MIKAILALSYS
Journal of Multidisciplinary Sciences

e-ISSN : 2987-2286
p-ISSN : 2987-3924

Index: Harvard, Boston, Sydney, Copernicus, Sinta 4, Scilit, Semantic, Google, etc

https://doi.org/10.58578/mikailalsys.v4i3.11903

The Role of Friendship Quality in the Mental Well-Being of University Students During Thesis Completion

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Article Info:

Submitted:	Revised:	Accepted:	Published:
Jul 13, 2026	Aug 10, 2026	Aug 22, 2026	Aug 27, 2026

Abstract

Friendship quality has received growing attention as a social factor associated with well-being; however, its relationship with mental well-being among university students during thesis completion remains insufficiently examined. This study investigated the relationship between friendship quality and mental well-being among final-year university students completing their undergraduate theses. A quantitative, non-experimental survey design was employed, involving 389 students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using the McGill Friendship Questionnaire–Friend's Functions and the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale and analyzed using Spearman's rank-order correlation. The results revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between friendship quality and mental well-being (r_s = .637, p < .001). Friendship quality was predominantly high among participants (90.23%), while 55.01% reported high mental well-being. These findings identify friendship as an important relational resource for students navigating the academic demands of thesis completion and extend understanding of the social factors associated with mental well-being during this critical academic period. Universities should therefore strengthen peer-support networks and provide

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collaborative academic spaces that enable students to remain socially connected while completing their theses. Future longitudinal research should examine this relationship over time and incorporate additional psychological and academic factors.

Keywords: Friendship Quality; Mental Well-Being; Peer Relationships; Thesis Completion; University Students

INTRODUCTION

University students encounter a period of life marked by academic expectations, growing independence, changing social roles, and preparation for future careers. Many of them are also navigating *emerging adulthood*, a developmental phase in which decisions concerning education, relationships, identity, and occupational direction become increasingly consequential (Moesarofah, 2021; Nice & Joseph, 2023). These developmental demands often coexist with substantial academic pressure. Evidence from higher education settings has consistently shown that university students are vulnerable to psychological distress when academic demands exceed their perceived capacity to cope, particularly when pressures accumulate over a prolonged period (Pascoe et al., 2020; Sharp & Theiler, 2018). A recent systematic review further indicates that students' well-being is closely connected to the social resources available to them, suggesting that supportive relationships may serve as an important psychological resource during demanding periods of university life (Ruihua et al., 2025). The issue of student mental well-being therefore extends beyond individual coping and needs to be understood within the academic and interpersonal environments in which students live.

Thesis completion represents one of the most demanding stages of undergraduate education because students are expected to work independently while managing research procedures, academic supervision, deadlines, revisions, and expectations surrounding graduation. Indonesian studies have repeatedly documented psychological strain among students completing their theses. Students may experience stress when encountering obstacles throughout the thesis process, especially when academic demands are accompanied by uncertainty and difficulties in managing emotional responses (Septyari et al., 2022). Research at Universitas Sam Ratulangi similarly identified considerable levels of stress among thesis-writing students (Rahmawati et al., 2020). Comparable concerns have been

documented among final-year students in Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Papua, where academic workload, emotional regulation, motivation, self-efficacy, and difficulties associated with completing a final project were related to students' experiences of academic stress (Kadir et al., 2024; Oktaviona et al., 2023; Sagita & Rhamadona, 2021). These findings suggest that psychological pressure during thesis completion is not confined to a particular university or geographical area, but reflects a broader concern within Indonesian higher education.

Mental well-being becomes particularly important under these circumstances because completing a thesis requires more than academic competence. Students also need sufficient emotional stability, psychological resources, and a sense of connection that allow them to remain engaged with a lengthy and sometimes uncertain process. Mental well-being refers to positive psychological functioning rather than merely the absence of psychological problems. The Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale was developed from this positive perspective by incorporating aspects of positive affect, satisfying interpersonal relationships, and psychological functioning (Tennant et al., 2007). Ryff (2014) similarly emphasizes that well-being involves meaningful living, personal growth, self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, and the ability to manage one's environment. Viewed from this perspective, a student may experience difficulties during thesis completion while still maintaining psychological resources that enable persistence, hope, meaningful engagement, and healthy relationships with others. Protecting mental well-being is consequently relevant not only to students' emotional condition but also to their capacity to navigate the completion of their studies in a healthy and sustainable manner.

