

Toxic Friendship: The Role of Emotion Regulation and Interpersonal Communication on Perceived Conflict

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Abstract

Students can generally view conflict positively or negatively. However, a negative view of conflict can trigger division, bullying, and even murder. This study aims to examine the influence of emotion regulation and interpersonal communication on students' perceptions of friendship conflicts. The research method uses a quantitative approach with multiple linear regression. The sampling technique was conducted incidentally, involving 360 psychology students at a state university in Semarang. The instruments used in the study included the friendship conflict perception scale, the emotion regulation scale, and the interpersonal communication scale. The results showed a significant effect ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$) of emotion regulation and interpersonal communication on the perception of friendship conflict, with an effect size of 11.3%. These findings show the importance of efforts or interventions to build positive social relationships among students.

Keywords: perception of friendship conflict, regulation of emotions, interpersonal communication

Abstrak

Mahasiswa umumnya dapat memandang konflik secara positif maupun negatif. Namun, pandangan negatif terhadap konflik dapat memicu perpecahan, perundungan, bahkan pembunuhan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh regulasi emosi dan komunikasi interpersonal terhadap persepsi konflik pertemanan pada mahasiswa. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan regresi linear berganda. Teknik sampling dilakukan secara insidental dengan melibatkan 360 mahasiswa psikologi universitas negeri di kota Semarang. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian meliputi skala persepsi konflik pertemanan, skala regulasi emosi dan skala komunikasi interpersonal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan pengaruh signifikan ($p = 0,000$, $p < 0,05$) dari regulasi emosi dan komunikasi interpersonal terhadap persepsi konflik pertemanan dengan pengaruh sebesar 11,3%. Temuan ini menunjukkan pentingnya upaya atau intervensi untuk membangun hubungan sosial yang positif di antara mahasiswa.

Kata kunci: persepsi konflik pertemanan, regulasi emosi, komunikasi interpersonal

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INTRODUCTION

Undergraduate students will be entering the stage of adjustment to their new campus environment because they will find various characteristics and traits that are possessed by each new individual they meet. According to Erikson's psychosocial development stages, students may experience a crisis of intimacy vs. isolation between ages 18 and 40 (Julieta, 2022). At this stage, undergraduate students are classified as late adolescents or emerging adults who desire to form close bonds or intimate relationships with many people, indicating a need to maintain more relationships. Friendships are among the most central and influential relationships during emerging adulthood; they are also a form of a close relationship that is vital for well-being (Barry et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2024). However, in reality, the consequences that individuals who build close or intimate relationships must accept include the occurrence of conflict.

Conflict is common and can occur in any relationship. Various news about student conflicts in the age of emerging adulthood can be found in the mass media and social media publications, one of which is the brawl between engineering and law students that occurred at a private university in Semarang in 2016, which was caused by a misunderstanding between supporters during a basketball match (Purbaya, 2016). In addition, research in Malang, Indonesia, found that 21% of teenagers had problems with their peers. Across the entire sample of adolescents, 81% reported experiencing disputes and conflicts with their peers at school. Meanwhile, in a sample of students who studied over a two-year period, 59% reported having faced problems with their peers 1-2 times, 11% reported 3-4 conflicts, and 29% reported 5 or more conflicts (Anwar, 2015). A recent study by Angelini & Gini (2025) suggests that social media use raises expectations and digital stress, thereby increasing the risk of friendship conflict among adolescents.

Conflict is a social process involving two or more individuals who both need each other but must be separated because of a gap or difference, and at least one party knows that there are differences between them, so that in the end the individual will respond to these differences (Astri, 2011). Feenez & Karantzas (Fatmawati et al., 2018) propose that conflict originates from interpersonal relationships in which there is competition between two parties or in which one party harms the other. When dealing with conflict, two responses will be encountered: positive and negative attitudes. Positive and negative attitudes arise when an individual spontaneously compares their understanding of conflict with their personal values. This process results in differences in how an individual perceives conflicts in their friendships.

