

## **PEER COUNSELING MODEL FOR IMPROVING STUDENTS' SELF-DIRECTION COMPETENCE**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to test the effectiveness of the peer counseling model for improving students' self-direction competence. The research aimed to describe, test and analyze the effectiveness of the peer counseling model and employed the descriptive-analytical method and quasi-experiments to do this. The research activities consisted of a series of model validity tests, namely the model rationality test, the model practicability test, and the limited test. The data collection techniques were interviews, self-direction competence inventories, observation and documentation. The results of the research demonstrate that the peer counseling model as an intervention program for the experimental group as a whole proved to effectively improve students' self-direction competence. The peer counseling model has its strengths in self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-control.

**Keywords:** effectiveness, peer-counseling model, students's self-direction.

### **Introduction**

Various studies in Indonesia have showed the complexity of behavioral problems faced by adolescents. There are six types of adolescence delinquency, which tend to increase, namely alcohol, free sex, pregnancy, violence, and drug addiction (Nurhayati, 1998; Yusuf, 2005; Pikiran Rakyat, December 21<sup>st</sup> 2008). Adolescent delinquencies do not only occur outside but also inside schools, especially at Junior High Schools and Senior High Schools.

Being delinquents, high school students are susceptible to problems because they are experiencing a crisis in trying to find their identities. Biologically, adolescents are at the peak of their growth periods, and are also preparing to become adults. Adolescents are also vulnerable to problems because they keep facing socio-cultural and environmental changes.

In a preliminary study of 139 students of a vocational school in Bandung it was found that all had problems, and in terms of quantity, the problems revealed by most students (85.61

%) were to do with time management. Personal problems commonly expressed by students were low self confidence which was identified with a lack of confidence in expressing their opinions (48.2 %), feeling ashamed when speaking in public (58.27 %), a supposed lack of appeal (17.26 %), lack of confidence to mix with others (15.11 %), feeling better when being 'stand-offish', and being pessimistic about their future (11.51 %). In addition to this, more than half of the students (61.87 %) stated that they had friends who displayed bad behavior (breaking religious and social norms) (Erhamwilda, 2011).

In order to anticipate and overcome their problems, students need help to build their inner strengths that may lead to them having appropriate attitudes and behavior from which they may benefit and profit from in the future. According to Cavanagh (1982), one of the most important human strengths is psychological strength. Psychological strength covers three dimensions, namely fulfillment of needs, intrapersonal competence, and interpersonal competence.

Intrapersonal competence is the dimension of psychological strength that occupies a strategic position in the fulfillment of personal needs and improvement of interpersonal competence (Erhamwilda, 2011).

Self-direction is one of the important intrapersonal competences of an individual when he/she is making a decision to determine his/her attitude or behavior, because most individual problems may stem from inaccuracy when making a decision. Adolescence is a very important period for making decisions concerning personal life, social matters, and career choice. An appropriate decision made during adolescence can bear an impact on life satisfaction and success in adulthood.

Self-direction is the ability of individuals to direct their lives and be fully responsible for the consequences of their behavior. The more capable one is of directing one's own behavior, the more one lives according to nature, and avoids situations that would change one's nature (Michael E. Cavanagh, 1982).

"Your ambition is an expression of who you are, and your self-expression. Self-expression is really self-direction; you think, move, and motivate yourself. Ambition is a result of self-direction. Positive self-direction says, 'I know who I am, and where I want to go'. I'm accumulating knowledge, experiences, feelings, and life philosophies and preparing for future opportunities..." (Rohn, 2011:1)

Problems with self-direction may manifest in one or more of the following aspects: (1) lack of self-confidence, (2) lack of self-reliance, and/or (3) lack of self-control (Cavanagh, 1982). Counseling can be conducted for improving self-direction competence.

