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# PEER GUIDANCE: A STRATEGY TO DEVELOP ADOLESCENTS' EMOTIONAL LITERACY

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aimed to find out the effectiveness of peer guidance in improving adolescents' emotional literacy. Two group pretest-posttest with control group experimental design was applied. Twenty participants were recruited using purposive random sampling technique and were randomly assigned into groups. The data were cOLLECTed using emotional literacy questionnaire and analyzed using Mann Whitney U Test. The result of the study showed that peer guidance was effective strategy to enhance adolescents' emotional literacy. The result of the study could serve as a reference for counselor to help adolescents enhance their emotional literacy by applying peer guidance.*

**Keywords:** emotional literacy, peer guidance, adolescents.

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## INTRODUCTION

Along with the increasing issue on adolescent students' mental health, the need to make them "a whole person" also gains greater attention (Balluerka, et al., 2016; Goldberg, et al., 2019). Various interventions are needed to enhance adolescent students' emotional and social competence. Teachers should not only focus on developing students' cognitive aspect but also on developing students' intrapersonal and interpersonal competences. In 21st century educational framework, such competences include: (1) core subjects and themes, (2) learning and innovation skills, (3) information and technology skills, and (4) life and career skills. The development of these competence could be done when there is a supporting system in the form of standard and

assessment, learning curriculum and design, sustainable teacher professional development, and supporting learning environment.

Moreover, efforts to develop students' socioemotional aspect has been long implemented in the form of policies. Some peer guidance programs in senior high school level that have been implemented include peer facilitator training, psychology education program, learning skill training, information service, peer counseling, peer mentoring program in school, and peer support (He, et al., 2014; Mudis & Yambo, 2015). Since peers have same age, they find it easiers to share experiences, knowledge, and skills, allowing them to influence their peer's behavior significantly.

In Indonesia since 2010, the government set character education as a national program, which is then strengthened by the national program of Character Education Reinforcement (PPK). The national program is the responsibility of education institutions since they are strategic means to develop students character through their structure, system, and facilities. In addition, the initiation of Child-friendly School policy, as described in article 3 of Women Empowerment and Child Protection Minister Regulation no. 8 of 2014 concerning Child-friendly school policy. Child-friendly school refers to safe, clean, healthy, caring, environmental friendly educational institution, both formal, informal, and nonformal, that are able to guarantee, fulfill, value children's rights and protect them from violence, discrimination, and other abuses; as well as to support children's participation, especially in terms of planning, policies, learning process, supervision, and reporting mechanism regarding children's rights and protection.

However, the implementation of peer guidance in many countries is still interventional that is done by independent social institutions and has not been the part of school-based program. Whereas peer guidance that is integrated in the school system is proven to be an effective intervention, compared to traditional, didactic approach (Ambayo, 2016; Adler, et al., 2016; Cowie & James, 2016; Salmivalli, 2018; Goldberg, et al., 2019; Cowie, 2019). REGARDING guidance and counseling service, peer guidance is one of the strategies to broaden the scope of the service and improve students' awareness to access available services (Barry, et al., 2017; Rizqi, et al., 2017; Ridhani & Abidarda, 2019; Stratford, et al., 2019; Supriyadi & Setiyawati, 2019; Watson, 2019).

The present study aimed to find out the effectiveness of peer guidance in improving adolescents' emotional literacy. The development of emotional literacy is viewed as an effort to prevent various misbehaviors. The result of the study could serve as a reference for counselor to help adolescents

enhance their emotional literacy by applying peer guidance.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Two group pretest-posttest with control group experimental design was applied. Twenty participants were recruited using purposive random sampling technique and were randomly assigned into groups. The data were COLLECTed using emotional literacy questionnaire and analyzed using Mann Whitney U Test.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The existing peer guidance services that are widely known, among other, are: (1) Center for Adolescent Information and Counseling (PIK-R), serving as one of the programs of National Family Planning Coordination Board (BKKBN). PIK-R provides information service, reproductive health counseling, and family life planning. (2) Peer tutor, a collaboration between school counselor and classroom teachers by recruiting above-average achiever students to help their friends who face difficulties in certain subjects. (3) Peer facilitator, an extended version of school guidance and counseling program, where the facilitators are directly recruited by school counselors based on some criteria (i.e., maturity, excellent communication skill, and acceptability).

