

Peer Social Support and Academic Self-Efficacy Among Freshmen Students

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship of peer social support and academic self-efficacy among freshmen of psychology department at one of private university, in Jakarta Indonesia. The study applied quantitative method involved 117 freshmen with the range age 18-25 years. Peer social support was measured using Social Provision Scale and Academic self-efficacy was measured using Academic Self Efficacy Scale. Using Pearson Correlation analysis, it showed that peer social support was significantly correlated with academic self-efficacy ($r = 0,591$, $p < 0,01$). The study concluded that the relationship between peer social support and academic self-efficacy among freshmen of psychology department is positive and significant. The result of the study will help the sustainable learning activities for freshmen students.

Keywords: peer social support; academic self-efficacy; emerging adulthood; freshmen

1. INTRODUCTION

Being freshmen is seen as a period of great transition in emerging adulthood or periods of development for someone aged 18 to 25 years [1], where individuals develop new patterns in their behavioral, cognitive and affective responses to meet new environmental demands [2]. In emerging adulthood, individuals begin to develop the quality characteristics needed to be independent, engage in committed relationships, take on more mature roles and responsibilities, and obtain a level of education and training that will be useful for them as they mature [3].

With the presence of various developments that are being experienced, emerging adults as freshmen also have a role that meets the requirements in their new environment, namely in college. Freshmen need to understand new social ways, develop attain lectures, become more advanced, and adjust to new roles and responsibilities [4]–[6].

Based on the results of interviews with 5 freshmen of psychology department, one of the participants stated that the challenges faced as freshmen were in terms of adaptation to the new environment, a demand to read lecture material books in English. Other participants stated that the tasks given were far more difficult than when they were still in high school, coupled with the time limit for the collection of tasks that have been determined.

With the various academic obstacles being faced, freshmen need to have good self-confidence so that they can help in overcoming the various academic obstacles that are being faced. In Psychology, self-confidence in academics is known as academic self-efficacy. Academic self-efficacy is a person's belief that they can achieve at the level specified in academic assignments or achieve certain academic goals

[7]. Academic self-efficacy is believed to have an important involvement in the success of students in their freshman years [8].

According to [7], several factors affect one's self-efficacy, which include social persuasion. One form of social persuasion is social support from peers. According to [9], peer social support is a system of giving and receiving assistance based on the principle of mutual respect, sharing of responsibilities and mutual agreement in terms of which can support one another. Peer social support is based on the assumption that someone with similar experiences or situations can provide more appropriate empathy and support[9].

This study focused to the one of the private university in Jakarta Indonesia with the initial name BN university.

BN University held a First-Year Program (FYP), which is a one-year program for freshmen with a general and academic orientation. In the First-Year Program (FYP), freshmen will be assisted by the role given by fellow students, namely, Freshmen Leader (FL) who is a first-year student companion during the general and academic orientation, and Freshmen Partner (FP) who will assist freshmen for a full year in adjusting to lectures. There is also mentoring program provided by the Students Advisory and Support Center (SASC) for freshmen majoring in Psychology, namely a tutorial program which is a mentoring program such as tutoring led by 1 tutor who is a fellow student from the Psychology department with a maximum of 30 tutees. But the program was stopped because no Psychology freshmen attended or responded to the program.

Based on the results of interviews conducted on 5 freshmen of psychology department at BN University, several participants stated that the Freshmen Leader (FL) and

Freshmen Partner (FP) were quite helpful in their lectures, through the introduction of deeper lecture systems, giving advice in learning methods appropriate, also helps in dealing with difficulties in the first year such as teaching the difficult subject matter. In addition, the freshmen majoring in Psychology stated that their peers in college also had an important role in dealing with academic obstacles that they are experiencing such as the provision of assistance in lecturing assignments by providing explanations that were easier to understand, helping one another in tasks that are considered difficult and carry out discussions or exchange ideas.

On the other hand, the results of interviews conducted by researcher, with the Counselling Head Section of the Student Advisory and Support Center (SASC) of BN University, that based on recorded counselling data, it was found that there were as many as 6 freshmen of Psychology which conducts counselling sessions related to problems in study planning, lecture orientation and about relationships with peers in college. This shows that apart from the various forms of support that have been provided by BN University through their peers to freshmen of Psychology at BN University such as Freshmen Leader (FL) and Freshmen Partner (FP), as well as their peers at tertiary institutions, there are obstacles that are often faced as freshmen of Psychology at BN University.

