

Friendships of Indonesian and United States youth

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Issues in the study of friendship across cultures were explored by reviewing a set of studies focusing on the friendships of Indonesian and United States youth. Four topics are considered: similarity of friendships across cultures, dimensions of friendships that vary across cultures, the utility of the individualism/collectivism dimension for explaining cultural differences in friendship, and methodological issues in the study of culture and friendship. Two studies are presented that address some of these issues. Although friendships of US and Indonesian youth are similar across many dimensions, the friendships of Indonesian youth appear somewhat less close, more centred on instrumental aid, less focused on enhancement of worth, and more extensive and less exclusive than those of US youth. These patterns are opposite to those that have emerged in the comparison of those in the US and other collectivist cultures, suggesting the need to modify models of collectivism and friendship. Finally, the authors advocate the use of multimethod and multiagent assessments, addressing issues of social class in cross-cultural comparison, and using a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to study culture and friendship.

Introduction

Despite evidence of the existence and importance of friendships in diverse cultures and historical periods (Y. A. Cohen, 1966), little cross-cultural study of this has been done (Bell & Colman, 1999; Krappmann, 1996). The limited anthropological study of friendship reveals cultural variation in the parameters of friend selection and differences in behaviour expected within these relationships (Y. A. Cohen, 1966).

In this paper, we present an overview of published and unpublished studies of the friendships of Indonesian and US children and college students in an effort to explore some of the issues that exist in the study of culture and friendship. First, we discuss the similarity of the concept of friendship in these countries. Second, we discuss the dimensions of friendship that are likely to vary across cultures. Third, we review the implications of our work for understanding the utility of the individualism/collectivism and independence/interdependence dimensions as explanations for cultural differences in friendship. The final section focuses on some of the enormous methodological challenges that have emerged in the study of culture and friendship.

Our studies of the friendships of US youth have been conducted in central Illinois, with a population that is predominately middle-class and European-American. Our references to US friendships will pertain to this population. It is likely that there are differences in the friendships of persons in various ethnic and social class groups within the United States, but the nature and magnitude of these effects are not well known.

Friendships of Indonesian youth

Indonesia is a vast archipelagic nation, currently ranking fourth in World population. Approximately 90% of the population is Muslim, and numerous ethnic groups speaking more than 300 local languages exist within this country. The participants in our research have been mostly of Javanese and Sundanese ethnicity living in Java and our conclusions about Indonesians are limited to these populations. Our studies have been conducted in Bandung, a city of approximately two million, that is a locale for university education, technological development, and textile manufacturing.

The Indonesian children and adolescents in our studies have been selected from middle-class families and as such their daily lives are in many ways comparable to those of US students. Daily activities include attending school, watching television, playing sports, riding bicycles and playing video games as well as eating in fast-food restaurants and visiting shopping malls. They also participate in after-school activities including scouting, sports clubs, and music instruction as well as in private tutorial lessons in subjects such as English and math. Much of their out-of-school time is spent in leisure and in the company of peers, who typically interact in same-sex groups that become more mixed-sex in adolescence. These after-school activities typically end before 6 p.m. as most students are expected to be home before the evening prayers.

The study of Indonesian youth is particularly useful for assessing the generalisability of models of friendship (Schneider, 1998). A number of researchers have found that Indonesians score higher in collectivism and lower in indivi-

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dualism than persons from the US and other Western cultures (e.g., Hofstede, 1991; Marshall, 1997). Thus, comparison of European-American and Indonesian youth may be useful for assessing the extent to which individualism and collectivism explains friendship variation across cultures.

Over the past century, theorists and anthropologists such as Gregory Bateson, Clifford Geertz, and Margaret Mead have been fascinated by various aspects of the social structure and behaviour of many of the cultural groups in Indonesia. Indigenous Javanese and Sundanese culture stresses interpersonal harmony, maintenance of social hierarchies, politeness, and group conformity (Magnis-Suseno, 1997). Farver and Wimbari (1995) note that Javanese children are taught to maintain harmonious social relationships, screen extreme emotions from others, and to display obedience and sharing.

Some of the aspects of collectivism and patterns of interpersonal behaviour existing in many parts of Indonesia (i.e., Java, Sumatra, Bali) may be attributable to historical reliance on an economy of wet rice agriculture. Success in these enterprises required intense coordination within village units to manage shared irrigation, marketing, and other tasks. The high level of community organisation has also been maintained in urban environments in which neighbourhood units (*kampung*s) typically organise themselves to conduct such activities as security, public works, and ceremonies (Mulder, 1992; N. Sullivan, 1994). Patterns of collectivism in many parts of Indonesia may thus differ from types of collectivism exhibited in other cultures such as Korea (Cho & Shin, 1996) that have placed less reliance on coordinated community systems and rely instead upon close family-based units. We suspect that patterns of friendship in Indonesia are in part attributable to these patterns of social organisation (French, Bae, Pidada, & Lee, 2004).

Friendship in the United States and Indonesia

Friendships are considered to be extremely important for US children and adolescents (Hartup, 1996), but there is limited public recognition of these relationships. The label "friend" is used to describe a wide variety of relationships, ranging from casual acquaintances to extremely close relationships (Hays, 1988). Considerable variation exists among individuals in the extent to which they have friends and the degree of closeness within these relationships (Hartup, 1996).

