

The Relationship Between Social Connectedness and Perceptions of Discrimination Among Papuan Students in Jakarta

Elvine Semulin Mote

Universitas Tarumanagara, Indonesia

Email: felizm434@gmail.com

Keywords

Social Connectedness; Perceived Discrimination; Papuan University Students; Students Studying Away From Home.

ABSTRACT

Papuan university students studying in Jakarta face the challenges of adapting to a different social and cultural environment, along with the possibility of experiencing treatment perceived as discriminatory based on their ethnic or regional backgrounds. In this context, social connectedness serves as an important psychological resource, as it is associated with feelings of acceptance, interpersonal closeness, and a sense of belonging within a social environment. This study aimed to examine the relationship between social connectedness and perceived discrimination among Papuan university students in Jakarta. A quantitative method with a descriptive correlational approach was employed. Participants consisted of 382 Papuan university students studying in Jakarta who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using two standardized instruments: the Social Connectedness Scale-Revised, which measures interpersonal closeness and belonging, and the Everyday Discrimination Scale, which assesses the frequency of perceived discriminatory experiences in daily life. The data were analyzed using Spearman's rank-order correlation to test the main hypothesis, along with the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test to examine potential differences across demographic subgroups. The results revealed a significant negative relationship between social connectedness and perceived discrimination ($r_s = -.469$, $p < .001$), indicating a moderate correlation. This finding demonstrated that higher levels of social connectedness among Papuan university students were associated with lower levels of perceived discrimination, whereas lower levels of social connectedness were associated with higher levels of perceived discrimination. These findings highlight the role of social connectedness as a protective factor and emphasize the importance of fostering supportive and inclusive campus environments to facilitate Papuan students' adjustment to life in Jakarta.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education serves as a fundamental pillar for improving human resource quality and promoting sustainable national development. Through higher education, individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to effectively navigate social, economic, and technological changes. Therefore, the provision of high-quality and equitable access to higher education represents an essential indicator of inclusive development. Beyond enhancing individual capacity, higher education also contributes to reducing social disparities

and strengthening national competitiveness through the development of competent human resources (Annisa & Faslah, 2025).

However, equitable access to higher education in Indonesia remains a persistent challenge. Universities with high-quality resources, comprehensive facilities, and diverse academic programs are predominantly concentrated on the island of Java. In contrast, eastern Indonesia, including Papua, continues to experience significant limitations in terms of access, quality, and availability of higher education. This disparity results in unequal opportunities for Indonesian citizens to obtain quality higher education. The condition is reflected in various national education development reports indicating persistent regional inequalities in educational access (Wardhana, Kharisma, & Fauzy, 2023).

Limited access to higher education in Papua has encouraged many high school graduates to pursue their studies outside the region, particularly on Java. This educational mobility has been supported by various government initiatives, most notably the Higher Education Affirmation Program (Program Afirmasi Pendidikan Tinggi—ADik), which provides opportunities for students from disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost regions, including Papua, to continue their education at universities across Indonesia. In addition to the affirmation program, Papuan students also pursue higher education through national selection pathways, independent admission schemes, and various scholarship programs. Consequently, the number of Papuan students studying in major cities, including Jakarta, has increased steadily over time.

Jakarta is one of the primary destinations for Papuan students pursuing higher education. As the center of government, economy, and education, Jakarta hosts numerous public and private universities that offer diverse academic programs and relatively more comprehensive educational facilities compared with many other regions in Indonesia. Beyond accessing improved educational opportunities, Papuan students studying in Jakarta also have opportunities to develop academic competencies, expand social networks, and enhance organizational and leadership experiences. However, relocating from their home regions to a new environment presents not only opportunities but also various challenges related to personal and social adjustment (Yunita, Dadan, & Widyastuti, 2024).

Papuan students studying in Jakarta encounter not only academic demands but also the need to adapt to different social, cultural, and interpersonal interaction patterns compared with those in their home regions. Differences in language, customs, cultural values, and community characteristics present significant challenges during the adaptation process. Furthermore, Papuan students represent a minority group within university environments in Jakarta, which may increase their vulnerability to differential social experiences compared with students from majority groups. This condition makes social adjustment a critical aspect influencing their experiences while living away from home (Fitri & Kustanti, 2018; Nababan, 2022).

In addition to adaptation challenges, Papuan students may also experience various forms of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. Discrimination against Papuans remains a significant social issue in Indonesia. One of the widely reported incidents was the case of racial discrimination against Papuan students in Surabaya in 2019, which received national attention and demonstrated the continued vulnerability of Papuans to treatment based on ethnic and racial identities. Furthermore, reports from various human rights organizations indicate that Papuans continue to encounter discrimination in the forms of racial slurs, negative stereotypes,

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unequal treatment, and social exclusion in daily life. Such discrimination does not always occur explicitly but may appear through subtle forms that can significantly affect individuals' social experiences (Kapisa, 2023).

