

## Opinions of Intern Nursing Students About Being a Peer Educator in Nursing Skills Laboratory

İntörn Hemşirelik Öğrencilerinin Hemşirelik Beceri Laboratuvarında Akran Eğitici Olmaya İlişkin Görüşleri

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### ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to determine the opinions of intern nursing students about being a peer educator in the nursing skills laboratory. This descriptive study was carried out with 119 intern nursing students who participated as peer educators in the nursing skills laboratory. The data were collected at the end of 2018-2019 academic year. The data of the research were collected using the Individual Characteristics Form and Peer Education Opinion Form. The majority of the intern students who participated in the nursing skills laboratory as peer educators stated that they were satisfied with this teaching method. The students stated that this method had a positive effect on their cognitive, psychomotor and affective development. 90.8% of the students stated that they had good relations with their peers and 80.7% of them wanted to be a peer educator again. It is recommended to use peer education method in nursing education by integrating it with existing teaching methods.

**Keywords:** Peer Assisted Learning, Nursing, Nursing Skills Training

### ÖZ

Bu araştırma, intörn hemşirelik öğrencilerinin hemşirelik beceri laboratuvarında akran eğitici olmaya ilişkin görüşlerini belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. Tanımlayıcı tipteki bu araştırma, hemşirelik becerileri laboratuvarına akran eğitici olarak katılan 119 intörn hemşirelik öğrencisi ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veriler 2018-2019 eğitim öğretim yılı sonunda toplanmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri Bireysel Özellikler Formu ve Akran Eğitimi Görüş Formu kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Hemşirelik becerileri laboratuvarına akran eğitici olarak katılan intörn hemşirelik öğrencilerinin çoğunluğu bu öğretim yönteminden memnun olduğunu belirtmiştir. Öğrenciler bu yöntemin bilişsel, psikomotor ve duyuşsal gelişimlerini pozitif yönde etkilediğini ifade etmişlerdir. Öğrencilerin %90,8'i akranlarıyla iyi ilişkiler kurduğunu ve %80,7'si tekrar akran eğitici olmak istediğini ifade etmiştir. Akran eğitimi yönteminin hemşirelik eğitiminde mevcut öğretim yöntemleri ile bütünleştirilerek kullanılması önerilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Akran Destekli Öğrenme, Hemşirelik, Hemşirelik Becerileri Eğitimi

*In the study, permission was obtained from the relevant institution and the Ethics Committee of the University (20/2018).*

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## INTRODUCTION

Nursing education aims to provide students with knowledge and skills related to nursing, and develop attitudes that will enable students to adopt professional ethical principles and values and turn it into professional behaviors. It also aims to develop affective domain skills of students as communication, collaboration and creativity.<sup>1, 2</sup> In order to train students for these purposes, nursing education should be organized in such a way as to provide these aims.<sup>2, 3</sup>

The development of psychomotor skills, which constitute an fundamental part of nursing education, has an indispensable importance in transferring knowledge, skills and attitudes learned to the student into practice.<sup>4-6</sup> For this reason, educators used various teaching techniques to teach these skills to the students in the best way.<sup>7</sup> It is stated in the literature that peer education method can be used for teaching psychomotor skills to nursing students.<sup>8</sup>

The peer relationship that is effective in every period of human life is the interaction of peer group with each other. Peer support is that a student helps other students and sometimes adults by using their own skills.<sup>9, 10</sup> Peer education, the foundations of which are very old, is increasingly included in pre-graduate, post-graduate and continuing education programs. Peer education can be used in many areas as small group studies, article evaluation, clinical meetings, evaluation of critical events.<sup>11</sup>

In peer education process, both peer learners and peer educators have important

achievements. Peer Assisted Learning method facilitates learning, develops critical thinking and cognitive skills, helps students evaluate their own performance and increases their communication skills. Peer Assisted Learning increases motivation of students and ensures that information is permanently learned. It also improves collaboration and leadership skills of students, and also enables students to plan their careers and learn to learn.<sup>9, 12-15</sup> At the same time, the opportunity of peer educators to teach, demonstrate or discuss what they have learned before enables them to gain in-depth knowledge on this subject. Peer educators are exposed to many questions during peer education. This creates an incentive for them to review their knowledge and improve themselves.<sup>12</sup>