Friendship relationships constitute one of the social resources that may help students maintain such psychological functioning. Friendship quality cannot be understood simply from the number of friends a student has or the frequency of social interaction. Mendelson & Aboud (1999) conceptualize friendship quality through relational functions that include companionship, help, intimacy, reliable alliance, emotional security, and self-validation. A high-quality friendship therefore provides a relational space in which individuals can feel heard, accepted, valued, and supported. Such qualities become particularly meaningful during thesis completion, when students may need someone with whom they can discuss academic difficulties, share disappointment after revisions, exchange practical information, or simply express emotional exhaustion without fear of judgment. Demir & Özdemir (2010) found that friendship contributes to happiness partly through the satisfaction of psychological

needs, indicating that the benefits of friendship arise not merely from social contact but from the quality of experience embedded in that relationship.

Empirical evidence has increasingly demonstrated the relevance of friendship quality to well-being. A systematic review by Alsarrani et al. (2022) found consistent associations between friendship quality and various dimensions of subjective well-being, while poorer friendship experiences were linked to less favorable psychosocial outcomes. Research on adult friendship likewise shows that meaningful and supportive friendships are associated with positive well-being across adulthood (Pezirkianidis et al., 2023). Longitudinal evidence adds an important perspective to this relationship. Langheit & Poulin (2024) found that dimensions of best-friendship quality were associated with indicators such as self-esteem and loneliness from early emerging adulthood into later adulthood. These findings suggest that friendship quality should not be treated as a peripheral aspect of student life. For university students who are simultaneously managing developmental transitions and demanding academic responsibilities, the emotional climate created by close friendships may shape how they experience and respond to pressure.

Indonesian research provides further evidence that peer relationships matter during thesis completion, although much of this literature has approached the issue through the concept of social support. Safitri & Rusli (2023) reported that peer support was associated with the psychological well-being of students completing their theses, indicating that students who perceive stronger support from peers tend to demonstrate more favorable psychological conditions. Bastian et al. (2021) similarly found an association between peer social support and stress among nursing students working on their theses. The social dimension of thesis completion is also visible in the experience of loneliness. Herianda et al. (2021) reported that students who were only enrolled in thesis-related coursework experienced changes in social interaction, including reduced opportunities to meet friends, particularly when peers had graduated earlier or had begun pursuing different activities. Thesis completion can therefore create a paradoxical situation: students may need emotional companionship at precisely the time when their ordinary patterns of peer interaction begin to diminish.

Existing studies establish the importance of social relationships, yet they also reveal a more specific question that has not been sufficiently addressed. Research involving thesis-writing students in Indonesia has predominantly examined peer social support in relation to stress or psychological well-being (Bastian et al., 2021; Safitri & Rusli, 2023), while other

studies have highlighted stress and social isolation during thesis completion (Septyari et al., 2022). International studies on friendship quality, by contrast, have commonly examined broader outcomes such as subjective well-being, happiness, self-esteem, or loneliness across adolescent and emerging-adult populations (Alsarrani et al., 2022; Demir & Özdemir, 2010; Langheit & Poulin, 2024). This distinction is meaningful because receiving social support does not necessarily capture the broader relational qualities of friendship. A student may receive occasional help from peers while still lacking intimacy, emotional security, mutual trust, or a reliable sense of companionship. The literature reviewed for the present study therefore leaves room for a more focused examination of whether the overall quality of friendship is related to positive mental functioning among university students facing the specific demands of thesis completion.

