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Students Attitudes Towards Reactivation of Peer Counselor Program to Prevent Substance Use

Actitudes de los estudiantes hacia la reactivación del programa de consejeros para prevenir el uso de sustancias

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RESUMEN

En este artículo, se investigan las actitudes de los estudiantes de secundaria hacia la reactivación del programa de consejeros de pares en las escuelas secundarias. Se llevaron a cabo en 10 escuelas y en 5 regiones de Surabaya con una muestra aleatoria de 854 estudiantes. Los datos se recopilaron de julio de 2018 a septiembre de 2018 mediante un cuestionario autoadministrado. Los resultados muestran que solo el 52.7% (n = 450) de los estudiantes conocían el programa y el 68% (n = 581) de estos estudiantes informaron una actitud positiva hacia el programa. Esta investigación también encontró que existe un programa similar en algunas escuelas.

Palabras clave: Actitudes, consejero, Estudiantes de secundaria, Política, Uso de sustancias.

ABSTRACT

In this article, the attitude of high school students toward reactivation of the peer counsellor program in senior high schools is investigated. They were conducted in 10 high schools in 5 regions in Surabaya with a random sample of 854 students. The data were collected from July 2018 to September 2018 using a self-administered questionnaire. Results show that only 52.7% (n=450) of students knew about the program and 68% (n=581) of these students report a positive attitude toward the program. This research also found that a similar program exists in some schools.

Keywords: Attitudes, High school students, Peer counselor, Policy, Substance use.

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of substance use is common across various age groups. In 2014, an estimated 1 of 20 adults or a quarter of a billion people aged 15-64 years, used drugs at least once (UNODC: 2016). Increased drug use occurs in several ASEAN countries, including Indonesia.

In Indonesia, drug abuse still became a problem among adolescents every year. East Java is a densely populated province, with a population of over 37 million. A survey conducted by the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) and the Indonesian National Police (POLRI) in 2013 found that East Java had the highest number of drug cases by province for three consecutive years (2010, 2011 and 2012).

The Surabaya City National Narcotics Agency (BNNK) records indicate the number of drug users in the school-aged population (aged 7 to 17) undergoing rehabilitation increased by about 16 percent from 2016 (84 students) to 2017 (101 students). Among them, are four elementary students, 63 junior high school students and 34 high school students (Surya et al.: 2018). Research showed that adolescence is a critical risk period for the initiation of substance use (12-17 years old) and that substance use may peak among young people aged 18–25 years (UNODC: 2018).

The stakeholders (District Education Office, District Health Office, Media, Health Primary Care) has launched various programs about drug awareness to address adolescent related social problems. The programs have been delivered by government and private institutions and NGOs, including Adolescent Health Care Services (PKPR), School Health Business (UKS), and Planning Generation (GENRE). The programs were carried out to support adolescent health.

In 2010 the Surabaya City Government implemented peer counsellor/peer educator training for representatives of students from all private and state junior and senior high schools in Surabaya. The training was conducted in collaboration with various local stakeholders and by the PKPR Guidelines. Research showed that adolescence is a critical risk period for the initiation of substance use (12-17 years old) and that substance use may peak among young people aged 18–25 years (UNODC: 2018).

Peer to peer counselling helps peers understand problems and find workable solutions together (Zahra & Malik: 2017). Peer counsellors are paraprofessionals selected by their teachers from within the population of interest, in this case, adolescents, trained, and given continuous supervision by a qualified professional counsellor (Hearne et al.: 2017, pp. 138-152; Villalobos and Ramirez: 2018, pp. 1012-1587). The peer-to-peer strategy is considered particularly useful for adolescents as in adolescence; individuals are usually more open about personal problems with peers than teachers or parents. In adolescence, communication with parents is reduced, as they switch to talk to their peers to meet the need for attachment.

The peer-to-peer counsellor program was implemented by the Surabaya City Government from 2010 to 2015. Furthermore, the program was not sustainable because of the budget constraints and changes policy, In 2014 there was a change in national policy (Regulation number 23/2014) with responsibility for senior high schools shifting to the provincial level of government. Thus from 2015, due to this change in policy and other implementation-related issues including lack of evaluation, the Surabaya City Government discontinued the peer counsellor program in senior high schools. This study explores student attitudes toward the reactivation of the peer-counsellor program. The findings of this research could provide the basis for advocacy efforts to develop a peer educator policy to work with adolescents to prevent substance use.

