Quality of Friendship Relationships to Risk of Bullying Behavior in First-Year Students

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Abstract. The risk of bullying behavior is an act of intimidation carried out repeatedly by a stronger party against a weaker party, causing harm to the victim physically or emotionally. This study aims to determine the effect of the quality of friendship relationships on the risk of bullying behavior in the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana. This study used quantitative methods. Samples were taken using a purposive sampling technique. Data was collected using two scales: the Friendship Quality Scale (FQS) and the Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (APRI). The results showed that the quality of friendship relationships in first-year students has a negative and significant influence on the risk of bullying behavior. Thus, the quality of good friendship relationships acts as a protective factor in creating a safe and bullying-free campus environment.
Keywords: friendship relationships, students, bullying behavior

Abstrak. Risiko perilaku bullying adalah tindakan intimidasi yang dilakukan berulang-ulang oleh pihak yang lebih kuat terhadap pihak yang lebih lemah dengan melukai korban secara fisik maupun emosional. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh kualitas hubungan persahabatan terhadap risiko perilaku *bullying* pada mahasiswa Tingkat Pertama Prodi Psikologi UNDANA. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif. Sampel diambil menggunakan teknik *purposive sampling*. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan dua skala, yaitu *Friendship Quality Scale* (FQS) dan *Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument* (APRI). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kualitas hubungan persahabatan pada mahasiswa tingkat pertama memiliki pengaruh negatif dan signifikan terhadap risiko perilaku *bullying*. Dengan demikian, kualitas hubungan persahabatan yang baik berperan sebagai faktor protektif dalam menciptakan lingkungan kampus yang aman dan bebas dari bullying.
Kata kunci: hubungan persahabatan, mahasiswa, perilaku bullying

Introduction

The phenomenon of bullying is increasingly recognized as a significant problem not only among primary and secondary school students but also in higher education settings (Rahmaniyah, Suhadianto, & Pratikto 2020). Bullying, which can be verbal, physical, or psychological behavior aimed at hurting or intimidating another person, is still often considered a more relevant issue at the level of education in college (Rahmaniyah, Suhadianto, & Pratikto 2020). Students, especially those who have just entered college or university, can face bullying more subtle but still harmful, such as bullying, social isolation, and verbal insults. Santrock (2011) stated that first-year students are teenagers who are classified as late adolescents. At this age, individuals are classified as just starting to experience a transition into adulthood, which makes the figure of a teenager capable of understanding more complex concepts. Based on the statistical results, approximately 3,011 bullying cases were reported in 2015, and this number increased to 3,488 in 2016 (Mohamad et al., 2021).

Bullying behavior cannot happen to individuals who have a good friendship relationship and provide mutual support, both from emotional support as well support system (Hasanah, 2022). The quality of friendship relationships is a good effort for individuals who have friends because, friendship relationships can improve low psychological well-being and also increase academic achievement (Sholichah, Amelasasih, & Hasanah 2022). The process is described directly by Hardianti et al., (2016) who stated that students began to build friendship relationships because they were in the same class and had similar characteristics (Liddiniyah & Maryam 2023).

As a first step, the researcher conducted a pre-research conducted on November 22, 2024, by distributing questionnaires to first-year students in the Psychology department of the Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana. Bbased on the results of the three aspects measured, verbal bullying, physical bullying, and relational bullying. Verbal bullying recorded the highest total score of 2,218, with an average score of 27.725. In contrast, physical bullying had the lowest

total score at 1,577, with an average of 19.712. This study aims to examine the influence of friendship quality on the risk of bullying behavior among first-year students in the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana. The findings are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of how positive peer relationships can serve as a protective factor against bullying in higher education. Additionally, the results may offer valuable insights for developing student well-being programs and campus policies that promote inclusive and supportive academic environments.

Method

The subjects in this study are first-year students of the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana. This study uses a data collection technique in the form of a questionnaire, utilizing 2 scales: Friendship Quality Scale (FQS) and the Teen Peer Relations Instrument (APRI). This study employs a quantitative method with a cross-sectional approach. The population in this study amounted to 90 people. Participants in this study used convenience sampling techniques. The sample was calculated using the Krejcie and Morgan table (1970), resulting in 73 participants. The method used in hypothesis testing is simple linear regression analysis.

