



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**FRIENDSHIP QUALITY: HOW IT IMPACT SOCIAL SKILLS
AND HAPPINESS AMONG YOUTHS**

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Grade: A

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Final Year Project Report

Masters

PhD

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**FRIENDSHIP QUALITY: HOW IT IMPACT SOCIAL SKILLS AND HAPPINESS
AMONG YOUTHS**


NUR NAJIHAH BINTI ASAHAR

This project is submitted
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
Bachelor of Psychology with Honours

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
(2022)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter consist of the background of the study, problem statement, the objectives of the study, the research question, the conceptual framework, the significance of the study, the limitation of the study and the definition of terms.

1.1 Background of Study

Friendship requires spending time with other human in doing activities, talking about varied subjects, providing social support and sharing information (Qualter & Munn, 2005). Friendship is one of the closest people connections within one individual which is that can provide more benefits to individual's development and flourishing (Hartup et al, 1996). Youth is usually look as a time to step away from the family and step more into the new world of their peers (Bradford et al, 2003). The researcher assume that youth spend more time with their friends and less with family. This happen because they want to build their social life and trying to fit in around their peer relationships also to look forward to know more about peers' emotional and instrumental support. According to Hartup and Stevens, (1997), they stated that youth spend one over third of their waking hours with their friends. This close attachment between individual is born upon different characteristics and features which can influence themselves as well as their development both positively and negatively (Berndt, 2002). However, there is relatively less research done in investigating the quality of friendship and how it can be impact with the youths' social skills and happiness.

The topic of this research is to investigate the relationship between social skills and happiness and proposed that friendship quality would mediate the associations among youths. This topic is chosen due to researcher personal experiences and involvement in situation of friendship relationship surround herself. Making friends are important for youths' personal well-being. During youth years, youths will acquire many skills and competences to fulfilling, healthy, happiness and flourishing their adult life. Past research has stated that social skills are essential correlates of psychosocial well-being in different cultures (Riggio, R. Watring, K., et al., 1993). According to the theory, individuals that can express their varies feelings and can identify and read other's emotional states also they can manage their relationships problems by accepting the other's perspective is the individuals who have good social skills (Buhrmester, Furman, & et al. 1977). When youths having good social skills, they also become good in emotional context and competences.

1.2 Problem Statement

For the past years, there are not many studies that focus on friendship quality and the relationship towards social skills and happiness among youth. There are few researches that related to present study. Demir, M. et al., (2015) has do the research about friendship and happiness among young adults. In this research, she examined how can friendship was related to and predictive of happiness also how the social support obtained from friend, intimacy in relationship, spending time with friends that have been suggested to account for the friendship and happiness relationship (Argyle, 2001).

Emma Gleckel, (2015), has studied about friendship quality and personality as predictors of psychological well-being in emerging adults. In the research by Iveta Pilipaityte in 2018, she studied about the relationship between perceived friendship quality and well-being of students with psychosocial difficulties. M. Demir et al has collaborated her studied with researcher in University Malaya in 2013. They studied about social skills, friendship and happiness along with a cross-cultural investigation. Those studies are using quantitative research and measured the variables using questionnaire and scale. Therefore, future research wants to examine about friendship, social skills and happiness using qualitative research design.

Those studies make the present researcher to explore more about perceive friendship quality and how it impacts youths' social skills and their happiness. Nowadays, there are youths that having problem with their peers and effect their social skills performance and their emotion toward other people. According to Sullivan, 1953, when youth's friendship relationship obtaining new demanding settings, emotional competences also requiring broader social, adolescent will face more tension and challenges in context of social interactions especially for those who have social anxiety. Future studies should explore more about the causes of the youth's social anxiety, friendship adjustment and acceptance of the youths' environment friendship. According to the research by Emma Gleckel, (2015), she suggests that future research could measure additional aspect of subjective well-being. Therefore, future research should look more into happiness, satisfaction with life and positive and negative effect.

1.3 Research Objective

To examine the phenomena of friendship among youths and the impact to social skills and happiness.

1. To identify the meaning of friendship quality relationship to youth's life.
2. to examine how friendship quality give impact in building social skills among youth.
3. to examine how friendship quality give impact on happiness among youth.
4. To identify the conflict resolution among youth's friendship.

1.4 Research Question

This research is based on the hypothesis that the social skills and happiness of youth may be associated with the perceived of the positive quality of friendship relationship on their life. The research goal is to investigates the friendship quality and how it impacts the social skills and happiness of the youth. In order to explain the research goal, the following research question are be made for a guideline in this research.