Considering the negative impacts that arise due to unresolved conflict in a friendship relation, such as breakdown, separation, bullying, and even suicidal behavior or death, preventive actions are needed to improve the ability of emotion regulation and interpersonal communication in emerging adulthood. Emotional regulation is the ability to control feelings that affect behavior and to express them in ways that are acceptable to the surrounding environment (Pratiste, 2012). Emotional regulation plays an important role in shaping perceptions of conflict within the circle of friends. Emotional regulation can minimize and prevent the spread of conflict. This is in line with research by Griffith et al (2014), which shows that emotional management plays an important role in reducing negative impacts in a relationship. Emotional regulation is the process of managing emotions so that individuals are able to be wiser in responding to external stimuli, in this case related to friendship conflicts. If emerging adults already have good control over their emotions, they will be more careful in perceiving conflicts, so they may make more positive attributions about conflicts in friendships. This certainly affects the behavioral



responses of emerging adults when a conflict occurs, such as being wiser in selecting and sorting words to convey to the relevant parties, adjusting appropriately to the situation and conditions of the conflict, and so on. Jiao et al (2024) suggest that the social environment posed many challenges during emerging adulthood, while emerging adults also need to form meaningful relationships. From a theoretical perspective on emerging adulthood, emerging adults need autonomy and sufficient opportunities to learn and practice emotion-regulation skills (Arnett, 2014). Poor emotion regulation skills may lead to difficulties establishing intimacy and meaning in personal relationships (English & John, 2013).

Choirunnisa et al (2018) also addressed the importance of emotion regulation, noting that individuals with high emotion regulation abilities are more likely to think more positively when facing conflict, and vice versa. If emerging adults' perspective on the conflict they experience is positive, it will help them face it. In addition, Ben-Ari & Hirshberg (2009) in their research, stated similarly that individuals who view conflict positively tend not to feel threatened by conflict situations and are wiser in paying attention to their own needs and those involved, while individuals who view conflict negatively feel more threatened by conflict and try to do anything to eliminate the feeling of being threatened. In the process, the formation of perceptions of friendship conflict is related to interpersonal communication.

Communication is a tool that plays a major role in making constructive or destructive contributions to resolving conflicts. Communication becomes important when emerging adults understand how to communicate effectively in situations of conflict within their friendships. Arnett (2014) gained some perspectives on friendship relationships among emerging adults, which tend to be characterized by greater emotional depth and complexity and more communication. Thus, communication in emerging adults' friendships is more focused on developing respect and intimacy and on learning strategies for resolving conflicts. Ruppel et al. (2021) found that communication, whether direct or mediated, may influence how individuals engage in and perceive conflict. Likewise, Mills et al. (2021) found that the destructive effects of conflict reduce the quality of communication among adolescents. As a conflict situation breaks down the adolescent's emotional security, it further decreases the quality of communication and the relationship.

Poor communication will only worsen conflict and may even lead to new conflicts. The conflict will become more heated or subside depending on how the communication is handled. The quality of communication can be determined by how individuals perceive a conflict in a friendship. To be taken into account, social communication dialogue between individuals is a behavioral response formed by an individual's ability to manage their emotions, which affects how they perceive a conflict. It shows that there is a fairly close relationship between emotional regulation, interpersonal communication, and perceived conflict in friendship. However, the evidence on how these variables influence one another among emerging adults remains unclear. Previous research on emerging adults has focused more on the context of relationships with the parents of couples. This research aims to fill the gap by focusing on friendships among emerging adults in a specific population of undergraduate students.

Preliminary direct observations of state university students in Semarang City showed various cases of friendship conflicts caused by an inability to manage emotions, evident in the way students communicated, among psychology undergraduate students. If this is left without further action, the impact may worsen. To learn more, researchers



conducted interviews with 10 psychology students at Walisongo State Islamic University, Semarang State University, and Diponegoro University. The interview results showed that all respondents had experienced conflicts with their close friends. Moreover, 6 out of 10 respondents perceived differences in ideas as difficult to accept and stated that there were times when they were firm in their personal arguments. In addition, they tended to feel carried away by feelings, feel angry, annoyed, hurt, and furious. The coping behaviors result in avoiding, cutting off communication, being silent, and even giving in and then withdrawing. On the other hand, they said there was no problem with differences in goals; they thought this was natural, because forcing it would only make the conflict even more heated.