Results

According to the data analysis results, the findings related to the friendship quality variable are as follows:

Table 1.

Distribution of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics by the Friendship Quality Variable

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	8	11 %
Medium	28	38 %
High	37	51 %
n	**73**	**100 %**

Overall, the quality of friendships among first-year students in the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana was generally high, with 51% of respondents categorized as having a high quality of friendship.

Table 2.

Distribution of Respondents by Gender in the Friendship Quality Variable

Category	Man	Percentage (%)	Woman	Percentage (%)	n	Percentage (%)
Low	6	26%	12	24%	18	25%
Medium	11	48%	26	52%	37	50%
High	6	26%	12	24%	18	25%
n	**23**	**100%**	**50**	**100%**	**73**	**100%**

Based on the data distribution, it is evident that the majority of respondents, both male and female, fall into the moderate category for friendship quality. However, males show a slightly higher percentage in the high category, at 26%, compared to females at 24%. These results indicate that males in this study have better-quality friendship relationships.

Table 3.

Distribution of Respondents by Age in the Friendship Quality Variable

Category	Age								n	%
	17	**%**	**18**	**%**	**19**	**%**	**20**	**%**		
Low	2	18%	6	15%	4	33%	6	67%	18	25%
Medium	7	64%	23	56%	6	50%	1	11%	37	50%
High	2	18%	12	29%	2	17%	2	22%	18	25%
n	**11**	**100%**	**41**	**100%**	**12**	**100%**	**9**	**100%**	**73**	**100%**

Respondents aged 18 have the highest percentage in the high friendship quality category, at 29%. Compared to other age groups, the 18-year-old group also shows a more balanced distribution across the low, medium, and high categories. This indicates that at the age of 18, the quality of friendship tends to be more optimal than at other ages.

1. **Risk Variables for Bullying Behavior**

To assess the risk of bullying behavior among respondents, this study employed the Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (APRI), a standardized scale designed to measure various forms of peer-related bullying experiences.

Table 4.

Distribution of Respondent Characteristics by Bullying Behavior Risk Variable

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	46	63 %
Medium	19	26 %
High	8	11 %

n	**73**	**100 %**

It is evident that first-year students of the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana are not significantly exposed to the risk of bullying behavior, as 89% fall into the moderate to low-risk categories.

Table 5.

Distribution of Respondents by Gender in the Bullying Behavior Risk Variable

Category	Man	Percentage %	Woman	Percentage %	n	Percentage %
Low	14	61%	32	64%	46	63%
Medium	7	30%	12	24%	19	26%
High	2	9%	6	12%	8	11%
n	**23**	**100%**	**50**	**100%**	**73**	**100%**

It was evident that the percentage of females in the high-risk category (12%) was higher than that of males (9%). This finding indicates that, within this group of respondents, females tend to be more at risk of experiencing or being involved in bullying behavior compared to males.

Table 6.

Distribution of Respondent Categorization by Age in the Bullying Behavior Risk Variable

Category				Age					n	Percentage (%)
	17	**%**	**18**	**%**	**19**	**%**	**20**	**%**		
Low	5	45%	28	68%	8	67%	5	56%	46	63%
Medium	5	45%	9	22%	3	25%	2	22%	19	26%
High	1	10%	4	10%	1	8%	2	22%	8	11%
n	**11**	**100%**	**41**	**100%**	**12**	**100%**	**9**	**100%**	**73**	**100%**

The categorization results suggest that most respondents across all age groups fall into the low-risk category for bullying behavior. However, respondents aged 20 have the highest percentage in the high-risk category, at 22%, compared to other age groups, which are at 10% or below. This finding indicates that, in this study, 20-year-old respondents tend to have a higher risk of bullying behavior compared to other age groups

Table 7.

