Perception and Self-Efficacy of Students in the Peer Mentoring Program (PRS)

Mawarnis Harisha Syafini Idris & Ku Suhaila Ku Johari

Faculty of Education, National University of Malaysia
Email: kusuhaila@ukm.edu.my

Abstract
This study aims to identify the perception and self-efficacy of students who follow the Peer Mentoring Program (PRS) at the Vocational College. This is qualitative research using the interview method through psycho-educational group counseling sessions. This study involved a sample of six PRS students consisting of students aged 16 and 17 years. As a result of the group sessions, three main themes were identified by the objectives of the study, namely the perception of students following the Peer Mentoring (PRS) program, students' self-efficacy in becoming Peer Mentoring (PRS) and action plans that can be taken to become Peer Mentoring (PRS) that are effective. The implications of the study show that guidance in terms of formal communication is very necessary and the researcher hopes that this study can help other researchers see PRS's perception and self-confidence in helping other peers.
Keywords: Peer Mentors, Perception, Self-Efficacy, Peers, Communication

Introduction
Peer mentoring programs (PRS) have long been introduced in the school system in Malaysia. Therefore, this program is familiar to students who are in primary or secondary school. The Malaysian Ministry of Education (2015) states that this program (PRS) was actually introduced in 1988 to Malaysian secondary schools after the Aminuddin Baki Institute conducted a coaching course for the first group and after that, the next three groups of coaches attended this course at the same place. In addition, it is known that the principle of this program is to help fellow students regardless of gender, religion, or behavioral and physical position. According to Zaini et al (2021), PRS is an organization that assists or facilitates the Guidance and Counseling Unit in a school and assists Guidance and Counseling Teachers (GBK) in carrying out their work. Therefore, it can be seen that the presence of PRS in an institution can help not only in the management of guidance and counseling but in the management of the institution as well.

This is also supported by the study of Ab Rahman et al (2019) which study says that this PRS can be a backup for an institution to help improve the performance of counseling

management and leadership because they can be effective role models for friends and for a successful generation. Today, the PRS program is familiar to students, and some of them are indeed scrambling to follow this PRS program because one can increase their self-confidence (self-efficacy). According to the research findings of Ab Rahman et al (2019), PRS can have a positive effect on students in improving their self-concept.

Apart from feedback or assessment from students or the school environment on the functioning of the PRS program, the perception or assessment of students who are PRS should also be obtained more carefully. This is because the perception before and after they follow the program is different. For example, some students have participated in the program, finally finding it incompatible with their personality. Then need students who better fit their personality for the process of helping others. This is also actually related to a person's self-efficacy, which is a person's confidence in himself whether or not he is able to handle a given challenge or task.

As is known, a PRS member needs to have some skills to show what guidance is given to peers, especially communication skills to attract peers with other peers and this has also been suggested in (Zaini et al., 2021). Effective communication among peer counsellors in primary school through the effects of basic skills modules can have an impact on the knowledge and skills that can continue to continue in high school. (Kamaruddin et al., 2020). Therefore, this study aims to i) identify students' perceptions before and after participating in the Peer Mentoring Program (PRS), ii) identify students' self-efficacy in becoming Peer Mentors (PRS), and iii) explore the action plan to become an effective Peer Mentor (PRS).

Literature Review
Peers
The study by Zaini et al (2021) focuses on effective communication within the PRS itself. Effective communication is important in the leadership process in the organization especially in the process of helping other students in the school. The communication element also helps to increase the self-confidence of PRS students in guiding their peers. In addition, the study by Kamaruddin et al (2020) stated the effect of using the helping skills module on PRS knowledge where the focus of this module is to improve the helping skills. Therefore, it is found that PRS students are students who are trained with communication skills and basic counseling to be good listeners to peers (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015).

A study by Fried et al (2019) stated that the existence of PRS program can help post-graduates in overcoming stress and anxiety and can also increase their resilience. Also, a study by John et al (2018) states about the effect of peer support on the mental well-being among university students

Self-efficacy
Self-confidence and self-esteem are also important aspects for students to achieve excellent academic performance. According to Bandura (2000) states that self-efficacy is the individual's confidence in his ability to perform the tasks or actions necessary to achieve certain results. In addition, self-efficacy is the result of cognitive processes in the form of decisions, beliefs or expectations about how an individual perceives his capabilities in the performance of certain tasks or actions necessary to achieve the desired result.

A study by Ab Rahman et al. (2019) shows the effect of the PRS program on the level of self-concept, counseling skills, and learning orientation of students. The results of the study show that going through the PRS training program followed by Practical Training with Supervision (LAP) shows a positive effect compared to students who follow the PRS training program without LAP. It will support the students to have more skills and knowledge in helping other peers.