Based on the pre-survey results presented, it can be concluded that psychology students at state universities in Semarang City have different perceptions of friendship conflicts. Some perceived the conflict positively, and the rest negatively, followed by attitudes consistent with their perceptions. This is a concern for researchers because negative perceptions can occur due to a feeling of difficulty in controlling emotions when faced with a conflict that has an impact on the way individuals express it to others. Anwar (2015) argued that conflict causes an increase in emotional levels, leading to unreasonable and irrational ways of thinking and behaving. This means that when an individual is under the influence of uncontrolled emotions, it will be difficult for him/her to respond to conflict with positive perceptions and behaviors. The results of this pre-survey confirm that the knowledge of emotional regulation, interpersonal communication, and conflict perception that psychology students have previously learned does not guarantee that they can apply it optimally in social life.

Therefore, this study aims to address the problem empirically by assessing undergraduate students' ability to manage their emotions and interact with others, which will affect their ability to perceive conflict in friendships. This research aims to fill a gap by focusing on friendships among emerging adults in a specific population of undergraduate students, which is important because friendships are among the most central and influential relationships during emerging adulthood. Relationship quality in friendship will improve the quality of life during emerging adulthood. Thus, understanding strategies to improve the quality of friendships will be significant for preventing the negative impact of conflicts. In addition, discourse on emotional regulation and interpersonal communication regarding perceived conflicts in friendship remains scarce. Therefore, this research focused on the novelty of examining three variables among psychology undergraduate students. The results of this study are expected to shed light on the field of psychological science related to emotional regulation, interpersonal communication, and perceived conflict in friendship, as an effort to prevent the negative impact of conflict from occurring and as an educational tool for students on the importance of the role of emotional regulation and interpersonal communication on friendship conflict.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach and a causal model to assess the influence of independent variables on dependent variables. The independent variables in this study are emotional regulation and interpersonal communication variables. Then, one dependent variable is the perceived conflict in friendship

The sampling technique used in this study is non-probability accidental sampling. The study included 360 participants drawn from psychology students at state universities



in Semarang, namely Walisongo State Islamic University of Semarang, Semarang State University, and Diponegoro University.

The measuring instrument in this study used three psychological scales: perceived conflict in friendship, emotional regulation, and interpersonal communication. First, the scale of perceived conflict in friendship is compiled based on indicators of interpersonal conflict according to Supardi (2011), namely differences in ideas, cultural background, goals, self-pressure, and sources of error, which are then linked to aspects of perception put forward by Walgito (2010), namely aspects of cognition, affection, and conation. Second, the scale of emotional regulation is compiled based on aspects of emotional regulation proposed by Gross (2007), namely strategies for emotion regulation, engaging in goal-directed behavior (goals), controlling emotional responses (impulse), and acceptance of emotional responses (acceptance). Finally, the interpersonal communication scale is compiled based on the aspects of interpersonal communication proposed by Devito (2011), namely openness (openness), empathy (empathy), supportive attitude (supportiveness), positive attitude (positiveness), and equality (equality). The results of the validity test for the friendship conflict perception scale showed that all items were deemed valid, with a reliability of 0.865. On the emotional regulation scale, all items were deemed valid, with a reliability of 0.871. Then in the interpersonal communication scale, all items were declared valid with a reliability of 0.865.

The data analysis techniques in this study are classical assumption tests and hypothesis tests. The classical assumption tests in this study are normality tests, linearity tests, and multicollinearity tests. The normality test in this study uses the technique of Kolmogorov-Smirnov. The linearity test in this study was conducted by comparing the significance of the deviation from linearity. Then, multicollinearity can be assessed using the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) and Tolerance. Hypothesis testing in this study uses multiple linear regression test because this test is considered appropriate with the purpose of this study, namely to empirically test the influence of independent variables, namely emotional regulation and interpersonal communication on the dependent variable, namely the perceived conflict in friendship, with the provision that if the significance value ≤ 0.05 , it means that the hypothesis is accepted and if the significance value ≥ 0.05 , it means that the hypothesis is rejected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The description of this research data includes the research variables: perceived conflict in friendship, emotional regulation, and interpersonal communication. The study processed research data using SPSS 27 for Windows. The results of the data processing are presented as the number of respondents, minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation, which are explained in detail below.