Our research has uncovered both similarities and differences between the friendships of US and Indonesian youth. In our studies, similarities have emerged between Indonesian and US children in the number of reciprocal friendships (French, Jansen, Riansari, & Setiono, 2003) and between Indonesian and US college students in the number of close friends (French et al., 2004). In both Indonesia and the United States, the definition of "close friend" involves intimacy, reliable alliance, instrumental aid, and companionship.

Some of the empirical findings associated with friendship in the United States also have been replicated in Indonesia. Thus, we have found that Indonesian children who have friends display greater social competence than those who do not (French et al., 2003). Findings from studies of Western populations consistently reveal that children who are friendless are less well adjusted, lower in social competence, and higher in aggression than those with friends (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1996). Indonesian children with friends were rated lower in aggression and withdrawal by teachers and peers and higher in

achievement than children without friends. The existence and magnitude of these associations were very similar to those that have emerged from studies of children in Western countries.

Indonesian friends are also similar to each other, an effect that has been referred to as "homophily." In studies conducted in both the United States (Kandel, 1978; Kupersmidt, DeRossier, & Patterson, 1995) and the Netherlands (Haselager, Hartup, Van Lieshout, & Riksen-Walraven, 1998), consistent evidence that children resemble their friends on a variety of behavioural, attitudinal, and ability dimensions has emerged. Paralleling these results, we found that Indonesian children were more similar to their friends than to their classmates in aggression, social withdrawal, social preference, and academic achievement (French et al., 2003).

Other evidence, however, suggests that some aspects of friendship differ between Indonesia and the United States as well as between Indonesia and some other collectivist cultures (French et al., 2004). Anthropologists have described Javanese social structure as being somewhat less focused on specific friendships and more focused on integration into the community and social network. Jay (1969), in an ethnography of an Indonesian village, reported that social relationships were based on kinship and community ties, but that there was an absence of specific friendships. Instead, individuals interacted with villagers with whom they came into contact. Koentjaraningrat (1985), in his extensive ethnography of Javanese culture, noted that adolescent urban youth tend to socialise in mixed-sex clique groups within which friendships exist. In an empirical study, Noesjirwan (1978) found that Indonesian adults endorsed the belief that it was better to maintain harmonious group relationships than to develop a few close friendships, a view opposite to that held by Australian participants. This suggests that Javanese social structures are more focused on integration into cliques, social networks, and community groups and comparatively less focused on the development of close dyadic friendships. We suspect that these patterns of friendship have in part evolved from the village and community social organisation described above.

Thus, despite evidence that a number of aspects of the friendships of Indonesian youth are similar to those of US youth, there are probably differences as well. One difference that may exist is the role of friends relative to family members as providers of companionship and intimacy. Whereas friends emerged as extreme sources of these provisions for US youth, particularly adolescent girls, these effects are less extreme among Indonesian youth, who rate family members as well as friends as important sources of these provisions (French, Rianasari, Pidada, Nelwan, & Buhrmester, 2001). As Schneider (1998) has pointed out, US youth might be extreme when compared to youth in many other cultures in their quest for autonomy, and the strong reliance upon friends may reflect this goal. In the following section, we consider further the question of similarity and differences in the characteristics of friendships of US and Indonesian youth.

Cultural differences in friendship qualities

There have been extensive discussions of the developmental and gender differences in the qualities associated with child and adolescent friendships, but very little attention has been focused on variation across cultures (Krappmann, 1996). This review will focus on four dimensions that we hypothesise are

likely to vary between US and Indonesian youth: (1) friendship closeness, (2) instrumental aid, (3) enhancement of worth, and (4) exclusivity and extensivity of social contact. These dimensions will first be briefly discussed, after which two studies comparing the friendships of US and Indonesian youth on these will be reviewed.

Dimensions of friendships

Friendship closeness. We have argued that Indonesian friendships are somewhat less close than those of US students. We based our initial hypotheses in part on the anthropological findings, reported above, that Indonesian students are typically more focused than US students on integration into family groups, peer networks, and the larger community, and to a lesser extent on developing specific close friendships with non-kin peers.

Across our studies, a variety of dimensions pertain to closeness. First, intimacy and disclosure provide one index of closeness. A second indicator of closeness is reliable alliance, which is the belief that friends can be depended upon for loyalty and emotional support. Third is longevity of relationship. Close relationships might be expected to take longer to develop, but once formed, last longer than relationships that are less close. We anticipated Indonesian friendships, in comparison to those of US participants, to be lower in intimate disclosure and reliable alliance, and of shorter longevity.

Enhancement of worth. The theoretical importance of enhancement of worth as a dimension of friendship stems from the work of Harry Stack Sullivan (1953), who highlighted the role of same-sex friends during late childhood and adolescence as validators of personal worth and contributors to self-esteem. Weiss (1974) identified this as one of six types of social support derived from relationships with others. It is likely, however, that the importance of this provision varies across cultures.

Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, and Norasakkunkit (1997) argue that the search for self-enhancement is typically a major concern for European-Americans, whereas it is less salient for Japanese and possibly for those in other cultures in which persons hold interdependent views of self. Fiske et al. (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998) suggest that in many interdependent cultures, praise is common, and situations are constructed to promote self-esteem. X. Chen, Kaspar, Zhang, Wang, and Zheng (in press) found enhancement of worth to be a more salient feature of Canadian than of Chinese children's friendships.

