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**“Psychology in Changing Global Contexts”**



**Faculty of Psychology  
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## CROSS CULTURAL STUDY ABOUT COLLEGE ADJUSTMENT STUDY OF CHINA & INDONESIAN COLLEGE STUDENTS: "HOW QUALITIES OF FAMILY CONTRIBUTE SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT"

Soerjantini Rahaju, Alexander English, Uly Gusniarti, Anastasia Dewi, Jiang Jing Xin, Anita Verina, Wen Xue Qi

Faculty of Psychology University of Surabaya, Faculty of Psychology Zhejiang University, Faculty of Psychology Islamic University of Indonesia

[ryantini@yahoo.com](mailto:ryantini@yahoo.com), [alexenglish84@gmail.com](mailto:alexenglish84@gmail.com), [uly\\_gusniarti@gmail.com](mailto:uly_gusniarti@gmail.com), [faustandri@gmail.com](mailto:faustandri@gmail.com),

### ABSTRACT

Many studies indicate that study in university bring a big experience for emerging adult, because of the transition. Many factors contributes to the quality of adjustment, it could come from the internal and external. Aspinwall (1992, in Abdullah, Elias, Uli & Mahyuddin, 2010) mentioned that students with family support will be predicted more success in adjustment. Balk (1995, in Wodka) asserting that higher family support may hinder identity exploration and achievement. According to the preliminary survey, social adjustment usually became the most difficult one. So, the aim of this study is to investigate the correlation between Family Function and Students Social Adjustment, and the differences of cross cultural conditions in Family Function between Indonesian and Chinese students. This study is quantitative methods using two instruments, which are Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ, Baker & Syrik, 1984, 1989) and ICPS Family Functioning Scales (ICPS-FFS, P.Noller, in Perlmutter, 2001). Subjects in this study are 20 Indonesian students and 20 Chinese students. There is significant differences in Family function between Indonesian students and Chinese students ( $t: -3.121, p < .05$ ). There is significant correlation between Students Social Adjustment and Family Function in the aspect of Intimacy, but not in the aspect of Parenting Styles ( $r: 0.32, p < 0.05$ ).

**Keywords :** Social Adjustment, College Students, Family Function, Cross Cultural

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The transition to college presents an important developmental challenge in late adolescence due to increased independence and responsibilities (Hickman, Bartholomae, & Mckenry, 2000 in Wodka). Students have to make adjustment both in academic and non academic areas, such as social relationship, time management, financial management, etc.

Al-nanni (2005) clarify that adjustment is a way to meet the needs and satisfaction in reducing pressure so as to achieve a balance. According to Crow (in Shalini, C. V. L. V, 2006) adjustment is the behavior to build connection with the environment and changing the attitude of the individu. Al-nanni (2005, in Al-khatib, Awamleh, Samawi, 2012) stated that the behavior is the way to fill the need of the individu and relief the stress to achieve balance. Sufian (2004, in Al-khatib, Awamleh, Samawi, 2012) mentioned that adjustment is the individual's abilities to fill the psychological needs and self acceptance so there are no conflict with the social activities. So in adjustment, there were effort to balancing the self needs and the conditions of external/reality and when the person could manage it successfully than it bring satisfaction for the individu.

Since the students came to the university, they start to live away from home. It is a definite break from home. The individual's usual sources of support are no

longer present to facilitate adjustment to the unfamiliar environment. There is mixed evidence regarding the specific role of family support within the college transition. For instance, Zaleski, et all. (1998, in Wodka) found college freshmen (N=95) who reported above-average levels of family support had more physical symptoms when faced with daily hassles than their peers who reported low to average levels of family support. It was concluded that high family support exacerbated the problems faced by students in their adaptation to college because, during the college transition, family support may have impeded students' ability to find their individual role at college and gain emotional independence. These findings are consistent with Balk (1995, in Wodka) asserting that higher family support may hinder identity exploration and achievement during the college transition. Desforjes, C and Abouchaar (2003) parental involvement have a significant effect to achievement and adjustment for age 16 th years old, but school composition had become a more powerful determinant. In the contrary, Nelson (1990, in Gall, Evans, Bellerose, 2000) found that individuals report experiencing more positive affect. Aspinwall and Taylor (1992, in Gall, Evans, Bellerose, 2000) student's level of social support predict their adjustment across the time.

