



Peer Mentoring Among Undergraduate Medical Students: Experience from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Peer mentoring is one of the mentoring essential components in any higher institution of learning. In the Medical Faculty of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), this mentoring system has existed long but has not undergone any formal evaluation. **Objective:** The main objective of this study is to determine the perception of peer mentoring among medical students of Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS), UNIMAS. **Method:** It was a cross-sectional study using self-administered questionnaire. All medical undergraduate students of FMHS were recruited. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 22. **Result:** A total of 234 respondents participated in this study. Peer mentoring system was preferred against other mentoring system. Majority of the respondents reported that academic gain was the main benefits they gained from peer mentoring system. Negative attitude of the mentee and poor time management for the meeting were the top two worst experience encountered by both mentors and mentees respectively. More than half of the mentor and mentee perceived that peer mentoring system was beneficial to them compared to other systems, with reason that the interaction between student themselves were more easier and comfortable. Nevertheless, there should be more interaction between the mentors and mentees. **Conclusion:** The findings indicated there is a positive contribution of peer mentoring towards the mentoring system of the faculty. There is a need to relook at the current mentoring system and consider peer mentoring to improve the student support.

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Introduction

Mentoring is a beneficial relationship between a mentor and a mentee, which highlights the progression of vocation and profession fulfilment for both of the mentor and mentee. It involves both of them, where their relationship is dynamic and evolving over the time [1,2]. Due to the

mutual benefits mentoring carries for both of the members, it plays a critical role in all stages of a person's career. In higher education, mentoring is very crucial since it helps new students to minimize their anxiety while standardizing and decreasing their restlessness, especially for those students who enter university for the first time [3,4]. It also helps to develop a positive attitude

and serves as a deterrent of risky youth behavior [5]. In medical schools, mentoring is critical for students to learn and model their professional behaviors, such as having good attitude, empathy for the patients and also the quality of being honest to themselves and others from their mentor [1].

However, peer mentoring also has its shortfalls. Unsuitable pairings in peer mentoring system is one of the common problems that can affect the academic performance of both mentees and mentors, when weak peer mentors are paired with weak mentees. In some circumstances mentees lost their confidence towards their mentors because of the poor quality of mentor's work [3].

Nevertheless, students found becoming a mentor has a rewarding experience. It is proven as literature had shown that mentees are expressed with altruistic reason in becoming mentors in their future [6]. As mentioned by Andrews and Clark [3], major key benefit for student peer mentor in peer mentoring system is by having the chance to obtain enhanced employability skills which enable themselves in providing helpful advices to their mentees and subsequently self-satisfaction is gained when mentors are able to help their mentees. By helping mentees, mentors can also gain self-confidence besides improve their own management, organizational and leadership skills.

In Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, peer mentoring system had already existed when the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) was established. It is known as the "buddy system". Unlike the structured mentor-mentee system established formally under the faculty, peer mentoring is informal and not officially implemented under the faculty medical curriculum. Nevertheless, the peer mentoring through informal feedback was well accepted among the medical students. All year 1 juniors to year 5 seniors participated in this system. Under this peer mentoring system, each of the participants has his or her own "buddy line", which connects and bonds the juniors and seniors

together. Unlike other mentoring systems, the participants of this peer mentoring system can take the role of a mentor and mentee at the same time. The objectives of peer mentoring include promoting and assisting students in academic and professional development besides producing positive role models. It also helps students to develop positive attitude and self-image, good communication and public relation skills, as well as widening the mentor and mentee's horizon and vision were also set to be the aims of this program.

Previous studies have drawn most attention based on mentees' perception and mentors' credibility and have less focus on students' role as mentor and mentee. Furthermore, most studies focused on assessment of formal establishment of mentoring system and little studies has been done on assessing the perception of both mentor and mentee in peer mentoring system, which has been established informally for some time though the focus of mentoring was on mentees. Therefore, the purpose of conducting this study was to determine the perception of mentor and mentee in peer mentoring. It is hope that the findings of this study would help us to understand the establishment of peer mentoring and further improve the mentoring system for the medical programme.

Method

It was a cross-sectional study was carried out among the medical students of Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS), UNIMAS from October of 2013 till January of 2014.