Crosstab Analysis between the Quality of Friendship Relationships and the Risk of Bullying Behavior

Quality of Friendship	Risk of Bullying Behavior						n	Percentage (%)
	Low	%	Medium	%	High	%		
Low	2	4 %	3	16 %	3	37 %	8	11%
Medium	20	44 %	6	31 %	2	26 %	28	38 %
High	24	52 %	10	53 %	3	37 %	37	51 %
n	**46**	**100 %**	**19**	**100 %**	**8**	**100 %**	**73**	**100%**

It is evident from the crosstab table that 46 students experience a low risk of bullying behavior, with the distribution as follows: 4% have low-quality friendships, 44% have moderate-quality friendships, and 52% have high-quality friendships. 19 students who are at risk of moderate bullying behavior, with the distribution as follows: 16% have a low quality of friendship, 31% have medium quality of friendship, and 53% have high quality of friendship relationship. 8 students who experienced a high risk of bullying behavior, with the distribution as follows: 37% had low quality of

friendship relationships, 26% had medium quality of friendship relationships, and 37% had high quality of friendship relationships.

2. **Normality Test**

Normality test was conducted with two research variables: friendship quality and bullying behavior risk—to determine whether the data distribution was normal. The Shapiro. Wilk test was used to assess normality, as it is considered suitable for small to medium sample sizes. A dataset is considered normally distributed if the significance value (p) is greater than 0.05. Conversely, if p < 0.05, the distribution is considered non-normal. (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012).

Table 8.

Normality Test

	Normality Test	
	Quality of Friendship	**Bullying Behavior**
Shapiro-Wilk	0.965	0.906
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	0.111	0.064

It is evident that the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test for bivariate normality showed that the p-value for the friendship quality variable was 0.111, and for the bullying behavior variable was 0.064. Therefore, both variables are normally distributed because the p-value is greater than 0.05.

The linearity test can be run through the test of linearity with a significance level of 0.05. Two variables are said to have a linear relationship when the significance p< 0.05.

Table 9.

Linearity Test

Type		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p
H₁	Regression	3854.649	1	3854.649	10.063	0.002
	Residual	27197.323	71	383.061		
	Total	31051.973	72			

It is evident that p-value or p *0.002* (p<0.05*)*, thus stating the existence of a linear relationship. It can be concluded that the quality of friendship is significantly able to predict bullying behavior among students in the first year of the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana.
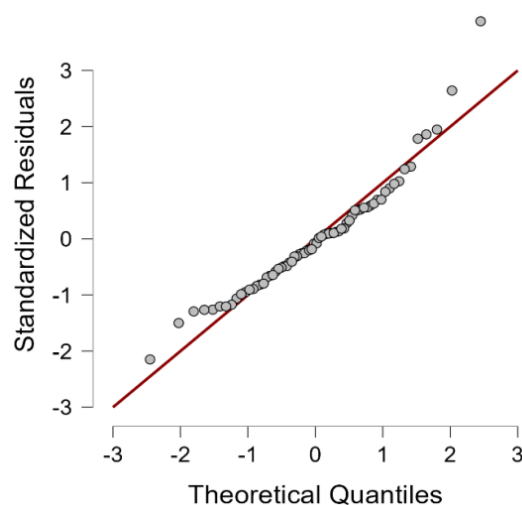
Picture 1. *Results of the Linearity Test (Q-Q Plot)*

The researcher conducted a linearity test using Q-Q plot standardized residuals with *JASP.0.18.1.0.* Based on the image above, the data spread along the diagonal line. The two variables in this study exhibit a significant linear relationship. Therefore, the linearity assumption test in this study has been fulfilled, and the researcher can proceed with a simple linear regression test.

3. Hypothesis Test

The results of the hypothesis test can be summarized as follows: Simple linear regression testing is performed using JASP.0.18.1.0 application. Table 10.

