

The Role of Peer Support in Preventing Risky Social Behavior (Promiscuity)

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Abstract: One of the prominent issues among adolescents is the problem of risky social behavior, including promiscuity. Peer support plays a significant role in preventing such behaviors among adolescents. This study aims to analyze the role of peer social support in preventing risky social behavior within the Pablo community in Pergulaan Village. The subject of this study consisted of 33 adolescents. The saturated sampling technique was used, in which the entire population was taken as the sample. The research employed a quantitative method, and data collection was conducted using questionnaires. The data were analyzed using simple linear regression. The results showed that peer support was high. The linear regression analysis indicated a T-value of 8.044, which is greater than the T-table value of 1.695, with a significance level of 0.000. According to the criterion that if the significance value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted, and if the value is greater than 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected, the findings support the hypothesis. The results demonstrated that the hypothesis was accepted, with a value of 0.676 or 67.6%. Therefore, the higher the level of peer support, the better the prevention of risky social behavior. Social support has proven to play a positive role in preventing promiscuity. This shows that peer social support has a role in coping with social stressful environments. It can thus be concluded that it is important for adolescents to have adequate social support to prevent risky social behavior.

Keywords: Peer Support, Risky Social Behavior, Adolescents, Promiscuity.

1 Introduction

Free association is a phenomenon frequently observed among today's adolescents. This behavior often contravenes societal expectations, including religious and moral norms. The issue of free association among teenagers remains complex, particularly with the rapid advancement of technology that facilitates access to information. Such technological progress significantly influences societal lifestyles, especially those of adolescents. Adolescence is a transitional period toward adulthood, during which individuals are expected to learn responsibility and to think and act in accordance with social norms. However, current trends in modernization have, in fact, created greater opportunities for teenagers to access information related to free association with ease [1].

Free association is a negative behavior and not a newly emerging issue. It has become a significant concern in many countries, not only in Indonesia. The term "free association" is composed of two elements: "association," which refers to interactions or contact between

individuals and groups, and "free," which implies a lack of constraints by rules, expectations, or obligations imposed by religious and moral standards. Consequently, free association describes behaviors that transgress the boundaries of societal norms, duties, and expectations, often disregarding feelings of shame [2]. This phenomenon encompasses a range of negative behaviors, including drug abuse, premarital sex, alcohol consumption, and other risky activities. Free association can have serious adverse effects on adolescent development and well-being, such as reduced academic achievement, physical and mental health problems, and an increased risk of involvement in criminal activities.

In a relatively short period, the issue of promiscuity among teenagers has continued to rise at an alarming rate. Many adolescents, finding themselves in the midst of puberty, struggle to maintain healthy relationships. They are often inclined to comply with the wishes of their peers or those they care about, which can ultimately lead to engaging in free association behaviors [3]. Teenagers become involved in promiscuity for a variety of reasons, including lack of parental supervision, peer pressure, and the influence of technology. Adolescents are typically curious and receptive to new experiences, particularly in today's modern era. This propensity for free association frequently drives them to fulfill their desires and impulses by any means, whether through subtle or overt actions. Individuals exhibiting such behavioral patterns may even resort to criminal activities if their desires are not met [4]. In Pergulaan Village, Sei Rampah District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, there are clear indications of free association manifested in behaviors such as premarital sex, brawls, and drug abuse. Interviews with the head of Hamlet 2 in Pergulaan Village revealed that six residents reported the loss of livestock, including goats, cows, and chickens. It was discovered that these thefts were committed by teenagers engaging in free association, motivated by a desire to acquire items such as cigarettes, illegal drugs, and weapons like machetes for brawling. Furthermore, as a consequence of premarital sex, two residents became pregnant outside of marriage, dropped out of school, and one subsequently divorced. The parents of these teenagers appeared indifferent to their children's actions. Additionally, there was a violent brawl involving teenagers from Hamlet 2 and Hamlet 4, resulting in injuries and distress among villagers. The prevalence of free association has had detrimental effects on the Pergulaan Village community, creating an atmosphere of unrest and anxiety.

Adolescents are often driven to engage in promiscuous behavior due to a lack of parental attention, peer influence, and advancements in technology. Teenagers are typically eager to experiment with new experiences, especially in the context of modern society. Within their social environments, they interact with peers who may exert both positive and negative influences. Peer influence is a major contributing factor to promiscuity, highlighting the importance of social support from peers as a preventive measure.

As social beings, individuals require interaction to support their psychological well-being. Peer support is a particularly significant form of social support during transitional periods such as adolescence and young adulthood. At this stage, individuals are in the process of discovering and developing their identities, with peers playing a crucial role by reflecting the values and norms present within their social groups.