Nursing skill laboratories are important environments that provide students with the opportunity to learn by doing. The presence of peer educators in the skill laboratories, which is an enjoyable but stressful environment for students, makes students comfortable. The fact that students can talk more easily about skills and ask questions with peer educators has a positive effect on their learning. It is thought that peer educators can help peer learners by remembering their education process while having teaching experience and this will make them feel good. In other words, peer education is thought to improve peer educators as well as peer learners. This study was conducted to determine the views of intern nursing students who are peer educators about peer education.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This descriptive study was carried out in the Nursing Department of a Faculty of Health Sciences at a university. In 2018-2019 academic year, 120 internship nursing students participated in nursing skills laboratory as peer educators. No calculations were made for sample selection, a student who was not present during the data

collection was excluded from the study, and the study was completed with 119 intern nursing students who agreed to participate in the study.

### Data Collection Tools

The data of the research were collected using the Individual Characteristics Form and Peer Education Opinion Form.

**Individual Characteristics Form:** It was created by researchers by researching the relevant literature.<sup>12, 16-22</sup> The form includes questions about the socio-demographic characteristics of the students and their need for friend support in their educational life.

**Peer Education Opinion Form:** The self-report questionnaire created by studying the related literature<sup>12, 16, 19, 21, 22</sup> consists of 12 questions. The questions were prepared with three options in order to obtain the opinions of the students regarding Peer Assisted Learning.

### Data Collection

In the department of nursing where the study was conducted, the courses are carried out in the first three years as theoretical and practical, and in the fourth year, it is carried out as an internship education. Nursing Skills Laboratory in which basic nursing skills are taught are included in both periods of the first grade and in the first semester of the second grade. The theoretical part of the practices are done as a class course. Then, in the nursing skills laboratory, every student is provided to learn by doing basic nursing practices. The skill trainings are conducted with the instructor and the intern students who are peer educators.

The intern students to be assigned for peer educators were selected at the beginning of the 2018-2019 academic year. Which intern students will participate in which skill practice was made by the instructors responsible for the skills laboratory. Some criteria are followed when selecting intern students. These are the following; having done the practice before, having a success average of over 2.50, participation in re-training, and volunteering to be a peer educator. A total of 85 hours of skill training was carried out in the skill laboratory, which is different for each skill training. Different intern students are assigned for each skill training. The intern students did peer education to first and second grade students who were demonstrating skills on models for the first time. The intern students were assigned to practice skills as vital signs, injections, phlebotomy, peripheral

intravenous infusion, oxygen therapy, tracheostomy care, suctioning, administering enemas, ostomy management, stoma and skin care, inserting nasogastric tubes, feeding, urinary catheterization, surgical asepsis and hygiene practices, etc. Although peer educators had taken nursing skills training lessons before, peer educators are re-trained about the skills about a week before the skill training. First of all, the intern students are reminded about the theoretical part of the skill training and they are given the opportunity to repeatedly demonstrate the nursing skill on models in the skill laboratory. The intern students are asked to practice until they obtain sufficient competence in skills. Skill training was taught according to the skill steps in the Basic Nursing Skills Learning Guidebook.<sup>23</sup> This guidebook includes the skill checklists. Skill checklists were also used to evaluate intern students. Each intern student is assigned to only one basic nursing skills lesson. Each intern student demonstrated the practice to own group under the supervision of the lecturer. According to the characteristics of the practice, each peer educator provided group training for 15-20 students on average.

At the end of the spring semester of 2018-2019 academic year (May-June 2019), when all skill trainings are finished, fourth grade intern nursing students participating in peer education were asked to fill out the questionnaire. Students participating in peer education were gathered in a classroom by the researcher responsible for the practice and asked to fill out the questionnaires in class. Additionally, students' feedback was received within the scope of institutional improvement efforts.

### Ethical Considerations

In order to conduct the study, the permission of the institution and the Ethics Committee from the University Social Humanities Ethics Committee (20/2018) were obtained. The aim of the research was explained to the students participating in the research and their written consents were obtained.

## Data Analysis

The data of the study were evaluated in IBM SPSS Statistics 21.0 statistical package program (IBM Corp, Armonk, NY). Descriptive statistics are given as number (n), percentage (%), mean  $\pm$  standard deviation

and median. The distribution of student opinions about peer education by gender and needing friend support was evaluated by Chi-square analysis. In all comparisons,  $p < 0.05$  value was considered significant.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean age of the peer educator students is  $22.4 \pm 1.19$ . 76.5% of this students are female, 96.6% have middle income level. The mother of 68.1% of the students and the father of 52.1% of them are primary school graduate. 50.4% of the students lived with their family members during their university education and 70.6% of them needed friend support in their educational life (Table 1).