The preliminary results of the survey on the implementation of counseling at five Senior High Schools (SMAs) and Vocational High Schools (SMKs) in Bandung, Indonesia, show the minimum amount of counseling

services. The results of a random survey of 100 SMA students on the type of people chosen for consultation showed that 78% of the students tended to consult with their classmates, friends from outside school or close friends, 19% tended to consult with their parents, and 3% tended to consult with their teachers with whom they had close relationships, while none of them consulted with the school counselors or their homeroom teachers (Erhamwilda, 2011).

The next survey conducted on 30 Vocational School (SMK) students showed that 70% of the students claimed that whenever they had problems, they tended to consult with their schoolmates, friends from outside school, or close friends, while 26.7% tended to consult with their parents, and only 3.33% consulted with the school counselors (Erhamwilda, 2011).

For many adolescents, how they look among their peers is the most important thing in their lives, and one of the most important functions of their peers is becoming their source of information about the world outside their family (Santrock, 2007: 311). The activities of helping and supporting each other when facing problems of life and/or when developing their own potentials is referred to as peer counseling (Suwarjo, 2008: 8).

According to the issues under research above, the research question is formulated into "How does the result of the peer counseling model effectively improve students' self-direction competence at one of the Vocational High Schools (SMK) in Bandung? This main issue is expanded into the following questions: (1) How is the profile of students' self-direction competence at one SMK in Bandung?; (2) What is the possibility of doing the peer counseling at one of SMK in Bandung? (3) What is the best model of peer counseling for improving the self-direction of students at one SMK in Bandung? (4) Is the peer-counseling model produced effective in improving students' self-direction competence in one SMK in Bandung?"

## **Literature Review**

Self-direction is an individual's competence to direct his/her life and accept full responsibility for the consequences of their behavior. The more people direct their own behavior, the more they live according to their nature, and the better they develop a repertoire of behaviors that will be consistent with self-direction. Three important such behaviors are self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-control. (Cavanagh, 1982, Cavanagh & Levitov, 2002: 207).

Self-confidence is extremely important in almost every aspect of our lives, yet so many people struggle to find it. Sadly, this can be a vicious cycle: People who lack self-confidence can find it difficult to become successful. "Your level of self-confidence can show in many ways: your behavior, your body language, how you speak, what you say, and so on" (Manktelow & Carlson, 2009).

In general, self-confidence may be influenced by: (1) internal factors, namely self-concept (Centi, 1995), self-esteem (Meadow in Kusuma, 2005), physical condition (Anthony, 1992), and life experience (Lauster, 1997), (2) external factors, including educational experience, work, environment, and life.

Self-reliance is an important part of self-direction, because the more people can create a situation that would meet their needs, the more able they are to direct their own behavior. In other words, the more one leans on others to achieve things, the more likely someone else will direct one's life (Cavanagh, 1982). The first philosophy of self-reliance was stated by Emerson as part of his speech in September 1830. Emerson's essay uttered sincerity to individualism (Gallozzi, Chuck, 2009).

Emerson said that there were two factors causing people to disbelieve their own competence, namely social refusal and consistency of foolishness (Gallozzi, Chuck, 2009).

Someone who lacks self-reliance may be suffering from one or more problems,

such as (a) self-hate because of an inability to meet one's needs, (b) self-blame or projecting self-hatred on others, (c) find it difficult to fulfill tasks because one is always positioned as an observer, (d) interpersonal problems (Cavanagh & Levitov, 2002).

Improvement of self-direction competence for students may be carried out through individual counseling or group counseling organized by school counselors. People seeking counseling may often have learned not to trust their competence, perception, motives, and judgment (Cavanagh, 1982).

Tindall and Gray (1985) developed peer counseling. The peer counseling they proposed explained the purpose of peer counseling, the change of counselor's roles, trainers' requirements, the planning of peer counseling, and the peer counselor training procedures. Their model provided inspiration for developing peer counseling suitable for the conditions of Indonesian students.