Table 1.
 Statistical Description Results

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Regulation	360	26	70	57.51	6.942
Interpersonal Communication	360	44	68	55.44	5.365
Perceived conflict in friendship	360	35	70	49.96	6.388
Valid N	360				



Based on the statistical description above, each variable has its own score. The emotional regulation variable has a minimum of 26, a maximum of 70, a mean of 57.51, and a standard deviation of 6.942. The interpersonal communication variable has a minimum of 44, a maximum of 68, a mean of 55.44, and a standard deviation of 5.365. Finally, the perceived conflict in friendship variable has a minimum of 35, a maximum of 70, a mean of 49.96, and a standard deviation of 6.388.

Then the data results can determine the categorization, which is divided into three categories, namely high, medium, and low categories, by calculating the mean value and standard deviation value for each variable. The results of the categorization calculation are as follows.

Table 2.
 Score Categorization of Perceived Conflict in Friendship

Interval Shoes	Value Range	Percentage (%)	Categorization
$X < M - 1SD$	$X < 43,57$	11 %	Low
$M - 1SD \leq X < M + 1SD$	$43,57 \leq X < 56,3$	69 %	Currently
$M + 1SD \leq X$	$56,3 \leq X$	20 %	High

Based on the table of categorization of the perception variable of friendship conflict above, it can be seen that as many as 11% of the total research sample, which is around 40 respondents, have a negative perceived conflict in friendship, then as many as 69% of the total research sample, which is around 249 respondents, have a moderate perceived conflict in friendship, and as many as 20% of the total research sample, which is around 71 respondents, have a positive perceived conflict in friendship. The results of this categorization show that psychology students at state universities in Semarang City predominantly have a moderate level of perceived friendship conflict, with negative and positive views balanced, so the impact of friendship conflict is more easily overcome than in conflicts with negative perceptions.

Table 3.
 Score Categorization of Emotional Regulation

Interval Shoes	Value Range	Percentage (%)	Categorization
$X < M - 1SD$	$X < 50,56$	18 %	Low
$M - 1SD \leq X < M + 1SD$	$50,56 \leq X < 64,45$	63 %	Currently
$M + 1SD \leq X$	$64,45 \leq X$	19 %	High

Based on the table of categorization of emotional regulation variables above, it can be seen that as many as 18% of the total number of research samples, namely around 63 respondents, have low emotional regulation abilities, then as many as 63% of the total number of research samples, namely around 228 respondents, have moderate emotional regulation abilities, and as many as 19% of the total number of research samples, namely around 69 respondents, have high emotional regulation abilities. The results of this categorization indicate that psychology students at state universities in Semarang predominantly have moderate emotional regulation abilities. As a result, the mood of individuals involved in friendship conflicts is easier to control than that of individuals with low emotional regulation, because low emotional regulation can cloud individuals' judgment.



Table 4.
 Score Categorization of Interpersonal Communication

Interval Shoes	Value Range	Percentage (%)	Categorization
$X < M - 1SD$	$X < 50,07$	10 %	Low
$M - 1SD \leq X < M + 1SD$	$50,07 \leq X < 60,8$	76 %	Currently
$M + 1SD \leq X$	$60,8 \leq X$	14 %	High

Based on the table of categorization of interpersonal communication variables above, it can be seen that as many as 10% of the total number of research samples, namely around 35 respondents, have low interpersonal communication skills, then as many as 76% of the total number of research samples, namely around 274 respondents, have moderate interpersonal communication skills, and as many as 14% of the total number of research samples, namely around 51 respondents, have high interpersonal communication skills. The results of this categorization indicate that psychology students at state universities in Semarang predominantly have moderate interpersonal communication skills, suggesting that they can communicate more wisely and carefully with parties involved in friendship conflicts.

Whether data are normally distributed can be determined by conducting a normality test. The normality test in this study uses a non-parametric Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, assessing the significance of the p-value. The setting rule is that when the p-value for the sign test is ≥ 0.05 , the data are normally distributed. Meanwhile, if the p-value is ≤ 0.05 , then the data are not normally distributed. This test is assisted by the SPSS 27 application for windows. The results of the normality test in this study are as follows.

