

Relationship quality and its effects on college student's psychological well-being

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ABSTRACT

The field of psychological well-being is extensively studied globally, encompassing positive relationships as a notable facet. Presently, there is a discourse emphasizing the need for research on relationships to encompass both positive and negative aspects, along with their effects on an individual's overall well-being. The study aimed to identify the impacts of relationship qualities of three sources (parental, friendship, and romantic relationships) on college students' psychological well-being. The 251 college students in Surabaya (Indonesia) and 139 college students in Hangzhou (China), selected using purposive sampling technique, were involved in this research. All participants have at least three social networks/sources of relationship, i.e., parents, best friends, and romantic partners. The network of relationships inventory -relationship quality version (NRI-RQV) was given to identify the qualities of relationship participants have from the three sources. Participants' psychological well-being was observed using the PERMA-Profil. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). In both countries, students highlight that the quality of the relationship between parents and college students has the most substantial influence on their psychological well-being, with parental approval being one of the key components. This finding provides valuable insights for developing an effective support system for college students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

College life is a life-changing experience that is characterized by significant personal, social, and academic changes. During this time, students face a variety of challenges, such as adjusting to new environments, handling academic pressures, and developing a sense of independence. Amidst these transitions, their psychological well-being plays a crucial role in various facets of their life. Psychological well-being is an extensively explored subject globally. Students at college define well-being as a wide concept that includes striking a balance between their schoolwork, extracurricular activities, and relationships [1]. Educational institutions must consider the well-being of students as critical for their growth and learning experience [2]. A

study from Malaysia [3] stated that universities must take a leading role in helping students improve their psychological well-being to better handle the challenges. A comprehensive understanding of the problem may be obtained by looking into the causes and solution to mental health issues from an ecological viewpoint, which encompasses personal, interpersonal, social, and other factors affecting the student.

Recent research has consistently demonstrated that relationship quality plays a crucial role in psychological well-being, especially among college students who are going through major life transitions and are in the emerging adult stage of life. Relationship quality pertains to how individuals show intimacy, affection, and nurturance. Therefore, low quality relationships are characterized as miserable, empty, unpleasant, discouraging, and boring [4]. While relationships contribute to life satisfaction and well-being, they can also induce stress and feelings of loneliness. Meaningful relationships emerge as a common factor contributing to individuals' happiness and values. Peer support and a sense of belonging, especially to a university community, have been identified as critical areas for developing protective factors for positive mental health outcomes and lower rates of health-risk behavior [5]. A study conducted by Wazid and Shahnawaz [4] highlights the substantial impact of relationship quality on an individual's well-being, conceptualized as virtues or states that one needs to achieve and realize, involving cognitive and affective evaluations [6]. However, every relationship inherently contains both positive and negative elements. Positive relationships exhibit elements such as companionship, disclosure, emotional support, approval, and satisfaction, while negative relationships are characterized by criticism, dominance, exclusion, pressure, and conflict [7]. Criticism of current research on relationships arises from its limited exploration of these dual aspects of relationship quality. Seligman's positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA) model emphasizes the significance of positive relationships in achieving overall well-being, indicating the need for a comprehensive examination of both the positive (supportive/closeness) and negative (discord) aspects of relationships to provide a balanced understanding of their overall impact on psychological well-being [8].

Relationship types have different effects on psychological well-being. By examining how different types of relationships uniquely and collectively influence psychological well-being, researchers can develop more effective mental health strategies. First, we can examine the relationship with parents. Individual's first interactions with their parents frequently shape the course of their relationships. Parent-child relationships serve as the cornerstone for future relationships, influencing an individual's interactions with others. Relationship between a child and his parents affects the child's psyche and behavior, as well as plays a great role in their physical and mental development, including self-esteem, body satisfaction, emotional regulation, and secure attachment [9]. As individuals mature, positive mental development enables them to form diverse relationships beyond those with their parents. Parents often serve as the primary support system, providing emotional stability and reassurance during stressful times. While previous studies have concentrated on the impact of parent-child relationships, little is known about the ongoing influence on parent-emerging adult relationships. Existing literature has suggested that parent-emerging adult relationships have been shown to be the main source of structure, support, and guidance, but also a major source of stress [10].

