Friendship quality and empathy with the happiness of new students

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ABSTRACT

High levels of happiness have a positive impact on students' academic continuity. This study aims to examine the relationship between friendship quality and empathy with the happiness of new students. The method used in this study is quantitative correlational, with a sample size of 368 new students. The sampling technique used is probability sampling. Three measurement tools were used: the Happiness According Scale, the Friendship Quality Scale (FQUA), and the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI). Data analysis was performed using multiple linear regression. The results of the study show that there is a significant relationship between friendship quality and empathy with happiness. Individuals with good friendship quality and high empathy will experience increased happiness. Partial tests also illustrate the influence of each variable, with both friendship quality and empathy contributing to individual happiness. The conclusion of this study is that there is a significant relationship between friendship quality and empathy with the happiness of new students at Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya.

Keywords: Empathy, Friendship quality, Happiness

INTRODUCTION

The happiness of students is a crucial component in their academic life during their time in college. Students who live their college life happily tend to develop better, be more productive, and achieve greater success in their academics [1]. According to Seligman, happiness is a condition where individuals experience positive emotions that originate from the past, present, and future. Emotions from the past include feelings of calmness, pride, and satisfaction. Positive emotions from the present include enthusiasm, cheerfulness, and joy. Positive emotions directed towards the future include hope, trust, confidence, and optimism,

which make individuals feel comfortable, have low negative moods, and enjoy a high quality of life [2].

Several studies have shown that new students have a high level of happiness. They feel happy when doing new things encountered in the academic world, such as attending classes, receiving assignments, meeting lecturers, and so on. Their happiness is reflected in their enthusiasm to adapt to the environment, develop their potential, manage their time well, and expand their relationships [3]. A total of 5,363 new students at UMSU from the 2023 batch felt happy during the university's orientation program. The students appeared cheerful throughout the activities, showing enthusiastic and communicative attitudes [4].

Research by Putra & Hariko indicates that the percentage of happiness among new students in the Faculty of Education at UNP is 68.67%. This percentage suggests that the happiness level of new students is relatively high. New students are enthusiastic about fulfilling academic demands, feel happy during lectures, and feel comfortable living as students [5]. New students at Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto (UMP) from the 2022 batch felt happy, showing enthusiastic attitudes in the learning process and building relationships. This feeling of happiness is also reflected in their acknowledgments, such as not wasting opportunities, wanting to be the best students, and continuously striving to improve [6].

The high level of happiness among new students is also evident from the research results of Silva & Braga, which showed that first-year pharmacy students at the University of Porto have a high level of happiness (p = 0.003) [7]. Abdullah found that 50.5% of new psychology students at Muhammadiyah University of Malang (UMM) exhibited high levels of happiness. This high level of happiness among students is reflected in their high self-confidence, optimism in completing tasks, and ability to learn from every failure they experience [8].

According to Seligman, happy individuals are those who do not isolate themselves, often participate in outdoor activities, and build friendships. One external factor that plays a crucial role for individuals in achieving happiness to fulfill their social needs is the quality of friendships [9]. According to Mee Thien et al., friendship quality is a state where relationships between individuals are based on providing emotional support, trust, and

personal growth for each person involved in the relationship. High-quality friendships are also based on mutual respect and appreciation, as well as the awareness to remain committed to the relationship [10].

Several studies have also shown a significant correlation between Friendship Quality and Happiness. Fitri explains that friendship quality and happiness have a significant relationship, indicating that friendship quality greatly influences student happiness [11]. Indria Galuh Hapsari also found a significant relationship between friendship quality and the happiness levels of students [12]. Anderson & Fowers mentioned that friendship quality is an important source of happiness [13]. This is in line with the research by Hapsari & Sholichah, which states that students' happiness levels are related to friendship quality. This is demonstrated by the phenomenon of students experiencing sadness when facing friendship problems [14].

According to Davis, empathy is an individual's understanding of thinking, feeling, and comprehending the situation of another individual through that person's perspective. This allows the individual to have a deep understanding and ability to feel and comprehend the feelings and thoughts of others. Happy individuals have a well-functioning emotional system that enables them to respond appropriately to events that occur [15]. According to Diener et al., individuals who possess empathy will have positive feelings or emotions, which in turn affects their happiness [16].