The aim of this study is to know further about the correlation of family function with social adjustment for university students and differences in family function between Indonesia and Chinese university students family function in correlation with social adjustment.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1 Subjects

In this study, we use 40 subjects which were College Students, 20 from Zhejiang University and 20 from University of Surabaya, from the year 1 – 3, and age 18-23 years old. From Zhejiang University, we got the data from 12 departement : Biology, Math, Chemistry, Energy, Polymer Science, Physics, Japanese, National Defence, Engineering, Material, Archaeology, and from University of Surabaya we got data from Engineering, Bussiness and Economics, Pharmacy, Psychology, Law, Technobiology, and Creative Industrial.

### 2.2 Measurements

In this study, the Social Adjustment among College Students were measured by using the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ), only Social Adjustment Aspect, adaptation from Baker and Siryk (1986). It contains 20 items, with 1-9 scales. Family function were measured by using the ICPS Family

Functioning Scales, adaptation from P. Noller (2001, in Perlmutter, Touliatos, Holden). It contains 19 items covering three major aspect : intimacy, conflict and parenting style, with scale 1-6. The higher the score are the more intimacy, the less conflict and the more democratics the parenting style.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis using SPSS Analysis data were using SPSS for Windows Version 16, for the correlation test and differences test by using T-test for levene's test.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1. The Correlation of Social Adjustment and Family Function

From the data analysis, it found that there is significant correlation between Family Function and College Students' Social Adjustment ( $r : .328, p < .05$ ). It means that with the better qualities of their family, the students will get better social adjustment. The better qualities of the family in this study means the more intimacy the students feel in their relation with their family, the less conflict they had with their family and the more democratics their parents' style in raising their children. The specific results of correlational between aspects of Family Function and Social Adjustment are listed in table 1 (below)

Table 1. Results of Correlation between Family Function & Social Adjustment

	r	Sig
Correlation Social Adjustment & Family Function	0.32	< 0.05
Correlation Social Adjustment & Family Function : Intimacy	0.39	<0.05
Correlation Social Adjustment & Family Function : Parenting Styles	0.164	>0.05

From table 1 above, it found that there is significant correlation between Students Social Adjustment and Family Function in the aspect of Intimacy. But for the Family Function in the aspect of Parenting Styles, there is no significant correlation. It means that how much intimacy in the family relation would contributes significantly to the students' success in social adjustment.

### 3.2. Differences in Social Adjustment among University Students

From the data analysis, the comparison of social adjustment among university students between Indonesian dan Chinese Students showed no significant differences,  $t = 1.272, p > 0.05$ . Mean for Indonesian students = 119,70, and Chinese students = 112,55.

### 3.3. Differences in Family Function of Indonesian and Chinese Students

In the issues of Social Adjustment, it found that there are no significant differences between Indonesian and Chinese Students. The results are listed in table 2 (below).

Table 2 Comparison of Social Adjustment and Family Function between Indonesian and Chinese Students

	T	Sig
Comparison of Family Function among Indonesian & Chinese Students	-3.191	< 0.05
Comparison of Family Function : Intimacy, among Indonesian & Chinese Students	-2,731	< 0.05
Comparison of Family Function : Parenting styles, among Indonesian & Chinese Students	-3.121	< 0.05

From the t-test analysis, it found that there is significant differences in Family function between Indonesian students and Chinese students ( $t : -3.121, p < .05$ ). It means that Indonesian and Chinese students perceive the difference level of their family function

includes intimacy, conflict and democratics parenting styles. The Chinese students family function showed higher level from Indonesian students family function as mentioned in table below this.



Table 3. Mean comparison of Indonesian and Chinese Family Function level

	Indonesian	Chinese
Family Function	82.8	92.85
Intimacy & Conflict (less)	52.6	58.5
Parenting Styles in Democratics	30.2	34.35

#### 4. DISCUSSION

##### 4.1. Family Function and Students Social Adjustment

From this study, it found that Family Function has positive and significant correlation with Students Social Adjustment. According to Erickson theory of personality development, at the age of young people (at the age of university student, 18-23 years old) there are two stages the individual pass through; the adolescence and the early young adulthood. These two stages have two major crisis ego development which are identity vs identity confusion and later intimacy vs isolation. The family function that give warm, open, and democratics climate in the family lives will give a positive acceptance for the individu and in will give a positive self identification and give the individu easiest way to build intimacy in their relationship when they move to the next stages as emerging adulthood. All of this impacts on children are the good traits for making good relationship in the future.

In this study, the first and second aspects of family function are intimacy and conflict. The higher score of this two aspects bring the more warm, open and togetherness in the family relationship. With more intimacy and less conflict in the origin family will make the students have more positive conditions and resources for facing the problems or obstacles in their process of adjustment in university lives. Good qualities of family function could be a substitute to fulfill their need of social support when they still got less from their new social environment, with friends, lecturers in the university. And by the time pass, if they have already succeed in adjusted to the new social relationship, they still have more rich sources of social support compare to the students with lower level of family function. In other words, the more intimacy and less conflict as the good qualities of family function will play as a sources of social support as one of positive emotional coping strategies.