"Proactive adult educators and on-site human resource developers can facilitate improvements in students' self-direction by implementing peer-mentoring programs and by building counseling coursework into professional adult education..." (Vann, 1966).

Ideally, expert counselors should provide counseling services, however, with certain prerequisites an expert counselor may train students to become "peer counselors", and conduct "peer counseling". In the ACA Code of Conduct (2005) it is determined that "Support network involvement counselors recognize that support, understanding, and involvement of others (e.g., religious/spiritual/community leaders, family members, and friends) can be positive resources, when appropriate, with client consent". Carr (1981) stated that without the active help of the students (peers) in solving the crisis of development and psychological problems of their own, service programs and counseling programs would not work effectively. The counselor must engage students (peers) as

allies and conduct cooperative efforts to help them through the various rational and logical actions.

Bowman and Myrick (1980 in Tindall & Gray, 1985) pointed out that counseling could improve positive self-concept on students of Grades 3 and 4 of Elementary Schools. Emmert (1977 in Tindall & Gray, 1985) found that a group of students who had been trained to become peer counselors statistically showed a higher empathy score relative to those who had not had training. Bell (1977 in Tindall & Gray, 1985) found that trained peer counselors did not show improvement in self-concept, yet they were capable of gaining higher academic achievement relative to peer counselors who did not work with other students. Miller (in Fritz, 1999: 516) reported that clients who used peer counseling were capable of identifying themselves with their peers, and clients assumed that "peer counselors" possessed willingness to develop communication bridges.

According to Fritz (1999, 522), the presence of peer counselors was not meant as a substitute for professional counselors, but simply to help improve their services. "Peer culture contains the informal social mechanisms through which children create their social order, determine their place and identity, and develop positive and negative feelings about themselves" (P.A Adler; P Adler, 1998).

During the last seven years, peer mentors have reduced the drop out rate of 16- and 17-year-olds from 75% to 80% within the first 40 days on the St. Louis Job Corps campus. From August to November 2008 the peer-mentors reached out to 2,212 students. Students being sent home from residential halls for fighting and conflict dropped 30% within the first year of utilizing peer mediators in the residence halls. Students serving as peer mentors (approx. 560 within the first 7 years have all completed the program except one (Tindall, Judith A: Chatman, Herbert; Foster, Robin, 2010, 18).

The purpose of this research is to design an effective peer counseling model for improving students' self-direction competence at one SMK in Bandung. The aims of the research are elaborated as follows: (1) to find the profile of students' self-direction competence; (2) to find the possibility of conducting peer counseling; (3) to formulate a peer counseling model for improving students' self-direction competence; (4) to prove the effectiveness of the produced peer counseling model in improving self-direction.

### **Method**

The sample comprised 501 Grade XI students from one SMK in Bandung. They came from four vocational field of study: Accountancy (AK), Office Administration (AP), Marketing (PS), and Tourism (UPW). The sample was selected from the four vocational programs, which comprised of eight classes, four of which were used as experiment groups, and the other four as control groups. The group members of each class were selected based on the results of self-direction assessment (which consisted of high, medium, and low self-direction); as a result, there were 40 students acting as samples (20 students belonged to the experiment group, and another 20 students belonged to the control group). The students to be trained as peer counselors were selected from the experimental group based on the following criteria: (a) being popular among their peers for consultation, (b) being willing to help others, being patient and capable of controlling their emotions, (c) having a high or close to high score for self-direction competence, and (d) willing to be trained as peer counselors.

The qualitative research in the preliminary study was carried out to determine the empirical condition of counseling services and system support for developing the peer counseling. Then, the qualitative research was conducted to validate the peer counseling program for the experts and practitioners.

At the end of the study, further qualitative research was conducted to collect information concerning the students' experiences after they underwent the peer counseling process. A quantitative study was then conducted to test the validity of the self-direction instruments and the statistical effectiveness of peer counseling to improve students' self-direction competence.