**Table 1. Individual Characteristics of Peer Educator Students**

Characteristics	
Age (Mean $\pm$ SD)	22.4 $\pm$ 1.19
	<i>n</i> (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	91 (76.5)
Male	28 (23.5)
<b>Family income status</b>	
High	2 (1.7)
Middle	115 (96.6)
Low	2 (1.7)
<b>Mother's education</b>	
Literate	17 (14.3)
Primary education	81 (68.1)
High school	17 (14.3)
Faculty	4 (3.3)
<b>Father's education</b>	
Literate	10 (8.4)
Primary education	62 (52.1)
High school	25 (21.0)
Faculty	22 (18.5)
<b>Place of residence during university education</b>	
Dormitory	45 (37.8)
With family	60 (50.4)
With relatives/friends	14 (11.8)
<b>Need for friend support in education life</b>	
Yes	84 (70.6)
No	35 (29.4)

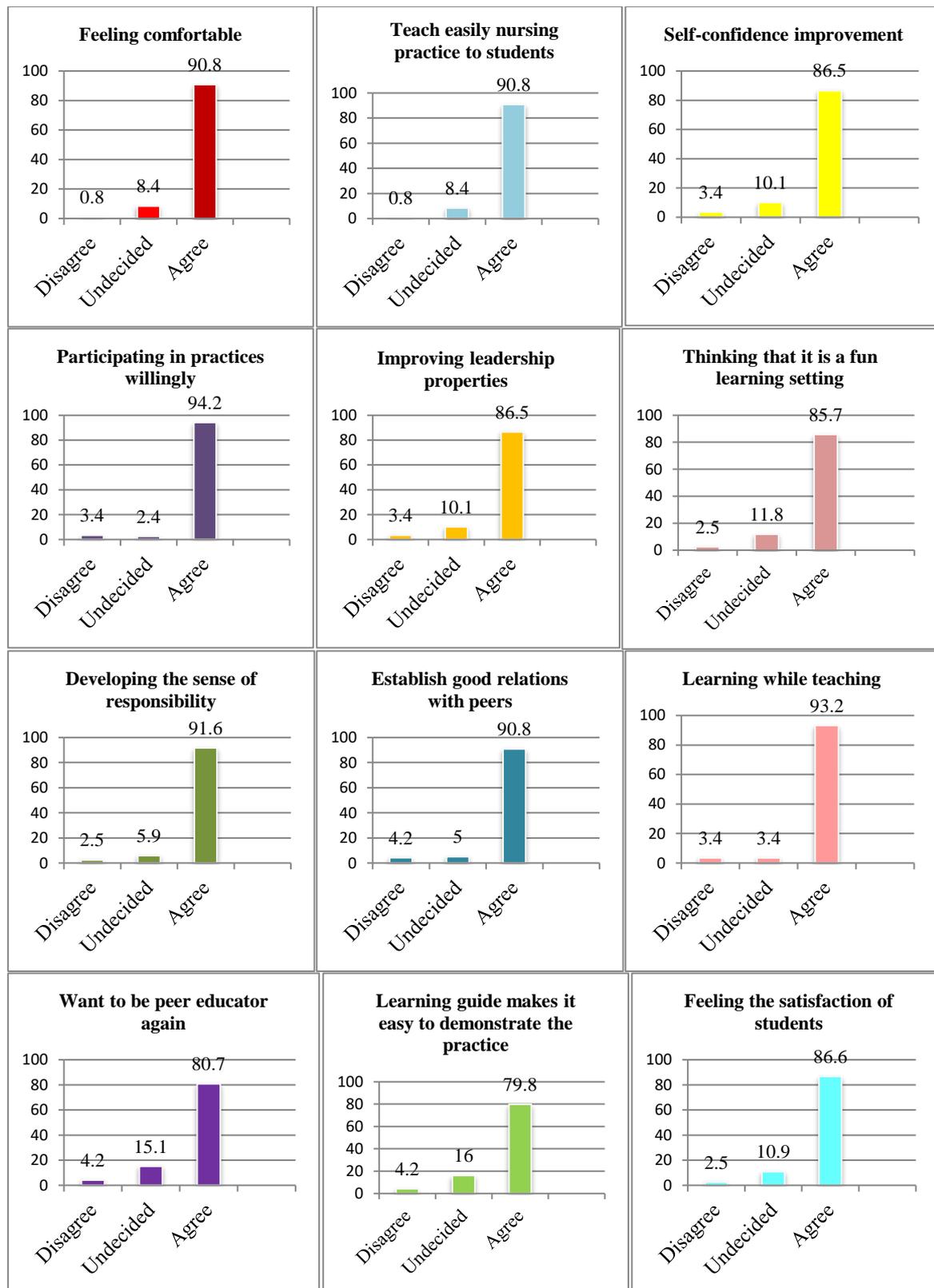
As can be seen in Graphic 1, the majority of the intern students who attended the skill practices as peer educators were satisfied with this training method. The students stated