During the transition to emerging adulthood, peer relationships gain prominence, especially for college students. The shift towards spending more time with same-age friends and engaging in activities with peers underscores the evolving nature of relationships during this period. These relationships fulfill social-emotional needs and contribute to happiness and mental health. Close, intimate, and affective relationships with peers can provide essential support during this phase. They communicate with their friends more than they communicate with their parents to fulfill their needs for "trust" and close relationships [11]. Friends can offer an emotional outlet, allowing students to express their feelings and thoughts freely. Nonetheless, prior research has discovered that there was a strong direct impact of negative peer relationships on both regulatory emotional self-efficacy and non-suicidal self-injury [12].

In addition to peer relationships, romantic relationships in emerging adulthood become more intimate and serious, involving emotional and physical exploration. Dating and romantic involvement contribute significantly to personal development and well-being, providing motivation, idea exchange, and emotional sharing between partners. Prior research suggested that college students who have romantic relationships report a higher level of overall life satisfaction [13] and relationship quality is an important factor to be considered when understanding how relationships predict well-being [14]. However, that does not imply that being in a romantic relationship will always bring good to an individual. Being in an unhappy romantic relationship might negatively impact one's psychological well-being. Even when individuals reported neutrally about their relationship (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) were predicted to experience worse well-being than their peers who were not in relationships [14].

Existing literature for relationship quality and psychological well-being predominantly reflects Western contexts, with insufficient attention to Asian cultures, particularly Indonesia and China, where societal norms and cultural values distinctly shape relationship dynamics and their impact on psychological well-being. Collectivist societies tend to produce more stable social relationships because of their higher need for affiliation

[15]. Thus, although some studies have examined the relationship between psychological well-being and relationship quality, there is limited research in Asia that compares and discusses all three of the relationship's sources simultaneously.

To address these problems, this study will focus on the following issues by empirically exploring how relationship quality influences college students' well-being, considering both positive and negative aspects across various relationship types and sources (parents, friends, and romantic partner) in Indonesia and China. Understanding this complex relationship in particular cultural context is essential for developing effective support systems for college students. By bridging the knowledge gap in region-specific research, this study aims to develop targeted interventions to improve relationship quality and psychological well-being among college students, as well as valuable insights that can inform mental health practices and policies in Indonesia and China.

2. METHOD

This is a quantitative study with non-experimental survey design. The data were obtained from an online survey. The sample size for our study was determined based on a combination of statistical considerations and practical constraints. We employed a formula proposed by Raosoft Inc. [16] for estimating sample size in this type of study. This reference outlines the minimum sample size required to achieve a specified level of statistical power. These recommendations state that our computed sample size is greater than what is needed to achieve a 95% confidence level with a less than 5% margin of error. This means that our sample size is sufficient to discover significant associations with a high degree of confidence.

2.1. Participants

The participants involved in this study consisted of college students from Surabaya, Indonesia (n=251; 196 females and 55 males) and from Hangzhou, People's Republic of China (n=139; 87 females and 52 males). These students were within the age range of 18 to 25 years old and had three social networks (i.e., parents, best friends, and romantic partner). The purpose of this study is to obtain data about each relationship's quality and the effect of each relationship towards college students' psychological well-being. The participants were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. All the participants provided informed consent and their participation was voluntary and anonymous. A summary of the descriptive statistics can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of Indonesia and China samples

| Variable | Indonesia | | China | |
|----------|-----------|------|-------|------|
| | n | % | n | % |
| Gender | | | | |
| Female | 196 | 78.1 | 87 | 62.6 |
| Male | 55 | 21.9 | 52 | 37.4 |
| Age | | | | |
| 18-20 | 190 | 75.7 | 87 | 62.6 |
| 21-23 | 59 | 23.5 | 42 | 30.2 |
| >24 | 2 | .8 | 10 | 7.2 |