The quasi-experiment method with pretest-posttest design (Heppner at al. 2008: 183) was conducted using the field test hypothetical model. The criteria for the effectiveness of the peer counseling model, its practical significance and statistical significance are as follows:

### **Model Development**

The peer-counseling model was developed based on relevant literature and empirical studies, which was carried out in a Vocational School in Bandung. The data collected for the study covered: (1) problems faced by students, (2) students' need for consultation, (3) students' inclination towards peer counseling, (4) students preparedness to be trained as peer counselors, (5) social relationships with classmates, (6) characteristics of students' personality, (7) students' average academic achievement, (8) profile of students' self-direction competence, and (9) support systems for implementing peer counseling.

### **Validation of the hypothetical model**

The rational validation of the model was conducted using detailed response techniques and qualitative assessment. The peer counseling model was validated by four Guidance and Counseling experts and four school practitioners.

### **Revision of the model**

Based on the inputs of the experts and school practitioners, the peer counseling model for improving self-direction competence was revised and amended. In this

way, the model and guide were operational. The model of peer counseling for improving students' self-direction competences consisted of: (1) rationales, (2) objectives, (3) targets, (4) assumptions, (5) targets of intervention, (6) stages of model implementation, (7) competence of expert counselors, (8) competence of peer counselors, (9) evaluation of the counseling success.

### **Trial of peer counseling effectiveness**

The threat of internal validity was anticipated with the presence of a control group. In the trial of model effectiveness, an hypothesis test was conducted.

The research hypothesis is: peer counseling is effective for improving the Vocational School (SMK) students' self-direction competence, while the statistical hypothesis is:

$$H_0: m_{\text{experiment}} = m_{\text{control}} \&$$

$$H1: m_{\text{experiment}} > m_{\text{control}}$$

$H_0: m_{\text{control}} = m_{\text{experiment}}$  means that there is no significant difference of the average improvement between the experiment group and the control group.  $H1: m_{\text{control}} > m_{\text{experiment}}$  means that there is significant difference of the average improvement between the experiment group and the control group.

### **Instruments**

The instruments for data collection consisted of: instruments for identifying students' problems, interviews, questionnaires, sociometry, and a self-direction inventory.

The self-direction inventory was especially made for assessing the students' self-direction competence, referring to self-direction concepts proposed by Cavanagh (1982 & 2002) and was supplemented with other relevant theories.

The instruments were in the form of inventories with four options, namely highly agree, agree, disagree, and highly disagree. In order to produce valid instruments, a number of tests were conducted: (1) worthiness test according to guidance and counseling experts,

(2) trial in the field, and (3) validity and reliability test. Validity test was carried out by means of the correlation technique of *item-total product moment*. The validity test of each item was carried out using the *Ms Excel 2007*. The reliability test of the instruments was carried out by *Ms Excel 2007* software using the statistical formula of *Cranbach's Alpha (a)*.

**Statistical Significance**

1. The research results should show normality and homogeneity with Z Kolmogrov-Smirnov ( $p > 0,05$ ) variants ( $p > 0,05$ ) before statistic test to test the mean and *N-gain* and two-mean differential test are done.
2. The main *N-gain* of pretest and posttest of the experimental group should be higher than those of the control group.
3. The improvement of the result of differential test should show that the scores of pretest and posttest of the experimental group are higher than those of the control group, as proven by  $t_{cal} > t_{tab}$  or seen from the value of  $p < 0,05$ .

**Result and Discussion**

The profile of self-direction competence of students is shown in Table 1:

Table 1  
*Self Direction* Profile of SMK's Student

Aspect	Criteria	Interval	Freq.	Precent.
Self-Confidence	High	31 - 45	126	25.15
	Medium	16 - 30	375	74.85
	Low	0 - 15	0	0.00
Self-reliance	High	31 - 45	111	22.16
	Medium	16 - 30	390	77.84
	Low	0 - 15	0	0.00
Self-Control	High	43 - 63	46	9.18
	Medium	22 - 42	453	90.42
	Low	0 - 21	2	0.40

*Source: Erhamwilda, 2011*

Based on the Table above most students' self-direction competence is considered

medium level. 18.16% rated high level, 81.84% medium and none rated low level.