For Papuan students, experiences of discrimination affect not only social dimensions but also psychological well-being during their educational journey away from home. Individuals who perceive themselves as being treated unfairly may experience increased stress, anxiety, reduced psychological well-being, and difficulties in establishing positive interpersonal relationships. Such experiences may also influence students' perceptions of their social environments, leading them to feel less accepted within the communities where they study and interact. Over time, these conditions may hinder the social adaptation process and academic achievement of Papuan students throughout their higher education experiences (Emmer, Dorn, & Mata, 2024; Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009).

In facing these challenges, social connectedness emerges as a psychological factor that is believed to play a crucial role in helping students adapt to new environments. Lee and Robbins (1995) define social connectedness as a feeling of closeness, acceptance, and belonging within a social environment. Individuals with high levels of social connectedness tend to find it easier to establish positive interpersonal relationships, obtain social support, and develop a sense of belonging within their communities. Conversely, individuals with low social connectedness are more likely to experience loneliness, social isolation, and difficulties in establishing relationships with others. Therefore, social connectedness is considered a protective factor that can assist students in navigating various challenges while living away from home (Cruwys et al., 2022; Lee, Draper, & Lee, 2001).

On the other hand, Papuan students may also experience perceived discrimination, which refers to an individual's perception that they have received unfair or differential treatment due to certain social identities, such as race or ethnicity. Perceived discrimination may arise not only from direct experiences of discriminatory actions but also from interpretations of daily interactions as forms of injustice associated with one's social identity. These experiences can significantly affect mental health, psychological well-being, and the quality of social relationships (Lewis, Cogburn, & Williams, 2015; Schmitt et al., 2014).

Papuan students with strong social connections tend to find it easier to establish interpersonal relationships, receive social support, and develop a sense of belonging within the campus environment. The feeling of being accepted as part of the academic community can help students overcome various social challenges while living away from home. Conversely, students who experience difficulties in establishing social relationships may feel isolated, lack adequate social support, and become more vulnerable to psychological distress. These conditions may influence how individuals interpret their social experiences, including whether they perceive certain treatments as unfair or discriminatory (Brown, Mistry, & Bigler, 2022; Gopalan & Brady, 2020).

Theoretically, social connectedness and perceived discrimination are interrelated constructs. Individuals with high levels of social connectedness generally possess broader social networks, receive stronger emotional support, and experience greater security within their social environments. Such support may function as a protective factor when individuals encounter negative experiences during social interactions. Conversely, individuals with low social connectedness may feel isolated and less accepted, making them more vulnerable to

interpreting social interactions as discriminatory experiences. Therefore, social connectedness is hypothesized to be associated with perceived discrimination among Papuan students undergoing the adaptation process within university environments (Heikamp et al., 2020; Kuşci, Öztosun, & Arlı, 2023).

The relationship between social connectedness and psychological well-being has been extensively examined across various populations. Research by Cruwys et al. (2022) demonstrated that social connectedness functions as a protective factor that enhances psychological well-being and reduces the risk of mental health problems. Similarly, Lee and Robbins (1995) found that individuals with higher levels of social connectedness tended to demonstrate better social adjustment, lower levels of loneliness, and more positive interpersonal relationships. Meanwhile, studies on perceived discrimination have indicated that discriminatory experiences are associated with various adverse psychological outcomes. Lewis, Cogburn, and Williams (2015) explained that perceived discrimination represents a form of psychosocial stress associated with increased risks of depression, anxiety, and reduced psychological well-being. Furthermore, a meta-analysis conducted by Schmitt et al. (2014) found that perceived discrimination was negatively associated with mental health, self-esteem, and individual well-being across various minority groups.

In the context of Papuan students, several studies in Indonesia have examined experiences of discrimination, social adjustment, and psychological well-being among students pursuing education outside their home regions. The findings of these studies indicate that Papuan students continue to encounter various challenges, including stereotypes, prejudice, unequal treatment, and difficulties in social adjustment within university environments (Kapisa, 2023; Nababan, 2022; Yunita et al., 2024). Conversely, research on social connectedness among students has more frequently focused on psychological well-being, social support, resilience, and self-adjustment. Thus, these two constructs have largely been examined separately, with limited attention given to their relationship within the Papuan student population.

Various previous studies have investigated experiences of discrimination among Papuan students and the role of social connectedness in psychological well-being. However, most studies have examined these constructs independently or focused on related variables, such as psychological well-being, self-adjustment, and stress. To date, research specifically examining the relationship between social connectedness and perceived discrimination among Papuan students studying in Jakarta remains limited. Therefore, an empirical gap (research gap) exists regarding how social connectedness is associated with perceptions of discrimination among Papuan students within the Jakarta university environment.

The novelty of this research lies in examining the relationship between social connectedness and perceived discrimination among Papuan students studying in Jakarta. Unlike previous studies that have investigated these variables separately or involved different populations, this study provides empirical evidence regarding the association between these two constructs within the context of Papuan students who have migrated for educational purposes in Jakarta. Furthermore, this study focuses on Papuan students undergoing adaptation within Jakarta's university environment, thereby providing a contextual understanding of the dynamics of social relationships and experiences of discrimination within this population.