We were confident that Indonesian students would identify enhancement of worth as a less salient feature of their friendships than would US students. In contrast to the self-promotion construct that exists within the United States, it is considered important for Javanese and other Indonesian cultural groups to control egoism, which is seen as disruptive to social harmony (Magnis-Suseno, 1997).

Instrumental aid. On the basis of Tietjen's (1989) suggestions that instrumental aid is more strongly associated with relationships in collectivist than in individualistic cultures, we were alerted to the possibility that this provision of friendships might vary across cultures, and in particular be more salient within Indonesian than US friendships. A prominent feature of Indonesian social relationships is the cementing of social bonds by lending assistance and sharing of resources. This is

captured by the term "*gotong-royong*", which describes the efforts of individuals to work together to address the needs of the larger community (Magnis-Suseno, 1997). We anticipated that these broad cultural norms would be reflected in individual friendships.

Extensivity and exclusivity. Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, and Lucca (1988) argued that persons in collectivist cultures tend to limit their interactions to a small group of persons that they know well, whereas those in individualistic cultures move fluidly between multiple social groups. On the basis of this argument, two aspects of friendship interaction were expected to vary across cultures. First, it is possible that cultural variation exists in the number of individuals that are interacted with over time with the presumption, based on the argument of Triandis et al. (1988), that those in collectivist cultures typically interact with fewer different people than those in individualistic cultures. Second, it could be expected that the interactions of those in collectivist cultures would be more exclusive than those in individualistic cultures, such that interacting groups would be composed solely of close friends.

On the basis of our knowledge of friendships in Indonesia and the United States, we expected that differences on the dimensions of extensivity and exclusivity would emerge, but to be opposite in direction from those predicted by Triandis et al. (1988). As discussed above, a major focus of Indonesian social life is participation in broad social networks. Noesjirwan (1977, 1978) observed that Indonesians were more likely than Australians to engage casual acquaintances and strangers in conversation. Thus, we expected Indonesian youth to interact with more different persons and have friendship interactions that were more open to inclusion of peers who were not close friends than would US participants.

Comparison of friendship qualities of US and Indonesian youth

Two studies, each consisting of several components, are particularly relevant to our understanding of friendship qualities. In reviewing these studies, we will focus specifically on country differences. Few gender differences emerged, the exception being that across studies, female participants reported more intimacy than male participants. In the sections below, the methods and results from these two studies will be reported. Following this, the implications of these findings for understanding differences between US and Indonesian youth on the four friendship dimensions outlined above will be discussed.

Study One: Friendship qualities of Indonesian and US children and adolescents

In the first part of this study, 168 fifth-grade (11 years old) and 171 eighth-grade (14 years old) Indonesian and US children and adolescents reported on their friendships using the Friendship Quality Questionnaire (FQQ; Parker & Asher, 1993). In the second part of this study, 110 fifth-grade and 114 eighth-grade children and adolescents reported on their friendships in a structured interview. Children in each country were recruited from schools that served middle-class populations. Most of the Indonesian children identified their ethnicity as Sundanese or Javanese. With the exception of two students, all of the US students were European-American.

In the first component of the study, participants rated their same-sex best friend using the FQQ. As noted in the section above, we were particularly interested in the dimensions of enhancement of worth and instrumental aid. These dimensions were tapped respectively by the conjunctive "validation and caring" and "help and guidance" scales of the FQQ. To create more focused scales, we pulled out four items that pertained to enhancement of worth (i.e., validation) and the six items that assessed instrumental aid (i.e., helping) from the original FQQ scales. The conflict and betrayal scale was also analysed. Because the companionship scale had unacceptable internal consistency, this was not analysed. The internal consistencies of these scales on the FQQ ranged between .6 and .8, and were comparable across countries.

A preliminary assessment of responses to the FQQ revealed that US participants used the extreme end points of the scales more frequently than Indonesian participants. Country differences in this response style have frequently emerged (C. Chen, Lee, & Stevenson, 1995; Hui & Triandis, 1989), effects that can be quite large and confound cultural comparison (Smith, 2001). To address this bias, the procedure outlined by Bond (1988) of standardising responses within each individual by using the mean and standard deviation of the individual's response to each item was used. Scores thus reflected the relative positioning of each friendship dimension relative to the other dimensions for each individual.

The means of both the standardised and unstandardised FQQ are presented in Table 1. Included in this table are *t*-tests and effect sizes associated with these comparisons. Inspection of this table reveals that US participants rated enhancement of worth as a more salient feature of their friendships than did Indonesian participants. Indonesian participants rated their friendships as higher in instrumental aid whereas US participants rated these as higher in intimacy; these effects, however, emerged respectively on the raw and standardised scales.