Changes that occur in emerging adulthood, continuing with increasing academic demands allow for difficulties in adapting, resulting in high levels of stress, dissatisfaction, or poor academic performance [10]. However, external factors such as support from family, peers, or lovers [11] and internal factors such as self-esteem and self-efficacy, have an important role in dealing with this transition. Additionally, [12] shows that relationships with peers form social identities during emerging adulthood.

The number of studies throughout the world in the last decade which states that the first year in higher education is called a critical period, given the various conditions that demand both the task of development as an emerging adult that must be met and also in their academic demands as freshmen [2]. With the indication that being freshmen is a critical period for emerging adults, all related parties, especially freshmen of Psychology at BN University would certainly want to look for alternatives in facing the academic obstacles that are being faced.

Previous research conducted by [13] regarding the development of academic self-efficacy in freshmen, that messages conveyed by peers to each other proved to be very influential in the development of academic self-efficacy of students. The development of academic self-efficacy that is influenced by peers can differ significantly, which can increase and also weaken academic self-efficacy. The results of the study show that by having a talk about their experiences at the right time, accompanied by encouragement from someone they trusted, students can successfully avoid social persuasion that can weaken the academic self-efficacy of their peers.

Supporting relationships and interactions with peers are considered important to improve the quality of student education and learning [14]. As stated by [15], that

friendships developed by freshmen at college are very important, because close interaction with fellow students or peers can make it possible to provide mutual guidance and support about obstacles related to college.

Social support does not always have a good impact, this can occur if the support provided is insufficient, inappropriate, or not needed [16]. The Support that is needed by individuals is the most useful [17]. Seeing from various forms of peer social support provided for freshmen of Psychology at BN University, the researcher is interested in finding out the relationship between peer social support and academic self-efficacy in freshmen of Psychology at BN University, where this research is still rarely found in freshmen of Psychology at BN University. The result of the study will therefore help the effort for sustainable learning activities for freshmen students.

2. METHODS

A total of 117 freshmen participated in the present study. The range age of these participants was 18-25 years old. These participants were freshmen of Psychology at BN university.

The sampling technique used in this study is probability sampling, which is a sampling technique that provides an equal opportunity for each member of the population to be selected as a sample member [18]. Then the sampling method in this study is cluster sampling, wherein the sample is obtained by randomly selecting from a list of groups that already exist in the population [18].

The research design used in this study is correlational research, in which there are two or more variables that are measured to produce a set of values for each individual. The results of these measurements are then identified to determine the relationship between the studied variables [18]. In this study, there are two variables, namely, peer social support with academic self-efficacy.

Measuring instruments used to measure the social support variables of peers, the researcher adopts and modifies the Social Provision Scale by [19] which consists of 24 items, according to the research context. The Social Provisions Scale by [19], refers to 6 social bond functions which consists of; 4 items of attachment component, 4 items of social integration, 4 items of opportunity for nurturance, 4 items of reward or recognition and 4 items of reliable relationship. This measurement tool uses item format consisting of favorable and unfavorable formats that refer to the Likert scale which has 4 responses namely, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (DA), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

In measuring the validity of the academic self-efficacy measurement instrument, the researcher conducts content validity to find out if the items that have been designed are by following per under what they want to be measured. The content validity test on the academic self-efficacy measurement instrument was carried out through expert judgment with three psychology lecturers from BN University. The pilot test was then carried out on 50

participants who met the criteria in the study participants, namely freshmen, through Google forms distributed online. From the results of pilot data processing using SPSS version 21, it shows that the validity value of the measuring instrument seen from the corrected item-total correlation found 8 items that have values <0.25 namely item number 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 19. However, based on consideration with the Supervising Lecturer, the researcher still uses the whole items from the measuring instrument because the reliability value of the measuring instrument from all 24 items has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.796, it is an acceptable measurement instrument.