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. Relationship qualities

The network of relationships inventories-relationship qualities version (NRI-RQV) from Furman and Buhrmester [7] was used to measure closeness as a positive relationship quality and discord as negative relationship quality. The positive aspects of relationship quality are i) companionship, ii) intimate disclosure, iii) emotional support, iv) approval, and v) satisfaction. Meanwhile, the negative aspects of relationship quality are i) criticism, ii) dominance, iii) exclusion, iv) pressure, and v) conflict.

NRI-RQV instrument was chosen for this study because this scale has balanced aspects of positive relationship quality (closeness) and negative relationship quality (discord). Sapphire-Bernstein and Taylor [17] noted that NRI could assess the quantity and quality of a wide array of relationships. The questionnaire's internal consistencies in this study were $\alpha=.920$ and $\alpha=.949$, for the Indonesian and Chinese versions, respectively. The participants were asked to respond to each item based on their relationship with their parents, friends, and romantic partners. The romantic partner could be in a hetero or homosexual relationship. NRI-RQV used the same set of items to describe each member of the social network (i.e., parents, friends, and romantic partner). Examples of items on this scale are "How much does this person help you when you need to get something else?" and "How often do you and this person argue with each other?" All items were responded to using a scale of 1 to 5 in which 1 represented "never or hardly at all" and 5 represented "always or extremely often/much".

2.2.1. Psychological well-being

PERMA Profiler by Butler and Kern [8] was implemented to measure psychological well-being in accordance with Seligman [18] theory. This instrument consists of 5 aspects, i) positive emotions, the hedonic feeling or happiness; ii) engagement, the psychological relationships with activities or organizations (such as attracted feeling and involvement in life); iii) positive relationships, the feeling of being socially integrated, being cared and supported by others, and being satisfied with his/her social relationships; iv) meaning, the belief that someone's life is precious; and v) accomplishment, the satisfaction of making progress towards one's goals, feeling capable in daily activities, and having a sense of accomplishment.

PERMA Profiler was chosen for this study because it is the latest psychological well-being measurement by Martin Seligman, founder of positive psychology. The questionnaire's internal consistencies in this study were $\alpha=.894$ and $\alpha=.911$ for the Indonesian and Chinese versions, respectively. Sample items on this scale are "How often do you become absorbed in what you are doing?" and "In general, how often do you feel positive?". Items are responded to using a scale of 0 to 10 in which 0 represents "never or not at all" and 10 represents "completely or always".

2.3. Statistical analysis

This study employed several statistical analysis techniques. The descriptive statistics were utilized to describe the demographic variable of the samples. Linear regression analysis is implemented to measure the correlation between relationship quality and psychological well-being. Some classic assumption tests were conducted before regression analyses, including multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and normality to fulfill the requirements of conducting a regression test. The normality of residual tests showed that both the Indonesia and China data sets were normal ($\text{sig}=0.534$). The linearity test showed a linear correlation in both data. Independent-samples t-test was used to see the difference between Indonesian and Chinese college students' relationship quality and psychological well-being. The analysis was carried out with IBM SPSS Version 22.0.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows regression analysis to predict psychological well-being based on the source of the relationship for Indonesian and Chinese college students. The result of the regression analysis suggests that in Indonesia, relationship quality was a significant predictor for psychological well-being ($F=32.370$, $p<.001$), with an R^2 of .282. The resulting regression linear model shows a 28.2% proportion on the effect of relationship quality on psychological well-being, while the remaining 71.8% was affected by other variables beside this regression model. On the other hand, the result of the regression analysis suggests that in China, relationship quality was a small but significant predictor for psychological well-being ($F=6.526$, $p<.001$), with an R^2 of .127. This result suggests a 12.7% proportion on the effect of relationship quality to psychological well-being in China sample, while 87.3% was affected by other variables.