1. what is the meaning of friendship quality relationship to youth's life?
2. how does friendship quality among youth can impact their social skills?
3. how does friendship quality among youth can impact their happiness towards their life?
4. How does youth handle the conflict in their friendship?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is made with the aim to provide crucial information and contribute to enrich the data to the body of knowledge regarding the chosen topic from respondents, recent studies and related sites needed as well as personal experience for the expected importance to the individuals as follows:

1.5.1 Knowledge

Being a newbie in conducting the research for this kind of topic is a quite challenge for the upcoming Psychologist like the researchers. So, this will be a tool or instruments that will guide and navigate the future research in discovering credible and reliable factors that are known as essential data for further understanding on the topic. Indeed, this research will be the chief source of insight that they will surely need in their future studies and be guidelines for further qualitative research on friendship quality by mastery the impact of social skills and happiness.

1.5.2 The Practitioner

This research will contribute the benefit to the society especially among youth. It is because this study can be reference towards them regarding friendship quality, social skills and happiness that these variables play an important role in their friendship and life. This study also can help psychologist, researcher, family and friends to get a deeper picture on how positive friendship quality can influences their mental health, productivity, having a broad mind and so on. This will lead them to live in comfortable live where they can increase their well-being or happiness in their life. Youth can be more confident to stand out their self in front of everyone because they have companion that they trust around them.

1.6 Definitions of Terms

1.6.1 Friendship

Conceptual Definition:

Friendship can be defined as voluntary interdependence between two individuals over time, that is intended to facilitate socio-emotional goals of the participants (Hays, 1988). Friendship also may involve various types of companionship, intimacy, support, affection, mutual assistance and self-validation (Demir et al, 2014). Friendship are important relationship throughout a person's life span. There are five features that can defining friendship which are dyadic relationship, reciprocated affection, not obligatory, egalitarian in nature and companionship (Hohmann et al, 2017).

Operational Definition:

Friendship can be referred as a close association between two people that attract by feelings of care, respect, admiration, concern, similarity or even love.

1.6.2 Friendship Quality

Conceptual Definition:

Friendship quality can be defined as an individual perception of positive and negative aspects with other persons. In another words, friendship quality is individuals that have a high level in positive aspects such as closeness, trust and assistance while low levels in negative aspects which are conflict, competition and dominance (Berndt, 2002).

Operational Definition:

Friendship quality is known as an individuals' perception of positive and negative aspects with their peers.

1.6.3 Social Skill**Conceptual Definition:**

Social skill is a set of learned abilities that enable an individual to interact competently and appropriately in a given social context such as observation, imitation, information and can include both verbal and non-verbal behaviors (American Psychological Association). The most commonly that can identify social skills in western cultures that include assertiveness, coping, communication, friendship making skills, interpersonal problem solving and the ability to regulate person's cognitions, feelings and behavior. Social skill also can increase social enforcement (Salavera et al, 2017).

Operational Definition:

Social skills in easy words can say the skills that people use in daily life such as communicate and interact with others like peers, family and teachers or skills that help them to continue their life such as help-giving task.

1.6.4 Happiness

Conceptual Definition:

Happiness can be referred as a state of well-being and contentment (Seligman, 2011). Happiness can be understood as a constant condition of high positive outlook mood and a feeling satisfaction with an individual life. Happiness also an experience the feeling of joy and having fun with what individual is doing (Kern et al, 2016). According to Deci and Ryan, (2000), happiness involves of global satisfaction, the presence of positive effect and the absence of negative effect.

Operational Definition:

Happiness can be referred as the feeling of joy or having fun with what person are doing does not matter with their friends or family.

1.7 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher explained how the study was conducted and linked it with the research objectives that have been stated before. Besides that, the researcher also provides the definition of terms for this study to enrich understanding of the study in the upcoming chapter. Overall, the background of study, problem statements, research questions, the significance of the study also has been described in this chapter. In the next chapter, the researcher will be discussed about the related past researches and the theories of the present research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The literature review chapter provides structure for understanding the phenomena that examine in the study. To understand the present study, this chapter will present and discuss the relevant theories about this study and the previous research which are laid out in three main variables which are friendship quality, social skills and happiness. First, a general explanation on the quality of friendship will be presented, followed by an exploration of how friendship quality can impact social skills and then an examination into how friendship quality can affect happiness. The component that form a friendship will then be further discuss and the related theories.

