Improving Student Career Maturity Through Peer Group Counseling

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Abstract

Indonesia is currently experiencing the industrial revolution 4.0 era, which is associated with the use of the internet and computer technology. There are still some changes associated with this era, which led to the need for quality human resources, such as educational institutions, especially universities. However, there some students are still unable to understand their career orientation, which led to the initiation of peer group counseling. Therefore, this study aims to determine the effectiveness of peer group counseling to increase student career maturity. The experimental one-group pretest-posttest design comprising 74 psychology study program students of class 2017 was used to carry out this research. Data were collected through a career maturity scale with a reliability value of 0.903. The data collected were analyzed using a paired t-test sample with the help of JASP. The results showed that peer group counseling has the ability to increase the career maturity of final-year students.

Keywords: *Career Maturity; Human Resource; Industrial Revolution 4.0; Peer Group Counseling*

Introduction

Currently, Indonesia is experiencing the industrial revolution 4.0 era, which is associated with the use of technology at the production level to bring new values and services to customers and organizations (Khan & Turowski, 2016). However, high quality of human resources is needed to compete and survive the existing changes associated with advanced technology development. This revolution occurs in the industrial, economic, social, and educational sectors. In this regard, education is one of the aspects used to deal with the changes by producing quality human resources.

The changes associated with the use of technology are inseparable from the role of students as human resources for the nation's successors. They must have critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration (Humas Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis UAD, 2019). The increasing yearly number of university graduates leads to employment difficulty, further enhanced by existing technological advances. Similarly, the Indonesian Statistics Agency survey carried out on the number of unemployed university graduates in the last three years is shown in Figure 1.

Fig. 1 Percentage of unemployment rate by education level in university

Figure 1 shows the percentage of the unemployment rate at the university level, which was quite high in 2020 at 7.51%. Therefore, universities need to play a significant role in shaping and producing quality students to compete, survive and excel in the world of work. The education stage in universities is when students explore themselves and careers appropriately (Beauchamp & Kiewra, 2004; Super, 1957).

The Psychology Study Programs at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Mulawarman University, Indonesia, aims to become a quality psychology educational institution oriented to the development of science, human resources, facilities, and technology in 2025. Therefore, to realize this vision, it is necessary to have a mission carried out to produce quality graduates in the field of psychology, namely creating ethical, competent, and professional graduates (BAN-PT, 2017). The psychology study program, through a strategic plan on the aspects of students and graduates from 2017-2021, has consented to efforts to increase the quantity and quality of graduates with an increase in the intensity of monitoring learning processes, trainings on soft skills, and academic services. Furthermore, based on the Minister of Education and Culture Decree No. 754/P/2020, one of the main performance indicators of State Universities is the work readiness of graduates to acquire jobs that match the profile (Kemdikbud, 2020).

However, based on tracer study data of the alumni in the psychology study program from 2018-2020, there are many issues in the spotlight, such as the low level of closeness which is approximately 12.5%. Furthermore, the alumni were also forced to take jobs that were not in accordance with their fields "due to their inability to get suitable jobs" (34 responses from 104 respondents) and "willingness to work outside the field of psychology in a career" (21 responses from 104 respondents), and other reasons, such as the current job which are more interesting (Rizal, 2020).

Furthermore, based on the results of a survey regarding career maturity in 2017, it was found that 56.1% of students lacked working intentions, with inadequate career-related seminars and poor knowledge in making decisions. There is also no forum or community providing services to prepare career maturity for Unmul psychology students, therefore they independently seek self-development training.

Career maturity refers to an individual's ability to describe self-confidence, assertiveness, independence, freedom, and willingness to negotiate between personal needs and the demands of the career situation (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Borges et.al, (2007) stated that it is a description of an individual's career development process to increase capabilities in making career-related decisions. There are several aspects of career maturity, such as planning, exploration, information gathering, and decision making. These aspects are based on the construct of the measuring instrument and in accordance with "The Career Development Inventory" created by Super, Thompson, Lindeman, Jordaan, and Myers in 1981 (Super, 2007).

According to King, (1989), career maturity reflects an individual's readiness to make age-appropriate career decisions carefully shaped in the face of social opportunities and constraints. It

determines suitable career choices, which are explored and understood in accordance with students' skills or abilities. Readiness is an individual ability to face various challenges in the work environment. Furthermore, students with insufficient information on career choices before graduating from the university, do not understand their abilities or talents, hence they often think pessimistically, and are not usually satisfied due to failure (Huang in Jawarneh, 2016; You, 2010). Super, (957), introduced career maturity as an attempt to ensure students' abilities to continue vocational development.

Universities make efforts to increase career maturity by providing services to students' readiness, such as training as well as guidance and counseling. Through this service, students are able to discuss their career preparation with friends or seniors. According to Astiti, (2019), the assistance associated with this training process forms guidance to peers with problems or obstacles in their personality development. In this counseling process, expository techniques, group discussions, problem-solving techniques, role play, simulation games, field trips, and homeroom techniques are used (Romlah, 2006). Peer group counseling is expected to help students further develop their knowledge and explore careers..

The problems above emphasize the importance of increasing student career readiness, which tends to impact the competence of graduates and students in determining careers after graduation during this industrial revolution 4.0 era. Therefore, based on this description, it is interesting to conduct a study on increasing the career maturity of final year students through peer group counseling. This study is expected to become a new idea for universities to provide services capable of preparing final year students to face the world of work.

Methodology

This is a quantitative study comprising of a group with a pretest-posttest experimental design.

Table 1 Experiment Design

Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
O1	X	O2

Description:

O1 : pre-test before giving the treatment.
O2 : final test (post-test) after giving the treatment
X : experimental group given peer group counseling treatment.