The calculation of sample size for the study was done by using Open Epi Software, version 3.01 [7]. Based on the total population of 519 students with the estimated prevalence from Hryciw et al. [8] research, where it was shown that 63% of the respondents yield positive result from the peer mentoring system, the minimum sample size needed was 234 (including 10% attrition). Based on the sampling frame by student cohort obtained from the Academic Office, all the year 1 to year 5 cohort would have equal number of

mentor and mentee distribution except for year 1, being the reason year 1 students were freshman. A self-administered questionnaire adopted from Hryciw et al.[8] was used as the data collection tool. The questionnaire comprises 3 sections. Section A was used to obtain general information such as socio-demographic of the population, which include respondent's gender, year of study, race and current curriculum phase. Section B contained open-ended questions, where section C consists of close-ended questions.

In section B open-ended questions, there were a total of 13 questions for mentor perspective questionnaires, while 11 questions for mentee perspective questionnaires. Among these questions, the first 7 questions were the same for both mentor and mentee perspective questionnaires, which the respondents were asked regarding the commencement of the peer mentoring system in the faculty, the knowledge of who in charge of peer mentoring system, the pairing method of mentors and mentees, duration of meeting or appointment between mentor and mentee, reasons for meeting and preference for peer mentoring system. In terms of the benefits and worst experience obtained by the respondents, the questions were still the same, but directed to different type of respondents only. For the additional questions which were present in mentor perspective questionnaires were being a mentor give the respondent a worthwhile experience with reasons and their opinion on how does being a mentor affect their future. While the remaining questions were also the same for both mentor and mentee, where it consist of feedbacks and suggestions from the participants to enhance peer mentoring system and their opinion on whether mentor-mentee system or peer mentoring system is more beneficial to them with reasons.

In section C close-ended questions, both mentor and mentee shared the same number of questions. A total of 7 questions with responses using Likert rating scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree or Strongly disagree) was included. In terms of similarities, both the mentor and mentee perspective shared similar components, such as the ability to understand more in studies, higher

confidence level, the different studying skills, and friendship. In the mentor perspective, components such as the development of mentoring skills, closeness to the medical program and motivation in studies were asked. On the other hand, mentee perspective components inquired about positiveness when attending class, time management and experience given to the mentee.

All the questionnaires were distributed with the consent form. The questionnaires were distributed to the respective participants during recess or free period, and collected back on the same day. The respondents could only take one role, either as a mentor or a mentee.

In order to prepare the instrument, a pre-test of the questionnaire was carried out among thirty respondents. The reliability test showed that Cronbach alpha for the perception of peer mentoring among mentor is 0.886 while the perception of peer mentoring among mentee is 0.812.

This study was approved by Universiti Malaysia Sarawak Medical Research Ethic Committee (MREC). Each of the questionnaires was attached with consent form, which contained a brief introduction regarding the study and purpose of the study. They were also informed that all the information obtained would be used solely for the study, and it would remained confidential. The participants were also informed regarding their rights to take part or withdraw from the study at any time.

The data was analyzed using SPSS version 22.0. The data was coded and entered for descriptive and inferential analysis. In measuring the descriptive statistic results, mean and standard deviation were used. The independent t-test was used in order to find the difference of the mean value of dependent variables between the independent variables. The confidence interval was set at 95% (two-sided) and perception which have p-value lesser than 0.05 was taken as significant result.

Result

Table 1. Socio-demographic of the respondents (N=234)

Characteristic	n (%)	
	Mentor (n=91)	Mentee (n=143)
Gender		
Male	24 (26.4)	47 (32.9)
Female	67 (73.6)	96 (67.1)
Ethnicity		
Malay	52 (57.1)	65 (45.5)
Chinese	26 (28.6)	59 (41.2)
Indian	3 (3.3)	6 (4.2)
Others	10 (11.0)	13 (9.1)
Year of study		
Year 1	0 (0.0)	52 (36.3)
Year 2	26 (28.5)	26 (18.2)
Year 3	23 (25.3)	23 (16.1)
Year 4	21 (23.1)	21 (14.7)
Year 5	21 (23.1)	21 (14.7)
Curriculum phase		
Pre-clinical	26 (28.6)	78 (54.5)
Clinical	65 (71.4)	65 (45.5)

A total of 234 respondents participated in this study. Table 1 shows the socio-demographic background of the respondents. There were more mentees (143 mentee, 61%) and female respondents outnumbered the male respondents. Majority of the respondents were Malay. There were more mentors from clinical phase (71.4%) and mentees from the pre-clinical phase (54.5%).