Table 2. Regression analysis summary for relationship quality variables predicting psychological well-being of Indonesian and China samples

| Variable | R | R Square | F | Sig |
|---|------|----------|--------|-------|
| Relationship quality and psychological well-being-Indonesia | .531 | .282 | 32.370 | <.001 |
| Relationship quality and psychological well-being-China | .356 | .127 | 6.526 | <.001 |

The results of a linear regression between the closeness and discord aspects of relationship quality and psychological well-being are shown in Table 3. In the Indonesian sample, a significant regression equation ($p<.001$) was discovered regarding the closeness of parents and student's psychological well-being. The parent closeness aspect and psychological well-being in the Chinese sample show the same significance. Meanwhile, romantic partner relationship quality in China has a significant regression equation with psychological well-being ($p<.05$). Nonetheless, no statistically significant correlation has been found between a student's psychological well-being and the discord aspect of any relationship quality with parents, friends, and romantic partners with ($p>.05$). In Indonesia, the one with the highest score was relationship quality in the closeness aspect with parents while the lowest score was the relationship quality with best friends in the discord aspect. In China, the one with the highest score was relationship quality in the closeness aspect with parents and romantic partner while the lowest score was the relationship quality with best friends in the closeness aspect.

Table 4 shows the results of regression analysis to see which aspects of relationship quality with parents affect the psychological well-being of college students in Indonesia and China. Based on the research results, parents' approval is the only aspect that has a significant influence on psychological well-being in both Indonesia and China, with β values 2.658 and 5.771, respectively. Parental acceptance forms the warmth dimension of

parenting. Parental acceptance is marked by warmth, affection, care, comfort, concern, nurturance, support, or simply love those children can experience from their parents and other caregivers [19].

Table 3. Regression analysis summary for relationship quality aspects predicting psychological well-being of Indonesian and China samples

| Variable | Indonesia PERMA | | | China PERMA | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------------|--------|-------|
| | β | t | Sig | β | t | Sig |
| Parents closeness | .687** | 5.387 | <.001 | .794** | 3.504 | <.001 |
| Parents discord | .443 | 2.852 | .005 | -.348 | -1.050 | .295 |
| Best friends' closeness | .290 | 1.896 | .059 | .216 | .906 | .367 |
| Best friends' discord | .055 | .249 | .804 | .366 | 1.195 | .234 |
| Romantic partner closeness | .304 | 2.394 | .017 | .531* | 2.593 | .011 |
| Romantic partner discord | .458 | 2.534 | .012 | .318 | .003 | .998 |

Table 4. Regression analysis for relationship quality with parents predicting psychological well-being of Indonesia and Chinese samples

| Variable | Indonesia PERMA | | | China PERMA | | | Variable | Indonesia PERMA | | | China PERMA | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------|------|-------------|--------|------|-------------------|-----------------|-------|------|-------------|--------|-------|
| | β | t | Sig | β | t | Sig | | β | t | Sig | β | t | Sig |
| Companionship | -1.279 | -1.743 | .083 | -1.989 | -1.361 | .176 | Emotional support | .347 | .378 | .706 | .386 | .226 | .822 |
| Intimate disclosure | 1.471 | 1.893 | .060 | 1.618 | 1.111 | .269 | Criticism | 1.212 | 1.621 | .106 | -2.260 | -1.081 | .282 |
| Pressure | -.269 | -.417 | .677 | 2.422 | 1.494 | .138 | Approval | 2.658* | 2.784 | .006 | 5.771** | 4.193 | <.001 |
| Satisfaction | .629 | .591 | .555 | 1.156 | .683 | .496 | Dominance | -.405 | -.528 | .598 | -.637 | -.373 | .710 |
| Conflict | .817 | .089 | .243 | .787 | .502 | .616 | Exclusion | 1.125 | 1.565 | .119 | .411 | .258 | .797 |

Table 5 displays the mean differences between Indonesian and Chinese college students in relationship quality and psychological well-being. The mean score of Indonesian students is rated higher than that of China students, in terms of relationship quality from three sources and psychological well-being. This result explains that students in Indonesia have higher average relationship quality and psychological well-being than those in China.