Goleman explains that individuals develop empathy skills in their lives to show concern for others in need, thereby fulfilling interpersonal satisfaction that contributes to increased individual happiness. Increased empathy and sensitivity can occur when individuals experience events relevant to their own experiences. Conversely, if individuals have low levels of empathy, they cannot understand the emotions, feel the position, or grasp the conditions experienced by others. Consequently, misunderstandings and interpersonal conflicts often arise [17].

Several studies have shown a significant correlation between empathy and happiness. The study by Inam et al. found that empathy (r = 0.131) has a significant positive relationship with happiness [18]. The research by Ali & Bozorgi also showed a significant relationship between happiness and empathy (P<0.05), indicating that happiness, as one of the most fundamental positive feelings, plays a crucial role in fostering empathy [19]. Sari states that

the higher an individual's empathy, the greater their happiness, and vice versa [20]. Dewi's research findings reveal that empathy is related to positive emotions or feelings that impact an individual's happiness [21].

Based on the above explanation, the researchers are interested in examining the relationship between friendship quality and empathy with the happiness of new students at Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya. Three hypotheses are proposed: the first hypothesis aims to examine the relationship between friendship quality and happiness among new students, the second hypothesis aims to examine the relationship between empathy and happiness among new students, and the third hypothesis aims to examine the simultaneous relationship between friendship quality and empathy with happiness among new students. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of science, particularly positive psychology. This research is important to conduct and is expected to help new students in enhancing their understanding of happiness, as well as identifying factors that can increase their perceived happiness.

According to Seligman, an individual's level of happiness can be measured through self-satisfaction levels by examining life satisfaction, external environmental control, and voluntary actions. Life satisfaction includes the individual's cognitive view of the comparison between their life conditions and the expected standard of living. External environmental control includes the quality of friendships, social life, religiosity, economic status, health, and others. Voluntary actions such as sympathy, empathy, will, motivation, interest, and attention are also considered. Based on this theory, it can be concluded that happiness, friendship quality, and empathy have a significant relationship [9].
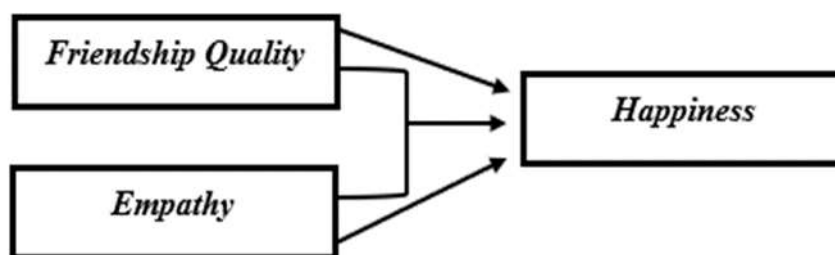

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 above illustrates that friendship quality has a significant relationship with happiness, where individuals with high friendship quality tend to have high levels of happiness. Furthermore, the empathy possessed by individuals also has a significant relationship with happiness, indicating that individuals with high empathy levels also experience higher happiness.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using scales as the data collection tool. Data were collected through Google Forms, with participants consisting of new students from Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya. The sampling method used in this study was probability sampling, specifically random sampling, with a total of 368 participants. The happiness scale was adapted from Marniati's scale, the friendship quality scale was adapted by the researcher from Wulandari's scale, and the empathy scale was adapted from Saepudin's scale. Data analysis was performed using multiple regression analysis, preceded by classical assumption tests, including normality test, heteroscedasticity test, and multicollinearity test, before conducting multiple regression analysis [22], [10], [15].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis begins with descriptive information regarding categorization. The categorization results for the happiness variable show that out of a total of 368 research subjects, 257 subjects (70%) have a moderate level of happiness, 73 subjects (20%) have a high level of happiness, and 38 subjects (10%) have a low level of happiness. Next is the categorization of the friendship quality variable, which shows that out of a total of 368 research subjects, 269 subjects (73%) have a moderate level of friendship quality, 39 subjects (11%) have a high level of friendship quality, and 60 subjects (16%) have a low level of friendship quality. Then, the categorization of the empathy variable shows that out of a total of 368 research subjects, 260 subjects (71%) have a moderate level of empathy, 63 subjects (17%) have a high level of empathy, and 45 subjects (12%) have a low level of empathy.

