

CORRELATION BETWEEN FORGIVENESS AND ADOLESCENCE FRIENDSHIP INTIMACY MODERATED BY GENDER

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Abstract

Friendship intimacy is one of the critical developing aspects of adolescence. Previous research shows that forgiveness has a vital role in the interpersonal relationship. This research aims to find a correlation between forgiveness and adolescent friendship intimacy based on gender. Research's participant consists of 250 teenagers (125 male and 125 female, $M = 16.2$, $SD = .7$, with 15-18 years old age range) in a Pekanbaru school. The sample was collected through *convenience sampling*. This study used the Friendship Intimacy Scale with $\alpha = .82$ and Forgiveness Scale, with $\alpha = .94$. Based on data analysis, a *product-moment* correlation shows a positive correlation between forgiveness and adolescence friendship intimacy ($r = .273$, $p < .01$), which means the higher the level of individual forgiveness is, the higher the friendship intimacy become. The moderator variable analysis shows that gender becomes a relationship moderator variable between forgiveness and adolescence friendship intimacy ($p < .01$), which means that correlation between forgiveness and friendship intimacy is more substantial on males than females.

Keyword: forgiveness; friendship intimacy; adolescence; gender

Abstrak

Intimasi pertemanan merupakan salah satu aspek perkembangan penting pada remaja. Penelitian sebelumnya menunjukkan bahwa pemaafan memiliki peran penting dalam hubungan interpersonal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mencari hubungan antara pemaafan dengan intimasi pertemanan pada remaja berdasarkan dari jenis kelamin. Partisipan penelitian terdiri dari 250 remaja (125 pria dan 125 wanita, $M = 16,2$, $SD = 0,7$, dengan rentang usia 15-18 tahun) di sebuah sekolah di Kota Pekanbaru, yang diperoleh melalui *convenience sampling*. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan Skala Intimasi Pertemanan (reliabilitas $\alpha = 0,82$) dan Skala Pemaafan (reliabilitas $\alpha = 0,94$). Berdasarkan hasil analisis data dengan korelasi *product moment* menunjukkan bahwa ada hubungan positif antara pemaafan dengan intimasi pertemanan pada remaja ($r = 0,273$, $p < 0,01$), artinya semakin tinggi pemaafan individu, maka intimasi pertemanan remaja akan semakin tinggi. Hasil analisis moderasi dengan regresi menunjukkan bahwa jenis kelamin menjadi variabel moderator hubungan antara pemaafan dengan intimasi pertemanan pada remaja, $F(1, 246) = 13,550$, $p < 0,01$, artinya hubungan pemaafan dengan intimasi pertemanan lebih kuat pada pria dibandingkan wanita.

Kata kunci: pemaafan; intimasi pertemanan; remaja; jenis kelamin

INTRODUCTION

One change in the aspect of adolescent development that is worthy of attention is peer relation. *The peer group* has a vital role in adolescent friendship relations change. Adolescents emphasized two kinds of friendship characteristics; first, adolescents try to seek psychological closeness and mutual understanding between friends; second, adolescents want their friends to be

loyal (Pauriyal, Sharma, & Gulati, 2011).

Jones and Dembo (1989) define friendship intimacy as closeness to best friend, through expressing feeling, honesty, loyalty, willingness to share, enjoyment of friendship, trust, and attachment. Friendship intimacy is an opening-up activity and shares personal thoughts (Santrock, 2007). Someone will become more intimate as long there is openness, mutually responsive to each other's

needs, acceptance, and mutual appreciation (Papalia, Old, & Feldman, 2008).

Intimacy is very important in the psychological development of adolescents. Adolescents who do not have close friends are at risk of experiencing failure in adapting to their social environment and tend to experience loneliness, anxiety, and depression easily (Owen, Fincham, & Manthos, 2013). Doi and Thelen (in Wahyudi, 2015) state that the inability of an individual to have intimacy will lead to anxiety, which will have a negative impact on emotional health such as depression, inability to adapt to stress and poor psychological health. Therefore, friendship intimacy is important for adolescents because it will lead to positive emotions such as satisfaction, happiness, and self-acceptance in their social environment as a result of fulfilling adolescent developmental tasks (Garcíaa, Sorianoa, & Arriazab, 2014).

