

# The Impact of Psychoeducation on Improving the Quality of Peer Counseling Comprehension: A Study on Students at SMPN 32

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Submitted: 16 December 2025, Revised: 28 July 2025, Accepted: 30 July 2025

DOI:10.38156/psikowipa.v6i1.238



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## Abstract

One of the efforts of the Surabaya City Education Department to create child-friendly schools is by forming Pemantik (Best Friend Tutors) communities in various public and private junior high schools in Surabaya. SMPN 32 Surabaya actively participates in this community through educational activities on positive values on social media and participation in educational competitions. However, the results of interviews with guidance and counseling teachers at SMPN 32 Surabaya show that the role of Pemantik members has not been optimally involved as peer counselors. Therefore, researchers conducted peer counseling psychoeducation with a focus on efforts to increase knowledge and understanding about peer counseling. The research method used is one group pre-test and post-test experiments. The results show that there are significant differences in students' understanding but the psychoeducation carried out has not been effective as a form of intervention in increasing their knowledge about peer counseling. These results are based on statistical tests of pre-test and post-test scores with paired sample T-tests and N-Gain tests. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt strategies to improve the effectiveness of psychoeducation programs in increasing understanding of peer counseling by means of role play training as counselees and counselors, as well as simplifying the material presented.

**Keywords:** Peer counseling; Pemantik; Psychoeducation

## Abstrak

Salah satu upaya Dinas Pendidikan Kota Surabaya dalam mewujudkan sekolah ramah anak yaitu dengan membentuk komunitas Pemantik (Pembimbing Teman Terbaik) di berbagai SMP Negeri maupun swasta di Surabaya. SMPN 32 Surabaya berpartisipasi aktif dalam komunitas ini melalui tersebut kegiatan edukasi nilai-nilai positif di media sosial dan partisipasi dalam lomba edukasi. Namun, hasil wawancara dengan guru BK di SMPN 32 Surabaya menunjukkan bahwa peran anggota Pemantik belum dilibatkan secara optimal sebagai konselor sebaya. Oleh sebab itu, peneliti mengadakan psikoedukasi peer counseling dengan fokus pada upaya peningkatan pengetahuan dan pemahaman tentang konseling sebaya. Metode penelitian yang digunakan yaitu eksperimen one-group pre-test dan post-test. Hasilnya menunjukkan adanya perbedaan pemahaman siswa secara signifikan tetapi psikoedukasi yang dilakukan belum efektif sebagai salah satu bentuk intervensi dalam meningkatkan pengetahuan mereka mengenai peer counseling. Hasil tersebut berdasarkan uji statistik nilai pre-test dan post-test dengan uji T sampel berpasangan dan uji N-Gain. Oleh sebab itu, diperlukan penyesuaian strategi untuk memperbaiki efektivitas program psikoedukasi dalam meningkatkan pemahaman konseling sebaya dengan cara pelatihan role play (bermain peran) sebagai konseli dan konselor, serta penyederhanaan materi yang disampaikan.

**Kata kunci:** Peer counselor; Pemantik; Psikoedukasi

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## Introduction

Adolescents are in a developmental phase in which they begin to build broader social relationships. According to Erikson, the exploration of social interactions is a crucial moment for adolescents to form their identity. The process of interacting with peers often has a significant impact on shaping that identity (Latifah et al., 2023). However, during this period, psychosocial conflicts may also arise as part of their identity-seeking process. This stage becomes risky if parents or schools fail to provide sufficient guidance during the exploration phase (Fadilah et al., 2023). As a result, adolescents' inability to filter healthy social relationships may lead them into destructive behaviors (Latifah et al., 2023).

According to Jawapos, data from the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA) of the Surabaya Police in 2023 reported an increase in juvenile crime cases in Surabaya, from 95 cases in the previous year to 115 cases. Meanwhile, data from the Supreme Court indicated a decrease in the number of children in conflict with the law (ABH) tried at the Surabaya District Court, with 41 cases recorded in 2023 (Wicaksono et al., 2023). This phenomenon should draw the attention of various stakeholders. Consequently, character education programs continue to be promoted as a preventive measure against rising juvenile delinquency (Amalianita et al., 2023).

