

Friendships Patterns and Types among Secondary School and University Level Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess friendship patterns and types between secondary school and university level students. The research employed a descriptive study design. A total of 322 (M=196, F=126) students selected via proportional stratified random sampling technique were participated in this study. Data collected through questionnaire were analyzed using chi-square, independent sample t-test, and one-way ANOVA. The chi-square result revealed that patterns of friendship by gender were significantly different between secondary school and university level students, $\chi^2 (2, N=322) = 20.68, P < .05$. The results of independent sample t-test showed that interdependent and consensus-sensitive friendship scores were statistically significant between secondary school and university level friends, but disengaged friendship score did not. The One way ANOVA results revealed that interdependent and disengaged friendship scores were statistically significant among male-male, female-female and male-female close friends at the secondary school, nevertheless, consensus-sensitive friendship score did not. Besides, at the university level, disengaged friendship score was statistically significant among male-male, female-female and male-female close friends but interdependent and consensus-sensitive friendship score did not. Based on these results, it is concluded that females' friendship patterns were dominant at secondary school while males' friendship patterns were dominant at university level. As friendships have greater impacts in one's life, stakeholders need to exert efforts to keep students' friendship strong and lay lifelong foundations by offering life skill trainings.

Key words: Friendship, pattern, type, disengaged, interdependent, consensus-sensitive

Background

Friendship exists normally throughout the stages of life (DeSousa & Cerqueira-Santos, 2012). Interactions with friends help children, adolescents as well as adults to develop social skills, cognitive, and socio-cognitive competencies (Moller & Stattin, 2001). Psychological and physical well-being are strongly related to social connections, as seen in perceived social support

(Cohen, 2004), integration in a social network (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015), and the quality of close friendships (Goswami, 2012). Thus, building and maintaining satisfactory friendships is an important indicator of mental, physical well-being and an important protective feature throughout the whole life span (Berndt, 2004).

Friendships play central role for overall development because they are the contexts within which basic skills and competencies emerge and are elaborated, especially in terms of perspective taking, empathy, and pro-social behavior (Furman & Buhrmester, 1992). However, friendships vary in character and quality that some friends have many interests in common while others are based on a single shared activity and still some friends are life long and others are fleeting (Hartup & Stevens, 1999).

As the young person moves through adolescence; as age increases the importance of intimacy with a friend increases (Israel, 2009). Because of the socialization of females often emphasizes relational skills and interpersonal understanding whereas the socialization of males often emphasizes autonomy and individuation (Kimmel, 2004), girls' friendships are deeper and more interdependent than boys (Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Moreover, girl's friendship give attention to relationships based on dyadic friendships (Lubbers et al., 2011), sharing of confidence and emotional support (Papalia, 2001). Invariably, there was no significant difference between males and females in intimate friendship (Israel, 2009).

Focusing on the friendships patterns, Hartup (1996) stipulated the dominance of same-sex friendship in late adolescence period. Similarly, Nezlek et al. (1983) indicated even if many college students have considerable opposite-sex contact, they tend to have more same than opposite-sex contacts. Contrarily, Laursen (1996) indicated that same-sex friends increase during early to middle adolescence, after which it typically declines as intimacy with other sex grows. Yet, sharing common values was an important predictor of same-sex attraction among women but shared activities (for example, music and sports preferences) were more important in determining men same-sex preferences (Hay; Hill & Stull; cited in Franzoi, 2000).

During adolescence, the friendship relationships promote social engagement, cooperation and conflict management (DeSousa & Cerqueira-Santos, 2012). Particularly, if friendships look

interdependent in type, people are cooperative, attentive, interactive, and strive to make individual and dual concerns (Shulman & Knafo, 1997).

Laursen et al. (2001) conducted a research to examine developmental trends in friendship conflict resolution and the result revealed that negotiation is common among late adolescents. In a similar vein, a research by Thomas (1996) on the morality of friendship versus the morality of individual autonomy on participants whose age was 15, 18, and 21 years revealed that younger students resolve friendship-individualism conflicts by asserting their individual rights whereas older students resolve their conflicts by setting boundaries on friendship obligation. This was asserted clearly on Shulman and Knafo (1997) findings' that most of middle adolescent friends were disengaged type whereas the majority of late adolescent friends were interdependent.

Coming to friendship types by gender, boys and girls differ in their conflict resolution experiences that girls use solution-oriented strategies while boys tend to spend more time in larger group situations and use controlling strategies with their close friends (Maccoby, 1998), females use problem solving and compromise more frequently than boys (Selthout et al., 2009). Furthermore, females were rated lower in withdrawal and higher in communication skills and support validation than males (Furman & Adler cited in Khatrine, 2000).