that this method improved their many skills. 90.8% of the students felt comfortable during the practices, 94.2% of them participated in the skill trainings willingly, 90.8% of them established good relationship with their peers and 80.7% of them wanted to participate as peer educators again. In addition, 86.5% of the students stated that self-confidence increased while showing the practices, 86.5% have improved their leadership characteristics, 91.6% developed their sense of taking responsibility and 93.2% learned the practices better while teaching.

Skill trainings aim to enable students to combine theory and practice, be ready for real life and gain self-learning experience as well as improve psychomotor skills of students.<sup>24-26</sup> Peer education, which is one of the important methods suggested to be used in achieving these goals<sup>27-29</sup> allows students to experience the learning and teaching process by taking responsibility. Peer education, facilitating the collaborative learning process, encourages students to discover their disabilities and correct their wrong knowledge.<sup>30</sup> In accordance with the literature, 93.2% of peer educators stated they learned the practices better while teaching. It is believed intern students who are instructors with peer education feel the responsibility of this task, work outside their education to perform well and complete their lack of knowledge and learn better. In the study in which Ercan and Yıldırım Orhan (2016) investigated the teaching and learning approach based on peer teaching in the individual instrument and teaching lesson, the students stated that peer education was also beneficial for their education and enabled them to improve. The students said peer education provided them experience and learned to think like a teacher while teaching.

They also stated Peer Assisted Learning allows them to think about things they did

not think before and make them aware of their shortcomings.<sup>31</sup>



**Graphic 1.** Student Opinions about Nursing Skill Training with Peer Education

**Table 2. The Opinions of the Students about Peer Education according to Gender and Need of Friend Support in Education Life**

Opinions		Gender		Need for friend support in education life	
		Female	Male	Yes	No
Feeling comfortable	Agree	82 (75.9)	26 (24.1)	78 (72.2)	30 (27.8)
	Undecided	8 (80.0)	2 (20.0)	6 (60.0)	4 (40.0)
	Disagree	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)
	<i>p</i>		0.821		0.215
Teach easily nursing practice to students	Agree	81 (75.0)	27 (25.0)	78 (72.2)	30 (27.8)
	Undecided	9 (90.0)	1 (10.0)	6 (60.0)	4 (40.0)
	Disagree	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)
	<i>p</i>		0.483		0.215
Self-confidence improvement	Agree	87 (76.3)	27 (23.7)	81 (71.1)	33 (28.9)
	Undecided	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)
	Disagree	3 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (66.7)	1 (33.3)
	<i>p</i>		0.427		0.802
Participating in practices willingly	Agree	84 (75.0)	28 (25.0)	80 (71.4)	32 (28.6)
	Undecided	3 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (66.7)	1 (33.3)
	Disagree	4 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (50.0)	2 (50.0)
	<i>p</i>		0.318		0.645
Improving leadership properties	Agree	77 (74.8)	26 (25.2)	73 (70.9)	30 (29.1)
	Undecided	11 (91.7)	1 (8.3)	8 (66.7)	4 (33.3)
	Disagree	3 (75.0)	1 (25.0)	3 (75.0)	1 (25.0)
	<i>p</i>		0.425		0.937
Thinking that it is a fun learning setting	Agree	75 (73.5)	27 (26.5)	74 (72.5)	28 (27.5)
	Undecided	13 (92.9)	1 (7.1)	8 (57.1)	6 (42.9)
	Disagree	3 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (66.7)	1 (33.3)
	<i>p</i>		0.174		0.489
Developing the sense of responsibility	Agree	83 (76.1)	26 (23.9)	77 (70.6)	32 (29.4)
	Undecided	5 (71.4)	2 (28.6)	5 (71.4)	2 (28.6)
	Disagree	3 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (66.7)	1 (33.3)
	<i>p</i>		0.598		0.988
Establish good relations with peers	Agree	81 (75.0)	27 (25.0)	75 (69.4)	33 (30.6)
	Undecided	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)	6 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
	Disagree	5 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (60.0)	2 (40.0)
	<i>p</i>		0.401		0.242
Learning while teaching	Agree	84 (75.7)	27 (24.3)	80 (72.1)	31 (27.9)
	Undecided	3 (75.0)	1 (25.0)	2 (50.0)	2 (50.0)
	Disagree	4 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (50.0)	2 (50.0)
	<i>p</i>		0.529		0.417
Want to be peer educator again	Agree	73 (76.0)	23 (24.0)	68 (70.8)	28 (29.2)
	Undecided	13 (72.2)	5 (27.8)	13 (72.2)	5 (27.8)
	Disagree	5 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (60.0)	2 (40.0)
	<i>p</i>		0.421		0.862
Learning guidebook makes it easy to demonstrate the practice	Agree	70 (73.7)	25 (26.3)	65 (68.4)	30 (31.6)
	Undecided	16 (84.2)	3 (15.8)	15 (78.9)	4 (21.1)
	Disagree	5 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (80.0)	1 (20.0)
	<i>p</i>		0.275		0.586
Feeling the satisfaction of students	Agree	79 (76.7)	24 (23.3)	73 (70.9)	30 (29.1)
	Undecided	9 (69.2)	4 (30.8)	9 (69.2)	4 (30.8)
	Disagree	3 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (66.7)	1 (33.3)
	<i>p</i>		0.521		0.981

