still inadequate. Therefore, it is necessary to have the attention of stakeholders such as leaders at all levels; School Administrator and training programs for psychologists, to have quality counselors in terms of knowledge and skills in psychological support for students.

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