Moreover, as females have a greater value of relationships, they prefer smoothing, withdrawing, compromising styles, and they are typically involved in indirect-communication strategies that are directed to diffuse conflicts whereas males commonly use direct-communication strategies. When they encounter conflicts, males prefer styles such as forcing, problem solving, competing, and dominating that are directed toward a specific outcome rather than a relationship (Holt & DeVore, 2005). However, other research findings revealed no differences exist in conflict resolving experiences sex-wise (e.g., Korabik et al., 1993; Laursen et al., 2001; Iskandar cited in Thayer et al., 2008).

Albeit friendships have the purpose of encouraging affection, intimacy and trust (DeSousa & Cerqueira-Santos, 2012), even the finest friendships can have an undesirable forms (Berndt, 2002). Of course, friendships have encompassed both positive (i.e., intimacy, closeness, and emotional support) and negative (e.g., conflict, negativity, and distrust) relationship dimensions

(Furman & Buhrmester, 1992). Thus, an exclusive focus on positive qualities of supportive relationships, which typically characterize previous studies, can be misleading because problems and conflicts can occur even in supportive relationships (Berndt & Perry, 1986).

For example, in circumstances that do not allow distribution of rewards, hostility and self-interest between friends can prevail (Hartup, 1996). As a result, studying the types and patterns of friendship that exist between two close friends on the way they resolve their disagreements in relation to gender and education level is pertinent. This makes the study unique. Furthermore, whether researches were conducted or not in this topic, little attention have been given to it and most researches have emphasized friendship interactions that occur within same gender groups (Underwood, 2004), here a very obvious selection criterion is of course gender. Thus, this study is trying to fill-in the gaps by focusing on the entire friendship patterns across gender rather than focusing only on same sex friendships. Hence, all these motivate the investigator to conduct this research on the pattern and types of friendship among secondary school and university level students.

By and large, friendship types by gender, boys and girls differ in their conflict resolution experiences, for example, friendship conflict resolution changes with developmental trends, such as negotiation is common among late adolescents (Laursen et al., 2001) and middle adolescent friends were disengaged type whereas the majority of late adolescent friends were interdependent one (Shulman & Knaffo, 1997). When viewed friendship from a developmental perspective, it is expected that there are changes over the life course, in this regard, Beer and Gardner (2015) indicated the importance of friendship to the general social life in fact, differs across time and space. Moreover, relationships with friends are somewhat different between boys and girls that female friendships take face to face, focusing emotional self-disclosure, while male friendships take place side by side, focusing activities featuring common interests (Gillespie et al., 2015). As deduced from above, friendship patterns depends on the individuals orientation to gender and the way they were socialized early on, in which, whether their socialization emphasizes relational skills and interpersonal understanding or emphasizes autonomy and individuation, basically, as age increases the importance of intimacy with a friend increases. In this regard, although more research in this area is needed, the available research provides initial support for this relation. Thus, the variables in focus in this study are conceptually illustrated in Figure 1.1 below.