In another study conducted with senior nursing students, Peer Assisted Learning increased the knowledge of students and

confidence in their teaching abilities and this situation reflected positively on their own learning.<sup>32</sup> Students who learn to teach

someone else are in a more active direction and their gains are increasing.<sup>12</sup>

The vast majority of the students who participated in our study thought that self-confidence increased (86.6%), they participated in practices willingly (94.2%) and there was a fun learning environment (85.7%) in the nursing skills laboratory. In a systematic review that studies peer education in nursing, it has been stated that peer education improves clinical skills, problem solving and critical thinking of students while increasing their self-confidence.<sup>33</sup> Şenyuva and Kocaağalar Akince (2020) stated peer education improves cognitive and psychomotor skills of learning process, increases their self-confidence and academic success.<sup>8</sup>

Peer education improves critical thinking, communication, leadership skills of students, and provides autonomy and professional behavior.<sup>34</sup> In the study, the majority of students (86.6%) stated their leadership characteristics improved. Peer educators, guessing what peer learners will have difficulty doing, by remembering their own training process, try to facilitate these difficulties for their peers. Peer educators, who feel they manage this process successfully and their peers are satisfied, are believed to feel like leaders by believing that they have successfully fulfilled their responsibilities and achieved their goals. It is also stated in the literature students and peer educators may be disappointed in their peer learning processes due to their passivity, insufficient knowledge and conflicts between them.<sup>30</sup>

In this study, it was determined the students experienced ease in teaching practice, had good relations with their peers and wanted to be peer educators again. It is thought the students do not have a sense of inadequacy in practice due to the repetitive training given to the students before the practice lesson and also the use of the skill guidebook that facilitates skill teaching. The fact that 79.9% of the students think that it is easier to use a learning guide while demonstrating the practices supports this idea.

In this study, it was determined that the opinions of the students regarding peer education did not differ in terms of gender and needing friend support status (Table 2). Korkut and Baser's (2020) study evaluating the opinions of students about the peer education approach in nursing skills education, it was stated that the opinions of peer learners about peer education were similar according to gender ( $p>0.05$ ). However it was stated that decreased stress of students during skill training and their willing participation in skill training differs in terms of their friend's need for physical, academic and emotional support ( $p<0.05$ ). The majority of the students who needed friend support stated that they participated in the skill trainings willingly and their stress decreased during skill training.<sup>35</sup>

### Limitations

One limitation of the study is that it was conducted only with students in a nursing department. The use of a self-report questionnaire is another limitation.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the study, it was determined that the nursing students who were peer educators were satisfied with the peer education method and thought that this method contributed to their development. It is recommended to use peer education method in nursing education by integrating it

with existing teaching methods. In future studies, it may be recommended to conduct qualitative studies that address students' views on peer education in more detail and to study with samples from different nursing departments.

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