The proposed focus offers a distinct contribution by positioning friendship quality as a multidimensional interpersonal experience rather than treating friendship only as a source of instrumental or emotional assistance. The relational dimensions described by Mendelson & Aboud (1999) provide a theoretical basis for understanding how friendship may offer companionship, validation, security, and dependable support during academically stressful periods. Mental well-being, as conceptualized through positive affect and psychological functioning by Tennant et al. (2007) , provides a complementary perspective by shifting attention away from psychological problems alone toward students' capacity to function positively while confronting academic challenges. Connecting these two perspectives allows the thesis-writing period to be examined not merely as a source of stress but as a social and psychological experience in which the quality of close relationships may help students retain a sense of emotional balance, connection, competence, and meaning. Such an approach extends previous studies that have concentrated primarily on stress reduction or general peer support and places greater emphasis on the relational quality underlying students' everyday experiences of support.

This study focuses on university students who are completing their undergraduate theses, a group whose academic responsibilities coincide with important developmental and social transitions. The study aims to examine the role of friendship quality in the mental well-being of university students during thesis completion. More specifically, it seeks to understand whether the quality of students' friendships is associated with their ability to maintain positive mental functioning while managing the academic, emotional, and interpersonal demands of completing a thesis. The findings are expected to provide a more

context-sensitive understanding of student well-being by recognizing that successful thesis completion is shaped not only by academic ability and individual resilience, but also by the quality of human relationships that accompany students through one of the most demanding stages of their undergraduate education.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental approach to examine friendship quality and mental well-being among university students who were completing their undergraduate theses. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the study measured both variables using standardized instruments and analyzed the resulting numerical data statistically to test the proposed hypothesis. Sugiyono (2019) explains that quantitative research is used to investigate a defined population or sample through structured research instruments and statistical analysis. The study applied a questionnaire-based survey design without manipulating participants' conditions, allowing friendship quality as the independent variable and mental well-being as the dependent variable to be examined within students' actual experiences of thesis completion. This approach differs from studies primarily concerned with instrument development or psychometric validation, as the present study applied previously validated measures to a specific population facing a demanding stage of university life.

The population consisted of active undergraduate students who were working on their theses. Participants were selected using *purposive sampling*, which enables researchers to recruit individuals who meet characteristics relevant to the purpose of the study (Sugiyono, 2019). Eligible participants were active bachelor's-degree students aged 18–25 years who were currently undertaking or writing their theses, while students on academic leave and those who had already passed their thesis defense were excluded. The minimum sample size was calculated using the Lemeshow formula with a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, and an estimated population proportion of 0.50, resulting in a minimum requirement of 385 participants. Data were collected electronically through Google Forms using two self-report instruments. Mental well-being was assessed using the 14-item *Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale* (WEMWBS) developed by Tennant et al. (2007) and modified from the Indonesian version used by Ramadhana (2023). The scale measures *positive affect, positive functioning,* and *interpersonal relationships*, with responses rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Higher total scores indicate better mental well-being.

Friendship quality was measured using the 30-item *McGill Friendship Questionnaire–Friend's Functions* (MFQ-FF), originally developed by Mendelson and Aboud (1999) and modified from the Indonesian version used by Putri and Muttaqin (2022). The instrument encompasses six relational functions: *companionship, help, intimacy, reliable alliance, self-validation,* and *emotional security*. All items are positively worded and scored from 0 (*never*) to 8 (*always*), with higher scores reflecting stronger friendship quality.

The instruments had demonstrated adequate psychometric properties before their use in the present study. The Indonesian WEMWBS showed satisfactory construct validity, with factor loadings ranging from 0.488 to 0.770, a Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin value of 0.918, a significant Bartlett's test ($p < .001$), and a significant correlation with the Student Resilience Survey ($r = .642$, $p < .001$) (Ramadhana, 2023). Its internal consistency was also strong, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .90. The Indonesian MFQ-FF had previously undergone *forward translation, review,* and *back translation* procedures to preserve conceptual and cultural equivalence and demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .960 (Putri & Muttaqin, 2022). The selection of both instruments was further supported by their previous use across university and Indonesian contexts (Fung, 2019; Ramadhana, 2023; Wicaksono et al., 2021). Data collection began after eligible participants had indicated their willingness to participate and met the predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Responses were subsequently scored according to the scoring procedures of each instrument, and statistical analysis for hypothesis testing was conducted using SPSS for Windows.