METHODS

This study uses quantitative methods with a cross-sectional approach. The study locations were in 10 senior high schools representing the regions in Surabaya (West, East, South, North, and Central Surabaya) with a sample of 854 students in first and second grade (15-17 years old). These students were taken

randomly with a simple random sampling technique with a population of 7265 students in 10 senior high schools. The study was conducted in July - September 2018.

Data Collection

Before data collection, participants were explained about the peer educator program and the task of the peer educator in sharing and counselling in drug abuse prevention efforts among adolescents. After that, they filled out informed consent as their approval in participating in this study. This study was received ethics approval from the Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Airlangga with certificate number 940-KEPK.

Primary data collection used self-administered questionnaires standards were adjusted to the research topic. The variables studied were the background factors that included gender and information, behavioural belief, outcome evaluation, attitudes, and student intention variables towards the peer-counsellor program in Surabaya High School while the disconnected line was not examined in this study. The content of a questionnaire filled out by participants was:

- a. demographic information, including gender and age.
- b. questions about the existence of peer counsellors: students were asked to answer two choices available (knowing the existence of peer educators in their school or not).
- c. behaviour belief: the five questions were: sharing with peer counsellors giving benefits in the form of understanding of drug prevention, having the ability to not use drugs, having the ability to share information and to prevent drug hazards, having self-protection in avoiding drug, and following activities held by peer counsellors will not take time. Response options were extremely unlikely, unlikely, likely, and extremely likely).
- d. Outcome evaluation: 5 questions regarding their assessment of activities delivered by peer-counsellors. Response options of extremely bad, bad, good, and extremely good.
- e. Attitude: 4 questions that contain their views when participating in activities held by peer-counsellors. Response options were extremely disagreed, disagree, agree, and extremely agree.
- f. Intention: X questions about the intention to participate in activities held by peer counsellors in the form of sharing/discussion and so on

Response options were a scale of 1-4. Responses for questions under each category were summed to get a composite score for each variable.

RESULTS

Characteristics of respondents viewed from gender and student information regarding the existence of peer-counsellor programs at school. Table 1 shows that there are more female students than male. More than half of respondents also were not aware of the existence of peer-counsellor programs at their school. They were not aware of the peer counsellor in their school, and they have not to use the chances to consult with their peers.

No	Characteristics Of Respondents	n	%
Gender	Male	363	42,5
	Female	491	57,5
Information about the existence of peer-counsellor in their schools	Know	404	47,3
	Not know	450	52,7
	Σ	854	100,0

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents Senior High School Student at Surabaya in 2018.

Behavioural Belief

Behavioural belief is a form of belief in the consequences of behaviour that is carried out about the form of belief regarding the impact, benefits, or even loss obtained if an individual does or does not commit the behaviour.

No	Behavioural Belief	n	%
1	Very low	10	1,2
2	Low	18	2,1
3	High	402	47,1
4	Very High	424	49,6
	Σ	854	100,0

Table 2. Behavioural Belief Of Student Toward Peer Counselor Program To Prevent Substance Abuse at Surabaya in 2018.

Based on Table 2 shows that the majority of students have a good behavioural belief related to sharing or discussion with peer counsellors can make students stay away from or prevent substance abuse.

Outcome Evaluation

Outcome Evaluations is a form of evaluation carried out by individuals if a behaviour will produce positive consequences; it will tend to be favourable towards the behaviour.

No	Outcome Evaluations	n	%
1	Very bad	3	0,4
2	Bad	12	1,4
3	Good	354	41,5
4	Very good	485	56,8
	Σ	854	100,0

Table 3. Outcome Evaluations Of Student Toward Peer Counselor Program To Prevent Substance Abuse at Surabaya in 2018

Based on Table 3 shows that the majority of student evaluations outcomes are very good, they have a good assessment of the results obtained after discussion or sharing with peer-counsellors they can participate actively in the prevention of substance abuse.

Attitude

Behavioural belief and outcome evaluation of results will shape a person's attitude towards a behaviour. The following is the frequency distribution of students' attitudes to the benefits that will be obtained when sharing with peer educators regularly in substance abuse efforts at the level of high school students.

No	Attitude	n	%
1	Very negative	7	0,8
2	Negative	83	9,7
3	Positive	581	68,0
4	Very Positive	183	21,4
	Σ	854	100,0

Table 4. Attitude Of Student Toward Peer Counselor Program To Prevent Substance Abuse at Surabaya in 2018.

Based on Table 4 can be obtained information that most students have a positive attitude towards the existence of peer counsellor programs in schools, but there are also negative student attitudes. Students tend to have a positive attitude to believe when they share and regularly discuss with peer counsellors will get many benefits for themselves in the prevention of substance abuse.