The background information regarding the peer mentoring among mentor and mentee is shown in Table 2. Majority of the respondents had no idea when peer mentoring system was implemented in the faculty (94.5% for mentor and 95.1% for mentee). More than half of the mentor (50.5%) and mentee (60.8%) thought that peer mentoring system was in charge by the student themselves, from both of the senior and juniors. More than half of the mentor respondents (54.9%) and mentee respondents (86.7%) reported that they were not given any opportunity to choose their own mentor or mentee.

On the duration of meeting between mentor and mentee, more than half of the mentors (57.0%) reported that they usually have 2 hours or lesser to meet their mentees. Similar to the mentor group, more than half of the mentees (57.6%) reported that their meeting with mentors was 2 hours or below. Among the mentors, 38.5% of them have their meeting at least once per month, whereas the 42.9% of mentee respondents were

reported to have met their mentee at least once per block (subject).

In terms of reason for meeting between mentor and mentee, three reasons were reported, the academic purpose, social purpose or personal purpose. Among these reasons, the academic purpose was rated as the main reason for meeting for both of the mentor (77.5%) and mentee (84.2%). In overall, majority of the respondents from both mentor (87.9%) and mentee (93.7%) preferred the peer mentoring system over the other types of mentoring.

The mentor's and mentee's perception on the peer mentoring system is presented in Table 3. In terms of benefits obtained from the peer mentoring system, more than half of the mentor respondents (51.9%) reported that they obtained academic gain, with mentee respondents reported with a higher rate (77.0%). Among the worst experiences encountered by the mentor, 35.7% of the mentor reported negative attitude of the mentee, 21.4% of the mentor were frustrated being unable to solve the junior's problem, while 17.9% reported that the wrong timing for meeting as their worst experience. Where else for the mentee, the top three situations where they reported as worst experience were poor time management in meeting with the mentor (38.2%), not familiar with the mentor (26.6%) and negative attitude of the mentor (23.5%). Only 3.6% of mentor reported that they were stressful, while 2.9% of mentee mentioned that mentor incompatibility and the lacking of cooperation between the mentor and mentee were the worst experience they encountered.

In terms of suggestion to improve peer mentoring system, majority of both mentor (75.0%) and mentee (65.4%) respondents suggested that interaction between the mentor and mentee should be increased, while 15.4% and 19.8% mentioned that explanation of peer mentoring system should be done in advance respectively.

Between the two mentoring system (Peer mentoring system and Mentor-mentee system), majority of the mentor (55.8%) and mentee (59.1%) respondents felt that peer mentoring system was the most beneficial mentoring system to them. The main reason to support this is both the mentor (55.1%) and mentee (39.5%) mentioned that interaction between students is easier and more comfortable.

Table 2. Background information about Peer Mentoring among Mentor and Mentee (N=234)

Item	n (%)	
	Mentor	Mentee
Q1. The commencement of peer mentoring in the faculty	(n=91)	(n=143)
Yes	5 (5.5)	7 (4.9)
No	86 (94.5)	136 (95.1)
Q2. Person or party in charge of peer mentoring.	(n=91)	(n=143)
UNIMED society	37 (40.7)	41 (28.7)
Both the senior and junior students	46 (50.5)	87 (60.8)
Lecturers	8 (8.8)	15 (10.5)
Q3. Knowledge on allocation of mentor and mentee.	(n=71)	(n=115)
Randomly picking	64 (90.1)	96 (83.5)
Arranged by UNIMED society	7 (9.9)	19 (16.5)
Q4. Opportunity for students to choose their own mentor/mentee.	(n=91)	(n=143)
Yes	41 (45.1)	19 (13.3)
No	50 (54.9)	124 (86.7)
Q5. Duration of each meeting between mentor and mentee.	(n=86)	(n=132)
No limit	25 (29.0)	43 (32.6)
More than 2 hours	12 (14.0)	13 (9.8)
2 hours and below	49 (57.0)	76 (57.6)
Q6.A) Frequency of meeting.	(n=26)	(n=49)
At least once per week	7 (26.9)	10 (20.4)
At least once per month	10 (38.5)	18 (36.7)
At least once per block	9 (34.6)	21 (42.9)
Q6.B) Reasons for meeting with each other.	(n=71)	(n=101)
Academic Purpose	55 (77.5)	85 (84.2)
Social Purpose	14 (19.7)	9 (8.9)
Personal Purpose	2 (2.8)	7 (6.9)
Q7. Peer mentoring is preferred over other types mentoring.	(n=91)	(n=143)
Yes	80 (87.9)	134 (93.7)
No	11 (12.1)	9 (6.3)

