

# Development of Peer Counselor Training Manual at State University of Malang

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**Abstract:** This research aims to develop a peer counselor training manual at State University of Malang. The researchers employ a research and development method in this research. The subjects of the product tryout were a guidance and counseling (BK) expert; a media expert; and a counselor of Guidance and Counseling Center in Career and Academic Competence (P2BK3A) of State University of Malang. The instruments used were interview guidelines and assessment instruments for the experts and the counselors. Data of assessment results from the BK expert, the media expert, and the counselor have shown that the developed product is acceptable and suitable to be used to train peer counselors to help solve the problems of their peers.

**Keywords:** training manual; peer counselors; peer counselor training manual

## I. INTRODUCTION

College students are individuals studying in universities, institutes, or colleges. College students are also individuals experiencing the development process. Various demands on- and off-campus often become a problem for college students in academic and non-academic aspects, causing failure to achieve stages of development. Each college student has an academic supervisor who acts as the student advisor on academic matters. Suranata's research (2011) showed that academic supervisor nature is very limited because academic supervisors are also teaching staff.

According to Gibson & Mitchell (2011), college students have higher independence than high school students, causing differences between counselors in schools and higher education. One of which is counselors in Higher Education play more active roles in professional development activities as is the role of the counselors at State University of Malang. Many functions and roles of the counselors in Guidance and Counseling Center in Career and Academic Competence (P2BK3A, Pusat Pengembangan Bimbingan Konseling Karir dan Kompetensi Akademik), Educational and Learning Development Institute (LP3, Lembaga Pengembangan Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran), State University of Malang have become the foundation for a peer counselor organization establishment called Peer Counseling Corner (PCC) since 2013.

According to Geldard (2014), peer counselors need to be more equipped with training programs to improve their helping conversation skills in order to enable an effective peer counseling program implementation at universities. Based on the interview results with the head of P2BK3A of State University of Malang and two PCC members, it can be concluded that the peer counselors in

PCC need ongoing training in order to provide peer problem-solving assistance.

Previous research by Kentriana (2015) has resulted in a peer counselor package for high school students. In this research, a peer counselor training package has been developed containing the peer counseling scope, basic attitudes of counselors, and basic communication skills comprising (1) Attending; (2) Open close question; (3) Summary; and (4) Reflection of feeling. The skills taught in the package have been suitable for senior high school-age students. If the package is about to be applied to peer counselors in Higher Education, more complete basic skills need to be developed.

Based on the above background and considering many benefits of peer counseling for college students, a product of peer counselor training manual at State University of Malang is developed as an effort to train peer counselors to help solve the problems of their peers.

## II. METHOD

The method used in this research adapts Gall, Borg, & Gall's (1996) research and development procedural model. The research and development procedures as illustrated in Figure 1 have six stages. Stage I is the pre-survey stage. The researchers do library research and conduct interviews to investigate and determine the problems. This stage was conducted in the P2BK3A LP3 building at State University of Malang in February 2019. Stage II is developing the product. The researchers formulate training objectives, determine training procedures, compile the contents of the product, and construct evaluation tools. Stage III is expert validation. In the expert validation stage, the product is reviewed by a material expert and a media expert. Stage IV is product revision based on expert validation results. The researchers revise the product based on evaluations,

comments, and suggestions from the material expert and the media expert. Stage V is the prospective user test. The product is reviewed by the prospective user of this product, i.e. a counselor of P2BK3A of State University of Malang. Stage VI is the final product revision. The researchers revise the product based on evaluations, comments, and suggestions from the prospective user of the product.