**The possibility of conducting peer counseling at one SMK in Bandung.**

Based on interviews with one SMK's School Counselor Coordinator, it is known that the guidance and counseling service has not been conducted well and they do not have comprehensive data about the students' problems. The services are mostly delivered classically, while individual counseling and group counseling have not been held according to standard.

The School Counselor Coordinator welcomed the peer counseling program offered. According to the Coordinator, the students like to be helped by their friends, and there was evidence that before the National Exam in 2009/2010 in maths, peer tutoring was successful. For this reason, they showed enthusiasm to try the peer counseling model.

To gauge the popularity of peer counseling among students a survey was conducted. It showed 72.8% of students prefer consulting their friends about their problems, while no students preferred consulting counselors. The remainder preferred consulting their family (18.2%).

Most of the students agreed that if here were trained friends at their school to share their problems, they would consult them. The survey showed that most of the students felt they need help from others to solve their problems.

**The stages of trialing the effectiveness of peer counseling are as follows:**

1. Socialization of the Implementation Plan of the program. This was discussed with the School Principal, Vice Principal for Students Affairs, while a more comprehensive socialization was carried out with the Guidance and Counseling Coordinator and School Counselors.
2. Selection of "Peer Counselor" Candidates: based on a number of set of criteria, in this research there were six students

representing the experiment group selected and confirmed as peer counselors.

3. Training of Peer Counselor Candidates. The main objective of the peer counselor training was to enable the peer counselor candidates to master the basic skills to effectively communicate in counseling, inform them about self-direction competence and how to improve it through counseling. The counseling may be carried out in the form of individual or group sessions. In order for the trainees to master all the skills associated with peer counseling, a number of training materials were prepared and designed. The training materials consisted of two main parts, Part I, which contained peer counseling communication skills, and Part II, which contained the improvement of self-direction competence. In the training, materials dealing with counseling communication skills were not clearly separated from the materials dealing with improvement of self-direction competence as both areas were practiced together.

The trainer of the peer counselors in this quasi-experiment was the researcher herself, who also involved a Guidance and Counseling teacher. After the students were trained, they felt that they could understand themselves better and felt more confident. The success of the training was evaluated qualitatively about interviews about the training materials.

The students' level of cognitive mastery of the counseling communication skills were good, however, regarding the practice of conducting counseling communication, their levels of competence varied. Throughout the training process, the researcher assisted the trainees to solve every problem they encountered when practicing peer counseling. At the end of the training, four out of six trainees showed good competence in counseling communication and in providing help for their counsees when exploring problems.

After going through all the processes, the peer counselor candidates claimed that they were ready for conducting peer counseling, and promised to learn more about peer counseling by practice. They would consult the researcher whenever they had problems.

Subsequently, the peer counselors were free to choose their own counsees from among their classmates. In this regard, the researcher gave them a list of names of students who should be given priority when they practice peer counseling (this list was produced using the database on the students' self-direction competence score).

4. The Execution of Peer Counseling  
The counseling may be carried out individually or in groups depending on the counselors' own competence, opportunities, and interests. The choice of time and place for peer counseling was based on the agreement made with the counsees. In essence, peer counseling was spontaneous and informal. It was spontaneous because it may happen at any time and anywhere. It was informal because counseling communication occurred among peers and was built upon equality, and the position of the peer counselors was not higher than their counsees. Therefore, the procedures should not be rigid.