Research Methodology
The study used qualitative method and case study research design. The qualitative method helps the researcher obtain in-depth information in order to help the researcher understand deeply about the context being discussed. According to Piaw (2021), case studies give a comprehensive explanation regarding an event that occurs in depth regarding individual behavior, social conditions or specific events to find out how change can occur.

Next, the data was obtained from the interview process during the psycho-educational group counseling approach. This study was conducted for four face-to-face sessions. This method was chosen because this design can explain in depth the experience of group members regarding the perception and self-efficacy of students as PRS as well as the help they need to become effective PRS through psycho-educational elements. In addition, the interview and observation data were transcribed into text to be analyzed using thematic analysis.

In addition, the questions for the group sessions conducted were guided by exploration based on the objectives in each session which aims to see more clearly how the student's perception and self-efficacy as a PRS. The group session was recorded from beginning to end with the consent of the study participants and through the sessions. The views and experiences of the respondents were explored in depth including the results of the intervention.

Interview and observation data were analyzed using a thematic and coding process to generate themes. The information obtained was analyzed based on six steps, Creswell (2012). The study involved a sample of six PRS students, aged 16 and 17 years. They will be coded as PK1, PK2, PK3, PK4, PK5 and PK6 in this research. The purposive sampling method was used based on certain characteristics found among the six respondents, namely the group of students who had just joined the PRS program. Next, psycho-educational group counseling activities are conducted three times and are held for an hour and a half for each meeting session. The interview process continued until no new themes emerged.

Research Findings and Discussion
The findings of this study will be discussed based on the research objectives. Table 1 discussed the participants' demographic information.

Demographic Information

Table 1

Distribution of study participants by gender, age and experience as PRS

No	Participant Study Code	Gender	Age
1	PK 1	Female	17 years old
2	PK2	Female	16 years old
3	PK3	Female	16 years old
4	PK4	Female	16 years old
5	PK5	Female	16 years old
6	PK6	Female	16 years old

Based on Table 1, shows the demographic distribution of study participants selected according to gender and age of the participants. The participants consisted of six PRS students who were all female between the ages of 16 and 17 with a period of being a PRS for 2 weeks.

The findings of the study show that there are three main themes based on the objectives of the study, including i) identify students' perceptions before and after participating in the Peer Mentoring Program (PRS), ii) identify students' self-efficacy in becoming Peer Mentors (PRS), and iii) explore the action plan to become an effective Peer Mentor (PRS).

Theme 1 : Perception of Being a Peer Mentor (PRS)
i.   A Meaningful Experience
Respondent 1,2,3,5 and 6 expressed similar feelings regarding their involvement in participating in Peer Mentoring (PRS). Participants expressed a feeling of happiness, enthusiasm and high curiosity because they went through the Peer Mentoring Introduction program by the school's Guidance and Counseling Unit.

"I felt something different when I joined the PRS introduction session last week, I felt fun when I did the activities that PRS does like group activities... it made me accepted and I could get along with people I didn't know easily" PK1

"I didn't think this PRS was actually fun and easy to get in with everyone because everyone feels like they accept each other" PK2

"From the beginning of the program to the end, I think it's the only program so far that I enjoy and focus on knowing what we're going to do next" PK3

" When I see the counseling teacherwith PRS's sister and brother who are friendly and easy to get along with from start to finish make me feel happy when I'm with them" PK5

"I think the activity that PRS organizes is different from the activities that MPP does and is more fun" PK6

Being in a positive environment causes an individual to feel something positive in themselves and will make this individual more enthusiastic and fun because their environment, especially

their friends, accepts them well. According to Kamal et al. (2022), peers who always give help and support to each other will ensure that they achieve the best.

ii. Many Activities

Respondent 1,2,4 and 6 stated the same issue by looking at the activities that were organized by PRS and the Guidance and Counseling Unit and even through the introduction program some activities were carried out.

"I looked at every activity that PRS had done before through the slides that were provided. It was all interesting again regarding the day of entrepreneurship or career because we all want to enter the world of looking for work" PK1

"I see that PRS can also organize sports and career activities which I think is the most important because we want to know what work is suitable for the field we are currently taking" PK2

"I saw through the introduction program last week, activities like having to build a building through paper made us communicate a lot even though we don't know each other and if you look at the programs that PRS does, like going on a career visit or to the university to learn about our career field, it is the most suitable and proper" PK4

"I see that the PRS activities that are organized all really help us to increase our knowledge for ourselves again about communication" PK6

In a program, especially a program with school students, there is no doubt that participation in activities in the program is one of the important attractions so that students are interested in following the program. In addition, if there are friends who encourage together in doing the activity. According to Ab Rahman et al. (2019), peers also help teenagers find their identity in participating in group activities.

iii. Increase Self-confidence

Respondent 1,3,4 and 5 expressed the same feeling that by participating in PRS, their self-confidence increased because they felt that through the PRS introduction program that was organized, they felt accepted and appreciated with everything they said and said without thinking the use of this sentence was correct or incorrect.

