

Interpersonal Trust and Friendship Intimacy in Public Health Students

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Abstract. Interpersonal trust and friendship intimacy are two important aspects of building social relationships, especially in an academic setting. This study aims to determine the relationship between interpersonal trust and friendship intimacy in students of the Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University. Data were collected through the distribution of interpersonal trust scale and friendship intimacy scale to 322 students. Purposive sampling was used in this study. Data analysis was performed using the Spearman Rank correlation test. The results showed that interpersonal trust in students was in the moderate category (63.0%), while friendship intimacy was also in the moderate category (61.8%). The correlation test results show a coefficient value of 0.508** with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) which indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between interpersonal trust and friendship intimacy in students of the Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University.

Keywords: *Interpersonal Trust, Friendship Intimacy*

Abstrak. Kepercayaan interpersonal dan intimasi pertemanan adalah dua aspek penting dalam membangun hubungan sosial, terutama dalam lingkungan akademis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara kepercayaan interpersonal dan intimasi pertemanan pada mahasiswa Fakultas Kesehatan Masyarakat Universitas Nusa Cendana. Data dikumpulkan melalui penyebaran skala kepercayaan interpersonal dan skala intimasi pertemanan kepada 322 mahasiswa. Teknik pengambilan sampel dalam penelitian ini menggunakan purposive sampling. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan uji korelasi Spearman Rank. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepercayaan interpersonal pada mahasiswa berada pada kategori sedang (63,0%), sedangkan intimasi pertemanan juga berada pada kategori sedang (61,8%). Hasil uji korelasi menunjukkan nilai koefisien sebesar 0,508** dengan tingkat signifikansi 0,000 ($p < 0,05$) yang menunjukkan bahwa terdapat hubungan yang positif dan signifikan antara kepercayaan interpersonal dengan intimasi pertemanan pada mahasiswa Fakultas Kesehatan Masyarakat Universitas Nusa Cendana. Artinya, semakin tinggi kepercayaan interpersonal maka semakin tinggi juga intimasi pertemanan.

Kata Kunci : *Kepercayaan Interpersonal, Intimasi Pertemanan*

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Introduction

A human is a social being who cannot live alone and needs the presence of other people in their life. This makes humans have to adapt to the people around them. Similarly, Monks (2006) argues that students are individuals who study in universities. Some students fall into the category of late adolescents aged 18-21 years, but some are categorized as early adults in the first period, aged 22-28 years. In this transition period from late adolescence to early adulthood, adaptation to the surrounding environment is very important for students in dealing with changes in their environment. Students must be able to adapt to new friends, heavier academic demands, and other changes in their lives. To be able to adapt in an environment, students are required to be able to interact with the surrounding environment. One form of social interaction that is important for students is to establish friendships in the campus environment. This is in line with Kartika's research (2014), which states that friendship is very important because it can help a person in the transition from childhood to adulthood. In addition, friendship is an opportunity to gather experiences that will help the process of developing personal identity and improve the ability to socialize and adapt to the environment. Factors that influence choosing and establishing friendships with others include similarities in traits or preferences, hobbies, distance from home, parents, and the ability to manage emotions (Anggraeni, 2015).

A quality friendship will produce an intimate relationship and foster mutual trust in each other (Salsabila & Maryatmi, 2019). Furthermore, based on research conducted by Berndt and Perry (cited from Santrock, 2011), the most consistent research on friendship in the last two decades is on intimacy. The development of intimacy is associated with deeper bonds between friends, who will generally seek psychological closeness and mutual understanding from their friends (Kartika, 2014). According to Sharabany (2008), friendship intimacy is an emotional relationship when a person feels empathy and shares feelings with others, has trust, attention, and can commit to others. Self-disclosure is related to self-identity and good adjustment. Someone who does not have close friends will be more at risk for failure to adapt to the social environment and often experience victimization. In addition, Putrisyani's (2015) research also states that not having intimate friendships can lead to feelings of loneliness, which can have a negative impact on mental health and academic achievement. Therefore, students must be