Peer guidance carried out in the present study aimed to improve adolescents' emotional literacy. Some stages were performed, including a) planning, b) implementation, c) supervision, and d) evaluation (ASCA, 2010) as follow Figure 1.

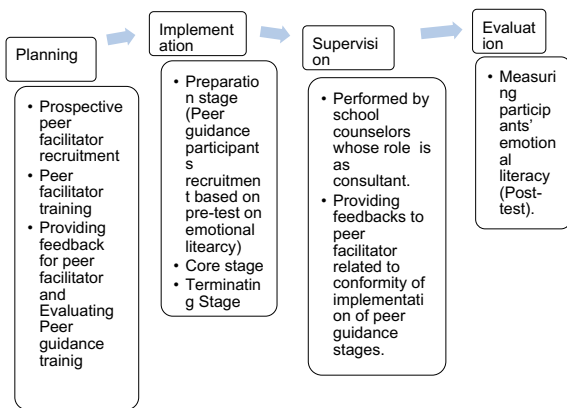


Figure 1. Peer Guidance Procedure

In planning stage, counselors recruited peer facilitator through sociometric questionnaire, 47 peer facilitators were recruited, they were participants whose emotional literacy was categorized as very high. Based on the questionnaire, initial participants (n =253) chose their friends they believed being able to be a group leader, the criteria of the selection was designed based on He, et al's. (2014) work as follows: (1) Interested in engaging with peer guidance activities, (2) interested in building relationship with peer, (3) exhibiting potential leadership, (4) exhibiting empathy, (5) friendliness, (6) discipline, (7) having adequate academic achievement, (8) being able to communicate well, (9) being able to be a good listener, (8) being able to keep confidentiality, (11) Showing openness, (12) Willing to help others, and (13) showing humility.

Based on these criteria, four prospective facilitators were selected, they were asked to give their written consent to be a peer facilitator and asked to participate in the entire activities. After this stage, the selected four facilitators were trained by the school counselors, so that they could facilitate peer guidance. This training was aimed at developing group dynamics and leadership skills, which includes (1) skills in discussion, (2) group process, and (3) group problem solving skills).

Once the training consisting of 7 meetings with 45 minutes each ended, the peer

guidance was carried out. In this stage, peer facilitator helps the group members develop their emotional literacy using life-story book, this activity consisted of several stages, including: (a) describing the problem being faced; (b) identifying the emotion that arise when facing the problem; (c) identifying thoughts when facing problems; (d) identifying the way to express emotions; (e) identifying the cause of emotions and the effect such emotion expression; and (f) making a plan of action to express emotion effectively based on the analysis. After that, (g) participants developed other perspectives in viewing their problems.

School counselors supervised and evaluate the peer guidance process. In this activity, school counselors acted as a tutor or a consultant as follow Table 1 and Figure 2.

Table 1

*Adolescents' Emotional Literacy*

Category	Pretest		Posttest	
	O <sub>1</sub>	O <sub>2</sub>	O <sub>1,2</sub>	O <sub>2,2</sub>
Very High	0	0	5	0
High	0	0	5	0
Low	0	0	0	2
Very Low	10	10	0	8

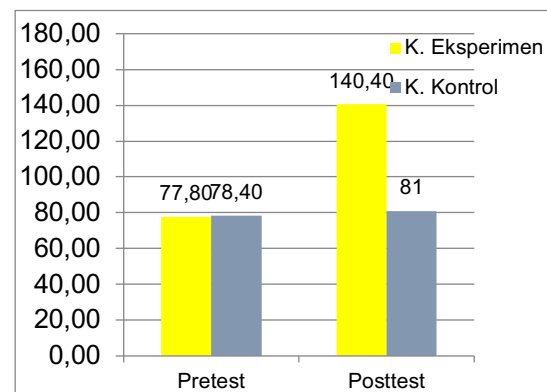


Figure 2 Adolescents' Emotional Literacy

The next step was testing the hypothesis. The hypothesis was tested through Mann Whitney U Test using SPSS 16.0 and by comparing the mean score of experimental and control group after the treatment was given. The result of hypothesis testing is described as follow Table 3.