In line with this, the Surabaya City Education Office organized training for Pemantik (Peer Support Counselors) cadres across all public and private junior high schools in Surabaya. This community is expected to help bridge various problems among junior high school students (Chan, 2022). In addition, community members are also responsible for promoting positive habits at school, which requires them to possess strong interpersonal skills. One way to develop such skills is by providing knowledge about peer counseling (Syahfanny et al., 2024). According to Tindall and Gray (1985), peer counseling is a form of counseling service carried out by peers in a non-professional manner. Peer counseling can serve as a first aid mechanism for students facing problems (Rifani et al., 2023).

The strong social attachment during adolescence makes teenagers more open to their peers, enabling peer counselors to make school-based counseling services more relevant and effective (Rohayati et al., 2022). The effectiveness of such programs is reflected in the ability of peer counselors to assist guidance and counseling teachers in handling student issues. Consequently, students can receive more optimal counseling services. This notion aligns with a study by Kearney, which states that a high student-to-counselor ratio can lead to suboptimal counseling outcomes (Kearney et al., 2021).

Efforts to improve the quality of counseling services at schools can be pursued by enhancing the competence of peer counselors through psychoeducation and peer counseling training (Baroroh & Amalia, 2023). Previous studies have shown that such training improves peer counselors' knowledge of counseling, thereby enabling the delivery of more effective counseling sessions (Kusumawaty et al., 2020). Furthermore, several other studies have demonstrated that peer counseling training can help reduce various school problems, such as increasing self-awareness regarding risky behaviors among adolescents (Yuliasari, 2020). The presence of peer counselors can also assist school counselors in monitoring students' social interactions (Rafiola et al., 2022). Other research has revealed the benefits of peer counseling training in preventing bullying in schools (Salmiati et al., 2018).

In this study, SMPN 32 Surabaya is one of the schools involved in the Pemantik community, with members comprising students from grades 7 and 8. Activities previously carried out by the community include promoting positive values through

social media and participating in educational competitions organized by the Surabaya City Education Office. However, the community has not yet implemented work programs that engage Pemantik members as peer counselors. Therefore, the researchers conducted psychoeducation on peer counseling to enhance the understanding of Pemantik members. This psychoeducational initiative is expected to help the Pemantik community at SMPN 32 Surabaya develop more effectively.

## Research Method

This study employed a quantitative experimental method with a one group pretest posttest design. In this design, data collection was conducted twice: before and after the psychoeducation intervention. The sampling technique used was total sampling, involving all 28 members of the \*Pemantik\* community at SMPN 32 Surabaya as participants (Amin et al., 2023). Data were collected through questionnaires distributed via Google Forms. The stages of this research included:

### 1. Screening Stage

At this stage, the researchers conducted interviews with the school counselor to gain deeper insights into the Pemantik community. The interviews revealed information about the community's activities and objectives, and it was found that the community had not yet implemented any work programs that reflect its role in addressing student issues as peer counselors. Therefore, psychoeducation was conducted to enhance the members' understanding of peer counseling, equipping them with the necessary knowledge to function as peer counselors.

### 2. Design Stage

In this phase, the researchers designed the implementation process for the psychoeducation, which included preparing the psychoeducational material on peer counseling, creating the activity schedule and agenda, and developing the evaluation questionnaire.

### 3. Implementation Stage

During this stage, the psychoeducation activity was carried out in four sessions: Pre-Test Administration, Presentation of Peer Counseling Material, Sharing and Q\&A Session, and Post-Test Administration.

### 4. Evaluation Stage

In this final stage, the researchers evaluated the results of both the pre-test and post-test using statistical analysis with the help of SPSS, specifically the paired sample t-test and N-Gain test. The paired sample t-test was chosen because the sample size was fewer than 30 participants, and the same group (members of the Pemantik community at SMPN 32 Surabaya) was tested before and after the intervention. The purpose of the paired sample t-test was to determine whether there was a significant difference in knowledge or understanding of the psychoeducation material. Additionally, the N-Gain test was used to measure the effectiveness of the intervention (Sukarelawan et al., 2024).

## Results

The decision-making basis using the paired sample t-test is that the data must be normally distributed. Based on the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, the data sample shows a significance value  $> 0.05$ , indicating that the data is normally distributed.