In teenagers' friendship intimacy, friends act as important confidants helping the teenager through distressing situations (such as problems with parents or a breakup of a romantic relationship) by providing emotional support and advice. Friends can also protect teens who are at risk of becoming victims of their peers. Besides, friends can become active partners in developing identity (Sullivan in Santrock, 2007).

However, in an adolescent established friendship, intimacy cannot be separated from arguments, triggering conflict, and it leads to intimacy impair. Chan (2011) mentioned that when conflict occurs, especially in a close relationship, it will produce strong negative feelings, such as sad, annoyed, and hate toward others who have offended them. Due to conflict, an initially good relationship becomes impaired, and the friendship becomes agitates. Some research shows that forgiveness influence interpersonal relationship quality (Safarzadeh, Esfahaniasl, & Bayat, 2011).

Forgiveness is essential in personal relations. Forgiveness is forgiving another mistake process to achieve self-internal peace (Mohases, 2019). Forgiveness is a set of motivations to change individuals not to take revenge and relieve the urge to keep the hatred toward the offending party and increase the urge to reconcile a relationship with an offending party (McCullough, Root, & Cohen, 2006). Forgiveness is an expression of altruism and moral forms to overcome injustice for victims through kindness toward the perpetrator (Lijo, 2018). Forgiveness involves a process of cognitive, affective, and behavior change, so it needs time to achieve forgiveness.

McCullough et al. (2006), divides forgiveness into three dimensions:

a) avoidance motivation is a motivation coming from within to avoid anger toward the offender; b) revenge motivation is a dimension marked by an individual's urge to take revenge on the perpetrator's action; c) benevolence motivation, the victim tries to make peace toward the perpetrator's action. The peace process brings up a good relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

Some research shows that forgiveness can improve a close relationship. There are positive relationships between forgiveness and empathy, serious offense, and closeness after offense (Chan, 2011). Forgiveness can give benefit for mental health, and there is a meaningful relationship between forgiveness and personality traits for mental health (Akhtar & Barlow, 2018; Al-Sabeelah, Alraggad, & Ameerh, 2014; Chung, 2016; Raj, Elizabeth, & Padmakumari, 2016; Webb, Toussaint, & Conway-Williams, 2012). Research by Syamsuddin (2013) shows that forgiveness intervention on counseling techniques can increase children's interpersonal relationships. According to Tsang and Stanford's (2007) research, males are easier to forgive than females if problems with close friends have occurred, males have a higher level of forgiveness than females.

Forgiveness is very functional in overcoming or reducing interpersonal conflict (Takada & Ohbuchi, 2013). When an individual forgives others after an offending, the relationship between the offender and the forgiver can be rebuilt, so the relationship does not break and negatively influences both parties (Fenny & Suwartono, 2010). Forgiveness can be associated with adolescent friendship intimacy. If a conflict in an adolescent friendship intimacy occurs, each party suffers from pain, and one of them really can forgive, the forgiver has paved the way in recovery or intimacy rebuilding. Consequently, they will not cover up the pain and resentment in their life.

Forgiveness has an essential role in increasing interpersonal relationship quality. Forgiveness can reduce anger, stress, and increasing well-being (Akhtar, Dolan, & Barlow, 2017; Barcaccia, Pallini, Baiocco, et al., 2018; Toussaint, Shields, & Slavich, 2016). According to research by Safarzadeh et al. (2011), forgiveness has a positive influence on interpersonal relationship intimacy. However, forgiveness role in friendship intimacy very much depends on contexts and situations; one is an individual characteristic, gender. Intimacy will differ between males and females (David-Barrett et al., 2015; Marshall, 2010; Palchykov, Kaski, Kertesz, Barabasi, & Dunbar, 2012; Szell & Thurner, 2013). Forgiveness between males and females also differ (Lestari & Agung, 2016). The study results showed that gender role becomes essential in forgiveness and friendship intimacy relation, meaning that the relation between forgiveness and friendship intimacy becomes stronger on male or female adolescents. This study becomes interesting to explore the relation between forgiveness and friendship intimacy on male and female adolescents in Indonesia, especially in Pekanbaru.