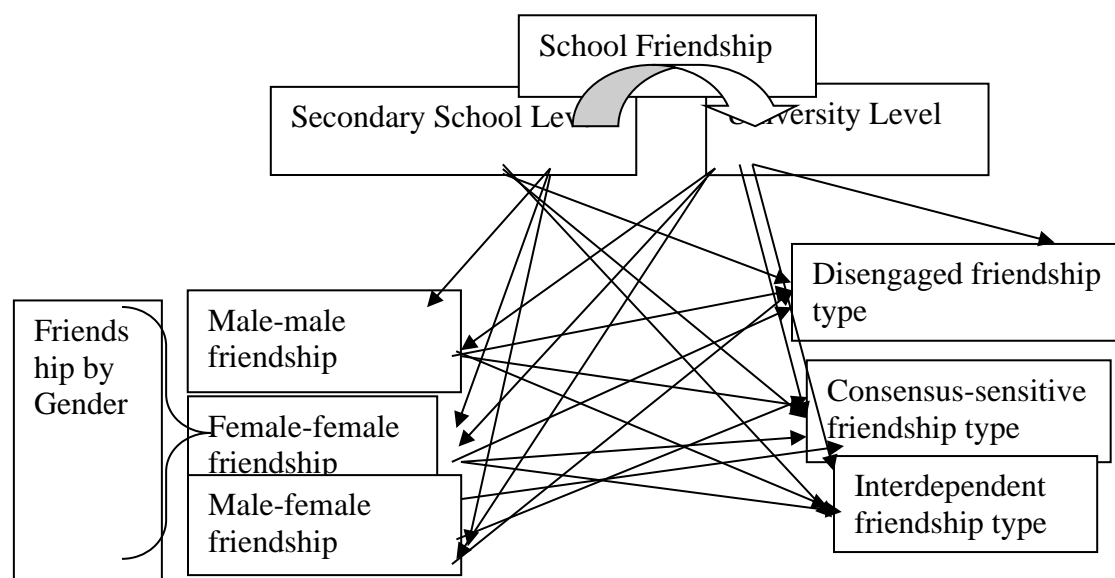


Figure 1.1: Friendship Patterns and Types Conceptual Framework

Research Questions

1. How friendship patterns by gender are statistically different between secondary school and university level students?
2. How do the three friendship types (interdependent, disengaged, and consensus-sensitive) differ significantly between secondary school and university level students?
3. How do the three friendship types significantly differ by the gender of close friends (male-male, female-female, and male-female close friends) among students at the secondary school and university level?

Method

Research Design

The study employed descriptive research design which investigates the pattern and types of friendship among secondary school and university level students. A descriptive research design was chosen because it is a very appropriate one to systematic collect information about the phenomenon under consideration.

Participants

The sample consisted of 3rd year Debre Markos University Students and 10th grade Nigus Tekelehaimanot Secondary School Students. These samples were secured over other batches (in case of university) and other grade levels (9th grade in case of secondary school) using simple random sampling technique (lottery method). Before selecting the specific participants for this study, strata was made based on sex as sex was treated as one variable in the study. Here from the strata, proportional stratified sampling technique was applied; this technique was selected over other methods as it gives the opportunity to adequately represent the subgroups in terms of the required variable, sex. Thus, it helps to avoid over and under representations of the population in the subgroups. Therefore, in each distinct stratum, the number of participants to be selected was determined by proportional method. Then after, the required number of participants was selected from each distinct stratum through simple random sampling technique using lottery method.

Regarding the selection process at the secondary school, 1st number of sections to be involved in the study was determined using simple random sampling (lottery method) and the number of participants from the selected sections, after proportion was maintained was selected randomly via lottery method. Based on this procedure, a total of 182 (87 male & 95 female) 10th grade students were selected to participate in the study. Regarding the selection process of university students, the following procedures were followed. First, colleges in the university were randomly selected using lottery method. Second, departments within colleges were chosen again randomly through the lottery method. Third, from the departments, students were chosen randomly using lottery method. Thus, a total of 182 (135 male & 47 female) 3rd year university students were selected to participate in the study.

In sum, a total of 364 (222 male & 142 female) 3rd year and 10th grade students were selected to participate in the study. Out of the 364 participants, 42 of them were not included in the study because (26 male, 16 female) students submitted the incomplete questionnaire. Thus, the study sample consisted of 322 (196 male, 126 female) participants as demonstrated in Table-1 below. The participants' age ranged from 15-22 with a mean age of 18.5.

Table 1: Relevant Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

| Participants | Female (N) | Male (N) | Total |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 10 th grade students | 86 | 75 | 161 |
| 3 rd year students | 40 | 121 | 161 |
| Total | 126 | 196 | 322 |

Measures

Relevant data were collected using self-report questionnaire, which comprised of friendship pattern questionnaire and friendship type scale. The instruments were developed based on relevant literature as no adequate standardized instruments were available in the context of what was studied here. The questionnaire had three parts. Part-1 consists of background information while part-2 consists of items that were employed to investigate friendship patterns. And part-3 pertains to items that were intended to investigate the types of friendships existed between two close friends based on the way they resolve their disagreements.

As Laursen (1996); Vennessa and Laurence (2004) indicated, conflict is a natural, inevitable, and unavoidable event occurring in any part of a relationship and it has been apparently identified in the reports of close friends. In this regard, Shulman and Knaffo (1997) identified three friendship types based on the information reported from two close friends as how they resolve a conflict when it exists between them. These are: interdependent, disengaged, and consensus-sensitive friendship types. The scales comprised of four response categories that ranged from “Not true” = 1, “Somewhat true” = 2, “True” = 3, and “Very true” = 4. The possible total score for the friendship type scale per participant ranged from 30-120. The possible total score for each friendship type subscale per participant ranged from 10-40.