Social support from peers can enhance an individual's well-being by reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness. Peers can also provide valuable information regarding access to health services and the benefits of adopting health-promoting behaviors. Additionally, such support fosters positive mental health, offers motivation, reduces maladaptive behaviors, mitigates risks, and assists individuals in recovering from physical illnesses. [5].

Individuals who receive substantial social support from their peers tend to have more positive life experiences, higher self-esteem, and a more optimistic outlook compared to those

with limited peer support [6]. Research by Hughes, Heather, Susan, and Margaret (2005) demonstrated that peer support can enhance hope, a sense of belonging, and purpose in life. In this context, peer support plays a pivotal role in either preventing or facilitating promiscuity among adolescents and young adults [7].

Based on this rationale, the author is interested in conducting research entitled " The Role of Peer Support in Preventing Risky Social Behavior (Promiscuity)"

2 Research Method

This research employed a quantitative approach. The subjects of the study were adolescents from the Pablo community. The population consisted of 33 individuals, and a saturated sampling technique was used, resulting in a sample size identical to the population (33 participants). Data collection methods included questionnaires and documentation. The quantitative data were analyzed using simple linear regression analysis.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Level of Peer Social Support Among Members of the Pablo Community

Social support can be derived from interactions within social networks, including family, partners, communities, and friends. Individuals who receive social support often experience feelings of respect, love, and connectedness to their social environment, such as their community and family, who are able to provide assistance when needed [8]. The results of the data analysis regarding the level of peer social support among members of the Pablo community are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Recapitulation of Average Values of Peer Social Support

No.	Indicator	Average value	Category
1.	Information support	2.43	Enough good
2.	Emotional support	2.47	Enough good
3.	Instrumental support	2.65	Good
4.	Friendship support	2.59	Good
Total		2.53	Good

The results of the author's analysis of the Pablo Community indicate that peer social support falls within the "good" category. This conclusion is based on the calculated average score using a value scale and further analysis conducted with Microsoft Excel, which revealed an average peer social support score of 2.53. According to the value scale, a score of 2.53 is categorized as good. Therefore, it can be concluded that peer social support within the Pablo Community is positive. For greater clarity, the data on peer social support are illustrated in the following graph:

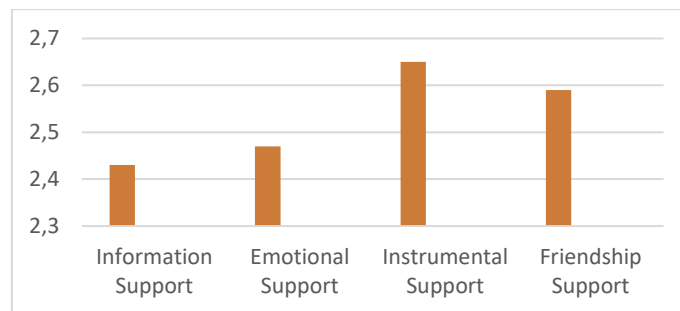


Fig. 1. Peer Social Support Graph

As shown in the figure above, peer social support is divided into four indicators. The highest average score, 2.65, corresponds to the instrumental support indicator, followed by the friendship support indicator at 2.59, the emotional support indicator at 2.47, and the information support indicator at 2.45. Overall, the graph demonstrates that the Pabullo Community provides peer social support in Pergulaan Village with an average score of 2.53, categorizing the overall level of support as good.

Peer social support consists of several forms, which are used as indicators in this research. Information support refers to the provision of advice and relevant information to help individuals address problems. In this study, it can be concluded that members of the Pabullo Community receive adequate information support. This finding indicates that community members actively provide one another with relevant advice and information. However, if the information is obtained from inappropriate sources, it can influence individual behavior negatively. According to Mutia and Kumolohadi (2005), inadequate information support from parents and peers may lead teenagers to seek knowledge from other sources, which can contribute to delinquent behavior among adolescents [9].

Emotional support refers to the attention, affection, and concern provided by peers within the Pabullo Community. The findings of this study indicate that emotional support among community members is quite strong. This is consistent with research on social support and self-regulated learning, which highlights the importance of socio-emotional skills—specifically, the ability to monitor one's own feelings, build connections with peers, and understand current situations and conditions. The research found a positive relationship between social support and self-regulated learning: the higher the level of social support received by adolescents, the greater their capacity for self-regulated learning. Conversely, when adolescents receive minimal social support, their self-regulated learning tends to be lower as well [10].

Within the Pabullo Community, peers demonstrate emotional support by showing attention, care, and concern for one another. The results of this study confirm that community members provide one another with sufficient emotional support.