From the description above, there are two hypotheses proposed. First, there is a relation between forgiveness and adolescent

friendship intimacy, and secondly, the relation between forgiveness and friendship intimacy moderated by gender.

METHOD

This study applied a quantitative method. In this research, samples are 250 adolescents, 125 males, and 125 females in one of SMK in Pekanbaru. 14% of participants are 15 years old, 55.2% of them 16 years old, 25.6% 17 years old, 5.2% 18 years old. The age average is 16.2, with an *SD* of .7. A convenience sampling is conducted, one of non-random data sampling techniques based on availability and ease of access in collecting data (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2015).

This study used two scales of TRIM-18 (Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations-18), forgiveness scale by McCullough et al., (2006). The scale has been modified by adding the items to become 27 items. The purpose of items adding is to anticipate items drop caused by context and social-culture differences and increase the probabilities in achieving reliable instruments (Stewart, Thrasher, Goldberg, & Shea, 2012). Forgiveness scale consists of three-dimension which are (1) avoidance motivation, (2) revenge motivation, and (3) benevolence motivation. After the trial, three items were dropped, and the Cronbach's alpha reliability is .82. The friendship intimacy measurement used Friendship intimacy scale IFS (Intimate Friendship Scale), constructed by Allgood (2008). IFS scale consists of 32 items with eight sub-scale. After the trial, three items were dropped, with Cronbach's alpha of .94. Therefore, the number of items used in this research were 29 items.

Data analysis use the product-moment correlation and moderated regression analysis (MRA) to test the hypothesis. Product moment correlation analysis examines the correlation between the independent variable, forgiveness (X1), and dependent variable, friendship intimacy (Y). MRA examines the effect of moderator variables, gender (X2)

toward the forgiveness variable (X1) with the friendship intimacy variable (Y). The data analysis utilizes SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) 17.0 for windows.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the hypothesis test result, using the Product Moment Pearson test to examine the

correlation between forgiveness and adolescence friendship intimacy, this study found an r -value of .273 and a significant value of .000 ($p < .01$). The result shows a significant positive correlation between the two variables. Furthermore, based on the moderator analysis test (MRA), gender influences the relation between forgiveness and adolescent friendship intimacy.

Table 1.
Gender Moderating the Relation of Forgiveness and Friendship Intimacy

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	p
	b	SE	b^*			
Model 1						
(Constant)	49.072	8.272			5.932	.000
Forgiveness	.490	.112	.255		4.365	.000
Gender	11.181	2.263	.289		4.941	.000
Model 2						
(Constant)	57.703	8.404			6.866	.000
Forgiveness	.364	.115	.190		3.173	.002
Gender	11.336	2.208	.293		5.134	.000
Moderator (X1*Mo)	-4.274	1.161	-.220		-3.681	.000

Based on the moderator analysis result (MRA), shown in model 1, forgiveness and gender have a direct effect on friendship intimacy ($p < .01$). While on model 2, the interaction variable shows significance in the

model ($b = -4.274$; $t = -3.681$, $p = .000$). This result can be interpreted that gender act as a moderator variable between forgiveness and friendship intimacy.

Table 2.
Correlation Test Based on Gender

Gender	Variables	Forgiveness		Friendship Intimacy	
		r	p	r	p
Male	Forgiveness	-	-	.473	.000
	Friendship Intimacy	.473	.000	-	-
Female	Forgiveness	-	-	.031	.732
	Friendship Intimacy	.031	.732	-	-

This study used a different analysis to examine gender as a moderator variable, and table 2 shows the result of the analysis. Regarding the correlation between forgiveness and friendship intimacy based on gender, it is evident that there is a positive correlation between forgiveness and friendship intimacy on male adolescence,

with a significant value of .000 ($p < .01$). A significant value of .73 ($p > .05$) was found on females, and it means that there is no relation between forgiveness and friendship intimacy on female adolescence. Based on the result, gender has moderated the relation between forgiveness and adolescence friendship

intimacy. Thus, the hypothesis of this study is accepted.