RESULTS

1. Participant Characteristics

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	153	39.33
	Female	236	60.67
Age	21 years	10	2.57
	22 years	175	44.99
	23 years	178	45.76
	24 years	25	6.43
	25 years	1	0.26
Total		389	100.00

A total of 389 final-year undergraduate students who were completing their theses participated in the study. As presented in Table 1, 236 participants (60.67%) were female and

153 (39.33%) were male. Participants ranged from 21 to 25 years of age. Most were 23 years old (45.76%), followed closely by those aged 22 years (44.99%). Taken together, students aged 22–23 years accounted for 90.75% of the sample. The remaining participants were aged 24 years (6.43%), 21 years (2.57%), and 25 years (0.26%). These characteristics indicate that the sample was largely composed of students in the early-adulthood period who were approaching the completion of their undergraduate studies.

2. Descriptive Results for Friendship Quality and Mental Well-Being

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Categorization of the Main Variables

Variable	Empirical Min	Empirical Max	Mean	SD	Low n (%)	Moderate n (%)	High n (%)
Friendship Quality	24	232	185.43	25.69	5 (1.29)	33 (8.48)	351 (90.23)
Mental Well-Being	20	70	57.25	8.10	9 (2.31)	166 (42.67)	214 (55.01)

The descriptive analysis showed relatively favorable scores for both variables. As shown in Table 2, friendship quality scores ranged from 24 to 232, with an empirical mean of 185.43 (*SD* = 25.69). This empirical mean was substantially higher than the hypothetical mean of 120 used in the study, indicating that friendship quality among participants generally tended to be high. Mental well-being scores ranged from 20 to 70, with an empirical mean of 57.25 (*SD* = 8.10), which was also higher than the hypothetical mean of 45. The overall pattern therefore indicates that most participants reported relatively positive friendship experiences alongside relatively favorable mental well-being while working on their theses.

The categorization results reinforced this pattern. A large majority of participants, 351 students (90.23%), were classified as having high friendship quality. Only 33 participants (8.48%) were in the moderate category and five (1.29%) were in the low category. Mental well-being showed a somewhat more varied distribution. A total of 214 participants (55.01%) were classified in the high category, while 166 (42.67%) were in the moderate category and nine (2.31%) were in the low category. Thus, although positive friendship quality was highly prevalent across the sample, mental well-being displayed greater variation among students.

3. Friendship Quality Across Its Dimensions

Friendship quality was further examined through six dimensions: *companionship, help, intimacy, reliable alliance, self-validation,* and *emotional security*. The descriptive findings for each

dimension are summarized in Table 3, Descriptive Results for the Dimensions of Friendship Quality.

Companionship showed the highest empirical mean (*M* = 32.95, *SD* = 4.98). A total of 361 participants (92.80%) were classified in the high category, while 24 (6.17%) were in the moderate category and four (1.03%) were in the low category. This result indicates that shared activities and the experience of having friends available for companionship were prominent features of participants' friendship experiences.

Reliable alliance had the second-highest mean (*M* = 32.83, *SD* = 5.24), with 356 participants (91.52%) classified in the high category. Only 27 participants (6.94%) were in the moderate category and six (1.54%) were in the low category. The distribution suggests that most participants perceived their friends as people who could be relied upon when support was needed.

The *help* dimension also produced a relatively high score (*M* = 32.59, *SD* = 5.10). Most participants, 348 (89.46%), were classified in the high category, whereas 36 (9.25%) were moderate and five (1.29%) were low. This pattern reflects the presence of assistance and support within participants' friendships.

Emotional security yielded a mean of 31.84 (*SD* = 5.53), with 341 participants (87.66%) in the high category. Another 43 participants (11.05%) were classified as moderate and five (1.29%) as low. These findings indicate that most respondents experienced their friendships as relationships that provided a sense of emotional safety.

Self-validation had an empirical mean of 31.48 (*SD* = 5.35). A total of 332 participants (85.35%) were in the high category, 50 (12.85%) were in the moderate category, and seven (1.80%) were in the low category. This result shows that recognition, acceptance, and positive affirmation from friends were commonly experienced by participants.