Intention

Intention to conduct behaviour is influenced by attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. The intention of the students in this study was measured by looking at how much effort or intention and the plan that students would do in participating in peer-counsellor programs.

No	Intention	n	%
1	No	144	16,9
2	Yes	710	83,1
	Σ	854	100,0

Table 5. Intention Of Student Toward Peer Counselor Program To Prevent Substance Abuse at Surabaya in 2018.

Based on Table 5, information can be obtained that the majority of students have intentions and plan to be active in activities held by peer counsellors regularly.

DISCUSSION

Characteristics Of Respondents

More than half of the total respondents are female. The respondent's information about the peer counsellor program in the school is still quite low because there are no socialization or information media in schools related to peer-counsellor programs. Based on the research of Sirait, Rustina, and Waluyanti (Sirait et al.: 2013, pp. 101-106), the existence of information will increase one's knowledge and attitude. Also, Iswahyudi (Iswahyudi: 2012, pp. 310-340) also mentioned that the provision of information is an important part of increasing community participation. The existence of information related to the program is very important so that students become more aware. If students are aware of the peer-counsellor program, they will have the confidence to share their problems with peer counsellors.

According to Iswahyudi (Iswahyudi: 2012, pp. 310-340), the implementation of community participation in improving public services is influenced by factors of awareness and communication. Therefore, there is a need for socialization and information media about invitations to students to be active so that they feel they have a role in the sustainability of the program. Most high schools in Surabaya already have a lot of information media in the form of posters and banners in the school environment about the dangers of drugs, and appeals to stay away from drugs, but the absence of media about the importance of being active in peer-counsellor programs.

Graham (Graham: 2014, pp. 16-24) stated that social media platforms could positively be used to facilitate increased participation and involvement of students in a program. In line with Badri et al. (Badri et al.: 2017) research that social media can be used as a tool to provide education with students. Social media can be well implemented in Surabaya and can be used to create a network between peers, especially those that were more comfortable writing their problems online rather than speak face to face with their peers.

Also, the lack of information on the peer-counsellor program was because the existing programs of peer counsellors implemented unsystematically since each school has different programs or activities under that term. In carrying out these activities, the role of students is inserted as counselling for their peers. The programs include Scouts, Youth Red Cross, Saka Bakti Husada, Health Ambassadors, Anti Narcotics Ambassadors, and others. These programs have the focus of their respective duties and functions so that

their implementation activities to provide counselling to peers is only done at a glance and is limited. Unstructured activities between one another resulted in overlapping implementation. Counselling activities are not a top priority for the activities carried out by these students. Department of Education, Student Services Division, Canada (Department of Education: 2005, pp. 1-30) states that the factors that influence the implementation of counsellors in schools are influenced by the priorities set by the school.

Behaviour Belief

The behaviour belief of respondents showed a high percentage. Respondents have confidence that by participating in peer-counsellor activities, they will get positive benefits for themselves both in resolving the problems at hand and about developing achievements. Ambayo and Ngumi, (Ambayo & Ngumi: 2016, pp. 125-130) also mentioned that peer counselling activities positively affect students' behavioural changes and academic competencies at school. The students already have confidence or trust, so they will conduct this behaviour voluntarily without feeling coerced or pressure. In this study, the existence of a supportive environment is very necessary to strengthen the behaviour of belief in students. Supporting environmental conditions can be formed through the media and socialization from the teacher counselling guidance on the importance of participating in peer-counsellor programs.

Outcome Evaluations

Outcome evaluations of respondents to the peer-counsellor program showed good results. Respondents also can predict their peers that are considered as peer counsellors, and this proves that the respondents have a high awareness of the program even though the program has not been experienced by the respondents. Respondents assess or provide an evaluation that the peer-counsellor role is needed because the counselling activities will help them prevent substance abuse.

According to Kute (Kute: 2014, pp. 6-11), a good relationship between peer counsellors and students is very necessary, and peer counsellors must be able to collaborate with their peers. A good relationship will provide a good assessment, that can help students be more open to vent various problems.

A good relationship can be established because of equality of age, status, or educational background that will lead to a relationship of intimacy. Thus the counsellors can assist in recognizing behavioural irregularities that occur in their peers (Ambayo & Ngumi: 2016, pp. 125-130). According to Ajzen (Ajzen: 1991, pp. 179-211), belief behaviour and outcome evaluations will determine a person's attitude to behaviour.