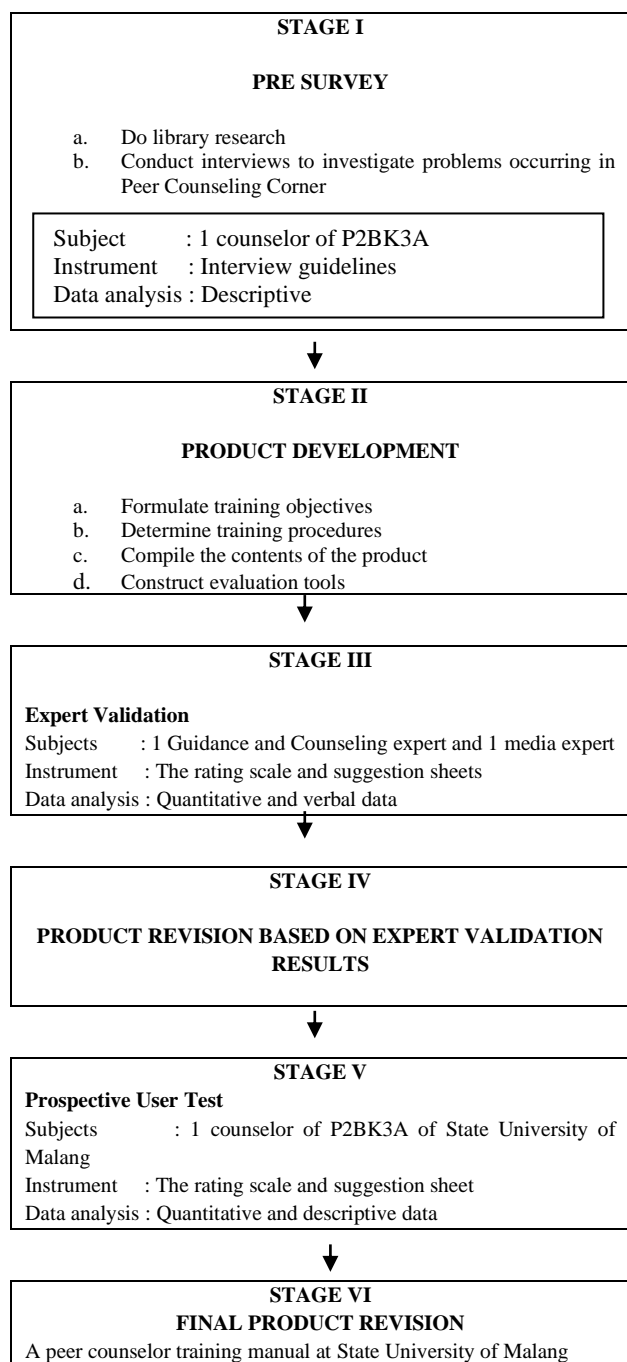


Figure 1

Procedures in the development of a peer counselor training manual at State University of Malang

Overall, the data obtained from product tryout are a numerical scale (quantitative) and descriptive evaluations in the form of suggestion sheets analyzed using the percentage of agreement technique. This technique is an item analysis based on the subject's

agreement on the rating scale for accuracy, usability, ease of use, and attractiveness aspects. Each score in each statement in the rating scale has the following meanings: (1) A score of one means that it is less accurate/less useful/less easy/less interesting; (2) A score of two means that it is quite accurate/quite useful/quite easy/quite interesting; (3) A score of three means that it is accurate/useful/easy/interesting; (4) A score of four means that it is very accurate/very useful/very easy/very interesting.

### III. RESULTS

The product developed in this research and development research is a Peer Counselor Training Manual at State University of Malang consisting of a training manual for professional counselors, a material book for peer counselors, and a Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) for professional counselors. The contents of the training manual for professional counselors are divided into three sections. Section I contains an introduction which explains the background, objectives, target users, training materials, and instructions for use describing general and specific instructions as well as the role of peer counselors. Section II contains five topics i.e. (1) Characteristics of student problems; (2) Basic attitudes of counselors; (3) Code of ethics for peer counselors; (4) Basic communication skills of peer counselors; and (5) Skills in providing assistance for problem solving. Finally, Section III contains an analysis of evaluation results.

The second product is a material book for peer counselors. The material book contains descriptions of the trained materials, homework sheets, and answer sheets. The third product is a DVD as a medium for peer counselors at State University of Malang to be used in the topic of basic communication skills. This DVD lasts for 13 minutes 41 seconds and has a size of 218 MB. The content of this DVD is a movie which tells the story of a gadget addict college student helped by a peer counselor. The DVD contains educational video techniques that teach the audience to master basic communication skills of peer counselors.