2.1 Quality of Friendship

Friendship cannot be defined as single value or multiple characteristics but it will be referred as qualities that were created to explore the extensive dimensions of friendship (Pilipaityte, 2018). Friendship quality can have positive and negative features in the relationship. According to past study, there are five characteristic of friendship which are companionship, conflict, help, closeness and security. These qualities were attached together to build an example for helping to conceptualize and examine friendship (Hartup et al, 1996).

So, the present study chose the dimensional analysis because there are few past researches are studied about the same thing. For example, research from Berndt and Perry (1986), Bukowski, Hoza and Boivin (1994), Furman and Adler (1982), Furman and Buhrmester (1985) and Parker and Asher (1993). In their research they stated that

the dimensional assessment is form on the provisions or features that children were mentioned when talking about this friendship relationship. Most of their instruments were about five or six domains but still correlated to each other.

The five elements are related to research variable which are social skills and happiness. for example, companionship will make one individual enjoys what they are doing with their peers wherever they want. So, it can be proven this element are related to happiness in youths' life. Besides, conflict can build the personal value from that it can influence social development. While help element can relate it to youths' social skills. It is because help-giving and help-seeking can build social skills. It is because when youths have been exposed in the situation of giving and seeking help in friendship, they will automatically practice and refine these skills in the friendship.

2.1.1 Theory Related (Model of Friendship by Willard W. Hartup)

According to Hartup, et al (1996), friendship quality assessment in child and adolescent are involves two main strategies which are *dimensional analysis* and *typological or categorical analysis*. Dimensional analysis was determined by five characteristic which are companionship, conflict, help, closeness and security whether one of these elements are present or absent in the social interaction between friends. While categorical analysis is identifying the patterns in social interactional believed to be critical to social development and adaption.

Companionship is referring to the friends that spend enjoyable, spending time together everywhere they want like shopping mall, theme park, cafe or cinema. The recreational activities was identified as a basic characteristic for children's relationships (Sullivan, 1953). According to Sullivan, he argues that when children doing recreational activities not only they can build up their friendship, but it also possible in

improving their own mental health since the interpersonal relationship are the key to the mental health (Sullivan, 1953). While, according to other study, they mentioned that play interaction are also important elements not only for children but as well for adults too (Bukoswki et al, 2005). It can be concluded that without outdoor activities in a friendship, this attachment of friendship would not have a basic phase for further development of interpersonal relationship between individuals.

Next is conflict. Conflict can be referred as an experience of betray to the relationship which is that can be defined by disputes, arguments, irritations or doubts (Hartup et al, 1996). Conflict play an important role in the youth's friendships. According to Hartup, in his model of friendship, he stated that conflict is negative aspect for the friendship and connected it with ending of friendship. On the other hand, past researcher suggests that if conflicts could handled in a good way especially in the early adulthood, conflict can contribute to development of personal values, influence social development and can even strengthen the relationship of friendship. However, the positive outcome of the conflict may be required by having a good conflict management skill which are stress management, control of emotions and behaviors, comprehension of emotions and feeling being expressed as well as intrapersonal experiences (Hartup et al, 1996).

According to Parker and Asher, conflict also involved in conflict resolution into the conceptualization of friendship (1993). They state that conflict resolution feature can be the defined as the measurement to which conflicts that occurred in the relationships are settles or resolved (Parker & Asher, 1993). However, the conflict cannot be measure by how the conflict were solved or if the both parties are satisfying with the outcome of the resolution. There is the lack measurement of conflict management skills within friendship concept and it still leaves the space for the future

studies to explore and investigate the full impact of integral component of conflict to youth's friendship. The conflict also becomes the intimidating aspect not only for the friendship but also for the individuals' development (Hartup et al, 1996).

Help is a behavior that individual providing aid or benefit to another person. According to Hartup model, help also can be defined as two aspects which are can be as guideline with everyday activities or challenging task and protection from victimization. According to Sullivan, he stated that assistance and guidance will appear when the relationship between peers becomes more cherished and the youth more awareness of the need of a friend. Help also would proceed to add each other's situation like by helping friends with the assignments or protecting them from victimization. According to Berndt, in his research he explains that helps can be defined as expression of mutual responsiveness. In empirical research, they stated that help will occur more during adolescence than in earlier years of children's development (1982). On that account, it can be proven that help is more significant for youth's friendship. So, there are few studies has proved that friendship does play a protective role against victimization as well as explanation of help's role in the model of friendship by Hartup (Hartup et al, 1996 & Bukowski et al, 2010).

