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PEER RELATIONSHIP ANALYSIS AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE AT SCHOOL IN EARLY ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The suboptimal state of quality of life will have an impact on the physical health and psychological welfare of individuals. When early adolescents are excluded from their age group, their quality of life is compromised. **Objective:** The primary objective of this research is to examine the correlation between peer relationships and the quality of life at school experienced by early adolescents. **Method:** The methodology employed in this study involved the utilization of a cross-sectional approach. The independent variables in this research encompass the following respondent characteristics: age, gender; peer relationships; and quality of life at school. The population under investigation consisted of 569 early adolescents in one of a state junior high school in South Jakarta. Total sampling was employed as the sampling technique for this study. The research instrument utilized was a modified questionnaire derived from The Peer Relationship Scale and The Quality of Life in School Questionnaire, which underwent rigorous testing to ensure its validity and reliability. In conducting bivariate analysis, the chi-square test was employed. **Result:** The findings of this research indicate that a majority of the adolescents surveyed exhibited poor peer relationships, with 312 respondents (54.8%) falling into this category. Furthermore, a significant proportion of the respondents reported a low quality of life at school, with 378 adolescents (66.4%) falling into this category. In addition, the majority of the sub-dimensions of quality of life in school, namely psychosocial well-being, attitudes towards school, student-teacher relationships, and the school environment, were reported as being poor (64.1%, 80.3%, 64.7%, and 56.4%, respectively). The quality of relationships between peers impacts adolescents' quality of life at school (p value = <0.000 ; $\alpha < 0.05$). **Conclusion:** Positive peer relationships have the potential to enhance the emotional and psychological well-being of adolescents, whereas extended conflict can engender the contrary effect.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence holds paramount importance as it encompasses a critical juncture wherein transformations transpire in every facet of growth encompassing psychological and societal domains (World Health Organization, 2022). The stage of adolescence is a critical phase as it ascertains an individual's cognitive capacities, interpersonal competencies, and prospective conduct, necessitating enhancement to guarantee an optimal progression into adulthood. The global population of adolescents is presently on the rise and is projected to persist in its expansion until the year 2050. The total adolescent population has reached 1.2 billion, and an estimated 1.1 million adolescents die yearly (Backes & Bonnie, 2019; World et al., 2022). Some leading causes of adolescent death are interpersonal violence, suicide, and murder. In addition, adolescents' main health risks are more often associated with behavioral problems (Mastorci et al., 2020; World Health Organization, 2022). Therefore, adolescent welfare needs to be considered, one related to quality of life.

Quality of life is important to discuss because it relates to a person's well-being (Teoli & Bhardwaj, 2023). Quality of life is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and values" (World Health Organization, 2012). Quality of life has several dimensions, and one dimension is interrelated. These dimensions encompass the domains of physical well-being, mental wellness, interpersonal connections, and the surrounding context (Phyo A et al., 2020). An individual who undergoes an inadequate level of living would encounter adverse consequences on their physical health and mental condition, which would manifest as indications of anxiety, distress, sadness, and a longing for self-cessation. Conversely, a satisfactory standard of living would contribute to the preservation of a person's physical health and psychological well-being, fostering traits such as self-assurance and a fervent optimism towards a more promising future (Phyo A et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2017).

Adolescence will experience a decrease in quality of life. A study in Poland involving 804 adolescents in middle and high schools described that adolescents had a low quality of life in the school environment dimension of 53.4% and psychological well-being of 51.6% (Magiera & Pac, 2022). Early adolescence is a significant period where the influence of peer relationships and the school environment powerfully shapes psychological development and the maturation of social-emotional regulatory functions (Mitic et al., 2021). If adolescents happen to experience a state of social isolation in relation to their peers, it is plausible that they may undergo a decline in their overall level of life satisfaction. A transversal observational study examined cross-cultural differences in perceived quality of life and health-related behavior in adolescents from Southern Portugal and Spain. The sample consisted of 319 adolescents. These studies describe several quality-of-life associations with behavioral problems (Lima-Serrano et al., 2013; Mikkelsen et al., 2022).

Numerous studies demonstrate that social connections assume a significant function in the state of being. Affiliation with companionship plays an imperative function in cultivating the social, cognitive, and emotional development of individuals across various age groups, including children, adolescents, and adults. Studies show that peer relationships influence adolescents'

individual and intrapersonal relationships. Adolescents will feel worried when they are not liked and are not part of the group. They spend an average of 5-6 hours a day at school; therefore, social interactions may impact their perception of quality of life (Cha & Kwon, 2022; Lezhnieva, Fredriksen, & Bekkhus, 2018; Phyo A et al., 2020).