Based on data from expert validation and prospective user test, data obtained were in the form of a numerical scale (quantitative) and descriptive evaluations in the form of product-related suggestions and comments (qualitative). According to the material expert, the media expert, and the prospective user, the peer counselor training manual has met the criteria for the accuracy, usability, ease of use, and attractiveness aspects.

### IV. DISCUSSION

The initial activity undertaken before developing the product was to review the results of previous research developing methods for peer counselor training. The previous research results included a peer counselor training package based on role-playing (Kentriana, 2015); Online-based peer counseling (Fukkink, 2011); and Peer counselor assistance based on role-playing (Shohib et al., 2016). Based on previous research, the most widely used technique was role-playing.

During the product development process of the peer counselor training manual, some improvements at each stage of the initial product development in the form of a training manual for professional counselors were performed. The training manual for professional counselors contains five topics, i.e. (1) Characteristics of student problems; (2) Basic attitudes of counselors; (3) Code of ethics for peer counselors; (4) Basic communication skills of peer counselors; and (5) Skills in providing assistance for problem solving. The evaluations in this manual consist of two evaluations i.e. process evaluation in the form of observation sheets and result evaluation in the form of homework.

The steps in this manual adopt a structured learning approach to enable peer counselors to learn the contents of the manual in a systematic and structured manner. According to Sprafkin (1993), the steps of the structured learning approach include (1) Direct instruction; (2) Modeling; (3) Role-playing; (4) Feedback; and (5) Evaluation.

The first topic is characteristics of student problems. In this section, peer counselors train on how to categorize counselee problems based on student characteristics. According to Jatmika et al.'s (2016) and Faturrohman's (2014) research results, problems that may be experienced by college students are (1) Personal problems; (2) Career problems; (3) Social relationship problems; (4) Learning problems; and (5) Family problems. This topic aims to help peer counselors understand the counselees' core problems and minimize misinformation.

The second topic is basic attitudes of counselors. In this section, peer counselors train on practicing basic attitudes of counselors. Corey (2009) states that there are three core conditions which can create a conducive climate in the counseling process, i.e. congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathy. Practices are performed alternately so that each member can provide feedback.

The third topic is code of ethics for peer counselors. According to Anni (2018), a code of ethics is a moral code which becomes the foundation of work for professionals. Although peer counselors are not professionals, in order to ensure the safety and comfort of counselees and maintain the good image of professional counselors, peer counselors need to have a code of ethics. The code of ethics for peer counselors in this manual is a combination of the peer counseling principles according to Suwarjo (in Erhamwilda, 2015) and Counselor Code of Ethics, Sub-Chapter of Individual Services, Relationships with Counselees from the ABKIN Team (2006).

The fourth topic is basic communication skills of peer counselors. The standards of basic communication skills of professional counselors differ from those of peer counselors who are non-professional personnel. Peer counselors tend to be good listeners for their counselees and to share with each other to solve a problem. This manual contains a combination of basic communication skills techniques proposed by Fauzan et al. (2008) and Ivey (2010) consisting of (1) Opening; (2) General leads; (3) Specific leads; (4) Reassurance; (5) Interpretation; (6)

Reflection of feeling; (7) Summarization; and (8) Termination.

The fifth topic is skills in providing assistance for problem solving. According to Zastrow (in Romlah, 2013), skills in providing assistance for problem solving or problem-solving techniques is a creative process in which individuals assess changes in themselves and their environment, make new choices, develop new decisions, or adjustments aligned with their life goals and values. The steps trained on this topic include (1) Identifying and formulating problems; (2) Determining the causes of the problem; (3) Helping to find alternative solutions to problems; (4) Helping to examine and choose alternatives; and (5) Evaluating the results achieved.

This product has met the accuracy, usability, ease of use, and attractiveness aspects based on the material expert validation. The material expert scored on the manual's rating scale as follows (1) Total score of the accuracy aspect was 92 and categorized as very accurate; (2) Total score of the usability aspect was 83 and categorized as very useful; (3) Total score of the ease of use aspect was 85 and categorized as very easy; and (4) Total score of the attractiveness aspect was 41 and categorized as very interesting. It can be concluded that the material expert provided a good evaluation of the manual.