Table 5.
 Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Unstandardized Residual
N		360
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	5.99839402
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.044
	Positive	.044
	Negative	-.025
Test Statistic		.044
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		.095
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.		
d. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 1241531719.		

Based on the results of the normality test above, the data are normally distributed, as indicated by the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed). In the table, the values Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) obtained is 0.095, and the value is greater than 0.05 ($0.095 > 0.05$). Therefore, the data in this study are normally distributed.



The results of the linearity test in this study are as follows.

Table 6.

Results of Linearity Test of Emotional Regulation and Perceived conflict in friendship

ANOVA Table			Sum of	Mean		
			Squares	df	Square	F Sig.
Perceived conflict in friendship * Emotional Regulation	Between Groups	(Combined)	2700.158	31	87.102	2.391 .000
		Linearity	1686.539	1	1686.539	46.299 .000
		Deviation from Linearity	1013.620	30	33.787	.928 .579
	Within Groups		11948.217	328	36.427	
Total		14648.375	359			

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the significance value deviation from linearity In the linearity test of the emotional regulation variable and perceived conflict in friendship, it was 0.579, which means it is greater than 0.05 ($0.579 > 0.05$), so it can be said that there is a linear relationship between the emotional regulation variable and perceived conflict in friendship.

Table 7.

Results of the Linearity Test of Interpersonal Communication and Perceived conflict in friendship

ANOVA Table			Sum of	Mean		
			Squares	df	Square	F Sig.
Perceived conflict in friendship * Interpersonal Communication	Between Groups	(Combined)	873.731	17	51.396	1.276 .205
		Linearity	25.627	1	25.627	.636 .426
		Deviation from Linearity	848.104	16	53.007	1.316 .184
	Within Groups		13774.644	342	40.277	
Total		14648.375	359			

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the significance value deviation from linearity In the linearity test of the interpersonal communication variable and perceived conflict in friendship, it was 0.184, which means it is greater than 0.05 ($0.184 > 0.05$), so it can be said that there is a linear relationship between the interpersonal communication variable and perceived conflict in friendship.

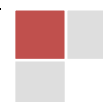
The results of the multicollinearity test in this study are as follows.

Table 8.

Multicollinearity Test Results

Coefficients ^a		
Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)		
Emotional Regulation	.922	1.085
Interpersonal Communication	.922	1.085

a. Dependent Variable: Perceived conflict in friendship



Based on the results of the multicollinearity test above, the tolerance value is 0.922 > 0.1, and the VIF value is 1.085 < 10. The results of this test show no multicollinearity between the variables of emotional regulation and interpersonal communication.

The results of the multiple linear regression test in this study are as follows.

Table 9.

ANOVA Test Results in Multiple Linear Regression

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1731.293	2	865.646	23.925	.000 ^b
Residual	12917.082	357	36.182		
Total	14648.375	359			

a. Dependent Variable: Perceived conflict in friendship

b. Predictors: (Constant), Interpersonal Communication, Emotional Regulation

Based on the data presented in the table, it can be seen that the significance value obtained is smaller than 0.05, which is 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), which means that simultaneously the third hypothesis is accepted, namely that there is an influence of emotional regulation and interpersonal communication on the perceived conflict in friendship among psychology students at state universities in the city of Semarang.

Table 10.

Partial Hypothesis Test Results in Multiple Linear Regression

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
1 (Constant)	34.952	3.748		9.327	.000
Emotional Regulation	.327	.048	.355	6.866	.000
Interpersonal Communication	-.069	.062	-.058	-1.112	.267

a. Dependent Variable: Perceived conflict in friendship

Based on the results of the hypothesis test above, the emotional regulation variable has a significance value of $0.000 \leq 0.05$, indicating that the first hypothesis is accepted, namely that emotional regulation influences perceived conflict in friendship. The significance value for the interpersonal communication variable is $0.267 \geq 0.05$, which means that the second hypothesis is rejected: there is no influence of interpersonal communication on perceived conflict in friendship. Furthermore, the table above shows that the significance values for the emotional regulation and interpersonal communication variables on perceived conflict in friendship are $0.000 \leq 0.05$, which means that the third hypothesis is accepted: there is a simultaneous influence of these variables on perceived conflict in friendship.