The subjects were 74 students consisting of 11 males and 3 females of the 2017 Psychology Study Program, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Mulawarman University, Indonesia. The data were collected using a career maturity scale measuring instrument (Super, 2007) and declared reliable using a Cronbach alpha value of 0.903. The initial number of items was 45, and after being tested for validity, 7 were declared invalid, thereby 38 final items were used for this research. The collected data were then analyzed using the Paired Sample T-Test. However, before hypothesis testing, an assumption test was carried out using the JASP analysis program.

Results

The normality test is first carried out before determining the hypothesis with the paired sample t-test. According to (Santoso, 2015), the distribution is normal or abnormal when p > 0.05, or < 0.05, respectively.

Table 2 Assumption test results

	Pre Test	Post Test
Skewness	0.345	0.223
Std. Error of Skewness	0.279	0.279
Kurtosis	0.388	0.345
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.552	0.552
Shapiro-Wilk	0.984	0.988
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	0.499	0.683

Table 2 shows that the normality test led to a p-value of 0.984 (> 0.05) and 0.988 (0.05) in the pre-test and post-test processes, respectively. These results indicated that the variable items are normal, which means that they met the assumption test.

After fulfilling the assumption test, it was followed by the hypothesis analysis. In this study, a hypothesis test was conducted, namely the paired sample test. If $p < 0.05$, H1 is accepted, and H0 is rejected, but if $p > 0.05$, then H1 is rejected, and H0 is accepted.

Table 3 Results of paired sample T-test

	t	df	p
Pre-Test – Post Test	- 6.080	73	<.001

Table 3 shows differences in student career maturity scores before and after participating in peer-group counseling with a p (sig.) value of 0.000 (<0.05), and t-count = -6.080 (> t table = 1.993). This difference is also reflected in the mean pre-test and post-test values.

Tabel 4 *Descriptive*

	N	Mean	SD	SE
Pre Test	74	101.48	11.23	1.306
Post Test	74	110.56	11.19	1.301

Table 4 shows an increase in the mean value before and after students take part in peer-group counseling.

Discussion

This study determined the effectiveness of peer group counseling to increase student career maturity and ability to face the competitive world of work in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0. Table 3 shows the differences in student career maturity scores before and after participating in peer-group counseling. The result showed that peer group counseling effectively increases student career maturity.

Final year students are usually between the ages of 19-22 years and are expected to determine their career direction and goals. According to Super, (1957), individuals start from 18-21 years to determine their career path and goals. Crites, (1996) and Super, (1957) stated that individual career maturity is known through certain characteristics, such as a combination of collective information needed to gain more knowledge, competencies in decision making, combined self-knowledge, and insight into the world of work.

Students' career maturity is improved through peer group counseling carried out using various group discussion techniques. Romlah, (2006) stated that techniques are guided by counselors to solve or clarify problems. The application of peer group counseling with group discussions enables students with career maturity problems, such as the incompatibility of lecture majors with work fields, to carry out discussions together.

The implementation of peer group counseling consists of two sessions. The first comprises "who am I" and "what is my passion." In this session, students were invited to know their interests, strengths, and weaknesses through career maturity aspects, namely planning, exploration, and information gathering (Super, 2007). In the counseling process, they provided feedback to each other. Furthermore, they also carried out career exploration by conveying their individual thoughts to the counselor regarding the desire in a field, strengths, and abilities, and associated obstacles. Through this process, the career specialization most suitable for each subject is determined. The second session focuses on "How Should I do?". In this session, the aspect of career maturity explored is decision making, and the subjects discussed the next steps or action plan. They also conveyed what should be taken in dealing with the obstacles experienced to achieve success in the specialization field during the study period and until after graduation.

The impact of peer group counseling for students was shown by the increase in determining the specialization in psychology and future career choices. This is also in line with the study program's vision, mission, and objectives in creating competent graduates in their various fields of specialization. The output produced in the future is graduates ready to enter the world of work. This is in line with the results of student interviews where the majority felt positive impacts on increasing their career orientation, starting from confidence, knowing their strengths and weaknesses, determining better competencies that need to be possessed to achieve a career, map skills, and things to do to achieve success.

Peer group counseling also found that the psychological conditions of some current students are a medium used to pour out their hearts, especially those that feel academic stress because of the inability to carry out lectures until the end. Furthermore, it was also found that those that experience psychological disorders needed further treatment. Therefore, besides targeting the main goal of increasing career maturity, the activity is also expected to detect student psychological problems.

Similarly, Fitriyah et.al, (2018) stated that through counseling groups, students are able to increase their career maturity comfortably and are willing to share problems with each other. According to Greenberg, (2003), the advantage of group counseling is that individuals tend to have contact with the socializing environment in group settings. It helps them to form bonds, interact with one another, and share experiences.

The counseling process between peers focuses on evaluating the content, and individual thinking, feeling, and making decisions. It involves experiences of each individual needed by adolescents, such as respect (Suranata, 2013). The existence of mutual respect makes individuals feel comfortable and willing to share experiences, thereby leading to the occurrence of emotional and decision-making processes.

According to Astiti, (2019), the effectiveness of peer group counseling is presented through the intensity and frequency of the process. The existence of friends, colleagues, and peers creates warm feelings, sincere concern in providing support when facing difficult circumstances, and trustworthiness during peer group counseling.

Conclusion

In conclusion, peer group counseling increases the 2017 students of the Psychology Study Program, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Mulawarman University. These results indicate that the hypothesis is accepted, with additional results indicating that peer group counseling increases career maturity and also acts as a means for students to pour out their hearts and express problems to peers to determine solutions.

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