In the second component of the study, participants completed a structured interview in which they described positive features of two same-sex friends. Children described each friend in turn and specified why they liked this individual. The descriptions were followed by four standard probes in which participants were asked whether there was anything about the way this person "acts with you", "acts with other children", "acts with adults", or "looks or dresses" that makes them like him or her. Interview responses were recorded and transcribed. Indonesian transcripts were translated into English, backcoded into Indonesian, and checked against the original transcripts to verify accuracy.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, analysis results, and effects sizes for FQQ measures in Study 1

Quality	United States (N = 101)	Indonesia (N = 238)	Analysis results	Effect size
Intimate disclosure	3.93 (0.98) -0.01 (0.59)	3.77 (0.78) -0.06 (0.55)	3.67** 0.76	0.42 0.09
Enhancement of worth	4.45 (0.53) 0.26 (0.22)	3.52 (0.63) -0.56 (0.52)	13.21** 14.34**	1.27 1.34
Instrumental aid	3.80 (0.87) -0.46 (0.60)	3.65 (0.62) 0.15 (0.43)	1.79 10.16**	0.21 1.08
Conflict	1.55 (0.55) -1.56 (0.47)	1.77 (0.74) -1.24 (0.60)	2.67** 3.28**	0.31 0.38

Analyses were conducted with *t*-tests with $df = 337$: ** $p < .01$.

Two US students, blind to hypotheses, coded the interviews for references to intimate disclosure, instrumental aid, reliable alliance, and companionship. These were coded reliably; percentage agreement exceeded .90 and Kappa coefficients exceeded .89. Three additional categories (conflict, enhancement of worth, and conflict resolution) were coded but the analyses are not reported because they occurred infrequently and coding was unreliable.

The dependent measures for the interview reports of friendship qualities were the presence or absence of references to a particular category within a description. Because two descriptions were provided by each participant, responses across friends were combined to avoid the dependency that would result from treating these as independent. Thus, a score of 0, 1, or 2 was coded depending upon whether the quality was described respectively in zero, one, or two of the descriptions. These means, analysis results, and effect sizes are reported in Table 2.

Inspection of this table reveals that US youth reported more reliable alliance and companionship than Indonesian youth, whereas Indonesian youth reported greater instrumental aid. No significant country differences emerged for intimate disclosure.

Study Two: Friendships of Indonesian and US college students

This study was a multi-method comparison of the friendships of Indonesian, US, and South Korean college students (French et al., 2004), but only the US and Indonesian data will be reported here. The sample consisted of 53 Indonesian college students recruited from Padjadaran University in Bandung, Indonesia, a prominent large public university. All were ethnic Indonesian, and most came from Java. The 62 US participants came from Illinois Wesleyan University, a highly selective liberal arts college located in a medium-size Midwestern city. Most of the participants (93%) were European-American.

College students are an ideal population in which to study culture and friendship for several reasons. First, students had access to many potential friends (approximately 2000 for US and 10,000 for Indonesian students) who shared commonalities of values, capabilities, and interests. Second, students were attending college, an activity that served as a context of their activities with friends. Finally, some control over social class was obtained by comparing students attending high-status universities. Students from both countries came from families that were well educated and affluent in comparison to the general population of these countries. Thus, the college environment provides a setting that affords individuals the

Table 2

Means, standard deviations, analysis results, and effects sizes for Study 1 interview variables

Quality	United States (N = 101)	Indonesia (N = 238)	Analysis results	Effect size
Intimate disclosure	0.48 (0.68)	0.34 (0.63)	1.54	0.21
Reliable alliance	0.54 (0.68)	0.31 (0.58)	2.65**	0.34
Instrumental aid	0.24 (0.51)	1.54 (0.61)	17.31**	1.51
Companionship	1.39 (0.74)	1.18 (0.75)	2.06*	0.28

Analyses were conducted using *t*-tests with $df = 222$.

possibility of developing friendships without the constraints that might exist in other locations and during other periods of the lifespan, and provides an opportunity to study friendships in a setting that is similar across these very different countries. Nevertheless, the college environment is unique and results from this population might not generalise to other populations in these countries.

Students completed three measures. These included a social network inventory, a modified version of the Friendship Quality Questionnaire, and the Rochester Interaction Inventory, a diary report of social interaction.

The social network inventory consisted of a grid on which students listed their friends, as well as all other persons who they anticipated interacting with over the subsequent 2-week period. They rated the status of each relationship, i.e., very close friend, close friend, nonclose friend, acquaintance, or other, as well as the length of their association. They also indicated if the person was a romantic partner or kin. No differences between US and Indonesian students emerged in the number of very close friends, close friends, or percentage of opposite-sex friends. As hypothesised, Indonesian students reported knowing their friends for a shorter time period (2.97 years) than did US students (3.98 years).

A modified version of the Friendship Quality Questionnaire (M-FQQ) was developed for use in this research. The M-FQQ consisted of 42 items that were grouped into seven scales that included intimate disclosure, reliable alliance, instrumental aid, enhancement of self, companionship, conflict and betrayal, and exclusivity. The last scale incorporated items from Parker (1977), and assessed the extent to which individuals preferred to spend time exclusively with their close friends. All the subscales, with the exception of exclusivity, had good internal consistencies that were similar across the three countries (.72 to .91). The internal consistency for the exclusivity scale was lower (.52 to .61), an effect attributable in part to the presence of only two items in this scale.

Consistent with our prior findings, US students used a higher percentage of extreme ratings (44%) than Indonesian (24%, $d = .84$) participants. To address this potential response set bias, analyses were also conducted using subscores derived from items that were standardised within individuals. Thus, each item was converted to standard scores using each participant's mean and standard deviation of item scores, and scale scores were computed as means of the standardised items forming the scales. Scores therefore reflected the relative weight that participants placed on different qualities of friendship. Participants completed ratings on two same-sex friends. To avoid issues of dependency, the means of subscale scores for these two individuals were computed and used in subsequent analyses. In Table 3, the means, standard deviations, and analysis results for both raw and transformed scores are presented.