able to build friendship intimacy, which is the need to form friendship relationships so that individuals in them feel a sense of closeness and familiarity and a sense of belonging (Miranda, 2021). Although friendship intimacy is important, in reality, not everyone can establish good intimacy relationships with others (Agusdwitanti, Tambunan & Retnaningsih, 2015). In a study conducted by Anggraeni (2015), it was said that university students included several individuals who had difficulty establishing friendship intimacy, students had begun to show individualism, which is an attitude that shows that they prefer to do everything themselves, so that it is often considered by others as a selfish attitude even though it is a representation of individual distrust of others. In addition, students who are too absorbed in doing all their assignments, feel unfamiliar with their surroundings because they lack socialization and are too focused on doing their assignments, are reluctant to be frank with others about the difficulties faced in doing assignments, because they are worried about the risks that will be received, if telling the truth about what they think and feel will make them abandoned or damage friendship relationships.

This situation shows that interpersonal trust is a key component that affects the quality of friendship relationships. The results of interviews with several subjects in this study reinforce these findings. Some students experienced unpleasant experiences, such as betrayal or disappointment from close friends, which resulted in decreased trust in others. This then inhibits them from forming intimate friendships. In contrast, students who have high trust in their friends tend to feel comfortable sharing, listening, and building healthy emotional relationships. According to Lewis and Weigert (in Waris Raffia, 2009), trust is the core of positive interpersonal relationships. Trust allows individuals to be open and feel safe in social relationships. Rottenberg (2010) also states that interpersonal trust is an important element in the formation and maintenance of friendships and affects the way individuals interact in everyday life, including in academic and social contexts. Research conducted by Utami (2015) concluded that individuals with low interpersonal trust tend to experience difficulties in facing environmental challenges and feel less happy in their lives. Thus, building interpersonal trust is an important basis for students to form quality friendships. Students of the Faculty of Public Health (FKM), Nusa Cendana University, as future professionals in the field of public health, are required to have good social skills. The ability to establish healthy, supportive, and trusting friendships is not only important in the context of campus life, but

also in preparing for future work dynamics. Therefore, an understanding of interpersonal trust and friendship intimacy is important to identify the extent to which students are able to establish quality social relationships and support their psychological well-being. Based on this background, this study aims to examine the relationship between interpersonal trust and intimacy in friendship among students of the Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University.

Methods

This research is a quantitative study with a quantitative correlation research design. This research was conducted at the Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University, with a total sample of 322 respondents obtained using a purposive sampling technique. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires directly to respondents in the form of interpersonal trust scales and friendship intimacy. The measuring instruments used in this study are the scale developed by Arwa (2021) based on the theory of Rottenberg (2010), and the friendship intimacy scale developed by Miranda (2021) based on the theory of Sharabany (2008), which has gone through repeated validity and reliability tests on both scales to ensure that the measuring instruments are relevant and can be used properly in the context and population of this study. The collected data were analyzed using the Spearman rank correlation statistical method to answer the research hypothesis.

Results

Based on the research results, the number of participants in this study was 322 people, consisting of 55 male students (17.7%) and 267 female students (82.3%). Thus, it can be concluded that the participants who dominate in this study are female students. The results of the analysis showed that the level of interpersonal trust in the majority of students was in the moderate category, which amounted to 63.0%, followed by the high category at 18.9%, and the low category at 18.1%. For the friendship intimacy variable, most students are also in the moderate category at 61.8%, followed by the high category at 37.0%, and the low category at 1.2%. To determine the relationship between the two variables, the Spearman's Rank correlation test was conducted. The analysis showed a correlation coefficient of 0.508 with a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). This shows that there is a positive and significant

relationship between interpersonal trust and friendship intimacy in students of the Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that there is a significant relationship that is quite strong and unidirectional between interpersonal trust and friendship intimacy in students of the Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University. This is proven through the Spearman Rank correlation test with a correlation coefficient of 0.508** and a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this study can be accepted. This finding is in line with research conducted by Asmaini (2020), which shows that interpersonal trust has a strong relationship with the intensity of intimacy in friendship. Johnson (in Ramadhany, 2010) also stated that trust is the foundation in building and maintaining interpersonal relationships, while Sharabany (2008) emphasized that trust plays an important role at the beginning of the relationship and progresses as intimacy increases. In other words, trust becomes a catalyst in forming intimate and meaningful relationships, especially in social contexts such as the university environment.