Instrumental support encompasses both direct and indirect forms of assistance. This study concludes that the instrumental support provided among community members is rated as good, indicating that members effectively help one another, both directly and indirectly.

Additionally, another important form of peer social support is manifested through the friendship support indicator. Friendship support refers to spending time together, offering reciprocal feedback, providing mutual understanding, and giving encouragement among community members. The findings of this study indicate that friendship support within the community is also classified as good. In other words, friendship support contributes to mutual understanding, reinforcement, constructive feedback, and shared experiences among members.

3.2 Level of Prevention of Free Association in the Pablo Community

Based on the results of the research analysis conducted in the Pablo Community, it was found that the prevention of free association falls into the "very good" category. This conclusion is supported by the calculated average score using a value scale and further analysis with Microsoft Excel, which yielded an average prevention score of 2.52—placing it within the good category. Therefore, it can be concluded that the prevention of free association in the Pablo Community is effective. The detailed data processing results are presented in the table below:

Table 2. Recapitulation of Average Values for Preventing Promiscuity

No.	Indicator	Average value	Category
1.	Prevention of Free Sex Problems	2.50	Enough good
2.	Smoking Problem Prevention	2.49	Enough good
3.	Prevention of Brawl Problems	2.34	Enough good
4.	Drug Problem Prevention	2.78	Good
Total		2.52	Good

The results of the data analysis indicate that the average score for preventing free association is 2.52, which falls within the "good" category. For greater clarity, the data regarding the prevention of free association are illustrated in the following graph:

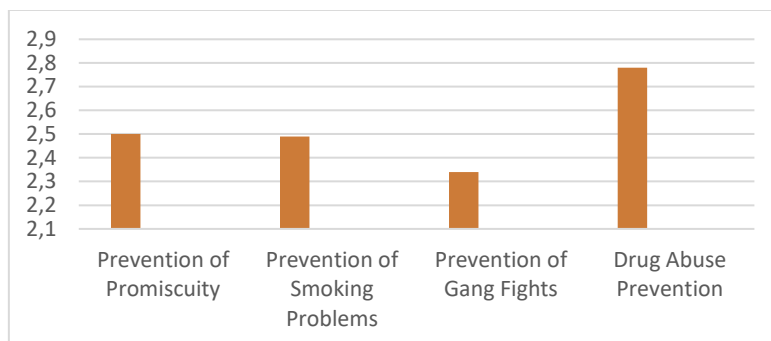


Fig. 2. Graph of Prevention of Promiscuity

As illustrated in the figure above, peer social support is divided into four indicators. The highest average score, 2.78, pertains to the prevention of drug-related problems, followed by a score of 2.50 for the prevention of free sex, 2.49 for the prevention of smoking, and 2.34 for the prevention of brawls. Based on the graph, it can be concluded that the peer social support provided by the Pablo Community in Pergulaan Village has an overall average score of 2.52, placing it in the "good" category.

The prevention of free association comprises several forms, which serve as research indicators. Prevention of issues related to premarital sex, for instance, involves providing education about free sex and its potential consequences. This study indicates that efforts to raise awareness and prevent risky sexual behavior within the Pablo Community have been

implemented fairly well. Preventive measures include educating youth—often led by parents—such as discouraging their children from engaging in unrestricted dating.

This aligns with findings by Setia Budi (2021), which suggest that adolescents attempt to prevent free association by avoiding dating behaviors that exceed reasonable boundaries and are not regulated by law or religion. Recently, this phenomenon has become increasingly common and trendy across various age groups, from teenagers to adults. Although dating is ideally a period of mutual exploration and understanding, in practice it frequently deviates from its original purpose. Many teenagers date in secluded settings, which increases the risk of deviant and immoral behavior [11].

Prevention of smoking involves educating individuals about the dangers and consequences of smoking. Preventive efforts may include avoiding smoking altogether and fostering environments where the risks and negative impacts of smoking are well understood. Regarding the prevention of brawling, the focus is on providing information about the nature and consequences of such behavior. This study found that brawl prevention efforts by the Pabullo Community are rated as fairly good, as community members strive to raise awareness about brawling and encourage the rejection of invitations to participate in such acts. This approach is consistent with the research conducted by Abas (2021), which identifies both punitive and non-punitive methods for preventing brawls.

Punitive methods involve taking legal action against individuals involved in brawling, in accordance with existing laws and regulations, and ensuring that offenders are processed through the legal system. Repressive measures entail law enforcement intervention by the police following the occurrence of criminal acts. Conversely, non-punitive (preventive) measures focus on prevention, such as persuasive approaches to potential offenders. These preventive strategies may include counseling, organizing religious or community activities, and fostering good communication with parents and peers. Providing information about the consequences of brawling, which can be delivered by peers or family members, also serves as an important preventive measure [12].