Intimacy recorded the lowest mean among the friendship-quality dimensions (*M* = 30.04, *SD* = 6.87). Although most participants remained in the high category (76.61%), the proportion in the moderate category reached 20.05%, which was larger than for the other dimensions. A further 3.34% were classified in the low category. Thus, emotional closeness and openness appeared to vary more widely among participants than companionship, reliability, or help.

Table 3. Descriptive Results for the Dimensions of Friendship Quality

Dimension	Mean	SD	Low n (%)	Moderate n (%)	High n (%)
Companionship	32.95	4.98	4 (1.03)	24 (6.17)	361 (92.80)
Help	32.59	5.10	5 (1.29)	36 (9.25)	348 (89.46)
Intimacy	30.04	6.87	13 (3.34)	78 (20.05)	298 (76.61)
Reliable Alliance	32.83	5.24	6 (1.54)	27 (6.94)	356 (91.52)
Self-Validation	31.48	5.35	7 (1.80)	50 (12.85)	332 (85.35)
Emotional Security	31.84	5.53	5 (1.29)	43 (11.05)	341 (87.66)

Overall, Table 3 shows that all six dimensions were dominated by the high category. *Companionship* had the highest mean and the largest proportion of participants in the high category, whereas *intimacy* showed the lowest mean and the greatest proportion of participants in the moderate and low categories. The results suggest that being together, being available, and being dependable were particularly strong characteristics of participants' friendships, while deeper emotional disclosure and intimacy were comparatively more varied.

4. Mental Well-Being Across Its Dimensions

Mental well-being was assessed through three dimensions: *positive affect, positive functioning,* and *interpersonal relationships*. The results are presented in Table 4, Descriptive Results for the Dimensions of Mental Well-Being.

The *positive affect* dimension produced an empirical mean of 16.38 (*SD* = 2.64). Most participants, 311 (79.95%), were classified in the high category, while 69 (17.74%) were in the moderate category and nine (2.31%) were in the low category. This distribution indicates that many participants continued to experience positive emotional states while working on their theses.

Positive functioning had the largest raw mean because it contained more items than the other mental well-being dimensions, with an empirical mean of 28.88 (*SD* = 4.30). Its categorical pattern, however, differed markedly from that of positive affect. Most participants, 280 (71.98%), were classified in the moderate category. Only 99 participants (25.45%) were in the high category, while 10 (2.57%) were classified as low. This result indicates that positive psychological functioning showed greater challenge or variability among students than their positive emotional experiences.

The *interpersonal relationships* dimension had an empirical mean of 7.83 (*SD* = 1.62). A total of 258 participants (66.32%) were in the high category, 126 (32.39%) were in the

moderate category, and five (1.29%) were in the low category. Most students therefore reported relatively favorable interpersonal relationships during thesis completion.

Table 4. Descriptive Results for the Dimensions of Mental Well-Being

Dimension	Mean	SD	Low n (%)	Moderate n (%)	High n (%)
Positive Affect	16.38	2.64	9 (2.31)	69 (17.74)	311 (79.95)
Positive Functioning	28.88	4.30	10 (2.57)	280 (71.98)	99 (25.45)
Interpersonal Relationships	7.83	1.62	5 (1.29)	126 (32.39)	258 (66.32)

As shown in Table 4, positive affect was predominantly high, and interpersonal relationships were also favorable for most participants. Positive functioning displayed a different pattern, with more than two-thirds of participants falling within the moderate category. These findings demonstrate that favorable mental well-being did not appear uniformly across all dimensions. Students could continue to experience positive emotions and supportive relationships while showing more moderate levels of psychological functioning as they managed the demands associated with completing their theses.

5. Assumption Testing

Statistical assumptions were examined before hypothesis testing. The results are summarized in Table 5, Results of Assumption Testing. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test produced significance values below .001 for both friendship quality and mental well-being. Because these values were below the .05 criterion, both variables were considered non-normally distributed.

The linearity test also revealed a significant *deviation from linearity*, with $F = 2.948$ and $p < .001$. The statistically significant deviation indicated that the relationship between friendship quality and mental well-being did not satisfy the linearity assumption. Based on these results, the hypothesis was tested using the non-parametric Spearman's rho correlation.