Piloting

To check the validity and reliability of the instruments piloting was conducted. Data collection instruments initially were developed in English language by referring relevant literatures. Then, instruments were provided to psychology experts to check the contents' appropriateness in measuring the intended objectives. Thus, the researcher obtained feedback from the experts and critical amendments were done on the very tools accordingly. After content validity was ensured, the instruments were translated from English version to the Amharic one just to ease data

collection specifically to secondary school students. The language translation was done by two language experts. After the language translation is over, the researcher evaluated the translation by comparing the original items with the translated ones. After relevant amendments were done, the Amharic version of the instrument was administered to 50(26 male & 24 female) respondents. After the responses of the participants were collected, each questionnaire was checked. Thus, the responses of 7 (3 male, 4 female) students were excluded, hence failed to fill-in the questionnaire properly. Therefore, only the responses of 43 (23 male, 20 female) respondents were analyzed for piloting. Then, the Cronbach's alpha and inter-item total correlations were computed to see the internal consistency of items. Hence, the Cronbach's alpha value of the of the friendship pattern questionnaire was (.68) while the friendship type scale Cronbach's alpha value (.73) while its subscales had (interdependent .74, disengaged .75, & consensus-sensitive .76).

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the collected data, different statistical technique such as chi-square test, independent sample T-test, and one-way ANOVA were employed and computed using SPSS version 14.0. Chi-square test was computed to check whether friendship patterns by gender differ significantly between students at the secondary school and university level or not. Independent sample t-test was computed to see whether a statistically significant difference existed in the distribution of the three friendship types between participants at the secondary school and university level or not. One-way ANOVA was computed to see whether there existed a statistically significant difference the three friendship types across gender of close friends (male-male, female-female and male-female close friends) among participants at the secondary school and university level. Moreover, following the ANOVA analyses Tukey post hoc pair wise comparison was computed to see cell mean differences.

Results

Table -2: *Friendship Patterns by Gender between Secondary School and University Students*

| Friendship patterns | Education level | | Df | χ^2 |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|----|----------|
| | Secondary School(N) | University (N) | | |
| Male-male | 51 | 86 | 2 | 20.68* |
| Female-female | 57 | 26 | | |
| Male-female | 53 | 49 | | |
| Total | 161 | 161 | | |

*P < .05

As the chi-square test revealed in Table-2, there were significant differences in friendship patterns by gender between students at the secondary school and university level, $\chi^2 (2, N=322) = 20.68$, $P < .05$. A close examination of the data in Table-3 further revealed that female-female friendship patterns were dominant at the secondary school followed by male-female and male-male friendships. At the university level, males' friendship were dominant followed by male-female and female-female friendship patterns. Thus, from the result it is possible to infer that friendship patterns by gender were different between secondary school and university level students.

Table-3: *Independent Sample T-test for Interdependent, Disengaged and Consensus-sensitive Friendship Score by Education level*

| Dependent variables | Education level | N | Mean | SD | Df | t-value |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----|-------|------|-----|---------|
| Interdependent | Secondary | 161 | 28.29 | 5.39 | 320 | -4.09* |
| Friendship | University | 161 | 30.61 | 4.81 | | |
| Disengaged | Secondary | 161 | 25.00 | 6.18 | 320 | 1.68 |
| Friendship | University | 161 | 23.76 | 7.09 | | |
| Consensus-sensitive | Secondary | 161 | 29.52 | 5.60 | 320 | 1.99* |
| Friendship | University | 161 | 28.32 | 5.19 | | |

*P < .05

An examination of the independent sample t-test results in Table-3 revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in interdependent friendship score between close friends at the

secondary school and university level $t(320)=-4.09, 320, p<.05$). This Table depicted the mean score differences between secondary school close friends ($M=28.29$) and university level close friends ($M=30.61$). These differences between the mean score of the two groups were statistically significant. This means that close friends at the university level were more interdependent type in their friendships than those close friends at the secondary school level.

As Table-3 also displayed, no statistically significant disengaged friendship score was noted between close friends at the secondary school and university level. A close examination of the Table-4 showed differences in the mean score between close friends at the secondary school and university level, nevertheless, this slight mean difference observed between the two groups was not statistically significant $t(320) = 1.68, P > .05$).

As the independent sample t-test results in Table-3 above revealed, there were significant differences in consensus-sensitive friendship score between close friends at the secondary school and university level $t(320) = 1.99, p<.05$). The Table displayed that the mean score of close friends at the secondary school was slightly greater than those close friends at the university level. This means that close friends at the secondary school level were more consensus-sensitive type in their friendships than those close friends at the university level.