More over, family with warm, open and positive affect will make the children's learn more important traits for good relationship. Since the individu have to adjust to the new social environment in the university, the better they learn positive traits from the family's origin relationship, the easier they adjust to social environment in the university.

The third aspect of family function is parenting skills in bring democratics styles of parenting when raising their children. From the results above, there are no significant correlation of this aspect with students social adjustment. In democratics or authoritative expected to follow. However, the parents are still responsive to their children and willing to listen to

questions. Parents are willing to involve their children when making decisions. Baumrind (1991, in Cherry.K.) mentioned that by in this parenting styles, the disciplinary methods are supportive, rather than punitive. Their children will became more assertive, well socially responsible, self regulated, and cooperative. But in some research about parenting style, it found some important limitations which cannot establish definitive cause-and-effect relations. Other important variable s such as a child's temperament play a major role (Cherry, K., [www.psychology.about.com/od/developmentalpsychology/a/parentingstyle.htm](http://www.psychology.about.com/od/developmentalpsychology/a/parentingstyle.htm)). It explained why the parenting style (the democratic one) in this study, are not correlated significantly to capability of university's students in social adjustment.

##### 4.2. Indonesian vs Chinese Family Function

From the table 1 above, we found that in general the Family Function of Chinese students got the higher average score compare to Indonesian students, in all aspects. It means that the Chinese family could function well in intimacy, less conflict and authoritative parenting styles.

In Chinese family in China, many students is the only child in their family. This condition related to the government rules about the numbers of child that family can have in China. The small number of child in the family could be the reason why the Family function from Chinese students got the better score than the Indonesian students. As the only child in the family, Chinese students could get full attention from their parents and no need to compete or share with siblings. In other words, they could get more intimacy and less conflict within their family lives, as the only child.

Other condition that differ between Indonesian and Chinese family function is the authoritative parenting styles. The Chinese parents in their child's perspectives are more democratics than Indonesian parents. Even they have only one child in the family, they still keep the rules and clarify the standard of behavior. They didn't became permissive parents. This is because they also tend to prepare the child to be more independent as early as could. They tend to send their child away from home, even when the child still young, to get the better chance of good education. The Chinese students get used to face the demands of the high independency because they have to enter the dormitory when they study in university, or even when they were in high school which located far from their house. And some Chinese students choose to have highschool far from home and stay in the dormitory for the preparation to enter university. In other words, in



Chinese the demands to raise the child to become independent in the young age make them aware that they have to prepare their child to become mature, well self regulation, therefore they raise their child in the democratics parenting styles.

In the contrary, in Indonesian even not in big numbers, but many families want to have child more than one, and the government not give a strict regulation related to numbers of children that family can have. The Indonesian government only give the campaign of small family with numbers of children only two. Indonesian students usually have brother or sister, even more than one. This conditions could give possibilities that in family there were siblings competition in parents' attention and love. Some parents in their wrong way of motivating children, tend to comparing their children with the siblings. It became potential conditions for conflict. Moreover, with the bigger numbers of children in the family, the conflict could get higher frequencies and intensities. The parenting styles could became more authoritarian or permissive.

Moreover, the education system in each country seem play major role for the parenting skills. In Chinese, it is very common that school and university have dormitories for their students, and the demand of independency are very strong. In the contrary in Indonesia (in University of Surabaya), most students still live with their parents and not face the high demand of independency compare to Chinese students.

Involvement of their parents in making decisions about study still strong, so the parents not doing the authoritative parenting styles.

## 2. Summaries and recommendations

From this study we found that Family Qualities in functioning significantly correlated with Social Adjustment of their children when they were in university. The aspect of family functioning that significantly correlated with social adjustment are intimacy and less conflict. The parenting styles has no significant correlation with Social Adjustment because it is not directly give impact to the traits of the students personality that important for adaptation to socia environment. Many factors could play important roles in successfull social adjustment such as temperament, communication, etc.

There are significant differences in the qualities of Family function between Indonesian and Chinese, and the Chinese Family Function got better score than Indonesian. It assumed related to the cultural differences such as the numbers of child in the family, parents' aspiration for child's future in education, education system in each country. Differences in choosing the parenting styles between the Indonesian and Chinese parents assume also related to the meaning of child, which in this study not covered yet. The meaning of child could interesting to study as the cross cultural issues.

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