" I think when doing group activities and hanging out with friends I don't know and never talk to.... When I speak they will listen and accept well and this makes me more confident to speak" PK1

"I'm a little shy to speak because I'm not sure people will accept what I say, but when I do activities in the group, I think that everyone feels the same thing as me, but they also try to talk and help, so it makes me more confident. on yourself to talk and communicate with everyone again with those you don't know" PK3

"When everyone plays a role in the group, I see that everyone is enthusiastic and confident, so I feel like doing the same thing and increasing my self-confidence" PK4

"The acceptance from everyone and the good cooperation made me more confident to do activities together with them" PK5

Life as a teenager is prone to feelings of self-doubt and one often finds it difficult to understand oneself. This is due to the difficulty of communicating effectively causing students to constantly avoid speaking in public. Students need guidance from organizations within the school as a support to them to increase their level of self-confidence and one of them is through the PRS program. Ab Rahman et al. (2019), stated that this opportunity in the PRS can increase the self-confidence of the students

Theme 2: Self-Efficacy of Students Becoming Peer Mentors (PRS)
i.   Be a good listener
Respondents 2,3,4 and 5 stated that they often become good listeners to every problem or issue that happens to their closest friends. The participants stated that they were often chosen by their friends to express problems and struggles. It makes them feel eager to help more even just by listening.

"I'm from elementary school. If my friends have any problems, they'll find me to talk to. Some say it's because I'll focus on listening to what they have to say." PK2

"For me, when I listen to other people's problems, I feel satisfied because I can help them express their feelings and be a good listener for them" PK3

"My friends always talk to me even though I don't want to talk much, but I'm always a good listener for them when there's a problem" PK4

"For me, when I hear other people's problems, it motivates me even more if they say that I am faithful to listen to what they feel and want to say" PK5

Being a good listener is not something that is easy and can be done by all individuals because it is something that cannot be forced and made up. According to Ab Rahman et al. (2019), peers play the role of being good listeners to teenagers because when they are teenagers, friends are individuals who are close to teenagers.

ii.   *Less shame*
Respondents 1,5 and 6 stated that when they participated in PRS and followed the program, they were able to reduce their shyness to communicate, especially with people they do not know and are close to.

"I can honestly say that with people I don't know, I'm really shy to talk to them even if it's a girl... but when I entered this PRS and followed the program last week, it made me realize that I can actually talk to anyone and this made me feel less embarrassed to talk to them even though the program is over" PK1

"I think I'm a little less shy especially when communicating with male students because when I talk they listen well and no one wants to make fun of me" PK5

"I feel that due to the positive environment it makes me a bit braver to say hello to everyone and feel a bit less shy" PK6

As a student, there will indeed be shyness in oneself, especially when asked to speak or communicate with people they do not know and are close to. According to Lee (2018), the communication process does not go well if the message sent cannot be understood by the receiver due to some obstacles such as language and spelling, which in turn affects the students' confidence in sharing opinions.

iii.   Not confident in leading

Respondents 3,4 and 5 expressed the same obstacle issue in themselves when they see how the PRS leadership handles the program they run and they need more in-depth guidance because they are really interested in becoming a leader.

"When I see my brother and sister running the program, I feel like I won't be able to do it when I'm a senior later" PK3
"I thought about how to make a real program…. What do I need to do because I really don't know how to do paperwork and so on" PK4

"I do have the intention if I get the chance to be one of the committees in an organization but I am still not sure if I can do it or not" PK5

The lack of effective communication skills in oneself causes students to feel that they are not qualified to lead an organization. According to Zaini et al. (2021), this is because students feel various feelings such as fear, lack of courage, it is difficult to compose sentences to handle something that is not yet certain.

Theme 3 : Action Plan to Become an Effective Peer Mentor (PRS).
i.   Communication Skills

Respondent 1 and 2 stated that new PRS members is still lack of confidence in communicating well, especially with people they don't know and don't socialize with. They stated that these communication skills are very important so that others are confident in themselves when they speak or express an idea.

"For me and my other friends, formal communication is what we are not good at and we need to learn so that other people have more confidence in us if we want to apply for a job or to help others" PK1

"What I see is that if we talk informally with our friends, it's okay, but when we want to talk formally with teachers, with people who are important to programs that are important to us, it's really weak" PK2

Communication is definitely one of the most important aspect for every individual to be successful in life. Even if someone has good communication, it causes people around them to give a good assessment of themselves. Therefore, a strategic and organized communication plan can make an organization to continue to grow and be resilient despite any challenging environmental conditions (Zaini et al., 2021).

ii.   Leadership

Respondents 3 and 4 stated that we are new members and it is certain that one day we will be chosen to be leaders in the PRS organization if given the opportunity. For them, early exposure is needed to prepare themselves and assess whether they are suitable or not to be good leaders.