UNIMED Society= UNIMAS Medical Society, representative for medical and nursing student

Table 3. Mentor (n=91) and Mentee (n=143) perception on the Peer Mentoring system

Mentor's perception	n(%)	Mentee's perception	n(%)
Q1. Benefits a mentor obtained. (n=81)		Q1. Benefits a mentee obtained. (n=135)	
Academic Purpose.	42 (51.9)	Academic Purpose.	104 (77.0)
Social Purpose.	30 (37.0)	Social Purpose.	16 (11.9)
Personal development.	9 (11.1)	Personal development.	15(11.1)
Q2. Worst experience a mentor encountered. (n=28)		Q2. Worst experience a mentee encountered. (n=34)	
Negative attitude of junior/mentee.	10 (35.7)	Poor time management.	13 (38.2)
Frustration due to unable to solve the junior's problem.	6 (21.4)	Not familiar with mentor.	9 (26.6)
Wrong timing for meeting.	5 (17.9)	Negative attitude of senior/mentor.	8 (23.5)
Lack of cooperation between mentor and mentee.	4 (14.3)	Mentor incompatibility.	1 (2.9)
Lack of enthusiasm and initiation from junior.	2 (7.1)	Lack of cooperation between mentor and mentee.	1 (2.9)
Stressful.	1 (3.6)		

Q3. Suggestion to enhance peer mentoring system. (n=52)		Q3. Suggestion to enhance peer mentoring system. (n=81)	
Increase the interaction between mentors and mentees.	39 (75.0)	Increase the interaction between mentors and mentees.	53(65.4)
Explanation of peer mentoring system should be done in advance.	8 (15.4)	Explanation of peer mentoring system should be done in advance.	16 (19.8)
Allow mentor to choose their mentee.	5 (9.6)	Allow mentee to choose their mentor.	8 (9.9)
		Matching mentor and mentee according to gender.	4 (4.9)
Q4. A) System that is more beneficial to mentor. (n=86)		Q4. A) System that is more beneficial to mentee. (n=132)	
Peer mentoring system	48 (55.8)	Peer mentoring system	78 (59.1)
Mentor-Mentee system	26 (30.2)	Mentor-Mentee system	32 (24.2)
Both of the systems	12 (14.0)	Both of the systems	22 (16.7)
B) Reason for (A) (n=69)		B) Reason for (A) (n=124)	
Interactions between students are easier and more comfortable in peer-mentoring system.	38 (55.1)	Interactions between students are easier and more comfortable in peer-mentoring system.	49 (39.5)
Lecturer is more experienced in mentor-mentee system.	16 (23.2)	Lecturer is more experienced in mentor-mentee system.	28 (22.7)
Both systems are beneficial and able to help students.	8(11.6)	Both systems are beneficial and able to help the students.	18 (14.5)
Easier to meet with each other in peer-mentoring system.	5(7.2)	Easier to meet with each other in peer-mentoring system.	12 (9.7)
Lecturer is harder to approach in mentor-mentee system.	2 (2.9)	Lecturer is harder to approach in mentor-mentee system.	7 (5.6)
		No generation gap in peer-mentoring system	7 (5.6)
		Seniors are more helpful in sharing their lecture notes through peer-mentoring system.	3 (2.4)

In comparing the perception of peer mentoring between mentor and mentee, which is shown in Table 4, four questions were asked. Among the questions, the mentees respondents consistently scored higher than the mentor counterparts, except for the questions regarding increasing

one's friendship network or social network. However, the only significant difference ($p<0.05$) that was found between mentor and the mentee respondents were under the question where peer mentoring system helps them to understand more in their studies

Table 4: Perception on Peer Mentoring between Mentor (n=91) and Mentee (n=143)

Perception	Mean (SD)		t-test	df	p value
	Mentor	Mentee			
Peer mentoring system helps me to understand more in my studies.	1.91 (0.69)	2.13 (0.49)	-2.712	155	<0.01*
Peer mentoring able to boost one's confidence level	1.91 (0.70)	2.04 (0.46)	-1.581	140	0.116
Peer mentoring able to improve and shows different ways of studying skills	1.87 (0.67)	1.97 (0.62)	-1.109	181	0.269
Peer mentoring able to increase one's friendship / social network	2.29 (0.64)	2.22 (0.57)	0.753	177	0.453

Note: Significant at $p<0.05$.