Table 5. Results of Assumption Testing

Statistical Test	Variable/Relationship	Statistic	p	Interpretation
Kolmogorov–Smirnov	Friendship Quality	—	< .001	Non-normal distribution
Kolmogorov–Smirnov	Mental Well-Being	—	< .001	Non-normal distribution
Deviation from Linearity	Friendship Quality and Mental Well-Being	F = 2.948	< .001	Significant deviation from linearity

Table 5 therefore provides the statistical basis for using a non-parametric correlation procedure. The failure to meet the normality assumption, together with the significant

deviation from linearity reported in the study, supported the use of Spearman's rho for hypothesis testing.

6. Relationship Between Friendship Quality and Mental Well-Being

The principal analysis examined whether friendship quality was significantly associated with mental well-being among final-year students completing their theses. The findings are presented in Table 6, Spearman's Rho Correlation Between Friendship Quality and Mental Well-Being.

Spearman's rho analysis produced a positive correlation coefficient of ($r_s = .637$), with $p < .001$, based on all 389 participants. The positive direction of the coefficient indicates that higher friendship-quality scores tended to occur alongside higher mental well-being scores. Conversely, lower friendship-quality scores tended to be accompanied by lower mental well-being scores.

The magnitude of ($r_s = .637$) indicates a strong positive association between the two variables. The probability value below .001 shows that the observed relationship was statistically significant. The hypothesis proposing a positive and significant relationship between friendship quality and mental well-being among final-year university students completing their theses was therefore supported.

Table 6. Spearman's Rho Correlation Between Friendship Quality and Mental Well-Being

Relationship	rs	p	N	Result
Friendship Quality and Mental Well-Being	.637	< .001	389	Positive and statistically significant

As presented in Table 6, friendship quality was positively and significantly associated with mental well-being. Students who experienced greater companionship, assistance, reliability, validation, emotional security, and intimacy within their friendships tended to report more favorable overall mental well-being while completing their theses. The finding establishes a meaningful statistical association between the two constructs within the sample. Because the study employed a correlational design, however, the result should be interpreted as an association rather than evidence that friendship quality directly causes changes in mental well-being.

7. Summary of the Results

The empirical findings reveal three main patterns. First, friendship quality was generally favorable among the participants, with 90.23% classified in the high category. *Companionship* emerged as the most prominent friendship dimension, followed closely by

reliable alliance and *help*, while *intimacy* showed comparatively greater variation. Second, mental well-being was predominantly moderate to high: 55.01% of participants were classified as high and 42.67% as moderate. Positive affect and interpersonal relationships were particularly favorable, whereas positive functioning was most frequently found at a moderate level. Third, and most importantly, friendship quality demonstrated a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship with mental well-being ((r_s=.637), $p < .001$). The findings therefore support the proposed association between the quality of students' friendships and their mental well-being during the demanding period of thesis completion.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationship between friendship quality and mental well-being among final-year university students completing their undergraduate theses. The main finding revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant association between the two variables ($r_s = .637$, $p < .001$). Students who reported higher-quality friendships also tended to report better mental well-being during thesis completion. This finding supports the proposed hypothesis and highlights the relevance of close interpersonal relationships during a period characterized by academic demands, uncertainty, repeated revision, and concerns about study completion. Friendship in this context appears to represent more than ordinary social contact. Relationships marked by companionship, reliability, assistance, emotional security, validation, and intimacy may provide students with a social environment in which academic pressure can be experienced with a greater sense of connection and psychological support.

The finding is consistent with previous evidence linking friendship quality with various dimensions of well-being. Alsarrani et al. (2022), through a systematic review, reported that higher friendship quality was associated with more favorable indicators of subjective well-being, including positive mood, happiness, life satisfaction, and self-esteem. Similar findings were reported by Farida & Tjiptorini (2021), who found that friendship quality contributed positively to subjective well-being in early adulthood. Chandra & Harahap (2023) likewise identified a significant positive relationship between friendship quality and happiness among university students. These consistencies suggest that supportive friendships may remain psychologically meaningful across different indicators of well-being. The present study extends this evidence by locating the relationship specifically within the

experience of thesis completion, when students are likely to encounter a combination of academic, emotional, and social pressures.