Table-4: Number of cases, Mean and Standard deviation for Dependent variables by Gender of Close Friends at Secondary School

| Dependent variables | Independent variables | N | Mean | SD |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----|-------|------|
| Interdependent | Male-male friends | 51 | 27.45 | 4.76 |
| | Female-female friends | 57 | 30.05 | 4.79 |
| | Male-female friends | 53 | 27.19 | 6.15 |
| | Total | 161 | 28.29 | 5.40 |
| Disengaged | Male-male friends | 51 | 26.84 | 6.27 |
| | Female-female friends | 57 | 22.95 | 5.28 |
| | Male-female friends | 53 | 25.43 | 6.44 |
| | Total | 161 | 25.00 | 6.18 |
| Consensus-sensitive | Male-male friends | 51 | 29.82 | 4.73 |
| | Female-female friends | 57 | 28.54 | 6.17 |
| | Male-female friends | 53 | 30.28 | 5.68 |
| | Total | 161 | 29.52 | 5.60 |

The results of descriptive statistics in Table-4 revealed that the mean score of the three groups (males' friendship, females' friendship, and male-female friendships) on each dependent variable (interdependent, disengaged and consensus-sensitive friendship score) seem different. But, this

difference alone does not confirm its statistical significance. Therefore, it was worthwhile to test the mean difference using one-way ANOVA.

Table-5: Summary of one-way ANOVA for Interdependent Friendship Score by the three groups of Close Friends at Secondary School

| Sources of variation | Sum of squares | Df | Mean square | F |
|----------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|
| Between groups | 277.27 | 2 | 138.64 | |
| Within groups | 4381.58 | 158 | 27.7 | 4.99* |
| Total | 4658.85 | 160 | | |

* $P < .05$

As the ANOVA results in Table-5 indicated, a statistically significant interdependent friendship score was found among male-male, female-female, and male-female close friends at the secondary school level, $F_{(2,158)} = 4.99$, $p < .05$. Since the results of one-way ANOVA in Table-5 have shown significant differences among the three groups, it was pertinent to check which pairs of groups had a significant mean difference on the interdependent friendship score. Therefore, Tukey post hoc test was computed and the results are presented in Table-6 below.

Table-6: Tukey Post Hoc Test for Interdependent Friendship Score across Groups

| Close friends | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|-------------------|-------|--------|---|
| Male-male (1) | 0.26 | 2.60 * | |
| Female-female (2) | 2.86* | | |
| Male-female (3) | | | |

* $P < .05$

The Tukey test results in Table-6 revealed that a statistically significant mean difference in interdependent friendship score was found between male-male and female-female close friends (2.60), $P < .05$, and between male-female and female-female close friends (2.86), $p < .05$. Nevertheless, no statistically significant mean difference in interdependent friendship score was found between male-male and male-female close friends.

Table-7: Summary of one-way ANOVA for Disengaged Friendship Score by the three Groups of Close Friends at Secondary School Level

| Source of variation | Sum of squares | Df | Means square | F |
|---------------------|----------------|-----|--------------|-------|
| Between groups | 423.39 | 2 | 211.70 | |
| Within groups | 5686.61 | 158 | 35.99 | 5.88* |
| Total | 6110.00 | 260 | | |

* $P < .05$

As disclosed in Table-7, disengaged friendship score differed significantly among male-male, female-female and male-female close friends, $F_{(2,158)} = 5.88$, $p < .05$.

Table-8: Tukey Post Hoc Test for Disengaged Friendship Score across Groups

| Close friends | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|-------------------|------|-------|---|
| Male-male (1) | 1.41 | 3.90* | |
| Female-female (2) | | | |
| Male-female (3) | | 2.49 | |

* $P < .05$

As can be seen from Table-8, a statistically significant mean difference in disengaged friendship score was found between male-male and female-female close friends (3.90), $p < .05$. However, no statistically significant mean difference in disengaged friendship score was noted between male-male and male-female, and between female-female and male-female close friends.

Table-9: Summary of one-way ANOVA for Consensus-sensitive Friendship Score by the three Groups of close friends at Secondary School Level

| Source of variation | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F |
|---------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|
| Between groups | 89.87 | 2 | 44.93 | |
| Within groups | 4926.31 | 158 | 31.18 | 1.44 |
| Total | 5016.18 | 160 | | |

$P > .05$

A close examination of the one way ANOVA Table-9 portrayed that there was no a statistically significant mean difference among male-male, female-female, and male-female close friends with respect to consensus-sensitive friendship score, $F_{(2,158)} = 1.44$, $p > .05$.