Discussion

The findings indicated that both mentors and mentees gained benefits from their participation in the peer mentoring system. A majority of the respondents agreed that the benefits obtained were academic aspects. This is consistent with Colvin and Ashman's research [9], where they mentioned that peer mentors would inspire and motivate their mentee to study more efficiently, thus the mentee improved academically, while the mentor's academic performance also improved. Andrews and Clark [3] stated that peer mentoring is like a platform, which provides chances for new students to learn. The experienced students would be able to help their junior to understand or realize their own studying method, hence promoting independent learning [3].

Social gain is where one is able to increase his or her friendship network or connection, and enhances the chances to meet with new people. According to Colvin and Ashman [9], one of the benefits of participating in peer mentoring is to develop connections and friendship, which Garringer and MacRae [10] also agreed upon. Through the peer mentoring system, the new students, or mentees were given a chance, which is a route for them to meet with someone new in the new environment which they would need to face for the next few years. The personal development from the mentor perspectives were where the mentor would be able to gain experience, leadership, other than being more confident. Topping [11] mentioned that a mentor would be able to gain experience and empathy towards others when helping their mentee. Through peer mentoring, a mentor intellectual development in self-confidence, self-concept, moral reasoning and leadership would be able to develop [12,13]. Goodlad [14] suggested that the mentors would be able to reapply new concepts they learn in their lives where they can become better students and act as good guides or role models to the mentees. Tinto [15] mentioned that mentors can share their experience because this is one of the instruments to ease the difficulties of juniors' lives. At the same time, mentors gain experience as a role model to other

students in terms of professionalism, commitment and other qualities [16]. The mentees reported that they have the opportunity to gain new experiences through the peer mentoring system, while having chances to share their problems with the mentors. This is consistent with Ehrich and Hansford's findings [17] where mentees gained new knowledge and increase their confidence in facing new environment.

Respondents also faced some misfortune incidences throughout their peer mentoring. In the mentor's perspective, negative attitude of a junior or mentee is one of the highest rate options. Eby and McManus [18] give examples of mentees who are unwilling to learn and study, sabotage their mentor, misleading, dishonest and having interpersonal difficulties as poor attitude mentees. Mentees who shows negative and unfavorable working attitude, such as uncooperative with the mentor, will tend to create stress and strain to the mentor [19,20]. Although 35.7% of mentors reported the negative attitude of mentee as their worst experience, mentees in contrast have a lower percentage, as only 23.5% mentioned that the negative attitude of mentor causes disturbance on their peer mentoring system. Some mentors also feel frustrated as they were unable to solve problems faced by juniors, due to lack of experience [10].

The mentees also stated that they are not familiar with the mentor, thus creating a worst experience for them. According to Zerzan et al.[2], in order to obtain maximum benefits from the mentoring relationships mentee should take the initiative to seek out their mentor and make a request on their needs. Only then, communication would be established and both parties would benefit. Therefore, in establishing a relationship between a mentor and mentee, it should be mutual, where both parties put efforts into getting to know each other and ease the uncertainty in their relationship.

Another problem which is highlighted by both the mentor and mentee is poor time management and making appointments between the mentor

and mentee. The mentors attributed it to their packed schedule. Garmel [1] also stated that mentorship is time consuming. As a result, they have difficulty to find time meeting their mentees [21,22]. Several articles reviewed that the excuse of lack of time was often being used whenever there are problems occurring in the mentoring relationship [23-26]. This further enhances the suggestion by Garmel [1], where the successful relationship between the mentor and mentee would require an active participation and involvement from both parties.