"I'm really interested to be among the leaders in any club if given the opportunity I don't know what skills are required by a good leader and how the scope of work is suitable for me" PK3

" When I look at the PRS leadership that runs the PRS introduction program and also the orientation of boarding students... I'm really interested and want to know what it takes to be a leader, but a leadership course or program is necessary" PK4

In PRS, guidance and counseling teachers are certainly among the closest individuals who can polish students who have the potential to become good leaders and guide students who are interested in helping lead the leadership afterward and students will certainly take teachers as their role models. According to Musa & Akhir (2021), the ability of teachers to work with adult students, communicate well, create collaboration with other teachers, have good content knowledge,

iii.   Helpful Skills

Respondents 5 and 6 stated the issue of PRS members who want to help in terms of listening to the problems of friends and family and help if their services are needed by teachers and so on but they do not know the helping skills they need to help other than good communication skills.

" I know that as PRS our main job is to help friends if they need a friend to share their problems with and before I have also participated in counseling sessions but I see when we listen to this we don't just listen there must be a technique so it becomes a skill help or guide this is necessary to learn" PK5

"I really have ambitions to learn the science of counseling in depth so I think those who are great in the field of counseling need to guide us to become a good PRS" PK6

As PRS, the elements of counseling must certainly be present in individuals who want to help other people surround them. According to the Malaysian Ministry of Education (2015), students who are trained in basic helping skills are very important to improve guidance and counseling services in schools.

Conclusion

In conclusion, PRS can be seen as one of the pillars in the life system especially between peers because as is known when children have entered their teenage years they are more together and share all happy and sad stories together with their friends than with family. Next, the implication seen through this study is that students who become PRS need a lot of guidance, especially in terms of formal communication because they do not learn it through learning in class and need to take certain courses. Therefore, this study hopes that the perception and self-confidence of peer mentors can be given due emphasis and attention in helping and

guiding their other colleagues towards good as well as being role models for peers, schools, communities and even the country.

Reference

Ab Rahman, O., Sipon, S., & Ahmad, R. (2019). Kesan Program Latihan Pembimbing Rakan Sebaya (PRS) Ke Atas Tahap Konsep Kendiri, Kemahiran Kaunseling Dan Orientasi Belajar Pelajar-pelajar. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*.

Bandura, A. (2000). Self-efficacy: The foundation of agency. *Control of human behavior, mental processes, and consciousness: Essays in honor of the 60th birthday of August Flammer*, *16*.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). Educational research Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4th ed.). Boston, MA Pearson

Fried, R. R., Atkins, M. A. P., & Irwin, J. D. (2019). Breaking grad: Building resilience among a sample of graduate students struggling with stress and anxiety via a peer coaching model–An 8-month pilot study. *International Journal*, *17*(2).

Gray, H. D., & Tindall, J. (1974). Communication training study: A model for training junior high school peer counselors. *School Counselor*. 21: 107-112.

John, N. M., Page, O., Martin, S. C., & Whittaker, P. (2018). Impact of peer support on student mental wellbeing: a systematic review. *MedEdPublish*, *7*(170), 170.

Kamaruddin, M., Lazim, M. J. M., Idris, R., Idris, M. A. T., & Ahmad, M. (2020). The effect of the basic helping skills module on middle school peer mentors' attention-giving knowledge. Journal of Dedicated Research, *18*(2), 132-149.

Kamal, N. M. M., Hussin, Z., & Sulaiman, A. M. (2022). Pendekatan heutagogi: Persepsi murid terhadap pentaksiran rakan sebaya. *International Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, *4*(1), 114-129.

Malaysia Education Ministry. (2015). Guidebook for the management of Malaysian primary and secondary school peer mentors.

Musa, K., & Akhir, M. K. M. (2021). The influence of teacher leadership on the success of form six students in form six colleges in Central district of Perak: Pengaruh kepimpinan guru terhadap keberhasilan pelajar tingkatan enam di kolej tingkatan enam daerah Perak Tengah. *Management Research Journal*, *10*(2), 37-48.

Piaw, C. Y. (2021). Research method. Kuala Lumpur: McGraw Hill Education (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd

Thye, L. L. (2018). Between the national language and Rojak language. Utama, Utusan Melayu Online. Taken on 12 October 2019 https:///www.utusan.com.my/rencana/utama/between-national-languages-and-language-rojak-1.734178

Zaini, A. Z. A., Amat, S., & Johari, K. S. K. (2021). Effective communication among peer counselors in primary schools through psychoeducational group counseling intervention. Proceedings of the Counseling, Social Sciences & Education Seminar (SKSSP) 2021.