Table 5. T-test results comparing Indonesian and Chinese college students on relationship quality to psychological well-being

| Variable | Indonesia | | China | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| Relationship quality–parents | 152.32 | 26.42 | 149.39 | 30.75 |
| Relationship quality–best friends | 105.05 | 18.42 | 84.22 | 14.34 |
| Relationship quality–romantic partner | 108.51 | 12.07 | 84.85 | 15.50 |
| Psychological well-being | 107.86 | 13.66 | 91.17 | 17.66 |

3.1. Relationship qualities and psychological well-being

Our hypothesis stated that there would be a positive relationship between relationship qualities and psychological well-being of college students, both in Indonesian and Chinese samples. This finding implied that the quality of a relationship could have a significant impact on psychological well-being. High quality relationships provide individuals with social support which serves as a buffer against stressors. When individuals feel supported and understood by their partners, they are better equipped to cope with life's challenges. Consequently, this leads to decreased psychological distress and higher levels of well-being [20]. As hypothesized, this research found that there was a positive relationship between relationship qualities and psychological well-being of college students in the Indonesian samples ($r^2 = .282$; $p < .001$) as well as the China samples ($r^2 = .127$; $p < .001$). These results suggest that relationship quality is a stronger predictor of psychological well-being for Indonesian students compared to their Chinese counterparts. Thus, the degree of overall psychological well-being among these students increases with their level of social skills [21]. Having more healthy interactions within one's own setting or context contributed to improved coping mechanisms and increased resilience, or the ability to adjust. Students' psychological well-being is expected to increase as a result of these strategies being strengthened since they experience greater optimism and support. Furthermore, we will examine each source of relationship in more detail.

3.1.1. Parents relationship quality and psychological well-being

In the Indonesian sample, participants were rated the highest for their relationship quality with parents, both in terms of closeness and discord. In summary, there was a positive relation between relationship quality and psychological well-being where relationship quality with parents in positive or closeness aspects in Indonesia is

quite high ($\beta=.687$). Meanwhile in China, the highest score was in the relationship quality with parents and romantic partner in the closeness aspect ($\beta=.794$ and $\beta=.531$ respectively). This result suggested that relationships with parents had a higher influence on college student's psychological well-being in both countries rather than any other sources. The higher influence of parental relationships compared to other sources indicates that fostering positive and supportive parent-child relationships can be a key intervention target for improving psychological well-being of students in both countries. This result is congruent with prior studies in adolescence that found parental relationship has a lot of influence on the adolescents' psychological well-being [8], [18].

College students who reported having a stable and secure relationship with their parents and peers not only reported better overall academic, social, and emotional adjustment to college but also reported improvements in their social competencies from freshman to senior year [19]. The quality of the relationship with parents during this crucial transition from adolescence to adulthood can influence how students manage this transition [22]. College student who has a stable secure relationship with mother predicted less loneliness and fewer symptoms of depression too. Prior research found that higher parent-child relationship quality is associated with decreased emerging adult psychological problems [23]. Unfortunately, emerging adults who have close relationships with their mother who have mental health problems may be at highest risk for developing their own mental health problems. This result suggested that a positive parent-child relationship can be buffered against the negative effects of psychological and physical maltreatment.

When we take a closer look at what aspect that parents' relationship has that can predict college student well-being, parental approval (both in Indonesia and China) is significant for predicting college students' well-being. This is consistent with results that parents act as identity agents in identity development by imparting values and perspectives that individuals evaluate and reflect on [24]. Prior evidence from a longitudinal study conducted in Germany stated that emerging adults begin to consider parental perspectives and motives for certain actions and decisions more [23]. In China, parental approval still plays an important role affecting the choice of partner [25]. According to Parker *et al.* [26], it is feasible that the relationship between college students and their parents transforms for the better, the quality increases despite the contact with family has decreased. They want to have a mature relationship with their parents when they can choose to tell parents about their life decisions and narratives. Parents can be receptive to their story, offer support and encouragement, provide guidance and support while allowing them to make his or her own decisions. This is the extent of what emerging adults desire for intimate disclosure and parent approval.