Simple Linear Regression Test

Model Summary - Y TOTAL

Type	R	R²	Adjusted R²	RMSE
H_1	0.352	0.124	0.112	19.572

It is known that the criteria can be determined based on a simple linear regression value test, provided that if the *R Square* > 0.05. Based on the table above, obtained *R Square* = 0.124 > criteria *R Square* (0.05). The results of this test show that the magnitude of the Quality of friendships relationships variable can explain the Bullying behavioral variable 12.4% in first-year students of the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana, while the rest (87.6%) were influenced by other factors that were not studied in this study. Meanwhile, to find out the results of the test on the effect of the quality of friendship relationships on behavioral risk Bullying for first-year students of the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana can be seen in the table below.

Table 11.

Hypothesis Test

Type		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p
H_0	(Intercept)	42.562	2.431		17.511	<.001
H_1	(Intercept)	86.774	14.124		6.144	<.001

Type	Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p
X TOTAL	-0.657	0.207	-0.352	-3.172	0.002

Coefficient for the friendship quality variable (X TOTAL) is -0.657. The constant value (a) is 86.774, while the value (b/regression coefficient) of -0.657 of these results is included in the regression equation as follows:

$$Y = a + bX$$

$$Y = 86.774 + -0.657X$$

- Y represents the risk of bullying behavior (dependent variable),

- X represents the quality of friendship (independent variable),

- 86.774 is the constant (intercept),

- –0.657 is the regression coefficient for the quality of friendship variable.

The negative value of the regression coefficient (-0.657) indicates an inverse relationship between the quality of friendship and the risk of bullying behavior. In other words, for every one-unit increase in the quality of friendship score, the predicted score of bullying behavior risk decreases by 0.657 units. This suggests that better friendship quality is associated with a lower likelihood of experiencing or engaging in bullying behavior.

The t-value of -3.172 and p-value of 0.002 ($p < 0.05$) indicate that the regression coefficient is statistically significant. This means that the influence of friendship quality on bullying risk is not due to chance and can be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn.

Furthermore, the R^2 value of 0.124 indicates that 12.4% of the variance in the bullying behavior risk can be explained by the quality of friendship variable. While this percentage may appear modest, it still reflects a meaningful contribution of friendship quality as a protective factor in the context of bullying risk, particularly

among first-year students who are in the transition phase of adapting to a new academic and social environment.

In conclusion, these findings support the hypothesis that friendship quality plays a significant and negative role in influencing bullying behavior risk. Higher levels of friendship quality are associated with lower risks of bullying behavior among first-year students in the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana.

Discussion

Based on the results of statistical testing using simple linear regression analysis, it is evident that the quality of friendship relationships has a negative effect on the risk of bullying behavior. This means that the better the quality of the friendship, the lower the risk of behavior Bullying. This is strengthened by the normality test, which yields smaller than the value *p 0.002 < 0.05.* This means that the influence of the quality of friendship relationships has a negative and significant effect on behavioral risk Bullying. Furthermore, it is evident that the result of r calculation is greater than r square, namely 0.124 > 0.05 means that H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted, thus showing that the quality of friendship relationships in first-year students of the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana has a negative and significant influence on behavioral risk Bullying. This result is in line with previous research conducted by Rangkuti (2016) on University of North Sumatra Students, which found a significant correlation between bullying and friendship. In other words, the higher the level of friendship, the lower the incidence of bullying behavior.

The results of this test show that the level of quality in the friendship relationship can explain 12.4% of the behavioral variable bullying among first-year students of the Psychology Department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana, while the rest (87.6%) were influenced by other factors. Bullying behavior

can affect the lives of individuals who experience it, according to Zakiyah et al. (2018, quoted in Herlin Bintari, 2022), bullying behavior influenced by various other factors, not only friendship groups but also the influence of family environment where the perpetrator Bullying often comes from a problematic family environment, such as harsh or conflict-filled parenting, education, where the campus lacks attention to its existence Bullying can make the perpetrator feel strengthened to continue to intimidate, the surrounding environmental conditions, such as difficult socio-economic conditions, can also be a trigger for action Bullying, as well as the influence of social media and the latter media factors, where television shows, print media, and social media can shape bullying behavior patterns through the content they display.