In peer counseling the main objective of the counseling communication was the happiness of the counsees. The counsees were helped to understand themselves and their internal conflicts, enabled to see their problems from various sides, assisted to see the various alternatives for solving problems, assisted in making decisions and to determine their attitude or decide what to do for their own benefit in the future. The other principle was that peer counselors should appreciate, honor, and respect their counsees as individuals. Peer counselors were aware

of the principle in which counsees were individuals who had potential and strength to become self-confident, capable of controlling themselves, and capable of fulfilling their own needs independently.

The peer counselors were to practice peer-counseling activities in a month.

In the trial process, counselors helped their peers solving their problems, namely:

- (1) Internal family problems, including: (a) feeling stressed by parents who are not harmonious, (b) feeling that their parents do not care for them, (c) economic problems, (d) feeling that their parents are too demanding and restrictive, (e) problems with other members of the family due to trivial things, (f) having problems with parents because they like travelling, (g) having problems with parents who quarrel with other members of the family, (h) having problems with parents because they are active in the flag raising squad, (i) being engaged to their boyfriend/girlfriend but their parents insist that the relation is to be ended, (j) fleeing from the house because of the feeling of being restrained, (k) wanting to buy a cellular phone but reluctant to talk to their parents.

- (2) Social personal problems, include: (a) having difficulty being open with others, having no close friends, having difficulty trusting others, (b) feeling unable to share problems with other people, (c) feeling reluctant to interact with school mates other than those belonging to his/her group, (d) feeling ashamed of talking openly to others, (e) feeling uncomfortable with the situation in the class which lack of a family atmosphere, (f) feeling unable to share stories with other people, (g) having problems with boyfriend/girlfriend, (h) feeling unable to express feelings, (i) remain getting along with bad people, (j) feeling that their boyfriend/girlfriend does not pay them enough attention, (k) having problems with classmates, (m) problems due to lack of confidence.

- (3) Problems with study, include: (a) inability to concentrate, (b) being lazy to read books, (c) having problems with English language, (d) finding it hard to learn and sometimes having the intention to cheat.

Regarding the peers who have been helped by the peer counselors through individual or group peer counseling, it turned out that the number of the counsees was 29 persons. In this regard, however, there were differences in the number of counsees belonging to different peer counselors. The data of peer counselors and peer counsees is shown in Table 2:

**Table 2**  
**Number Of Counsees Helped**  
**By Peer Counselors**

No	Peer Counselor's initial	Amount of Counselee		Kind of Counseling
		Class	Freq	
1.	S R	XI AK2	3	Individual
2.	RHN	XI AP3	6	Individual
3.	T O	XI AP3	3	Individual
4.	WS	XI UPW2	3	Individual
5.	WS	XI AK2	3	Individual
6.	PA.A.	XI UPW2	2	Individual
7.	PA.A	XI UPW2	5	Group
9	S	XI PS1	4	Group
Total			29	

The peer counselors felt happy because they could help other people and were able to practice the counseling communication techniques. Almost all the counsees talked about their problems to the peer counselors and felt relieved for having shared their stories. Both the peer counselors and their counsees became aware of the benefits of counseling. Changes experienced by the counsees are listed below:

- (1) having the capability to be open to friends because they feel comfortable and not ashamed. They find it easier to understand themselves and to solve problems
- (2) feeling comfortable when being in a group because they can feel the problem experienced by other members of the group, they can also feel sad or happy