In terms of drug prevention, the indicator involves providing education about the dangers and consequences of drug use. The findings of this study indicate that drug prevention efforts within the Pabullo Community are rated as good. This suggests that teenagers in the community are able to firmly reject and are not interested in trying drugs because they understand the potential consequences. Additionally, the Pabullo Community offers opportunities and spaces for youth to participate in positive activities, such as sports, which help to prevent involvement with drugs. These efforts are consistent with the research of Djibran (2024), which highlights that youth participation in various positive activities can help divert their attention from drugs. Such activities include engagement in sports, the arts, volunteer work, and social initiatives [13].

3.3 The Role of Peer Social Support in Preventing Free Association

Social support can arise from interpersonal interactions within social networks, including family, partners, communities, and groups of friends. Individuals who receive social support tend to feel respected, valued, and integrated into their social environment, including their community and family, who are available to provide assistance when needed [8].

Peer support is one of the most significant forms of social support, particularly during transitional periods such as adolescence and young adulthood. During this time, individuals are in the process of seeking and forming their own identities. Peers embody important beliefs and

standards within a social group, making their influence particularly significant in this developmental stage. In the context of preventing promiscuity among adolescents, peers play a crucial role by providing both guidance and invitations toward positive or negative behaviors. For this reason, parental involvement is also essential in monitoring and understanding the social environments and associations of their children.

Based on the field data collected, the researchers processed the data using SPSS 25. A normality test was conducted to determine whether the data followed a normal distribution. Using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, the analysis produced a significance level of 0.200. As this value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed.

Furthermore, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the role of peer social support in preventing promiscuity within the Pabllo community. The regression equation was $Y = 43.307 + 0.153X$, with a significance value of 0.00, which is less than 0.05, indicating that peer social support has a significant effect on the prevention of promiscuity. The coefficient of determination was 67.6%, meaning that 67.6% of the variation in the prevention of promiscuity can be explained by peer social support, while the remaining 32.4% is attributable to other factors not explored in this study.

The hypothesis test produced a significance value (2-tailed) of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a), confirming that social support from peers has a positive influence on preventing promiscuity in the Pabllo community, Pergulaan Village, Sei Rampah District.

In summary, the findings indicate that peer social support has a significant influence on the prevention of promiscuity within the Pabllo community. The support provided among community members primarily takes the form of informational support, such as sharing advice and relevant information to address problems. Generally, members of the Pabllo community provide each other with accurate advice and information; however, if information is sourced from inappropriate parties, it may adversely affect behavior.

Additionally, social support from peers significantly limits opportunities for risky social behaviors by offering attention, affection, and care. Friendship support within the community is characterized by spending time together, providing mutual feedback and understanding, and offering reinforcement. The study found that the friendship support among community members is rated as good, suggesting that it effectively promotes understanding, encouragement, and the sharing of experiences.

These findings demonstrate that peer support functions as a vital reciprocal mechanism, fostering mutual respect, shared responsibility, and teamwork, as well as providing emotional understanding and empathy. Such support enables individuals to share emotional experiences and overcome psychological challenges.

In the context of preventing promiscuity, peer social support within the Pabllo community acts as a preventive measure. These efforts are complemented by the roles of parents and the broader environment, including family and friends, who serve as primary agents of socialization in character formation. The family and surrounding environment play a crucial role through advice, supervision, and preventive measures—such as setting boundaries and providing information about the risks and consequences of free association.

4 Conclusion

Based on the analysis presented in this thesis regarding the role of peer social support in preventing promiscuity within the Pablo community in Pergulaan Village, Sei Rampah District, several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

- a. The findings of this study indicate that the level of peer social support in the Pablo community, Pergulaan Village, Sei Rampah District, falls within the "good" category, with an average score of 2.53. This assessment is based on responses to questionnaires administered to 33 participants and analyzed using descriptive statistics. These results suggest that peer social support plays a meaningful role in enabling some members of the Pablo community to prevent promiscuity.
- b. The level of prevention of promiscuity in the Pablo community, according to the analysis, is also categorized as "good," with an average score of 2.52. This conclusion is derived from the analysis of questionnaires distributed to 33 respondents and confirmed through descriptive statistical methods. These findings indicate that efforts to prevent promiscuity within the Pablo community are at a commendable level.
- c. Peer social support is shown to have a significant effect on preventing promiscuity in the Pablo community, Pergulaan Village, Sei Rampah District. With a significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. The coefficient of determination is 0.676, or 67.6%, indicating that the role of peer social support accounts for 67.6% of the variance in the prevention of promiscuity within the Pablo community, while the remaining 32.4% is attributable to other factors not addressed in this study.

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