Regarding the quality of friendship relationships among first-year students in the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana, most respondents fell into the high category, with a percentage of 51%. According to Brehm et al. (2002, as cited in Setyawati et al., 2019), Psychology students study theories related to interpersonal relationships, empathy, effective communication, and social support. This understanding enables them to build and maintain high-quality friendship relationships. The results of this study are in line with the research conducted by Pramanasari (2019) on students at the Faculty of Education, State University of Yogyakarta, which stated that the majority of peer influence falls into the high category, with a percentage of 55.4%. Companionship, Conflict, Help, Closeness, and Security influence the quality of quality friendships. Companionship reflects togetherness and social interaction, while Conflict refers to quarrels or differences in a relationship. Help involves helping and protecting friends, showing emotional closeness, and Security related to trust in friendship. These five dimensions affirm that friendship is not just a social relationship but also provides emotional support that is important for individual well-being, especially in the face of social and psychological challenges (Bukowski et al. 1994).

Regarding behavioral risk variables, most first-year students in the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana, fall into the low category, with a percentage of 63%. This supports the findings of previous studies conducted by Widianingtyas (2023), students of the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Medan; as many as 41 respondents experienced Bullying low by 57%. Mulachela (2019) explained that psychology students are often in an academic environment that emphasizes the values of openness, discussion, and acceptance of differences, which can reduce the likelihood of bullying behavior. This is because they learn about emotional control, empathy, and conflict resolution, which makes them better able to manage negative emotions without channeling them in the form of aggression or bullying.

A university environment that emphasizes academics, professionalism, and freedom of thought also plays a role in shaping healthier social relationship dynamics among students. One of the critical factors that contribute to suppressing behavior Bullying is the quality of friendship relationships. Students who have quality friendships tend to receive strong social support, which makes them feel more accepted and safer in the campus environment. According to Bukowski (1994), quality friendship is characterized by emotional closeness, trust, and support in dealing with social pressure. Students who have social support from their peers tend to be better able to manage emotions in a constructive way, thus reducing their tendency to commit aggression toward other individuals (Andayani, Pieter and Artanti, 2023). Students who possess a good understanding and strong interpersonal skills are more likely to form healthy, mutually supportive, and inclusive friendships. Thus, the quality of good friendship relations plays a protective factor in creating a safe campus environment free from bullying.

Conclusion

Based on the data and analysis conducted in this study, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, regarding Variable X (Friendship Quality), the data showed that most of the first-year Psychology students from the 2024 cohort at the Faculty of Public Health, University of Nusa Cendana, were categorized as having a high level of friendship quality, with 51% of respondents falling into this category. This suggests that most students experience supportive and positive peer relationships during their initial transition into university life. Second, in terms of Variable Y (Risk of Bullying Behavior), the findings revealed that 63% of the students were in the low-risk category for engaging in or experiencing bullying behavior. This indicates that the majority of students are not significantly exposed to or involved in bullying incidents. Third, the analysis of the relationship between these two variables revealed a negative and significant correlation. The p-value of 0.002 ($p < 0.05$) indicates a statistically significant relationship, and the regression coefficient of -0.657 confirms that the direction of the relationship is negative. This means that as the quality of friendship increases, the risk of bullying behavior decreases. Fourth, the R Square (R^2) value of 0.124 implies that the quality of friendship relationships can explain 12.4% of the variance in bullying behavior risk. This highlights the vital role that peer relationships play in shaping students' social behavior, particularly in reducing the risk of bullying behavior. Finally, the remaining 87.6% of the variance is influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as individual personality traits, family background, campus environment, or coping strategies.

Suggestion

This research is expected to increase students' knowledge about how the special role of friendship quality in a particular problem, such as bullying on campus, reduces behavioral risks.

For the Psychology department, Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University, this research is expected to provide knowledge and information about a

direct picture related to the social environment of relationships in friendship within the campus environment.

Future researchers are encouraged to explore these additional factors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of what contributes to bullying behavior among university students. This study is expected to be a reference and conduct research with a broader population and sample so that the results obtained can be more generalized to various groups of students so that they can be a source of information for future research, especially research related to the quality of friendship to behavioral risks bullying for students.

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