- together, they feel it is easier to be introspective, and want to change their bad traits.
- (3) feeling pleased, comfortable, relieved, unashamed to share stories with peers, and feeling like they now have guidance for thinking as adults, and are able to be introspective
  - (4) feeling pleased for being self confident, open to friends, having fewer burdens, wanting to change oneself (although it may not be easy and require time)
  - (5) feeling more comfortable, having fewer burdens because they can be open with friends, and receiving good guidance in solving problems
  - (6) feeling more comfortable, more peaceful, more relaxed because they can work together in solving problems and have more confidence to be open with others so they do not keep their problems to themselves
  - (7) knowing one's own weaknesses and knowing that the weaknesses need to be overcome, feeling determined to be better and useful individuals for others
  - (8) feeling more peaceful than before when they felt humiliated, and consequently feeling more spirited
  - (9) having more confidence to face problems
  - (10) feeling calmer because of being capable to learn from the problems they had
  - (11) feeling calmer and capable of seeing the positive side of the problems they had, and feeling capable of controlling their emotions when solving problems
  - (12) feeling relieved, calm, and able to express problems more freely, and feeling capable of solving their problems using their own strengths
  - (13) capable of making the right decisions
  - (14) feeling more confident due to the inputs from peers and feeling more relaxed
  - (15) feeling capable of considering the desire to leave home, and as a result they no longer have a strong desire to leave home
  - (16) Feeling capable of accepting the conditions of their parents (changing from complaining about a lack of fatherly attention and stress due to the lack of a harmonious relationship between parents, to becoming relieved and capable of accepting the condition of their parents)
  - (17) feeling more autonomous and confident to confront parents who do not care for them
  - (18) feeling more aware that in life someone is not always at the bottom, and that someday progress will come
  - (19) trying to learn how to argue and be open with family, and changing from thinking one is not being considered to becoming more enthusiastic about learning to be more considered.

### **Results of Hypothesis Test**

Before the data of intervention counseling model result was processed, normality test was conducted with Z kolmogrov-Sminov test statistic ( $p > 0.05$ ) and variance homogeneity test ( $p > 0.05$ ). Normality data test Z Gain Normalize showed Z experiment group (0.762) and p (0.608), while control group of Z value (1.176) and p (0.126). This means that all the data are distributed normally because the value of  $p > 0.05$ . The result of the data variance homogeneity test showed that F (0.130). df. 1(1), df2 (70), and p (0.720). This means that the data has a homogeneity variance because the value of  $p > 0.05$ .

The results of the mean for the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group and control group are shown in Table 3.

Table 4 shows independent t test for Gain Differential of Experimental group and Control Group in Self-Direction Competence.

**Table 3**  
**The Means Of Pretest-Posttest Of Control And Experimental Group**

Aspect & sub aspect	Pretest Control	Posttest Control	Pretest Experiment	Posttest Experiment
Self-Direction	85.35	85.43	85.29	94.11
Self- confidence	27.81	28.00	28.29	30.83
Self-reliance	28.30	27.97	27.91	30.26
Self-control	36.22	36.05	35.94	40.80

**Table 4**  
**Recapitulation t Test For Gain Differential of Experimental and Control Group in Self-Direction Competence**

Aspect – sub aspect	Experimental		Control		Differential Mean	t	p	Explanation
	Mean	Deviation	Mean	Deviation				
Self-Direction	0,171	0,140	-0,005	0,175	0,176	4,688	0,000	Significant
a. Self-confidence	0.159	0.161	0.013	0.277	0.147	2.721	0.008	Significant
b. Self-Reliance	0.137	0.172	-0.030	0.255	0.167	3.243	0.002	Significant
c. Self-Control	0.190	0.186	-0.020	0.182	0.211	4.861	0.000	Significant

p<0.05 =significant

From this point of view the peer-counseling program was effective for improving the self-direction competence and sub competences of self-direction.

**Discussion**

The test results of the model using a quasi-experiment showed that overall the peer counseling model was effective for improving the three aspects of self-direction competence, namely self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-control.

The research findings agree with Vann (1966) that students' self-direction can be facilitated by implementing peer-mentoring programs.

The research findings also agree with Nelson, J.R, Smith, D.J, and Colvin, G (1995), who discussed: "The effects of a peer-mediated self-evaluation procedure on the recess behavior of students with behavior problems". They also agree with Dolan, B (1994) who explained: "A teen talk line run by peers is shown to be effective and have an impact on the self-esteem of peers."The research found "Self-control and self-management at recess

improved when peers were partnered with students with behavior problems".