As can be seen from Table 3, the results are very similar regardless of whether raw or standardised scores were used. The US students rated their friendships higher in companionship and reliable alliance than Indonesian students. They also rated their friendships higher in intimate disclosure in the raw but not transformed score analyses. Indonesian students rated their friendships higher than US students in instrumental aid—an effect, however, that only emerged from the analysis of transformed scores.

The Rochester Interaction Inventory (RIR) was the third method used to assess friendships. Over a 14-day period,

Table 3

Means, standard deviations, and analysis results for the Modified Friendship Quality Questionnaire raw and standard scores in Study 2

Quality	Indonesia (<i>N</i> = 53)	United States (<i>N</i> = 62)	Analysis results	Effect size
Intimate disclosure				
Raw	5.25 (0.88)	5.93 (1.06)	3.05**	0.55
<i>z</i>	0.45 (0.39)	0.47 (0.35)	0.94	0.02
Enhancement of worth				
Raw	4.66 (0.92)	5.61 (0.96)	5.36**	0.88
<i>z</i>	0.07 (0.33)	0.27 (0.34)	3.29**	0.59
Instrumental aid				
Raw	4.89 (0.91)	4.76 (1.04)	0.70	0.12
<i>z</i>	0.21 (0.36)	-0.15 (0.39)	5.24**	0.87
Reliable alliance				
Raw	5.27 (0.88)	6.12 (0.72)	5.72**	0.94
<i>z</i>	0.40 (0.29)	0.55 (0.22)	3.01**	0.53
Conflict				
Raw	2.89 (1.05)	2.76 (1.00)	0.71	0.13
<i>z</i>	-0.92 (0.66)	-1.15 (0.51)	2.07*	0.38
Exclusivity				
Raw	2.49 (0.82)	2.56 (0.74)	0.50	0.09
<i>z</i>	-1.18 (0.52)	-1.33 (0.45)	1.64	0.30

Analyses were conducted using *t*-tests with $df = 113$: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

students completed a rating form for each interaction that lasted more than 10 minutes. On this form, they recorded the duration of interaction and number of participants. They also recorded the initials or pseudonyms of interaction participants, and their sex. These initials were matched with the information on the network inventory making it possible to determine the relationship (i.e., close friendship, friendship, acquaintance, etc.) between the participant and those with whom he or she interacted.

The RIR analyses were divided into two sections: total interactions and friend interactions. In Table 4 are the means, standard deviations, *t*-test analysis results, and effect sizes for both sets of analyses. The first set of analyses focused on total interactions; these included interactions with friends, as well as nonfriends. Indonesian students reported more interactions per day and longer-lasting interactions than US students. Over the course of the 14-day-period, Indonesian students reported interacting with more different people than US students.

The second set of analyses focused on interactions with friends. As can be seen from this table, Indonesian students engaged in more interactions per day with friends, whereas no differences emerged in the number of hours per day or the number of participants in these interactions.

Consistent with expectations, the interactions of Indonesian students were less exclusive than those of US students. Thus, Indonesian students, more often than US students, included others in their interactions with close friends. No country differences emerged from the analyses of ratings of disclosure, quality, or conflict.

Implications of these studies for understanding culture and friendships

In this section, the implications of the studies reported above will be discussed. This discussion will specifically focus on

Table 4
Means, standard deviations, and analysis results of RIR friend and total interactions

RIR variable	Indonesia (N = 53)	United States (N = 62)	Analysis results	Effect size
Friend interactions				
Interactions/day	5.99 (2.63)	3.48 (1.82)	6.07**	0.54
Unique interaction participants	11.20 (3.94)	14.35 (9.11)	1.04	0.07
Disclosure	3.38 (1.22)	3.71 (0.87)	1.89	0.08
Conflict	1.75 (0.62)	1.91 (0.72)	1.28	0.08
Exclusivity	0.51 (0.20)	0.62 (0.27)	2.48*	0.20
Total interactions				
Interactions/day	9.69 (3.44)	4.23 (2.34)	10.22**	1.32
Unique interaction participants	41.41 (16.14)	21.11 (13.57)	7.42**	0.66

Analyses were conducted using *t*-tests with $df = 113$: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

friendship closeness, enhancement of worth, instrumental aid, extensivity, and exclusivity.

Friendship closeness. We hypothesised that the friendships of Indonesians were less close than those of European-American youth, and the findings above provide some support for this position. Closeness was operationally defined by intimacy, reliable alliance, and friendship longevity.

There was mixed support for the hypothesis that Indonesian youth would report less intimacy in their friendships than US youth. In both studies, these effects emerged on the raw, but not the standardised, scales. Thus, the extent to which the obtained differences were a function of response bias is uncertain. Differences in disclosure were not obtained from the analysis of the ratings of disclosure during friendship interaction on the RIR. There is thus inconsistent and somewhat weak support for the hypothesis that differences in intimacy exist between friends in the two countries.

More consistent support was obtained for the hypothesis that the friendships of Indonesian youth are lower in reliable alliance and longevity. US youth in the interview data from Study One, and the standardised and nonstandardised questionnaire data from Study Two, reported reliable alliance as a more salient feature of their friendships than did Indonesian youth. Also consistent with predictions, the friendships of Indonesian college students were shorter in duration than those of US students.