To measure academic self-efficacy variables, researchers modified the Academic Self-efficacy Scale by [20] consisting of 40 items, according to the research context. The Academic Self-Efficiency Scale by [20], refers to the 4 psychological processes of self-efficacy proposed by [7], which consists of; 12 items of cognitive process aspects, (cognitive process), 8 items of affective process, 12 items of motivational process, and 8 items of the selection of tasks. This measurement tool uses item format consisting of favorable and unfavorable formats which refer to the Likert scale which has 4 responses namely, Strongly Agree (SA),

Agree (A), Disagree (DA), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The content validity test on the academic self-efficacy measurement tool was carried out through expert judgment with three psychology lecturers from BN University. The pilot test was then conducted by researchers on 50 participants who met the criteria in the research participants, namely first-year students, through Google forms distributed online. From the results of pilot data processing using SPSS version 21, it shows that the validity value of the measuring instrument seen from the corrected item-total correlation found 8 items that have a value <0.25 namely item number 13, 21, 22, 24, 25, 34, 38 and 39. However, based on considerations with the Supervising Lecturer, the researcher still uses the whole items from the measuring instrument because the reliability value of the measuring instrument from all 40 items has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.870 it is a good measurement instrument.

Based on the above explanation in the introduction section, we formulate the hypothesis of the study. The hypothesis of this study is: There is a significant relationship between peer social support and academic self-efficacy among freshmen of psychology department at BN University.

Table 1. The Correlation of Peer Social Support and Academic Self-Efficacy Among Freshman of Psychology department at BN University

| | | Peer Social Support | Academic Self-Efficacy |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Peer Social Support | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.591** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.000 |
| | N | 117 | 117 |

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 shows the results of the statistical analysis using the Pearson Correlation technique. Based on the results of the correlation test, it can be seen that the correlation between peer social support and academic self-efficacy has a correlation coefficient of 0.591 with a significance level <0.01. The result indicates that there is a positive and significant correlation between peer social support and academic self-efficacy among freshmen of psychology department at BN University. Therefore, the hypothesis which stated there is a significant correlation between peer social support and academic self-efficacy among freshmen of psychology department at BN University is accepted. Furthermore, the direction of correlation showed positive result, it means the higher peer social support led to the higher level of academic self-efficacy. On the contrary, the lower level of peer social support will be led to the lower level of academic self-efficacy.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that there is a relationship between peer social support and academic self-efficacy among freshmen of psychology department at BN University. The results of this study are in line with statements by [21], that forming relationships with peers who can support each other is an important task for students at the beginning of their studies.

Supporting relationships and interactions with peers are considered important to improve the quality of student education and learning [14]. As said by [15], friendships developed by freshmen in college are very important, because close interaction with fellow students or peers can make it possible to provide mutual guidance and support about obstacles related to college.

Furthermore, the results of this study are also consistent with the results of data from research conducted by [13], that messages conveyed by peers to one another have proven to be very influential in developing the academic self-efficacy of freshmen. The development of academic self-efficacy that is influenced by peers can differ significantly, which can increase and also weaken academic self-efficacy.

The results of research conducted by [13], show that by having a conversation about their experiences at the right time, accompanied by encouragement from someone trusted, students can successfully avoid social persuasion that can weaken the academic self-efficacy of their peers. However, the results of this study are not in following per under with the results of research conducted by [22] of freshmen in civil engineering at the Faculty of Engineering, Diponegoro University. Based on these results, it is known that there is no significant relationship between peer social support and academic self-efficacy in freshmen of Civil Engineering of the Faculty of Engineering at Diponegoro University. The results in this study can be supported by the characteristics that are most important for emerging adults, namely the quality of individualistic characters [23]. Various studies suggest that the two main criteria as emerging adults are accepting responsibility for themselves and making their own decisions [24]–[26]. Both of these criteria require emerging adults to become independent individuals [23]. Thus, peer social support in the study did not have a significant relationship with academic self-efficacy in freshmen engineering at the Faculty of Engineering, Diponegoro University because being responsible for oneself and making one's own decisions was the main criterion as an emerging adult. Apart from the results that showed a positive and significant correlation between peer social support and academic self-efficacy among freshmen of psychology department at BN University, this study has the limitation, it is related to the limited participants involved in this study, and therefore the results of this study has not been able to generalize for other students. The entire sample of this study only consists of freshmen of psychology department at BN University, so the results of this study could not be made generalizations for freshmen in other majors and other universities. Furthermore, the result of the study helps the effort for sustainable learning activities for freshmen students.

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