Based on the data analysis above, the results of the multiple regression analysis are presented as follows.

a. The regression equation obtained is: $34.952 (Y) + 0.327 (X1) - 0.069 (X2)$

b. Obtaining a constant value of 34.952 means that if the independent variable has a value of 0 (constant), then the dependent variable has a value of 34.952.



- c. The regression coefficient on X1 has a positive (+) value of 0.327, which means that if variable X1 increases, variable Y will also increase, and vice versa.
- d. The regression coefficient on X2 has a negative value (-) of -0.069, which means that if the variable X2 increases, the variable Y will decrease, and vice versa.

The coefficient of determination test is used to assess how much the independent variable influences the dependent variable by examining the column section. Adjusted R-Square. The test results are as follows.

Table 11.
 R Test Results in Multiple Linear Regression

Model Summary^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.344 ^a	.118	.113	6.015

a. Predictors: (Constant), Interpersonal Communication, Emotional Regulation
 b. Dependent Variable: Perceived conflict in friendship

The Adjusted R-Square value is 0.113. This shows that emotional regulation and interpersonal communication influence perceived conflict in friendships among psychology students at state universities in Semarang, with a percentage of 11.3%. The remaining 88.7% is influenced by variables outside this study.

Discussion

In this study, three hypotheses are proposed. The first hypothesis is that emotional regulation influences perceived conflict in friendships among psychology students at state universities in Semarang. The test results of the first hypothesis using the regression analysis in Table 10 shows that there is an influence of emotional regulation on the perceived conflict in friendship as seen based on the significance value obtained of 0.000 which means that the value is <0.05 so that it can be said that the emotional regulation variable affects the perceived conflict in friendship of psychology students at state universities in Semarang.

The results of this study are consistent with those reported by Choirunissa et al (2018), who found that individuals with high emotional regulation skills are more likely to perceive conflicts positively. Students with low emotional regulation skills tend to perceive conflict negatively. Emotional regulation is an individual's ability to assess, control, and change their emotions, which are influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic processes, consciously or unconsciously, so that these responses affect the emotional and behavioral responses to conflict. Jamil (2007) states that emotion is the energy that moves individuals when faced with conflict. If individuals can think clearly and logically, then they can focus when faced with problems. Barry et al. (2016) explain that emotion and friendship relations are independently correlated. Emerging adults meet emotional needs such as attachment, dependence, and intimacy through friendships and, in turn, shape their overall well-being.

Based on the table of categorization of emotional regulation in Table 3, shows 18% of the total number of research samples (around 63 respondents), have low emotional regulation skills. A total of 63% of respondents, around 228, have moderate emotional regulation abilities, and 19% of the total research sample, around 69, have high emotional regulation abilities. This indicates that most psychology students at state universities in Semarang have moderate emotional regulation skills.



The data analysis for the second hypothesis in Table 10 shows an influential relationship between interpersonal communication and perceived conflict in friendships among psychology students at state universities in the city of Semarang. The results of the second hypothesis using the regression analysis that has been carried out shows that there is no significant influence of interpersonal communication on the perceived conflict in friendship as seen from the significance value obtained of 0.267 which means that the value is > 0.05 so it means that the interpersonal communication variable has no influence on the perceived conflict in friendship of psychology students at state universities in the city of Semarang. This result is consistent with research by Katz and Kuhn (Jewell & Siegall, 1998), which shows that communication has no influence on interpersonal conflict.

In Landessari et al (2015) research, the dominant factors influencing interpersonal conflict are internal, including negative thoughts, sensitive feelings, personality traits, and an inability to manage emotions. This shows that communication is not included in the dominant factors influencing interpersonal conflict. This is supported by research conducted by Mumpuni (2021), which showed that communication has a low influence of 4.5% on interpersonal conflict. This shows that communication is not a strong predictor or influencing factor of interpersonal conflict. In addition, according to Rakhmat (2015), one factor influencing the formation of perception is functional factors, such as needs, past experiences, and other factors originating from the individual. This shows that whether an individual perceives something as positive or negative depends on his needs, experiences, and other personal factors. Even though an individual has good interpersonal communication skills, this does not guarantee that he can perceive friendship conflicts as positive.