There may be major cultural differences in the closeness of friendships, and those of European-Americans may be somewhat less close than those of persons in some other cultures. Brain (1976), for example, has argued that friendships in the US are without formal status and, in contrast to friendships in many parts of the world, are often transient and lacking in emotional depth. Further evidence that the friendships of US students are somewhat less close than those existing in some other cultures comes from the comparison of the social interactions of college students in Hong Kong and the United States discussed earlier (Wheeler, Reis, & Bond, 1989).

In our research, we have found that the friendships of US students are less close than those of South Korean students (French et al., 2004). Within Confucianism, a philosophy that has a strong influence on Korean values, close friendships are considered to be essential for the stability of society. Friendships are often developed during adolescence or young adulthood and are maintained throughout the lifespan. The degree of intimacy that ideally characterises these friendships is

described by the word “*cheong*,” which refers to the melding of family members and close friends into a collective unit, a concept closely related to the Japanese concept of “*amae*”. Although we argue that the friendships of Indonesian youth are less close than those of US youth, it is important to consider that the friendships of US youth may be less close than those of youth in some other cultures (Brain, 1976).

Enhancement of worth. We hypothesised that enhancement of worth would be a more salient aspect of US than of Indonesian friendships, and our results support this hypothesis. This effect emerged in both Studies One and Two and in the analysis of both raw and standardised scores.

Within Javanese society, it is important to control egoism, which is seen as disruptive to social harmony (Magnis-Suseno, 1997). Persons are admonished not to act in accord with their self interest, but instead to look toward the interests of others. Self-respect is ideally located in the positive view of others rather than self-appraisal (Mulder, 1992). McDonald (2002) found that Indonesian college students rated the promotion of self-esteem in children as one of the least valued objectives, in contrast to US students, who rated this as one of their most important child-rearing goals.

The promotion of self-esteem, in contrast, appears to be a major emphasis within North American populations. Fiske et al. (1998) suggests that there exists a self-esteem construct in many interdependent cultures; praise is common, and situations are constructed to promote self-esteem. X. Chen et al. (in press) similarly found enhancement of worth to be a more salient feature of Canadian than of Chinese children’s friendships. The promotion of self-esteem permeates multiple aspects of American society, in particular education (Damon, 1995). This focus on self-esteem is reflected by the fact that the Amazon Internet bookstore lists more than 2500 titles focused on some aspect of self-esteem, many of which are devoted to methods of increasing this in self or others.

These findings suggest that a cultural emphasis of the promotion of self-esteem is reflected within the friendships of US youth. It remains to be seen, however, how this occurs. Perhaps individuals select persons who provide this enhancement to be friends. Alternatively, individuals may selectively reinforce friends to provide them with greater reinforcement, in a process similar to the deviancy enhancement process documented by Dishion, Spacklen, Andrews, and Patterson (1996). Further research might profitably focus upon understanding these processes.

Instrumental aid. Hays (1988) argued that instrumental aid is often a feature of friendships, but is seldom the primary motivation for developing these. At the same time, there is likely to be variation across cultures in the extent to which this is a salient aspect of relationships (Tietjen, 1989). The strongest support for the hypothesis that instrumental aid might be more salient in the friendships of Indonesian than US youth emerged from the interview component of Study Two. Also, in both Studies One and Two, instrumental aid was rated higher by Indonesian than US students—an effect, however, that emerged only in the standardised scales.

Anthropologists (e.g., N. Sullivan, 1994) have described the exchange of instrumental aid as an important feature of interpersonal relationships and community cohesion in Indonesia. Particularly noteworthy is the norm of mutual assistance among members of a community and shared involvement to complete joint tasks (Magnis-Suseno, 1997). The importance of exchange of instrumental aid to promote the social structure has also been documented as occurring in neighbouring Asian countries (e.g., Smart, 1999). Hollnsteiner (1979), for example, discussed norms of reciprocity that govern the exchange of goods and services in the Philippines and the importance of these exchanges for cementing social and community relationships. Nydegger and Nydegger (1963) made a similar observation of Philippine children in the Six Cultures Study. They found that the mutual assistance expectations that were exhibited by adults in Philippine society were paralleled by children's expectations to assist each other with schoolwork.

The de-emphasis of instrumental aid in the friendships of US youth may be, in part, a function of philosophical views that ideal friendships are based on affection and not assistance. Aristotle (1976) distinguished between virtuous friendships and those based on utility, ideas that were prominent in American history (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985). These values undoubtedly continue to be reflected in contemporary values.

Extensivity and exclusivity. We hypothesised that Indonesian students would engage in more interactions and interact with more different people than US students. Our findings are consistent with these hypotheses. Indonesian college students engaged in more interactions, more interactions with friends per day, and interactions with more different people over the 14-day period than US students. These findings directly contradict the conclusions of Reis, Collins, and Bersheid (2000) and Triandis et al. (1988) that persons in collectivist cultures tend to limit their interactions to a small group of persons that they know well. They may also be consistent with the tendencies of Indonesians, described by Noesjirwan (1977, 1978), to socially interact with casual acquaintances and strangers. These findings thus directly pertain to the suggestion that cultural differences in individualism and collectivism explains variation in friendships, an issue discussed more extensively in the section below.