Table 3  
*Hypothesis Testing Result*

	Emotional Literacy
Mann-Whitney U	.000
Wilcoxon W	15,000
Z	-2,668
Asymp. sig. (2-tailed)	.008
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.008 <sup>a</sup>

It was found that the value of Asymp. Sig = 0.008 <  $\alpha$  = 0.05, indicating an improvement of emotional literacy after the peer guidance was conducted. The effectiveness of the peer guidance was examined through N Gain Score. The result showed that the N Gain score of experimental group was 0.61 (61.238%), which could be concluded that peer guidance was quite effective in enhancing emotional literacy of experimental group members.

Some of adolescents' social problems emerges due to their lack of emotional literacy as the basic social skill, leading to poor social relationship quality. The development of emotional literacy is viewed as an effort to prevent various misbehaviors. Since emotion is the concern of this activity, the intervention should be done by providing various social situation to enhance emotional literacy aspects. Group approach is considered to be able to provide direct learning experience, thus training participants' coping skills, creating antecedent and training participants' skill to give appropriate responses (Knowler & Frederickson, 2013). Peer guidance in school setting plays active role in creating positive atmosphere between students and their peer concerning various socioemotional issues (Cowie, 2019).

Studies on peer guidance are conducted since 1960s and 1970s, particularly concerning the development of adolescents' socioemotional aspects (Azmi, 2016) in order to create a positive school environment and school community interrelationship (Zainuddin and Hambali, 2015). The result of these studies are mostly school-based program that aims to develop individual's strength to evaluate their choice, make self-improvement, and be a part of the community (Wolfe, et al., 2009).

Experimental group members of this study exhibited significant improvement regarding their emotional literacy competence after the treatment was given. Whereas those in control group did not exhibit such a significant improvement.

Adolescents with poor emotional literacy competence may have limited ability to understand their own feelings and other, making them difficult to build social relationship (Devcich, 2017). Such individuals may exhibit less competence on their cognitive, affective, or behavioral aspects. Regarding the cognitive aspect, these individuals may find it difficult to identify their feelings, define the feeling symbols, and identify the intensity of the feelings and their effect on their thought and behavior. Meanwhile, in affective aspect, individuals with poor emotional literacy competence are less aware of others' perspective and find it difficult to see others' emotional experience in certain conditions. With regard to behavioral aspects, such individuals find it difficult to properly manage their feelings, they may fail to redress their mistakes related to inappropriate emotional expression and inappropriate response to others' feelings.

Applying peer guidance strategy, every participants are provided with opportunities of direct experience (Knowler and Frederickson, 2013) by reflecting the problems, identifying thoughts and feelings that comes along with problems, understanding its appropriate expressions, and evaluating the effectiveness of such expressions, and developing more effective way to express the emotion. With such opportunities, participants may develop new perspectives in viewing their problems. which is effective for adolescents (Adler, et al., 2016; Cowie & James, 2016; Salmivalli, 2018; Cowie, 2019).

This condition shows that adolescents with adequate emotional literacy competence may be viewed as individuals who are able to properly understand their own feelings and others feelings, thus allowing them to build social relationship. Individuals with adequate emotional literacy may exhibit good competence in cognitive, affective, and

behavioral aspects. Regarding the cognitive aspect, these individuals could properly identify their feelings, define the feeling symbols, and identify the intensity of the feelings and their effect on their thought and behavior. Meanwhile, in affective aspect, individuals with adequate emotional literacy competence are aware of others' perspective and may properly see others' emotional experience in certain conditions. With regard to behavioral aspects, such individuals may properly manage their feelings, be able to redress their mistakes related to inappropriate emotional expression and inappropriate response to others' feelings.

### CONCLUSION

The result of the study showed that peer guidance was effective strategy to enhance adolescents' emotional literacy. This effectiveness is indicated by significant changes after the treatment, i.e., peer guidance, was carried out.

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