The current study will examine the relationship between peer relationship analysis and the quality of life at school in early adolescents. Until now, research on this theme has generally been carried out on adolescent populations who experience certain diseases. This study, nonetheless, will be executed on young individuals of a comprehensive disposition in the framework of an educational establishment. Inquiry concerning the standard of existence was undertaken on juveniles and adolescents who experienced corporeal or mental maladies, such as juveniles who confronted corpulence and malignancy, along with those influenced by attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Bult et al., 2019; Felix et al., 2020; Kaal et al., 2021; Kousha & Kakrodi, 2019; Meixner, Cohrdes, Schienkiewitz, & Mensink, 2020).

Research novelty, namely the instrument that will be used in this research, is also new in this research, where research in Indonesia has never used a quality of life in school instrument that measures the quality of life specifically in schools. Furthermore, the peer relationship scale instrument is something new that has never been used in Indonesia to measure peer relationships or ties. Lastly, there still needs to be more research linking peer relationships with the quality of life at school in early adolescence. Therefore, researchers are interested in analyzing peer relationships with quality of life at school in early adolescence.

2. METHOD

Research Design

The research design used in this study used a cross-sectional approach. This research variable consists of respondent characteristics: adolescent age, gender; independent variable peer relationships, and dependent variable quality of life at school.

Population and Sample

The population in this study was 569 adolescents at one of the state junior high schools in South Jakarta. The sampling technique used was total sampling.

Instrument

The instruments used in this research were the respondent characteristics questionnaire, modification of The Peer Relationship Scale for the peer relationship variable, and modification of The Quality of Life in School Instrument for the quality of life at school variable. The Peer Relationship Scale consists of 29 statements which are divided into 4 sub dimensions, namely intimacy, popularity, trust, and insightfulness (Aydogdu, 2022). Meanwhile, The Quality of Life in School Instrument consists of 33 statements which are divided into four dimensions, namely psychosocial, attitude towards school, student-teacher relationship, and school environment (Ghotra, McIsaac, Kirk, & Kuhle, 2016). This instrument has been tested for validity and reliability with 20 early adolescent respondents at one of the state junior high schools in South Jakarta. Analysis of the results of the validity test of the peer relationship scale and quality of life in school

questionnaires found that for the overall statement, the calculated R-value was more significant than the R Table (0.468), so the two questionnaires were declared valid. The reliability test results obtained Cronbach's alpha values, namely 0.953 and 0.973. The two instruments in this study were declared reliable from Cronbach's alpha value.

Research Procedure

Researchers clarify the research data to the participants. Once the participant understands and agrees to participate in the research endeavour, the participant, in collaboration with the homeroom instructor, completes a research authorization document. Subsequently, the researcher distributes all instruments to the participants. After collecting the data, the researcher carries out data manipulation, including editing, coding, data input, and tabulation.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted through the utilization of univariate and bivariate analysis. The univariate analysis encompasses respondent characteristics, specifically adolescent age and gender, ascertained using measures of central tendency such as the mean and standard deviation, in addition to frequency distribution. Moreover, the independent variable, peer relationship, was also examined through frequency distribution. Similarly, the dependent variable, quality of life at school, was assessed using frequency distribution. The bivariate analysis in this study employed the chi-square test.

Ethical Clearance

This research has passed ethical review in the research ethics test by The Health Research Ethics Committee Universitas Indonesia Maju with No. 5191/Sket/Ka-Dept/RE/UIMA/VII/2023.

3. RESULT

In this study, the average age of adolescents was 13.6 years, with a minimum age of 11 and a maximum age of 15. A standard deviation of 0.964 indicates that the age distribution is relatively homogeneous, with most respondents around the average age. This information provides an initial understanding of the adolescent age group that is the subject of the research.

Table 1. Description of Respondent Characteristics (Gender and Class) (n=569)

Respondent Characteristics	Amount	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Man	250	43.9
Woman	319	56.1
Class		
7 th grade	216	38.0
8 th grade	171	30.0
9 th grade	182	32.0

Table 1 describes that the majority of adolescents' gender is female, 319 respondents (56.1%), and the respondents in this study were dominated by 7th graders, 216 adolescents (38%).