The material expert also provided comments and suggestions, i.e. (1) To clarify sentences at the direct instruction which were similar to sentences at the general instruction and (2) To give additional material on skills in providing assistance for problem solving. It is in line with Geldard's (2014) opinion that peer counselors need to be more equipped with training programs to improve their helping conversation skills in order to enable an effective peer counseling program implementation at universities. The material on skills in providing assistance for problem solving can help the training on helping conversation skills.

Based on the media expert validation, this product has met the accuracy, usability, ease of use, and attractiveness aspects. The media expert scored on the manual's rating scale as follows (1) Total score of the accuracy aspect was 41 and categorized as very accurate; (2) Total score of the usability aspect was 51 and categorized as very useful; (3) Total score of the ease of use aspect was 16 and categorized as very easy; and (4) Total score of the attractiveness aspect was 33 and categorized as very interesting. It can be concluded that the media expert provided a good evaluation of the manual.

The media expert also provided comments and suggestions, i.e. (1) Illustrations needed to be adjusted to the material topic and the target age; (2) The use of colors was too bright; (3) The back cover needed to be added with content to avoid a blank page. Suggestions from the media expert are in accordance with Santoso's (2008) opinion stating that images media have a major contribution in attracting readers. Therefore, the relevance of the images used with the target age must be appropriate. Comments and suggestions from the media expert were used as a reference for the researchers to revise the product, resulting in more suitable illustrations

for the topic, neutral use of colors, and the content addition on the back cover.

After revising the product based on expert validation, the researchers also added a new product, i.e. a material book for peer counselors. This material book was a suggestion from the material expert to facilitate peer counselors in understanding the contents of the materials and doing the evaluation. This book contains materials on each topic, evaluation sheets, homework, and answer sheets.

Based on the prospective user test, this product has met the accuracy, usability, ease of use, and attractiveness aspects. The prospective users scored on the manual's rating scale as follows (1) Total score of the accuracy aspect was 21 and categorized as very accurate; (2) Total score of the usability aspect was 21 and categorized as very useful; (3) Total score of the ease of use aspect was 16 and categorized as very easy; and (4) Total score of the attractiveness aspect was 18 and categorized as very interesting. It can be concluded that the media expert provided a good evaluation of the manual.

The prospective user also provided comments and suggestions, i.e. (1) To clarify steps and procedures; (2) To provide a video in the modeling step; and (3) To replace the front cover with the context relevant to counseling. Comments and suggestions from the prospective user were used as a reference for the researchers to revise the product, resulting in the elaboration of unclear steps, the video provision for the modeling step in the topic of basic communication skills, and the replacement of the front cover with a more formal counseling context. According to Mardiaty (2018), video media has a significant effect on student learning about communication and counseling. Therefore, the researchers developed a Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) containing a basic communication skills practice video.

Based on the entire research and development process, the researchers acknowledged that this product has strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of this product are: (1) This product acts as a structured and appropriate peer counselor training media for the peer counseling corner members of State University of Malang, (2) This product comes with a training manual for professional counselors, a material book for peer counselors, and a Digital Versatile Disc (DVD); and (3) Training manuals for professional counselors and peer counselors have passed the material expert validation, the media expert validation, and the prospective user test with good scores. The weaknesses of this product are: (1) The Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) has not tested through expert validation; (2) The material and media expert validation was only conducted by one expert each.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The development of the peer counselor training manual at State University of Malang has met the experts

and prospective user evaluation, causing the product to be considered as appropriate, useful, easy, and interesting. The suggestions include the utilization suggestions and further development suggestions. For counselors of P2BK3A of State University of Malang, it is suggested that counselors of P2BK3A of State University of Malang use this manual during peer counselor training to improve the basic skills of peer counselors in helping to solve the problems of their peers. For further researchers, it is suggested that they should conduct the experimental research to investigate the effectiveness of the utilization of peer counselor training manual at State University of Malang. In addition, if further researchers want to develop a product similar to this training manual, the counseling approach commonly used to solve student problems should be added.

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