These data confirm that the knowledge of interpersonal communication and conflict perception that psychology students have previously studied does not guarantee that they can apply it optimally in social life. This can happen because students' perceptions of conflict can be shaped by various factors from their lives, such as parenting patterns, experiences, personality, and other factors. Therefore, it can be said that the perceived conflict in friendship owned by the subjects in this study was not influenced by interpersonal communication.

Based on the table of categorization of interpersonal communication in Table 4, it can be seen that as many as 10% of the total number of research samples, namely around 35 respondents, have low interpersonal communication skills, then as many as 76% of the total number of research samples, namely around 274 respondents, have moderate interpersonal communication skills, and as many as 14% of the total number of research samples, namely around 51 respondents, have high interpersonal communication skills. It can be concluded that most psychology students at state universities in Semarang have moderate interpersonal communication skills.

Finally, the third hypothesis in this study is that emotional regulation and interpersonal communication influence perceived conflict in friendships among psychology students at state universities in Semarang City. The results of the third hypothesis test using the regression test that has been carried out in Table 10 state that there is an influence of emotional regulation and interpersonal communication on the perceived conflict in friendship seen based on the significance value obtained which is smaller than 0.05, which is 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) which means that simultaneously the third hypothesis is accepted with an Adjusted R Square value of 0.113. This shows that the variables of emotional regulation and interpersonal communication influence perceived



conflict in friendship, accounting for 11.3%. The remaining 88.7% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study, such as psychological well-being and personality. Therefore, the third hypothesis in this study, namely that there is an influence of emotional regulation and interpersonal communication on the perceived conflict in friendship of psychology students at state universities in Semarang City, can be accepted. This means that the higher students' ability in emotional regulation and interpersonal communication, the more positive they perceive the conflict in friendships. Conversely, the lower the ability to regulate emotions and communicate interpersonal relationships, the more negative the perceived conflict in friendships among psychology students at state universities in Semarang City.

When building a friendship, of course, students in the late teenage age group will never be free from conflict because of differences between them. To maintain friendships when conflict arises, students need to be aware of how to manage their emotions so they can think rationally and view conflict positively. Like Dewi et al. (2024), who argue that the formation of perceptions is influenced by emotions, which can be seen in how individuals communicate with others. Students who have a positive perception of conflict will see it as an opportunity to improve and strengthen their relationships by resolving conflicts constructively. Regulating emotions properly can be the first step in maintaining relationship stability, as it clears the mind and helps students focus when dealing with conflict (Jamil, 2007).

Recent studies suggest that interpersonal communication skills can influence perceptions of conflict. But the findings in this study suggest otherwise. Among psychology students at state universities in Semarang City, the population of this study, interpersonal communication skills are not a dominant factor in the formation of conflict perceptions. Student perceptions do not always arise from extrinsic factors such as communication; they can also arise from intrinsic factors, including needs, past experiences, and other factors originating from the students themselves (Rakhmat, 2015). Thus, the formation of students' perceptions of this conflict is influenced by intrinsic factors, meaning that, in this case, communication skills cannot ensure that students perceive conflict in friendships positively. Moreover, based on research findings, Fišerová et al. (2021) suggest that attachment styles and relationship quality define the skills to compromise and process hostile emotions, thereby becoming factors more associated with conflict resolution.

CONCLUSION

This study found that emotional regulation and interpersonal communication have a very significant influence on the perceived conflict in friendships of psychology students at state universities in Semarang. Emotional regulation has a significant influence on students' perceived friendship conflict, but in this study, interpersonal communication did not. This finding can be used by students and universities in building a more positive social environment. Universities can design relevant, effective strategies, such as providing education that fosters students' motivation to improve themselves and develop their emotional regulation and interpersonal communication skills, so that the university's friendship environment is increasingly qualified. The results of this study can also serve as a basis for further research, particularly in interpersonal communication and conflict perception. The limitation of this study is the use of accidental sampling, as researchers have limited access, time, and budget, resulting in data that are less than optimal in covering all samples. In addition, there is limited availability of respondents



for this study. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers use more effective sampling methods and techniques and include additional factors influencing perceived conflict in friendships that have not been studied, such as psychological well-being, parenting, and personality.

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