Assumption Tests

Assumption tests for the three variables were conducted before the regression analysis, based on the classical assumption tests which include the normality test and multicollinearity test. The normality test yielded a significance value of 0.153 (0.153 > 0.05), indicating that the data is normally distributed. Based on the multicollinearity test results, a VIF value of 1.167 (1.167 < 10) and a tolerance value of 0.857 (0.857 > 0.01) were obtained. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity between the friendship quality and empathy variables in this study. The hypothesis testing of this study is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Partial T-Test Results

Mode	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	27.335	2.923		9.353	.000
Friendship Quality (X1)	.072	.034	.104	2.109	.036
Empathy (X2)	.290	.033	.439	8.892	.000

Table 1 presents the results of the partial T-test, which analyzes the impact of Friendship Quality (X1) and Empathy (X2) on happiness, including unstandardized and standardized coefficients, t-values, and significance levels for each predictor. The intercept of the regression model is 27.335 with a standard error of 2.923, resulting in a t-value of 9.353, which is highly significant (p < 0.001). The unstandardized coefficient (B) for Friendship Quality is 0.072 with a standard error of 0.034; the standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.104; and the t-value is 2.109, which is statistically significant (p = 0.036). This indicates that Friendship Quality has a positive and significant impact on the dependent variable. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for Empathy is 0.290 with a standard error of 0.033; the standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.439; and the t-value is 8.892, which is highly significant (p < 0.001). This indicates that Empathy is a strong positive predictor of happiness. The results of the simultaneous F-test for this study are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Simultaneous F-Test Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3821.509	2	1910.755	56.991	.000b
Residual	12237.447	365	33.527		
Total	16058.957	367			

Table 2 presents the results of the ANOVA F-test, which examines the collective impact of Friendship Quality (X1) and Empathy (X2) on happiness (Y). The table includes the sum of squares, degrees of freedom (df), mean square, F-value, and significance level for the regression model. The sum of squares for the regression model is 3821.509 with 2 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 1910.755. The F-value for the regression model is 56.991, which is highly significant ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that Friendship Quality (X1) and Empathy (X2), when considered together, have a significant effect on happiness. This means there is a significant relationship between friendship quality and empathy simultaneously affecting the happiness of new students at Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya. The residual sum of squares is 12237.447 with 365 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 33.527. This represents the variation in happiness not explained by the independent variables in the model. The total sum of squares is 16058.957 with 367 degrees of freedom, combining both the regression and residual sums of squares.

Based on the results of hypothesis testing using multiple linear regression, the T-test significance value for the variable friendship quality was $0.036 < 0.05$ with a calculated T-value of $2.109 >$ T-table value of 1.966. This result indicates that the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted, meaning that friendship quality is related to happiness. This result is supported by the study of Sharma & Parveen, which showed that friendship quality significantly and positively affects happiness in adolescents in Aligarh. This means that the better the friendship quality that adolescents have, the higher their level of happiness [23]. This finding is also reinforced by the research of Hapsari & Sholichah, which demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between friendship quality and happiness [14].

Having good friendship quality can have a positive impact on the happiness felt by individuals, such as building positive relationships with others in the form of support, thereby increasing self-esteem and enabling individuals to solve problems. Conversely, low happiness can also result from poor friendship quality. Conflicts, divisions, disputes, and

betrayals among individuals in a friendship can lead to negative emotions such as sadness, disappointment, annoyance, and anger [24]. The contribution of friendship quality to individual happiness is that friends can help individuals in difficult times, provide support, prevent loneliness, be a place to exchange thoughts, and influence the individual's self-identity [25].