Closeness also one of the friendship's characteristic by Hartup's model. Closeness in not a physical intimacy but the acceptance, validation and attachment within the friendship. According to Sullivan, closeness in friendship is to individual for understanding their value of themselves by evaluating from the context of friendship. In another words, the youths can form their personality within the social context which is close friendship. According to model of friendship by Hartup, closeness is divided by two dimensions which are affective bond and reflected appraisal (Hartup et al, 1996). From the perspective of attachment theory, affective bond can be referred to the youth's

attachment behavior towards the friend with a great emotional significance (Bowlby, 1988). While reflected appraisal can relate it to the process that influencing the development of the concept of self (Sullivan, 1953).

The positive development of youth's self will be triggered when the youth experience validation and acceptance expressed by connectedness with their friend. However, the influence of the reflected appraisal may increase when it combines with the expression of effective bond (Sullivan, 1953). In other words, the closer the friends are, the more influence that friendship will have for the concept of self. In the Berndt research, he suggests that to add an extra dimension of stability in the model of friendship for fully understanding and measuring the importance of closeness to construction of the self (Berndt, 1982). For Sullivan and Hartup, they suggested that to measure the two dimension which are effective bond and reflected appraisal together in a longitude study for investigating the closeness and its effect.

Security can be described as a sense of safety and have potential to manage difficulties within the relationship of friendship as well as trust. The security also can exchange the feeling or personal information (Hartup et al, 1996). Sullivan in turns stated that security is intimacy because it is an important element of friendship with the features of self-disclosure and intimate exchange (Sullivan, 1953). While Parker and Asher detached the security into two dimensions which are conflict resolution and intimacy. Conflict resolution where as it focusing on placed or the resolution of the socially challenging situation. While intimacy which mostly includes the exchange of feelings and sensitive information (Parker and Asher, 1993). Therefore, whatever the past researchers say about security whether it is separated in different directions or not, it still remains the priority to one of the characteristics in the model of friendship (Berndt, 2004).

It can be concluded, that Friendship's characteristics are mostly influence towards individuals' social skills and their happiness. it can form a positive quality friendship among youths. Not only that, youth can build their interpersonal relationship in their self.

2.2 Friendship Quality and Social Skill

This study contributes to my understanding of how quality of friendship can impact our social skills and happiness. First of all, altruism, social competence, self-confidence and self-esteem has been found to be positively social relations on having friends. Past researcher has found that friendship enable adult to learn more about themselves and can develop their own identity. According to Asher et al (1996), in his article he argued that the important of friendship is people must control for the acceptance and also to consider the skills that relevant for their friendship to the general peer interaction (Asher et al, 1996).

In the present study, social skills were expected one of the effects to studying friendship competencies. Close friendship was characterized as positive quality friendship. When having friends and high-quality friendship, it could be expected to forecast the changes in how youth respond to giving help and seeking help task. Past study also said that friendships can provide the development of social skills (Ladd, 1999) and youth who having close friendship can expand, practice and refine their social skills through their friendship (Buhrmester and Furman, 1986). Not only that, intimacy and validation in close friendships also will contribute to social competence like communication and their appropriate expression of effect towards people around them.

According to the article by Sullivan's in 1953, he said that when adult have their own close friendship in another word is positive high-quality friendship it could

enhance their social skills. For example, it will allow youth to set aside their insecurities and disclose their personal feeling towards their friends. So, when they have positive qualities friendships it may increase their sense of disclosure, talking to their friends about each other problems, seeking and offering for advice, foster compassion, empathy and reassurance when they accept and have trust towards their friends. So, social skills important for quality of friendship as well as building intimacy, engaging in appropriate disclosure also earning peer trust and respect (Asher et al, 1996).

2.2.1 Theory Related (Social Competence Theory)

According to past research by Eisler, 1970, the social ability and interpersonal skill of an individual social competence can be referred as effectively dealing with an individual environmental factor or successfully forming and maintaining positive social interactions with other people while reaching personal goals. According to Goldfried and D'zurilla in 1963, they stated that social competence can be defined as effectiveness which an individual is proficient of to respond to the various complex situation that confront them. According to Argyle, (1999), social competence consists of different social abilities, habits, skills and knowledge. Social competence allows person to engage in an appropriate social behavior by strengthening one's interpersonal relationships and it is not hurtful to others (Schneider, 1993).

Social competence also can be referred as social skills and adaptive behavior (Gresham and Reschly (1987). Social skills contain of three sub aspects which are task-related behaviors, self-related behavior and interpersonal behaviors. Task-related behaviors is when individual go along with the instruction or directions, paying attention to the warnings, fulfilling one's responsibilities and working independently. Self-related behavior can be defined as ethical behavior, expressing one's own feelings