Table 1. Normality Test

	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-Test	0.165	28	0.049	0.947	28	0.168
Post-Test	0.149	28	0.115	0.946	28	0.154

Next, the paired sample t-test output contains two main tables that illustrate the characteristics of peer counseling understanding among members of the Pemantik community at SMPN 32 Surabaya. Table 2 shows the differences in students' average understanding before and after the psychoeducation intervention. The table indicates an initial understanding score of 62.50 and a final understanding score of 75.54 after the psychoeducational intervention on peer counseling. However, to confirm the significance of this difference, further analysis using the paired sample t-test is required (Sukarelawan et al., 2024).

Table 2. Paired Sample Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Test	62.50	28	14.240	2.691
Post-Test	75.54	28	11.654	2.202

Based on the paired sample t-test, the significance value is  $< 0.05$ , indicating a significant difference between the students' pre- and post-test scores. Therefore, further analysis was conducted using the N-Gain test to measure the effectiveness of the psychoeducational intervention.

Table 3. Paired Sample T-Test

	Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pemahaman Awal - Pemahaman Akhir	-13.036	12.045	2.276	-17.706	-8.365	-5.727	27	<.001

Table 4 shows that the average N-Gain score was 0.3226, which falls into the "moderate" category of improvement based on the Normalized Gain criteria. However, the psychoeducational intervention is categorized as "ineffective" since the average percentage of N-Gain scores was below 40%, specifically at 32.26% (Sukarelawan et al., 2024).

Table 4. N-Gain Test Results

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
NGain_Score	28	0.00	0.80	0.3226	0.23592
NGain_Persen	28	0.00	80.00	32.2640	23.59200
Valid N (listwise)	28				

## Discussion

The efforts of the Surabaya City Education Office to realize child-friendly schools are manifested through the establishment of the Pemantik (Peer Counselor) community in various public and private junior high schools across Surabaya. This community plays a role in promoting positive habits in schools, requiring members to possess strong interpersonal skills (Chan, 2022). One way to develop these interpersonal skills is by providing knowledge about peer counseling (Syahfanny et al., 2024).

Peer counseling is a counseling service provided by peers, aimed at offering first-line support to students experiencing problems (Rifani et al., 2023). Consistent with this definition, other studies also describe peer counseling as an early detection mechanism that facilitates further actions for students facing minor issues. However, the Pemantik community at SMPN 32 Surabaya had not yet fully carried out its role as a bridge between troubled students and school counselors. Therefore, a psychoeducational intervention was necessary as an initial step toward building a better understanding of peer counseling roles (Brown et al., 2020).

In this study, the paired sample t-test analysis showed a significance value of  $< 0.05$ , indicating a statistically significant difference in students' understanding before and after the psychoeducation intervention. This psychoeducation was important to enhance students' knowledge of basic peer counseling skills, which are essential for becoming effective peer counselors (Rahmawati et al., 2019). Previous studies have also demonstrated that peer counseling training can significantly improve peer counselors' knowledge, enabling them to carry out counseling tasks more effectively (Kusumawaty et al., 2020).

However, this study also found that the improvement in students' understanding was in the "moderate" category, and the psychoeducational intervention was not fully effective in increasing understanding of peer counseling. This conclusion is supported by the N-Gain test results, which show that the average gain percentage was less than 40% (Sukarelawan et al., 2024). Several factors contributed to this outcome, including: the lengthy duration of the psychoeducation, which caused students to lose focus during the post-test; technical issues with the video playback that lacked audio, reducing student engagement; and the high number of test questions coupled with unclear wording, which made the questionnaire difficult to understand. Previous studies have noted that one key factor influencing the effectiveness of psychoeducation is the audience's ability to process and comprehend the presented material (Fletcher et al., 2015).

## Conclusion

Peer counseling is a counseling service conducted by peers, functioning as a bridge between students with problems and school counselors or guidance teachers. To serve effectively as a peer counselor, sufficient understanding of basic counseling skills is required. Based on the research findings, the psychoeducation provided to Pemantik members at SMPN 32 Surabaya was able to improve students' understanding of peer counseling. However, the increase was moderate, and the psychoeducation was not fully effective according to the N-Gain test and the effectiveness criteria applied.

## Recommendations

This study recommends several strategies to enhance the effectiveness of future interventions. First, psychoeducation can be supplemented with additional methods such as practical training (role play) or group discussions to help students better grasp



peer counseling concepts. Second, the psychoeducational materials should be simplified to better align with the characteristics of the student participants. Third, it is important to minimize technical issues during the sessions, such as poor audio-visual quality in learning media, and to ensure that evaluation items are appropriate in number and easily understood by the students.

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