Based on the data collected, several suggestions were brought by both mentor and mentee respondents. Both parties agreed that interaction between mentor and mentee should increase. Garmel¹ explained that a successful mentor-mentee relationship would require an activate participation from both parties. Hence, this explains that why does both mentor and mentee recommended it. A firm and understanding relationship between each other would be the first criteria for a healthy and lively peer mentoring relationship. Peer mentoring relationship between the mentor and mentee would also require cultivation, other than only interaction between each other. According to Zerzan et al.[2], the mentees should initiate, and take ownership of the relationship between the mentor and mentee. The relationship between the mentor and mentee would be fostered once the mentee engaged the mentor. Chin et al.[27], also mentioned that it is crucial to have a frequent and effective communication between mentor mentee pairs in order to maintain a stable relationship. Based on most studies, it is clearly clarified that for a stable, beneficial mentor-mentee relationship, both the mentor and mentee should share mutual interest in upholding the bond they share and putting effort in communicating with each other to further flourish the relationship. According to the respondents, many students were confused on how the system run, especially Year 1 and Year 2 medical students. This is also due to lack of introduction from the faculty itself, where the UNIMED society, a medical student representative body only organizes and randomly pair the mentor and mentee, without further explanation to the student.

Both the mentor and mentee also suggested that they should be allowed to choose their counterpart. According to Coates [28], a mentor would like to choose a mentee whom he or she feels free to open to, and a potential mentee who would please the mentor. Coates [28] also mentioned that a mentor would choose a mentee who is similar to him or herself. The suggestion is further enhanced by Johnson and Ridley [29] and Zerzan et al.[2], where they mentioned that if there are more similarities between the mentor and mentee, they would obtain more benefits from that relationship.

The remaining suggestion made by the mentees was matching the mentor and mentee according to the gender. However, according to the study which carried out by Kanchewa et al.[30], there is no difference in the relationship quality, academic, social and behavioral between the same genders versus cross-matching for the mentoring system. The probability of obtaining benefits from the same gender in the peer mentoring relationship would then be low, or probably none.

In comparing the perception on peer mentoring between the mentor and mentee, it was found that the only significance result ($p < 0.05$) is where peer mentoring system able to help the respondents to have better understanding in their studies, with the mentee scored higher than mentor. This is consistent with the study done by Ehrich and Hansford [23], where the mentee tends to obtain the benefits regarding learning and developing as compared to the mentor. In FMHS, the junior would always seek advice from the senior for information regarding examination scope and format, due to the experience and knowledge a senior possesses. A senior could be helpful to a junior by explaining the do's and don'ts in answering exam questions. In terms of boosting one's confidence level, although mentee scored higher than mentor, but the value is not significance. This indicated that peer mentoring might not be the solely way to increase one's confident level. In Hecimovich and Volet [31] study, they mentioned that building of one's confidence level in patient communication and clinical skills begins in

tertiary studies, where experiences such as problem-based learning, staff or clinician mentoring, and also peer mentoring might help develop student's confidence level. Furthermore, it was further stressed that the most significant way in building confidence level for the student is through clinical practice. As the mentee scored higher as compared to their counterpart, this shows that mentee is more agreeable to the statement as compared to the mentor. This can be proven with the support of Andrews and Clark [3] study, where they mentioned that through peer mentoring system, the newbies were having peer which befriends and guide them, from the day they arrive the university. This would give them the confidence to communicate with other people as they had their first talk with their peer, hence it would enhance their confidence to talk with others.

Although it is was thought that peer mentoring would improve and expose different studying skills, however the result obtained is not significant. According to Andrews and Clark [3], mentor shows the right technique of studying, which would help the mentees to excel academically in their exams. Therefore, this is probably the reason of mentee scoring higher as compared to mentor. People usually starts their education since seven years old in Malaysia and throughout the years until tertiary education, they might already found their own way to revise or study. Hence, one's studying skills might not be suitable for another.

Peer mentoring indeed able to increase one's friendship [9]. Different from other perception, mentor tends to score higher in the perception regarding peer mentoring would be able to increase one's friendship or social network. This is probably due to different needs of mentor and mentee. From the findings, mentee tend to gain or search for academic benefits throughout the peer mentoring relationship. While mentors agreed that they gained academic benefits, but tend to choose to increase one's social network. Throughout the years of being a student in university, mentors are exposed more to university life and they realized that friendship or a social network is indeed crucial in a university

setting. The perception value is not significant, which indicate that there is other way to develop and expand one's social network.

This study was found to meet certain limitations. As this is a survey research using questionnaires, the issue of response bias is unavoidable. The research was done among medical students in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Hence, the findings cannot be generalized to other medical schools or any other faculties in the university

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