Table 2. Description of Sub-Dimensions of Quality of Life at School in Early Adolescents (n=569)

Quality of Life at School	Amount	Percentage (%)
Psychosocial		
Not good	365	64.1
Good	204	35.9
Attitudes Towards School		
Not good	457	80.3
Good	112	19.7
Student-Teacher Relationships		
Not good	368	64.7
Good	201	35.3
The School Environment		
Not good	321	56.4
Good	248	43.6

Table 2 illustrates that the majority of all sub-dimensions of quality of life at school in early adolescence are not good, namely psychosocial 64.1%, attitude towards school 80.3%, student-teacher relationship 64.7%, and school environment 56.4%.

Table 3. Analysis of Peer Relationships with Quality of Life at School in Early Adolescents (n=569)

Variable	Quality of Life in Schools				Total	p-value
	Not good		Good			
	n	%	n	%		
Peer Relationships						< 0.000
Not good	304	53.4	8	1.4	312	54.8
Good	74	13.0	183	32.2	257	45.2
Total	378	66.4	191	33.6	569	100

Table 3 illustrates that most adolescents have poor peer relationships with 312 respondents (54.8%), and the majority of the quality of life at school could be better with 378 adolescents (66.4%). The quality of relationships between peers impacts adolescents' quality of life at school (p-value = <0.000; α <0.05).

4. DISCUSSION

Early adolescence is a commonly observed developmental stage encountered during an individual's lifespan. The characteristics of early adolescence reflect the transition from childhood to adulthood, often fraught with significant challenges and changes. First, early adolescents often experience rapid physical changes. During the phase of adolescence, young people undergo a series of intricate developmental mechanisms that encompass the maturation of their reproductive organs as well as the manifestation of hormonal alterations. These mechanisms possess the capacity to exert an impact on their emotional state and mood (Branje, de Moor, Spitzer, & Becht, 2021; Steinmayr, Wirthwein, Modler, & Barry, 2019; Van den Akker et al., 2021). Second, early adolescents are also looking for their social identity. They begin to understand their societal roles and values and try different activities and lifestyles to define themselves. This search for identity often involves conflict with parents and authority (Berkman, 2018; Steinmayr et al., 2019). Third, early adolescents have the urge to be independent. They want to make decisions, seek freedom, and take risks. However, they often need to gain the skills to manage this responsibility well.

Lastly, early adolescents tend to have a broader range of social relationships, with peers being significant. Individuals actively pursue companionship and seek solace in the form of friendship and emotional aid from their social acquaintances (Alsarrani, Hunter, Dunne, & Garcia, 2022; Loeb, Kansky, Tan, Costello, & Allen, 2021).

The quality of life in school is often divided into four dimensions: psychosocial, attitude towards school, student-teacher relationship, and school environment. These dimensions measure students' well-being and satisfaction with their school experience. The Quality of life in school measures the extent to which students have positive attitudes toward school, including intrapersonal competencies, student-teacher relationships, and the school environment. Various studies have emphasized the importance of considering students' perspectives on the quality of school life and have proposed four-dimensional models to capture students' subjective experiences in school (Ghotra et al., 2016; Teoli & Bhardwaj, 2023).

This research illustrates that a significant p-value (< 0.05) indicates that the relationship between peer relationships and quality of life at school has statistical relevance. This means that poor peer relationships can significantly impact adolescents' quality of life at school. The findings underscore the significance of social relationship elements in exerting influence over the quality of life within the educational setting. The well-being of teenagers in school carries considerable weight in shaping their forthcoming trajectory. An exemplary educational institution not only imparts a first-rate education, but also establishes an atmosphere conducive to the personal and societal growth of adolescents. The quality of life experienced within the school environment encompasses a wide array of facets, including emotional prosperity, physical well-being, and interpersonal engagements (Cha & Kwon, 2022; Gempp & González-Carrasco, 2021; Lezhnieva et al., 2018; Țepordei et al., 2023). In school, adolescents are afforded the opportunity to acquire not only academic knowledge, but also to cultivate social, leadership, and teamwork proficiencies. Caring teachers, solid peers, and diverse extracurricular programs all contribute to the learning experience (Alsarrani et al., 2022; Dewey & Volkovinskaia, 2018; Gempp & González-Carrasco, 2021; Salgado, González, & Yáñez, 2021).