Nelson and Padilla-walker [27] found that emerging adults with the most positive outcomes were those whose parents displayed a high level of support and communication with their children. Emerging adults already have struggles to become independent and have self-reliance, but it does not mean that they do not need their parents. Skill of survival, such as subsistence skills and managing relationships in emerging adults are developing, because their efficiency is still lower than mothers [28]. Strong relationships in parent-child relationships can be seen by a relationship that is filled with warmth, support, love, and communication [27]. It is important for college students to know that their parents trust them and check in with them, not just controlling their behavior. From adolescence to emerging adulthood, cohesiveness rose when parent-child conflict decreased [29].

In order to have low levels of conflict, emerging adults need more equal and reciprocal relationships with their parents. This may be achieved by prior family agreements or negotiation [30]. However, for this parent acceptance and negotiation to exist, parents must be certain of their role in raising their emerging adult children. It supports the earlier study's findings that, although they are relatively uncommon in most countries, it is crucial to develop resources or provide services to encourage positive parenting throughout emerging adulthood [30].

3.1.2. Romantic partner relationship quality and psychological well-being

Both in Indonesia and China, romantic partners are the second influential figure that influences the psychological well-being of college students, but this result has no significance. Prior research indicated that the quality of romantic relationships has been associated with long-term physical health outcomes in addition to psychological well-being. Studies have shown that individuals in happy, supportive relationships are more likely to engage in health-promoting behaviors, have lower rates of chronic illness, and have higher life expectancy compared to those in dysfunctional or unsatisfying relationships [31].

In Indonesia, romantic partners influence college student psychological well-being with the discord dimension ($\beta=.458$) higher than the closeness dimension ($\beta=.304$). In China, romantic partners influence college students' psychological well-being with the closeness dimension ($\beta=.531$) higher than the discord dimension ($\beta=.318$). This means that in Indonesia, negative aspects with a romantic partner can affect psychological well-being higher than their closeness or positive interaction. In China, positive aspects of romantic partners will have a higher impact on the psychological well-being of college students rather than negative aspects. These unique variations between the two samples also suggest cultural differences in the relative importance of romantic relationships, which could be an area for further research due to the current lack of studies addressing these issues.

In other words, romantic relationships are also one of the most influential things that affect emerging adults' psychological well-being. This study is in line with previous studies, such as a study from Gómez-López *et al.* [32] which showed that romantic relationships with romantic competence, mental and emotional health consideration might be one of the main sources of well-being in emerging adults. Braithwaite *et al.* [33] also showed that emerging adults who are in committed relationships experienced fewer mental health problems and less likely to engage in risky behaviors.

In the China sample, our data showed closeness relationships with romantic partners hold the second most influential figure for emerging adults, after closeness relationships with parents. This result is in line with Cao and An [34] research which studied relationship qualities in China emerging adults, and showed that attachment qualities in parents-emerging adults relationship affects their romantic relationship, and the development of romantic relationships might affect peer relationships. Cao and An [34] stated that China's emerging adults tend to subordinate best friends when they have a romantic partner, this mainly includes emotional support and companionship. This is in line with this study, as China's emerging adults tend to place concerns for peer relationships after romantic relationships, especially in the closeness aspect.

In line with the result in China's sample, romantic partners hold the second influential figure for emerging adults in Indonesia if we look at their discord aspect. Indonesian emerging adults tend to give more attention to their romantic partner rather than best friend. Additionally, there are interesting results in which discord within a relationship with a romantic partner has more impact on their psychological well-being rather than discord within friendship. There is a key distinction between friendships and romantic relationships that could be considered to contribute to this outcome. Our results, along with previous research, indicate that people who are significantly experiencing a great deal of relationship distress and instability are strongly associated with depression and relationship dissatisfaction [35].