Theories of culture and friendship

As noted above, some attempts have been made by Reis et al. (2000), Triandis et al. (1988), and Wheeler et al. (1989) to explain cultural differences in friendship using the constructs

of individualism/collectivism or independence/interdependence. The argument has been that collectivists interact with a small number of in-group members with whom they share long-lasting and highly intimate relationships.

These hypothesised patterns of interaction appear to be typical of persons in some cultures presumed to be collectivist. Wheeler et al. (1989) compared the social interactions of students in Hong Kong with those of US students using the Rochester Interaction Inventory. The US students interacted with more students over the study period than did Hong Kong students, a finding the authors interpreted as supportive of the hypothesis that collectivists limit their interaction to a small number of in-group members. The Hong Kong students reported more disclosure in the interactions, a finding that was consistent with suggestions that there is greater intimacy within the relations of those in collectivist cultures. We found similar results from comparisons of South Korean and US students (French et al., 2004). South Korean students reported more disclosure in their friend interaction on the RIR than US students, and more exclusivity in their interactions with friends than US students, results that emerged from both the M-FQQ and the RIR analyses. Thus, we believe closeness of friends and restriction of interaction to small groups of insiders is consistent with some but not all collectivist cultures.

The findings regarding the friendship closeness, extensivity, and inclusivity of Indonesian youth reported earlier, however, directly contradict the conclusions that the patterns of interaction described by Triandis et al. (1988) universally characterise those in collectivist cultures. In contrast to predictions, Indonesian college students interacted with more different persons than US students. In contrast to suggestions that collectivists develop closer relationships than individualists, Indonesian friendships appeared to be somewhat less close than those of US students. Finally, we found that rather than limit their interactions to in-group members, Indonesian students were more inclusive than US students. On the basis of these results, it appears possible to reject the hypothesis that consistent patterns of friendship interaction universally typify those in collectivist cultures.

Findings that contradict the notion that friendships are closer in collectivist than in individualistic cultures have emerged from other studies, the strongest evidence emerging from the study of kibbutz societies of Israel. These communal groups focused on extensivity of interaction in conjunction with a de-emphasis of close relationships between particular individuals (Josselson, Lieblich, Sharbany, & Wiseman, 1997). Sharbany and Wiseman (1993) found that kibbutz adolescents spent considerable time with peers, but developed less intimacy with specific friends than did city-reared Israeli adolescents. Both Bettelheim (1969) and Josselson et al. (1997) suggested that the pressure to join the collective interfered with the development of specific friendships.

The results from Indonesia, in conjunction with those from kibbutz societies, suggest the need to expand the models of friendships in collectivist societies to include a variant in which extensive involvement with a peer group is emphasised, but involvement in specific dyadic relationships is de-emphasised. There may also be other patterns (Fiske, 2002).

Future research on culture and friendship might profitably focus on uncovering prototypic patterns of friendship with cultures. Based on the arguments of D. Cohen (2002), we suggest that a limited number of stable patterns of relationships may exist. For example, in addition to the two prototypic

patterns described above, there is probably an additional pattern in which kinship relationships are so strong and extensive that limited resources exist to devote to relationships with non-kin (Bell & Coleman, 1999). Gaskins (2004) argues that the Yucatec Maya of Mexico have limited involvement with friends and instead confine their social interactions to members of their extended families. Using an inductive approach, researchers could begin to explore the relation between these prototypical types of friendships in relation to other features of the culture and to other relationship systems. Unfortunately, this task is difficult because of the absence of systematic research by anthropologists on friendship (Bell & Coleman, 1999).

Methodology

Enormous methodological problems confront investigators attempting to conduct research exploring culture and friendship. In this final section, we will outline three major methodological issues that are relevant to the study of friendship. These include: (1) the need to use multimethod and multiagent measures, (2) the need to address the issues of social class, and (3) the importance of integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Multiple-method and multi-agent assessment

We argue that it is important to use multiple methods and multiple sources of information in conducting cross-cultural research. Patterson and his colleagues (e.g., Patterson & Bank, 1986) argue that few, if any, measures of social behaviour are free of error associated with bias from either measurement type or agent (Dishion, French, & Patterson, 1995). This problem, ubiquitous in single-culture studies, is magnified in cross-cultural studies that introduce more serious threats to measurement accuracy and equivalence (Vijver & Leung, 1997). The search for a single unbiased measure that can be used across cultures is likely to be futile. To the extent that convergence across different measures and across different reporting agents exist, we can have increased confidence in our findings.

The complex problems of measurement in cross-cultural research may lead to a "Catch 22" problem. It is assumed that one cannot measure variables within a culture without fully understanding the meaning of that measurement. At the same time, one cannot understand a culture without conducting research studies. The notion of "bootstrapping", initially described by Meehl (1954) in the context of construct validation, may provide a useful approach to address this problem. This involves the iterative process of developing, empirically validating, and refining measures. Thus, instead of viewing measurement refinement as a precondition for research, measurement development and exploration of behaviour within a culture can proceed simultaneously (French, Setiono, & Eddy, 1999).

We are sceptical of the value of relying solely on questionnaire measures obtained from a single source for several reasons. First, comparisons of rating scales invariably involve issues of response biases that may vary across cultures (e.g., C. Chen et al., 1995). These effects can be quite large (Smith, 2001), and we have seen evidence of these effects in the two studies presented in this paper. Second, there are

concerns about the extent to which scores have the same meaning across cultures. This is most dramatically illustrated by the work of Weisz, Chaiyasit, Weiss, Eastman, and Jackson (1995), who found that Thai children were rated higher than US children by teachers, whereas direct observations revealed that US children, in fact, exhibited higher rates of classroom problem behaviour than Thai children.