Table-10: Number of cases, Mean and Standard deviation for Dependent variables by Sex of Close Friends at University Level

| Dependent variables | Independent variables | N | Mean | SD |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----|-------|------|
| Interdependent | Male-male friends | 86 | 30.26 | 4.67 |
| | Female-male friends | 26 | 29.50 | 4.75 |
| | Male-female friends | 49 | 31.84 | 4.95 |
| | Total | 161 | 30.61 | 4.81 |
| Disengaged | Male-male friends | 86 | 26.15 | 6.79 |
| | Female-female friends | 26 | 21.88 | 6.74 |
| | Male-female friends | 49 | 20.55 | 6.29 |
| | Total | 161 | 23.76 | 7.09 |
| Consensus-sensitive | Male-male friends | 86 | 28.71 | 4.97 |
| | Female-female friends | 26 | 27.50 | 5.81 |
| | Male-female friends | 49 | 28.08 | 5.29 |
| | Total | 161 | 28.32 | 5.19 |

A close examination of Table-10 revealed differences in the mean score of the three groups on the dependent variables. However, the mean score difference observed across groups does not assure the significance level. Hence, it is pertinent to test the mean differences with one-way ANOVA.

Table-11: Summary of one-way ANOVA for Consensus-sensitive, Interdependent and Disengaged Friendship Score among the three Groups of Close Friends at the University Level

| Dependent variables | Sources of variation | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|
| Consensus-sensitive | Between Groups | 33.30 | 2 | 543.871 | .61 |
| | Within Groups | 4283.91 | 158 | 43.961 | |
| | Total | 4317.21 | 160 | | |
| Interdependent | Between Groups | 116.556 | 2 | 58.279 | 2.57 |
| | Within Groups | 3589.57 | 158 | 22.719 | |
| | Total | 3706.13 | 160 | | |
| Disengaged | Between Groups | 1087.74 | 2 | 16.649 | 12.37 * |
| | Within Groups | 6945.81 | 158 | 27.113 | |
| | Total | 8033.55 | 160 | | |

*P < .05

As can be seen from Table-11, there was no a statistically significant difference in consensus-sensitive friendship score among male-male, female-female, and male-female close friends at the

university level. Though the mean score of the three groups on consensus-sensitive friendship score displayed some differences, these differences observed across the three groups were not statistically significant, $F_{(2,158)} = 0.61, p > .05$.

As the summary of one-way ANOVA in Table-11 revealed, there was no a statistically significant difference in interdependent friendship score among male-male, female-female, and male-female close friends at the university level, $F_{(2,158)} = 257, p > .05$.

As the ANOVA summary Table-11 also displayed, there was a statistically significant difference in disengaged friendship score among male-male, female-female, and male-female close friends at the university level, $F_{(2,158)} = 12.37, p < .05$. Based on the results, Tukey post hoc analysis was undertaken.

Table-12: Tukey Post Hoc Test for Disengaged Friendship Score across Groups

| Close friends | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|-------------------|-------|--------|---|
| Male-Male (1) | 5.60* | 4.27 * | |
| Female-female (2) | 1.33 | | |
| Male-female (3) | | | |

* $p < .05$

As the outcome of pair wise mean comparison in Table-12 portrayed, a statistically significant mean difference in disengaged friendship score was found between male-male and male-female close friends (5.60), $p < .05$, and between male-male and female-female close friends (4.27), $p < .05$. It is clearly observed in Table-12 that the differences lay between male-male close friends and the rest of the groups. However, no statistically significant mean difference in disengaged friendship score was found between female-female and male-female close friends.

Discussion

Gender base Friendship Patterns at Secondary School and University level

Results of the study revealed that friendship patterns by gender differed significantly between secondary school and university level students. In secondary school, females' friendship were the most dominant followed by male-female and males' friendships. At university level, male-male friendships were dominant followed by patterns among male-female and females' friendship. In

other words, there exist friendship patterns of the same sex close friends both at university and secondary school level. This finding is consistent with previous research findings. For example, Nezlek et al., (1983) indicated that although many college students have considerable opposite-sex contact, they tend to have more same than opposite-sex contact. However, Laursen (1996) indicated that same-sex friends increase during early to middle adolescence, after which it typically declines as intimacy with other sex grows.