Longitudinal evidence also helps explain why high-quality friendships may be related to more favorable psychological conditions. Luijten et al. (2023) found that friendship quality was associated with subsequent well-being and that self-esteem contributed to explaining this relationship. A supportive friendship can provide recognition, reassurance, and a sense of being valued, all of which may strengthen how individuals perceive themselves when they encounter difficulties. Demir & Özdemir (2010) similarly showed that friendship contributes to happiness partly through the satisfaction of psychological needs. Applied to thesis-writing students, encouragement from trusted friends may not remove deadlines, methodological difficulties, or supervisory demands, but it may help students face these challenges without experiencing them entirely in isolation. The value of friendship may therefore lie both in the assistance friends provide and in the emotional meaning attached to feeling accompanied, accepted, and understood.

The descriptive findings strengthen this interpretation. Friendship quality was classified as high for 90.23% of participants, and each friendship dimension was predominantly represented in the high category. *Companionship* showed the largest proportion of participants in the high category (92.80%), followed by *reliable alliance* (91.52%) and *help* (89.46%). This pattern suggests that students particularly valued having friends who were present, available, and dependable. Such relational characteristics may become especially meaningful during thesis completion, when students often need opportunities to exchange information, discuss academic difficulties, seek practical assistance, or simply spend time with others outside the pressures of academic work. Peer support has previously been associated with resilience and more adaptive responses among students completing their theses (Andriyanto et al., 2022; Ningsih & Astuti, 2024). Ruihua et al. (2025) further demonstrated through a systematic review that social support is closely related to university students' well-being and mental health. The present findings add nuance to this literature by suggesting that the perceived quality of the friendship itself, rather than the mere availability of social contact, deserves attention.

Emotional security, self-validation, and *intimacy* provide further insight into the relational processes that may accompany student well-being. Most participants reported high emotional security (87.66%) and self-validation (85.35%), indicating that many students

experienced their friendships as emotionally safe and affirming. Feeling able to express frustration, uncertainty, or exhaustion without fearing rejection may be particularly valuable when students experience setbacks during thesis completion. Validation from friends may also help students maintain a more balanced understanding of their abilities when academic difficulties temporarily undermine confidence. *Intimacy* had the lowest proportion in the high category among the friendship dimensions (76.61%), while 20.05% of participants were classified as moderate. This difference suggests that students may find it relatively easier to maintain companionship, practical help, and dependable relationships than to establish deeper emotional openness. The distinction is important because friendship quality is multidimensional; strong companionship does not necessarily imply the same degree of emotional disclosure or intimacy.

The pattern observed in mental well-being was equally informative. Although 55.01% of participants were classified as having high overall mental well-being, another 42.67% remained in the moderate category. *Positive affect* was predominantly high (79.95%), and *interpersonal relationships* were also largely high (66.32%). *Positive functioning*, however, was dominated by the moderate category (71.98%). This finding indicates that maintaining positive emotions and satisfactory relationships does not necessarily mean that students experience equally strong psychological functioning across all areas of life. Thesis completion may still challenge concentration, confidence, daily functioning, goal-directed behavior, or the ability to manage competing academic responsibilities. Research on final-year students has repeatedly shown that thesis preparation can be accompanied by meaningful academic stress (Kadir et al., 2024; Septyari et al., 2022; Telaumbanua & Brahmana, 2025). Friendship may therefore operate as an important psychological resource without completely eliminating the demands inherent in the thesis process.

This distinction offers an important contribution to the interpretation of the present findings. Previous studies involving thesis-writing students have frequently emphasized peer social support in relation to stress, resilience, or psychological well-being. Bastian et al. (2021), for example, found that peer social support was related to stress among students completing their theses, while Safitri & Rusli (2023) reported an association between peer support and psychological well-being. The present study approaches the social dimension from the broader construct of friendship quality. Friendship quality encompasses not only whether support is received, but also whether the relationship provides companionship, emotional security, intimacy, reliable alliance, assistance, and self-validation. The findings

therefore suggest that understanding students' mental well-being may require attention not only to the amount of support available to them but also to the relational qualities through which that support is experienced.