Increased efforts to develop multimethod and multiagent measurements of friendship are needed. One useful approach would be to assess structural features of friendship (i.e., Who are youth spending time with? What they are doing? How much time are they spending together?) using such methods as diaries and experience sampling methods (e.g., Larson & Verma, 1999; Sandstrom & Cillessen, 2003). There are large differences across cultures in the amount of time that youth spend with peers (Brown, Larson, & Saraswathi, 2002; Larson & Verma, 1999) and these patterns undoubtedly have an effect on friendship. It is also important to include observations of behaviour with friends (Corsaro, in press).

It is also important to supplement cross-cultural comparisons with assessment of within-culture variation. For example, the relative ranking of instrumental aid, enhancement of worth, and intimate disclosure were computed separately for US and Indonesian children and adolescents in Study One. Whereas instrumental aid was the highest rated quality for Indonesian youth, enhancement of worth was the highest rated quality for US youth. These analyses provide information about the relative importance of these qualities within cultures.

Other within-culture comparisons may involve assessing the extent to which the correlates of social competence are similar across cultures, an approach that follows from the arguments of Ogbu (1981). An example of this strategy comes from the work of X. Chen, Rubin, and Lee (1995), who found that among Chinese children, shyness/sensitivity was correlated positively with social competence whereas for Canadian children a negative correlation for these qualities emerged.

Social class

Comparisons involving persons from countries as different as the United States and Indonesia invariably introduce problems of determining whether obtained differences are attributable to culture or to differences in social class. This is a difficult problem to address, and no entirely satisfactory solution exists. It is impossible to obtain comparable samples in countries as different as the US and Indonesia because selection of participants who are equivalent on one dimension (e.g., income, education, economic prestige) invariably produces gross inequalities on other dimensions. At the same time, it is necessary to address the issue because of evidence of social class differences in socialisation patterns in both the United States (e.g., McLoyd, 1998) and Indonesia (Zevalkink, 1997), evidence of social class differences in individualism and collectivism in Indonesia (Marshall, 1997), and findings that reasoning about friendship varies by social class (Selman, 1980).

In our research, we have selected samples from schools serving middle-class populations within both Indonesia and the United States. Although middle-class Indonesians typically have lower income and lower levels of education than those in the US middle class, they share a number of features. Their children typically attend school, complete high school and

frequently complete college. Parents are typically employed in business or professional occupations similar to those of their US counterparts, and they have access to economic resources, e.g., houses, cars, etc., that are similar across cultures.

Another approach to assessing the SES to friendship was used by Bukowski and his colleagues (Mayman, 2004). They selected two populations within Canada and Columbia that differed in SES, thus making it possible to determine the percentage of variance attributable to this variable.

Integration of quantitative and qualitative information

The approach that we have used to understand friendship and culture relies upon collecting quantitative information and making explicit comparisons across cultures. At the same time, however, we are very sceptical of cross-cultural work in which questionnaires or other measures are given to participants from different countries and the results interpreted without reference to the context of that culture, a process identified in the cross-cultural literature as “imposed etic” (Berry, 1989).

We have attempted to provide participants with the opportunity to describe social phenomena, e.g., friendships or conflicts, in their own words. Thus, we are comfortable using questionnaire and structured scoring of interviews only because our prior analysis of open-ended descriptions of friendships revealed the appropriateness of the categories that we used. Our recent work, in which children described the conflicts that they experience with peers (French, Pidada, Denoma, Lawton, & McDonald, in press), illustrates the value of this approach. Evaluation of the descriptions of conflicts provided by Indonesian children revealed that they frequently adopted an approach of disengagement from the person with whom they were having a conflict, engaging in what they described as “acting enemies”. This behaviour was different from “disengagement from the conflict”, a behaviour that was more prominent in descriptions provided by US children. Had we relied only on questionnaire measures and structured coding systems, we would have missed seeing important cultural differences in the manner in which children addressed conflict with peers.

Much more work, however, needs to be done integrating qualitative and quantitative information on culture and friendship. One useful approach might be to attempt to understand how people in different cultures understand friendship, perhaps using some of the tools developed by communication researchers (e.g., Fitch, 1998; Maeda & Ritchie, 2003).

Conclusion

In this paper, we have provided an overview of some of our findings from the study of friendships of Indonesian and US youth, along with some of the issues that we have faced. We are enthusiastic about the need to study friendships in different cultures, an area of research that has been seriously ignored in both the developmental and anthropological literature.

Understanding friendships may be particularly important as a window to explore values and beliefs about relationships within cultures. It seems paradoxical that, given the dominance of the models of individualism and collectivism, and the fact

that these seem to be so clearly relevant to social relationships, so little research has actually focused on friendship.

Unfortunately, the study of culture and friendship has been made difficult by the limited study of friendships and of children’s behaviour outside of the family context by anthropologists. Thus, research on this issue, particularly in understudied regions such as Africa, the Middle East, and South America, is needed. Such study is made difficult by the inadequacies of theories to explain cultural variation in friendship. Hopefully researchers will begin to collect the type of data, in part by addressing some of the methodological issues discussed above, that will make it possible to develop such a theory.

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