The results of descriptive analysis show that most students are in the moderate category for the interpersonal trust variable (63.0%). This reflects that students generally have a fairly good capacity to build trust with others, although not yet maximally. One of the dominant aspects of interpersonal trust is reliability, which is the ability to be consistent, keep promises, and be reliable in social interactions. This is important because reliability creates a sense of security and comfort in social relationships, as confirmed by Baron and Byrne (2004), who found that individuals who are in intimate relationships tend to be honest and open, and stay away from manipulative behavior. There was also, however, variation in the emotional aspects of trust. Some students showed a high category in the emotional aspect (19.9%), which indicates the ability to create a supportive and open emotional environment.

On the other hand, the proportion in the low category for the emotional aspect is also quite large (18.6%), which indicates that some students still have difficulties in managing emotional trust. Factors such as negative experiences, inability to open up, or lack of empathy may contribute to this low aspect. Therefore, interventions in the form of soft skills and emotional

intelligence training are needed to improve the quality of students' interpersonal relationships.

In the friendship intimacy variable, the majority of students are also in the moderate category (61.8%). This shows that students have a fairly good friendship relationship, but have not shown high emotional depth. The dominant aspects in this variable are trust and loyalty, which show that students tend to establish stable and mutually supportive relationships, although emotional intensity and personal closeness can still be developed. The exclusivity aspect also stands out in the high category (26.4%), which indicates the tendency of students to form special and deep friendship relationships with certain individuals. This is in line with Sharabany's (2008) view that exclusivity creates unique and intense relationships in friendships. Meanwhile, the aspects of sensitivity and understanding occupied the highest position in the low category (20.2%).

This finding shows that there are still students who are less sensitive to the emotional conditions of their friends or have difficulty responding to the social needs of others, which has the potential to hinder the development of intimacy in friendship relationships. Further analysis showed that there were no significant differences in interpersonal trust and friendship intimacy based on gender. Both male and female students tend to show the same distribution pattern, with the majority in the moderate category and a small proportion in the high and low categories. This finding is consistent with Firmansyah's (2023) research, which states that interpersonal trust is more influenced by internal factors and social experiences than by gender factors.

However, this finding is different from Riska and Harmaini's (2019) research, which found that women tend to have more intimate friendships than men. This difference can be explained through the social development theory proposed by Sharabany, Eshel & Hakim (2008), that women develop the ability to establish intimate relationships earlier than men, but the effect can vary depending on the social and cultural context. Overall, the results of this study underline that interpersonal trust is the main foundation for building intimate and healthy friendship relationships among university students. Trust allows individuals to feel safe, accepted, and open in their social relationships. In the context of the Faculty of Public Health students, these abilities are important to support collaboration, teamwork, and future academic and professional success. Therefore, strengthening interpersonal trust through

character building, interpersonal communication training, and emotional intelligence development are important strategies in creating a healthy campus social environment and supporting students' psychological well-being.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research analysis that has been carried out regarding the relationship between interpersonal trust and friendship intimacy among students at the Faculty of Public Health, it can be concluded that:

1. The level of interpersonal trust among students at the Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University is in the medium category, namely 63.0% with a total of 195 students out of 322 students.
2. The level of friendship intimacy among students at the Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University is in the medium category, namely 61.8% with a total of 199 students out of 322 students.
3. There is a positive and significant relationship between interpersonal trust and friendship intimacy among students of the Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University, with a correlation coefficient of 0.508** and a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This means that the higher the interpersonal trust, the higher the friendship intimacy.

Suggestion

1. For students

Students need to improve reliability in social relationships, such as keeping promises and being consistent to build stronger interpersonal trust. Students also need to manage emotions better so as not to interfere with the quality of friendships, and strengthen mutual trust and loyalty through honesty and commitment in relationships. In addition, it is important to balance exclusivity so as not to limit other social relationships, and increase sensitivity and understanding between friends through empathy and listening skills, in order to create closer, healthier, and more meaningful friendships.

2. For future researchers Future

Researchers can examine interpersonal trust and intimacy by linking them to other factors that have the potential to influence both, such as social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. In addition, further research is recommended to develop more diverse and in-depth data collection methods to enrich the understanding of this topic, as well as expand the scope of research in order to make a more significant contribution to the development of science and social practice.

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