Though contradictory ideas were presented above, there are some evidences on gender differences. For instance, studies on college friends revealed that sharing common values was an important predictor of same-sex attraction among women, but shared activities (for example, music and sports preferences) were more important in determining same-sex preferences among men (Hay; Hill & Stull; cited in Franzoi, 2000).

In general, friendship patterns among males at university and among females at secondary school were dominantly different. This is due to the availability of more male than female and more female than male students at university and secondary school levels respectively during the study period. Thus, the finding of this study and previous findings leads to the conclusion that gender based friendship patterns differed by education level.

Friendship Types at Secondary School and University Level

It was found out that, irrespective of the sex differences of close friends, there were significant variations in the friendship types of close friends at the secondary school and university levels with respect to interdependent friendship scores. The interdependent friendship mean score of participants at the secondary school was ($M=28.29$) while it was ($M=30.61$) at the university level. This means that close friends at the university level were more interdependent in their friendship types than those close friends at the secondary school. The implications of this finding was that close friends at the university level than at the secondary school level discuss more about differences, compromise one another's interests, accommodate one another's idea, and were more objective in dealing with their disagreements.

Consistent with the present result, Laursen et al. (2001) conducted a research to examine developmental trends in friendship conflict resolution and the result revealed that negotiation is

common among late adolescents. The present finding also consistent with Shulman and Knaffo (1997) findings' that most of middle adolescent friends were disengaged type whereas the majority of late adolescent friends were interdependent. Though both middle and late adolescents use negotiation strategy to resolve disagreements, the negotiation strategy between middle and late adolescents differ in terms of balancing individuality and close relationships. In a similar vein, a study by Thomas (1996) on the morality of friendship versus the morality of individual autonomy on participants whose age was 15, 18, and 21 years revealed that younger students resolve friendship-individualism conflicts by asserting their individual rights whereas older students resolve their conflicts by setting boundaries on friendship obligation.

Thus, the findings of the present study together with previous research findings lead the conclusion that close friends at the university level (late adolescents) were interdependent type in their friendships than close friends at the secondary school level (middle adolescents), which is supported by Beer and Gardner's (2015) study that the importance of friendship to the general social life, differs across time and space. The present study also revealed that disengaged friendship score was not significant between close friends at the secondary school and university level. This means that, disengaged friendship type was not influenced by close friends' level of education.

The question is, why disengaged friendship score did not differ significantly between close friends of secondary school and university level? The possible reason could be that, in disengaged friendship type, there is competition between close friends to win or ensure one's own wishes or interests, as well try to control the arguments by assuming 'I am right'. This is an inherently predisposed thought that everybody is wished to get recognition or acceptance from others regardless of individuals' education level.

The results of the finding also revealed that irrespective of close friends, there was a statistically significant difference in consensus-sensitive friendship score between close friends at the secondary school and university level $t(320)=1.99, p<.05$). The consensus-sensitive friendship mean score for the secondary school students was ($M=29.52$) while those of university participants was ($M=28.32$). So, we may infer that close friends at the secondary school than close friends at the university level were consensus-sensitive type in their friendships. In other words, close friends of secondary school than close friends of the university reach quick

consensus for their disagreements, confronted less, use more avoidant, withdrawal, and non-confrontation strategies when they deal with issues conflicting them. In this conflict resolution strategy, disagreements were not solved effectively. Consistent with this finding, Shulman and Knaffo (1997) found out that consensus-sensitive friends reflected some sort of cooperation to the extent that conflicts are not solved effectively.

From the present finding one can conclude that close friends at the secondary school were consensus-sensitive type and less interdependent type compared to close friends at the university level. Nevertheless, they did not differ with regard to disengaged friendship score.

Friendship Types on Gender Basis

The study revealed that interdependent friendship score was significant across male-male, female-female and male-female close friends at secondary school but not at university level. This implies that female close friends at the secondary school had high interdependent friendship score, and they were more interdependent in their friendships type than male-male and male-female counterparts. In other words, female-female close friends are more open-minded, cooperative, and negotiating more, who resolve disagreements in a more objective manner than among males and opposite-sex counterparts. This in turn, implies that female-female close friends gave due attention for individual and dual concerns as more compared to male-male and male-female close friends.