In addition, schools that support adolescent mental health by providing counseling services and listening to feelings are also important. Quality of life at school also reflects whether young people feel safe and respected. Schools that create an environment free of harassment, discrimination, and violence will provide youth with the security necessary to develop positively. Quality of life at school significantly impacts adolescent's overall quality of life. By providing quality education and a supportive environment, adolescents can reach their maximum potential and form a better generation in the future. In addition, schools that support adolescent mental health by providing counseling services and listening to feelings are also important. Quality of life at school also reflects whether young people feel safe and respected. Schools that establish a milieu devoid of harassment, discrimination, and violence will furnish adolescents with the essential sense of safety required for their positive growth and development. Quality of life at school significantly impacts adolescent's overall quality of life. Through the provision of education of high caliber and the establishment of a nurturing atmosphere, adolescents are empowered to attain their utmost capabilities and cultivate a superior cohort for the forthcoming era (Cardona, 2021; Cavioni, Grazzani, Ornaghi, Agliati, & Pepe, 2021; Hoover & Bostic, 2021).

Peer relationships are essential to a person's life, especially during adolescence. This is when individuals begin to develop their identity and search for themselves. Peer relationships are central to social, emotional, and cognitive development. In peer relationships, it is vital to understand the values of healthy friendships, such as trust, understanding, and support. Irrespective of the hindrances and contradictions that may emerge, associations with colleagues support the personal progression and maturation of individuals, enabling them to become more autonomous and adept in their interactions with others. In this way, peer relationships become a strong foundation for forming a person's identity and social development (Aydogdu, 2022; Branje et al., 2021; Fu et al., 2021; Lezhnieva et al., 2018; Vania, Yudianta, & Susanto, 2022).

Peers have a vital role in shaping the quality of life at school. The relationship between peers and the quality of life at school mutually influence each other. At school, peers are not just classmates or playmates. They constitute an essential component of the educational process. Relationships with peers can significantly impact the quality of life at school. Peers can be a powerful source of emotional support. When they have friends who care and support them, adolescents are more comfortable and happy at school. This makes the learning atmosphere more positive and motivates adolescents to attend every day (Solera-Sanchez, Adelantado-Renau, Moliner-Urdiales, & Beltran-Valls, 2021; Tepordei et al., 2023). Apart from that, peers can also be good learning partners. When adolescents have friends who have the same interests and goals in learning, they can help and motivate each other to achieve better academic achievements. However, not only in terms of academics, peers also play an essential role in developing social skills (Lezhnieva et al., 2018; Vania et al., 2022).

However, not all peer relationships are always positive. Sometimes, adolescents experience conflict or pressure from peers. Therefore, it is important to choose good friends and ensure that adolescents' relationships with peers are always positive and supportive. Early adolescence is an essential phase in individual development, where social interactions with peers can significantly impact adolescents' quality of life experiences at school. The influence of peer relationships is of utmost importance in molding different dimensions of the lives of teenagers, encompassing their psychological welfare, interpersonal engagements, and scholastic achievements (Lezhnieva et al., 2018; Long, Zucca, & Sweeting, 2021).

Previous studies demonstrate that the caliber of peer relationships profoundly influences the scholastic experience during early adolescence. Provision of social support and fostering positive peer interactions can enhance the emotional and psychological well-being of adolescents. Studies conducted in the past reveal that favorable relationships with peers aid adolescents in surmounting stress, boosting self-assurance, and experiencing greater acceptance within the school milieu. The potency of peer relationships extends beyond the quality of these associations alone, encompassing the dynamics prevailing within the peer collective as well as adolescents' perceptions of these interactions. Notably, extensive conflict with peers, as indicated by prior research, can precipitate a decline in the quality of the school experience, leading to diminished academic motivation and emotional contentment (Adedeji et al., 2022; Long et al., 2021; Tepordei et al., 2023).

However, it is imperative to acknowledge that the findings of this study solely offer an initial glimpse and necessitate further examination to comprehend the intricacies and additional variables that might impact these findings. Moreover, it is imperative to acknowledge that the results of this

inquiry are purely explanatory and associative, thus lacking the ability to establish a direct causal connection between peer affiliations and the quality of education within educational institutions. Consequently, additional research may be warranted to investigate this connection and the factors that may exert influence over it. The findings of this study possess significant ramifications for the formulation of educational initiatives that prioritize fortifying constructive peer relationships. Initiatives that impart social aptitude, effective communication, and resolution skills can facilitate the cultivation of robust relationships among adolescents and enhance the quality of life within the educational setting. Additionally, interventions that facilitate conflict management may help adolescents overcome the potential negative impacts of less positive peer interactions.

5. CONCLUSION

This study offers a more profound comprehension of how peer connections can impact the well-being of early adolescents within the educational setting. Favourable peer connections possess the capacity to amplify the emotional and psychological welfare of adolescents, while extended conflicts can have the contrary consequence. Hence, it is imperative to acknowledge the crucial significance of peer relationships in the school experiences of adolescents and formulate approaches that foster constructive exchanges.

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