Intimacy in romantic relationships is crucial for fostering deeper connections that significantly improve well-being. Romantic relationships in emerging adulthood last longer than in adolescents and involve a deeper level of intimacy [36]. This study shares similar results with prior studies which showed that failure to meet the goal of maintaining intimacy with a romantic partner may be linked to poorer well-being [37].

3.1.3. Friend relationship quality and psychological well-being

Both in Indonesia and China, best friends were the least influential figure that influences the psychological well-being of college students. In Indonesia, best friends influence college students' psychological well-being with the closeness aspect ($\beta=.290$) higher than the discord aspect ($\beta=.055$). In China, best friends influence college students' psychological well-being with the discord aspect ($\beta=.366$) higher than the closeness aspect ($\beta=.216$). This means that in Indonesia, friends' companionship, disclosure, satisfaction, emotional support, and approval will impact the psychological well-being of college students, but the impact is less than the other sources. In China, best friends' pressure, criticism, dominance, conflict, and exclusion will impact the psychological well-being of college students more than the closeness aspect.

Relationships with friends are an important source of individual well-being [6]. Support from friends can be one of the protective factors for individuals to improve their well-being. College students have so many times to communicate and meet more friends than they do with their parents to fulfill their needs for trust and close relationships [11]. College students who reported increased security of attachment to peers reported better social functioning over time in college [38]. Friends have many roles for college students, especially when they begin their studies [39]. They help students to adjust in their new environment, provide them with emotional support and tangible assistance when needed. Friends can help normalize the experience they feel during the transition. Berndt [40] defines a high-quality friendship as one with high levels of prosocial behavior and intimacy along with low levels of conflicts and rivalry. According to Chan *et al.* [41], intimacy among friends is important for Chinese adolescent's psychosocial development.

Results from Chinese data showed that friendship is the least influential figure for emerging adults psychological well-being. Friendships in Chinese students are difficult to define [42]. The word "friend" in Chinese society is used in a more generalized way. It is frequently used when we define the relations of couples, brothers, classmates, or someone you are familiar with. Meanwhile, Zhao *et al.* [43] stated that intense academic competition in China affected college students to develop jealousy and distrust in their peer relationships. Close friends were also often seen as rivals or enemies in academic competition. Interestingly, the findings of the present studies provide evidence of how the discord aspect in college students' friendship leads to more influence in their psychological well-being. It is consistent with previous studies conducted by Ma and Lai [44] which indicated that friends' risk factor is a stronger predictor of adolescents' well-being.

Findings from Indonesia indicated that psychological well-being is impacted by the closeness aspect rather than the discord aspect. Prior research showed that compared to US or Korean students, Indonesian students displayed characteristics of extensive social contacts, but limited intimacy, with more interaction partners and more daily encounters [45]. This indicates that they engage in more companionship-related

activities with their friends in order to maintain the relationship and avoid conflict within their friendships. Compared to Chinese students, friendships in Indonesia are easier to define due to the many types of friendships that exist. In general, friendships in Indonesia can be divided into several types such as friends, close friends, and work friends (*teman*, *teman dekat/teman akrab*, and *teman kerja*) [45].

Many research suggests that friendship is consistently related to happiness across the studies, but the correlations are generally small to moderate [6]. The quality of a person's friendship network in late adolescence is a good indicator of the friendship network in early adulthood and indicator of a well-developed social life [46]. Recent research about friendship tells us that there is more to learn about this friendship thing, not just the quality or satisfaction, but more about friendship-specific experiences as they relate to happiness, like number of friends, attempts to maintain the friendship, socialization with friends, friends' reaction to partner's attempts to capitalize on positive events, and support from friends [47].