Theoretically, the results reinforce the view that mental well-being is embedded in interpersonal as well as individual processes. Positive mental functioning cannot be separated entirely from the relationships through which individuals experience belonging, acceptance, emotional safety, and recognition. Friendship quality may provide a relational context that supports positive affect, interpersonal functioning, and students' capacity to continue engaging with difficult academic tasks. Practically, these findings suggest that universities should regard peer relationships as part of the broader ecology of student well-being. Academic support for thesis-writing students may be strengthened through peer mentoring, thesis-writing groups, structured peer discussion sessions, or supportive student communities that enable students to share both academic difficulties and emotional experiences. Such initiatives should not replace professional psychological services when they are needed, but they may create everyday spaces in which students feel less isolated while progressing through the final stage of their studies.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. The correlational and cross-sectional design does not permit conclusions about causality. Although friendship quality was strongly associated with mental well-being, the present data cannot establish whether better friendships increase mental well-being, whether students with better mental well-being are more able to maintain satisfying friendships, or whether both are shaped by other factors. The use of *purposive sampling* also limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized to all university students. Both variables were measured using self-report questionnaires, which may be influenced by participants' subjective perceptions and response tendencies. Other potentially relevant factors, including family support, supervisory relationships, academic stress, financial concerns, personality, resilience, and progress in thesis completion, were not examined simultaneously. Future research could employ longitudinal designs, probability-based sampling, or multivariate models to explore how friendship quality interacts with these variables over the course of thesis completion.

Taken together, the findings indicate that friendship quality is meaningfully associated with the mental well-being of university students completing their theses. Students who experienced greater companionship, dependable support, assistance, emotional security,

self-validation, and intimacy within their friendships tended to report more favorable mental well-being. The strongest descriptive patterns in companionship and reliable alliance suggest that being accompanied and knowing that someone can be relied upon may be particularly meaningful during the final stage of undergraduate study. The results extend previous research on peer support and student well-being by showing that the quality of the friendship relationship itself deserves attention. Thesis completion remains an individual academic responsibility, but students do not necessarily experience it as an entirely individual journey; the quality of the relationships surrounding them may form an important part of how they sustain psychological well-being while bringing that journey to completion.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, this study concludes that friendship quality is positively and significantly associated with the mental well-being of final-year university students during thesis completion. The Spearman's rho analysis yielded a strong positive correlation ($r_s = .637$, $p < .001$) among 389 participants, indicating that students who reported higher-quality friendships also tended to experience better mental well-being. Friendship quality was predominantly high, with 351 participants (90.23%) classified in the high category, while 33 (8.48%) were in the moderate category and five (1.29%) were in the low category. All dimensions of friendship quality—*companionship, help, intimacy, reliable alliance, self-validation,* and *emotional security*—were predominantly represented at high levels, with *companionship* and *reliable alliance* emerging as particularly prominent features of the students' friendships. These findings highlight that supportive friendships during thesis completion involve not merely having friends, but experiencing relationships characterized by presence, reliability, emotional safety, mutual assistance, acceptance, and meaningful connection.

Mental well-being was also generally favorable, with 214 participants (55.01%) classified in the high category, 166 (42.67%) in the moderate category, and nine (2.31%) in the low category. *Positive affect* and *interpersonal relationships* were predominantly high, whereas *positive functioning* was more frequently found at a moderate level, suggesting that students could maintain positive emotions and supportive social relationships while still experiencing challenges in psychological functioning during the demanding process of completing a thesis. These findings underscore the importance of supportive peer relationships as part of the social environment surrounding students at the final stage of their undergraduate education. Universities may therefore consider strengthening peer-support networks, thesis-writing

communities, and collaborative academic spaces that allow students to remain socially connected while managing academic pressure. Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal designs, involve more diverse university populations, and examine additional factors such as academic stress, resilience, family support, supervisory relationships, and thesis progress to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how friendship quality and mental well-being develop throughout the thesis-completion process.

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