Attitude

Most respondents' attitude supports peer-counsellor programs. They agreed that the presence of peer counsellors in schools would make them able to prevent and avoid substance abuse. This attitude was influenced by behavioural belief and outcome evaluations which also showed positive results as discussed in the previous chapter. According to Yakasai and Jusoh (Yakasai & Jusoh: 2015, pp. 186-193), the attitude was the strongest variable that will influence a person's intention to behave. Whereas according to Azwar (Azwar: 2013), a person's attitude can be influenced by experience. The attitude gained through experience will have a direct influence. Also, someone who is considered important or someone significant will influence the formation of individual attitudes towards a behaviour. Inegbedion, Obadiaru, and Bello (Inegbedion et al.: 2016, pp. 353-375) also found in their study that several factors have a strong predictive influence on one's attitudes, they were perceptions, needs, and past experiences. Mausbach et al. (Mausbach et al.: 2013, pp. 36-42) mentioned that positive attitudes, social norms, and behavioural control are perceived to be positively correlated with one's intention to engage in functional behaviour.

Intention

The majority of respondents have intentions and plans to participate in activities held by peer-counsellors. Respondents plan to share or discuss with peer counsellors regularly to deal with various personal problems, especially drug prevention. Research conducted by Kuruuzum and Koksai (Kuruuzum & Koksai: 2010, pp. 9-15) shows that the intention to behave is significantly influenced by the perception of the quality of services that will be obtained. In line with the research of Wahyuningsih and Nurdin (Wahyuningsih & Nurdin: 2010, pp. 1-16) the intention of a consumer in the future is determined by the level of satisfaction, the more satisfied he will intend and will inform the other person. Therefore, a peer counsellor must be given intensive special training by a professional so that he can provide good service and be able to move his colleagues to become agents of change in community life to prevent and reduce abuse substances in Surabaya.

Respondents' intention to participate can be used as a reinforcing factor for public policymaking. System theory argues that public policymaking cannot be separated from environmental influences. Weimer and Vining (Weimer & Vining: 2017) mentions 3 (three) policy elements, including policy actors, policy environment, and public policy. The public policy that will be implemented must get public support as written by Harold Laswell that the consideration of public policymaking relates to "who gets what, when and how"(Lembaga Administrasi Negara, Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, Australian Aid: 2015). The policy is expected to implement peer-counsellor programs more structured and integrated.

According to Mulyadi (Mulyadi: 2016), the policy framework consists of several aspects including the objectives achieved, value preferences, supporting resources, the ability of actors involved in policymaking, the environment, and the strategies used to achieve goals. The policy regarding the peer-counsellor program that will be applied is expected to provide positive value to the target community and be used as an effort by the East Java Provincial Government to reduce the prevalence of drug users at the student level by optimizing the available human resources (principals, BK teachers, and others) to participate in becoming the driving force of program implementation.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that more than half of high school students in Surabaya who were not aware of information about the existence of peer counsellors in their respective schools. This condition leads to less sharing or discussion activities to solve the personal problems of students, especially the problem of substance abuse. Peer-counselor programs need to be organized. The positive results that support the sustainability of the peer counsellor program in this study were behavioural beliefs and outcome evaluations of peer counsellor programs. The two variables reflect the positive attitudes of students that support the sustainability of peer-counsellor programs. Students were interested in and agreed that meeting and regularly sharing with peer-counsellors could help them prevent substance abuse. They stated that they have the intention to participate in the implementation of the program.

Therefore, school support for the program is important and can be improved by providing socialization and providing information media in the school environment as well as facilitating peer-counsellor activities. The peer counsellor program also needs a strong policy by the East Java Provincial Government so that the program can be reactivated, starting with training as an effort to train high school students in Surabaya. The training is aimed at representatives of students and guides teachers and counselling as the person in charge in each school. Furthermore, assistance must also be made to the implementation of the program regularly with evaluation and monitoring, so that the program is expected to be able to overcome various problems of high school-level adolescents, especially in efforts to prevent systematically and sustained drug abuse.

The limitation in this study is the sample of 10 schools in this study were selected purposively, so that the results of the study may not reflect and representing all high schools in Surabaya, both private and state-owned schools. However, the ten schools were chosen based on location in each region in Surabaya, and an

almost equal number of private and state-owned were achieved. Also, the peer counsellor program launched by the Surabaya City Government has been stalled since 2015 so that students who become respondents were not directly experienced the benefits of the program, but after the explanation about the program, they can immediately be perceived as the program has many benefits.

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