The present finding obtained from the secondary school is in agreement with Selthout et al. (2009) that disclose the most frequent use of problem solving skills and negotiate among girls than boys. Nevertheless, relationships with friends are somewhat different between boys and girls that female friendships take place in a face to face manner, focusing emotional self-disclosure, while male friendships take place side by side by focusing on activities featuring common interests (Gillespie et al., 2015). Because of the socialization, females often emphasize relational skills and interpersonal understanding whereas the socialization of males often emphasizes autonomy and individuation (Kimmel, 2004). Girls' friendships are deeper and more interdependent than boys (Youniss & Smollar, 1985) who give attention to dyadic friendships (Lubbers et al., 2011) and share confidence and emotional support which seem to be more vital to female friendship than male friendship, throughout life (Papalia, 2001). In a similar vein,

Maccoby's (1998) viewed gender socialization that, females are more likely to use interactive styles; whereas males are more likely to use restrictive and controlling interactive styles. In other words, female-female close friends are more likely than male-male close friends to use solution-oriented conflict resolution strategies (i.e., efforts to come to mutually satisfying conflict resolutions). Moreover, on the conflict resolution tasks, females were rated lower in withdrawal and higher in communication skills and support validation than were males (Furman & Adler as cited in Khatrine, 2000).

Moreover, as females have a greater value of relationships, they prefer such styles as smoothing, withdrawing and compromising styles. They are typically involved in indirect-communication strategies that are directed to diffuse the conflicts. On the other hand, males commonly use direct-communication strategies while in a conflict and they prefer styles such as forcing, problem solving, competing, and dominating that are directed toward a specific outcome rather than a relationship (Holt & DeVore, 2005).

Inconsistent to the findings obtained from secondary school and Maccoby's (1998) gender socialization theory, other researchers underlined the view that sex has no effect on conflict resolution style (e.g., Laursen et al., 2001; Iskandar cited in Thyer et al., 2008; Korabik et al., 1993) which is consistent with the findings obtained at university level.

In general, the findings of this study together with previous findings leads to the conclusion that further research shall be conducted in this area (though most research findings consistent with the findings obtained at the secondary school level).

Moreover, in the present study, it was found that disengaged friendship score differed significantly among male-male, female-female and male-female close friends at the secondary school and university levels respectively. This implies that male-male close friends were the most disengaged ones in the type of their friendships as compared to opposite-sex and female-female close friends. Specifically, male-male close friends thrive more on dominance, competition, and status as well as use control interactive style, and there is a tendency to ensure one's own wishes in times of arguing with and/or when they try to resolve their disagreements. This finding is consistent with Maccoby's (1998) ideas, that boys were more likely to use control strategies, whereas girls were more likely to report solution-oriented strategies. The study is also

inconsistent with Korabik et al. (1993), which revealed that there were no differences between males and females in conflict resolution experience.

The greater significance that girls place on close interpersonal relationships is consistent with their more frequent use of solution-oriented strategies, an approach that is likely to maintain close relationships. On the contrary, boys tend to spend more time in larger group situations and use controlling strategies with their close friends that may be most effective type in all male social groups (Maccoby, 1998). These gender differences may be exacerbated by the extent that girls and boys are more likely to describe using strategies that are defined as socially appropriate in same-sex interactions (i.e., negotiation and compromise among girls and control/dominance strategies among boys).

The results of the present study corroborated with previous findings lead to the conclusion that male-male close friends are disengaged in their friendship types than female-female and male-female close friends.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were made.

Friendship patterns by gender have been found with education level i.e., female-female friendship were dominant which is followed by male-female and male-male friendships at the secondary school. However, at the university level, male-male friendships were dominant followed by patterns of male-female and female-female friendships. Moreover, friendship types have been found to have connection with the gender of close friends i.e., female-female close friends were interdependent type than male-male and male-female counterparts, implying that females' close friends were more open for discussion. They support each other in their own independent goals, compromise and negotiate each other's ideas, and resolve disagreements in a more objective manner than male-male and male-female counterparts. Furthermore, at both secondary school and university levels, male-male close friends were more disengaged in the type of their friendships than female-female and male-female close friends. This implies that male-male close friends thrive more on dominance, competition, status, and use of control interactive styles. This also shows the extant tendency of ensuring one's own wishes in times of arguing with and/or resolving their disagreements. Finally, it can be stated that university

students use compromising strategy in their disagreements with friends than secondary school students i.e., close friends at the university level than at the secondary school level discuss more about differences, compromise one another's interests, accommodate one another's idea, and were more objective in dealing with their disagreements.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to give a particular thanks to the administrators and teachers of Nigus T/Haimanot Secondary School, and to instructors of Debre Markos University for their cooperation during data collection. In addition, the author would like to thank students of the aforementioned institutions for their willingness to participate in the study.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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