This research results show a positive correlation between forgiveness and friendship intimacy, and the hypothesis is accepted. It means the higher the forgiveness is given, the higher the friendship intimacy and vice versa; the lower the forgiveness is, the lower adolescent's friendship intimacy.

This study results support the research from Safarzadeh et al. (2011). Forgiveness has a positive influence on friendship intimacy. Forgiveness is considered to be the motivation constructing relationships after interpersonal offend occurred. It increases the possibilities to make a positive relation to intimacy and improve the closeness level, demonstrating the interpersonal relation quality. Forgiveness can also become a requirement to rebuild a broken relationship after the occurrence of mistake and betrayal. The result of this study means, the better someone gives forgiveness, the better friendship intimacy tied, even when the conflict in friendship has occurred.

Forgiveness always occurs in many relationships, and one of them is friendship. Forgiveness is associated with happiness enhancement, cordiality, expectation, and the ability to rebuild relationship closeness. (Batk, Bingöl, Kodaz, & Hoşoğlu, 2017). When individuals are unable to forgive, they will get various losses, a heart full of negative emotions such as resentment, anger, and hatred toward the offender (Nashori, 2008). Besides, the inability to forgive positively correlates with depression and anger (Barcaccia et al., 2018). Therefore, forgiveness is needed when conflict or problem in adolescence friendship intimacy has occurred. As a result, the built friendship will not be hurt and can be maintained without resentment, anger, and hostility. Therefore, if each party cannot overcome the problem, it will negatively influence the relationship and self.

Gender differences between males and females can also affect forgiveness and adolescence friendship intimacy correlation. This difference is due to physical and psychological characteristics between males and females. Males and females have different needs, leading to different needs in friendship intimacy. In friendship building, females tend to prioritize psychological closeness, like discussion, sharing, and self-disclosure, while males tend to share by doing activities. (McNelles & Connolly, 2010). Based on the result, there is a stronger correlation between forgiveness and friendship intimacy on males than females. This result also supports the research of Tsang and Stanford (2007), and Kusprayogi and Nashori (2016). They found that males are easier to forgive than females when problems with their best friend occurred. The implication when conflict with friends occurred, males will easy to improve friendship quality ensure that friendship quality will be well-maintained.

Male friendship characteristics do not focus on care, prioritize logic, think globally, and make males easier to forgive. Males tend to get along competitively, test friend's loyalty, comparing physical ability and size (Pauriyal et al., 2011). Unlike males, females tend to communicate in friendship more and are likely to hide the feeling away. When friendship conflict occurs, the female is difficult to forgive than males (Kane, Jacob, & Sherman, 2018). As a result, female friendship intimacy will be hard to maintain when conflict has occurred.

This finding shows that friendship relations are influenced by individual personality characteristics, such as forgiveness and gender. Correlation between forgiveness and friendship intimacy only occurs in male adolescence, and it does not occur in females. This research also has limitations. First, the number and diversity of the sample are limited. An enhanced the number of participants to get a more diverse sample for the next research is suggested. Second, this research is cross-sectional, so it does not give

a firm overview between variables yet. Therefore, a different approach for the next research, like an experiment, could enrich the resulting study. Third, friendship intimacy cannot be adequately explained by forgiveness. By adding another psychological variable of friendship intimacy, like self-disclosure, could better explain the model of friendship intimacy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis result and discussion, several points can be concluded. First, there is a positive correlation between forgiveness and adolescence friendship intimacy. The higher the forgiveness is given, the higher the level of adolescent friendship intimacy. Vice versa, the lower the forgiveness is given, the lower the adolescence friendship intimacy becomes. Second, there is a correlation between forgiveness and friendship intimacy, moderated by gender. In this case, the correlation between forgiveness and friendship intimacy is more.

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