3.2. Differences in relationship qualities and psychological well-being

Our results showed that both relationship quality and psychological well-being in Indonesia and Chinese college students differed significantly. Indonesian students reported higher levels of both relationship quality and psychological well-being compared to Chinese college students. Despite these differences, there were notable similarities between the two countries. In both Indonesia and China, relationship quality with parents played the most important role for the college students' psychological well-being. Additionally, romantic relationships were found to have a greater impact on psychological well-being than relationships with best friends in both countries. These findings emphasize the universal importance of parental and romantic relationships in supporting the psychological well-being of college students across different cultures. This result is in line with the findings from Weisskirch [48] that a sense of one's identity, comfort in intimate relationships, and comfort with close relationships derived from parent-child relationship may all help someone attain the developmental goal of psychosocial intimacy, and achieving intimacy during emerging adulthood may be associated with well-being.

This study looked at two aspects of relationship quality, the closeness and discord aspects, to better understand the similarity and the differences between the results from these two countries. Although there are so many similarities between these two cultures, there are some crucial differences. None of the discord aspects in China were linear, so the discord aspect of relationships did not significantly impact the psychological well-being of Chinese emerging adults. This may be attributed to the gradual shift in Chinese society toward individualism [46], [47]. Chinese people are gradually prioritizing individualist factors in assessments of their own happiness and life satisfaction, although many still consider China to be a collectivist country [46]. The increasing importance of income, self-rated health, and marital and employment status become one of many reasons they are gradually prioritizing individualist factors now. Shifting to cultures that become more individualistic can have a negative impact on several things, including rising divorce rates, a tendency for family members to avoid one another because they do not like each other, and socially isolated neighbors [15]. Further research is needed to explore whether similar patterns are emerging in Indonesia and how they might affect relationship quality and psychological well-being among Indonesian college students.

3.3. Limitation and suggestion

The present study contributes to the literature on relationship study and well-being, particularly by examining the various sources of significant connections among college students. This study answered future challenges that it is important to have research that tested many differences and examined the importance of many significant relationships for college students and their effect on psychological well-being. There are several limitations of this study. First, the sample size was utilized primarily in just one city of the respective country, limiting the generalizability. Given these limitations, caution should be exercised when interpreting and generalizing the results of our study. While our findings provide valuable insights within the scope of our sample, further research with more diverse samples like a more extensive range of cities or ethnicities is warranted to corroborate and extend our conclusions. It may be beneficial for future research to investigate any cultural differences in relationship quality and psychological well-being from these two countries. Second, there isn't much research or tools available that can quantify and explain relationship quality in such a wide range of situations or relationship kinds. Numerous academic fields have investigated relationship quality, yet commonly accepted techniques perpetuate a lack of conceptual clarity [49]. Additional research and development of relationship quality tools are required to address the conceptual ambiguity. Third, there are limited studies sources of significant relationships. This study is important because we can about approval from parents in emerging adulthood, especially in Indonesia. It would be better to study further about approval from parents and psychological well-being in a quantitative and qualitative method in Indonesia. Fourth, there are limited studies about shifting cultures in Asian countries, especially in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

This research highlights the impact of relationship quality with parents, best friends, and romantic partners on college student's psychological well-being in Indonesia and China, encompassing both positive and negative aspects. According to the findings, relationship quality played crucial roles in college student's psychological well-being in both countries. It was discovered that parental approval had a significant influence on college student's psychological well-being. The study indicates that the quality of relationship, especially between parents and college students, is a strong predictor of psychological well-being. These results highlight the importance of nurturing positive parent-child relationships to enhance psychological well-being of college students in both cultural contexts.

Given the findings, we propose that every college student who has a problem in their parent-child relationship can be more upfront about their issues. Guidance counselors or psychologists should be assessing family relationship issues to help them resolve their psychological well-being issues. It is important to identify relationship issues as protective or risk factors to their well-being, especially parent's and romantic partners closeness. The result of the instrument used in this research could elucidate the integration of social networks for better treatment models, so to further enrich this treatment model, it is recommended to adapt this instrument with open questions that will ensure more deeply information collected.

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