The clients had at least six new experiences in peer counseling, namely: (1) knowing internal conflicts, (2) facing the reality, (3) developing predictions, (4) starting new relationships, (5) increasing psychological freedom, and (6) correcting wrong concepts (Moh. Surya, 2009:28-29).

Qualitatively, the effectiveness test results also showed that the students received positive and valuable experiences by helping their peers solve their problems. Counselees' satisfaction of peer counseling service was reflected in their written expressions in the evaluation instruments, such as: the counselees' expressions of relief after receiving peer counseling, the feeling of knowing their own potentials, the feeling of deeper understanding of their own problems, the feeling of having somebody to talk to when they have problems, the feeling of being able to make decisions, and the feeling of being able to solve problems with controlled emotions.

The effectiveness of peer-counseling in improving students' self-direction is

supported by several factors, such as: (1) the implementation of peer-counseling was fully supported by the School Principals, Vice School Principals for Student Affairs, school counselors, homeroom teachers, subject matter teachers, and the parents of the peer counselors, (2) the preparation of the model which was based on needs analysis for the improvement of self-direction competence, (3) the selection of peer counselor candidates which was based on the profiles of self-direction competence, personal characteristics of the students, sociometry, average academic performance, the tendency for providing assistance to peers, and the students' preparedness to undergo peer counseling training, (4) the students who underwent training were those who were serious, highly motivated, and voluntary, (5) the peer counseling was informal in nature and students were not regulated in terms of time, place, and targets, (6) the potentials of mutual assistance among peers were excellent.

### **The Limitation of the Research and Recommendations**

The research had several limitations, such as: (1) the number of the samples was very limited, the experiment groups came from only four classes in each study program at one of many SMKs, (2) the needs analysis for preparing the peer counseling model was based on the needs analysis carried out in only one Vocational High School, therefore the effectiveness model needs more tests with larger samples, (3) the implementation of peer counseling at the school was very much dependent upon the amount of time peer counselors were able to dedicate to counseling. They are busy with their academic activities and various agendas of the school, and in such cases the peer counselors require more freedom to conduct peer counseling.

Within one month the number of counselees who were helped through peer counseling was relatively small compared to the number of students who actually had problems. This is not at all surprising and

perfectly natural for such peer counseling processes. In this regard, if the research was carried out with a larger sample and more peer counselors, and more time was given to the peer counselors to carry out peer counseling, and Guidance Counseling teachers were also involved, the effectiveness of the counseling model would be more convincing, (4) The research did not test the extent to which the improvement of one sub competence of self-direction had an influence to compared to that of another sub competence (there were no tests of the interaction among sub variables), (5) the peer counseling program had not been tested for its effectiveness for helping students with severe problems, because the fact showed that the peer counselors tended to help their peers without severe problems.

With such limitation of the research, the peer counseling model for improving students' self-direction competence is only recommended for use as an alternative mediator in counseling services already provided by the counselors at the school where the research was carried out. The counseling program will remain useful if the counselors are prepared for innovations in the existing counseling services. The peer counseling may also become an alternative solution for the disproportional ratio between counselors and students. However, for other counselors at other schools this counseling program may inspire them to try out similar programs with some of their own classes so that it may become a mediator alternative in the counseling services at their own schools.

It is also recommended that the use of peer counseling programs does not mean that the school counselors hand over the responsibility to the peer counselors. The counseling services should remain the responsibility of the Guidance and Counseling Coordinator and Guidance and Counseling teachers. Peer counselors merely act as facilitators and assist the school counselors. It is also recommended that other researchers try out the peer counseling method with other

populations for the development of other personal competences.

### Conclusion

The research findings show that the peer counseling model holds a strategic position for use as one of the mediators of counseling services, be it empirically or theoretically from the view that student development tends to have some sort of influence from their peers. The counseling model proved effective for improving the SMK students' self-direction competence, consisting of self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-control.

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