Based on the results of hypothesis testing using multiple linear regression, the T-test significance value for the variable empathy was 0.000 < 0.05 with a calculated T-value of 8.892 > T-table value of 1.966. These results indicate a positive relationship between empathy and happiness among new students at Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya, thus supporting the second hypothesis (H2). This result is also supported by several previous studies. Inam et al. showed that empathy has a positive correlation with happiness, where the higher the level of individual empathy, the higher the level of happiness [18]. Nuryanti's research also supports this result, demonstrating that empathy can significantly enhance individual happiness [26].

Individuals who possess empathy are better able to recognize subtle social cues indicating the needs of others, thus enabling them to better accept others' perspectives, be sensitive to others' feelings, listen more effectively, and experience happiness within themselves. Empathy brings happiness and satisfaction to individuals, as it allows them to feel and help alleviate the suffering of those in need [27]. Students with high empathy levels tend to accept their lives more readily, leading to higher levels of happiness. Students with high empathy do not want others to experience pain similar to what they have felt [28].

The next F-test results show the simultaneous effect of friendship quality and empathy on happiness. Based on the calculation of the effective contribution from R square, friendship quality contributes 2.9%. On the other hand, empathy contributes 20.9%, with the remainder influenced by other variables outside this study. Therefore, it can be concluded that the third hypothesis (H3) is accepted, meaning there is a significant relationship between friendship quality and empathy on the happiness of new students at Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya. When individuals show empathy towards others, they tend to feel gratitude and respond with kindness. Such friendly and supportive relationships enhance individual happiness, life satisfaction, and positive emotions [29].

According to Carr, several factors influence individual happiness, including friendship and companionship. Having good friendship quality effectively meets the human need for social relationships, leading to increased happiness levels. Another factor influencing happiness is social support, often provided in response to the empathy felt by individuals. Through empathy, individuals perceive the suffering of others, anticipate emotions, and motivate behavior aimed at alleviating suffering and enhancing the well-being of others, thereby creating satisfying interpersonal relationships, improving quality of life, and individual happiness [30], [31].

Based on the classification results of the variables, it is known that of the total 368 research subjects, the majority of subjects, 257 people (70%), have a moderate level of happiness, followed by 73 people (20%) with a high level of happiness, and 38 people (10%) with a low level of happiness. A total of 269 subjects (73%) have a moderate level of friendship quality, while 39 subjects (11%) have a high level of friendship quality, and 60 subjects (16%) have a low level of friendship quality. Additionally, 260 subjects (71%) have a moderate level of empathy, followed by 63 subjects (17%) with a high level of empathy, and 45 subjects (12%) with a low level of empathy.

This study utilized demographic data of the subjects to determine the happiness levels of new students. From the demographic data, it can be seen that the majority of subjects in this study were from the Faculty of Psychology and Health, with 81 subjects (22.0%), while the fewest subjects were from the Faculty of Ushuludin and Philosophy, with 15 subjects (4.1%). Additionally, the data shows that the majority of subjects were from the Psychology study program, with 61 subjects (16.6%), while the fewest subjects were from the Islamic Community Development, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education, Sufism and Psychotherapy, Islamic Economics, and Biology programs, each with 2 subjects (0.5%). These numbers cannot quantitatively represent the entire population due to the varying number of subjects in each faculty and study program.

The results of the faculty and happiness level crosstabulation show that the highest happiness level among new students at Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya is in the Faculty of Psychology and Health, with a percentage of 22.0%, followed by the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business with a percentage of 15.2%, and the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training in third place with a percentage of 12.8%. These figures

cannot quantitatively represent the entire population, as the number of subjects varies across faculties. Saraswati's research on the happiness of students in the Faculty of Psychology at Padjadjaran University indicates that these students have a relatively high level of happiness [32].

CONCLUSION

Based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between friendship quality and empathy with the happiness of new students at Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya. Individuals with high friendship quality tend to have high levels of happiness. The empathy variable also has a significant relationship with happiness, where individuals with high empathy tend to experience higher levels of happiness. Considering that the contributions of friendship quality and empathy are not yet optimal, it is necessary to expand the use of variables that have better predictor values. Additionally, employing or adding other data collection methods could also be undertaken to achieve more optimal results.

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