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This research is significant because it provides insight into how social connectedness is associated with perceived discrimination among Papuan students undergoing adaptation within Jakarta's university environment. The findings are expected to serve as a foundation for universities in developing programs that strengthen social relationships, promote inclusive campus environments, and reduce discriminatory experiences among Papuan students. Furthermore, the results may provide valuable input for policymakers in developing student support and service programs that are more responsive to the needs of Papuan students, while also contributing to social psychology literature regarding the relationship between social connectedness and perceptions of discrimination among students from eastern Indonesia.

This study aimed to determine the relationship between social connectedness and perceived discrimination among Papuan students in Jakarta. The findings are expected to contribute to the advancement of psychology, particularly social psychology, by enriching empirical evidence regarding the role of social connectedness in shaping discrimination experiences among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, this research may serve as a reference for future studies and provide practical benefits for Papuan students, universities, and policymakers in creating more inclusive environments, supporting social adjustment, improving psychological well-being, and strengthening appreciation for diversity within higher education settings.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative method with a descriptive correlational approach. This approach was used to examine the relationship between social connectedness and perceived discrimination among Papuan students studying in Jakarta. A descriptive correlational design was selected to determine the strength and direction of the association between the two variables. Data were collected using validated questionnaires and analyzed through statistical techniques to identify the relationship between variables. This approach enabled the researchers to provide empirical evidence regarding the social dynamics and experiences of perceived discrimination among Papuan students within the Jakarta higher education environment.

The study population consisted of Papuan students studying in Jakarta. The sample included 382 Papuan university students who were selected using purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria were students of Papuan ethnic background, active enrollment at a university in Jakarta, and willingness to participate in the study. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms using networks such as the Jakarta Papua Student Association (Ikatan Mahasiswa Papua Jakarta [IMAPA]), WhatsApp groups, Instagram, Line, and Twitter. This distribution strategy enabled the recruitment of participants from various universities and student communities in Jakarta.

Social connectedness was measured using the Social Connectedness Scale (SCS) developed by Lee and Robbins (1995), while perceived discrimination was assessed using the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS) developed by Williams, Yu, Jackson, and Anderson (1997). Both instruments underwent validity and reliability testing. The reliability analysis showed that both instruments had excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.960 for each scale. These results indicated that the instruments were reliable for measuring social connectedness and perceived discrimination among Papuan students in Jakarta.

The research was conducted in two stages: preparation and implementation. During the preparation stage, the researchers developed the research framework, formulated the research objectives, developed hypotheses, and prepared the research instruments. Research

permissions were obtained, and coordination was established with IMAPA to facilitate questionnaire distribution. During the implementation stage, questionnaires were distributed online through Google Forms over a one-month period to Papuan students residing in Jakarta through IMAPA and various social media platforms, including WhatsApp, Instagram, Line, and Twitter. After data collection was completed, statistical analyses were conducted, and the findings were compiled into a research report.

The collected data were organized, examined for completeness, and cleaned before being coded using a Likert scale. Data analysis was performed using SPSS software, including descriptive analysis to summarize respondent characteristics and the distribution of scores for social connectedness and perceived discrimination. Before hypothesis testing, a normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was conducted to determine the appropriate statistical analysis. Since the data were not normally distributed ($p < 0.05$), the relationship between the variables was analyzed using Spearman’s rank-order correlation test. Differences between demographic groups were further examined using the Mann–Whitney U test for two-group comparisons and the Kruskal–Wallis test for comparisons involving three or more groups. The results were presented in tables and narrative descriptions to explain the relationship between social connectedness and perceived discrimination among Papuan students in Jakarta.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Key Data Analytics

Normality Test

In this study, the normality test was conducted using the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test method with the assistance of Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) software. The decision-making criteria were based on significance values (Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)). The data were declared to be normally distributed if the significance value was greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$); conversely, if the significance value was less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the data were declared not to be normally distributed.

Table 1. Normality Test

Variabel	N	Test Statistic	Sig.	Remarks
Residual	382	0.234	0,000	Abnormal

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher using SPSS (2026).

Based on Table 1, a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) was obtained. These results indicate that the research residual is not normally distributed; therefore, the assumption of normality is not met. Consequently, the hypothesis test in this study was conducted using a nonparametric analysis technique appropriate for the data characteristics, namely the Spearman Rank correlation test to examine the relationship between research variables. Spearman Correlation Test

Spearman Correlation Test

Based on Table 2, the Spearman correlation coefficient value was -0.469 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). A significance value of less than 0.05 indicates that there is a significant relationship between social connectedness and perceived discrimination among Papuan migrant students in Jakarta. Thus, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted, while the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected.

Table 2. Spearman Correlation Test

Variabel	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Social Connectedness - Perceptions of Discrimination	-0,469	0,000	signifikan

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher using SPSS (2026).

A correlation coefficient with a negative value indicates that the relationship between the two variables is in the opposite direction. This means that the higher the social connectedness that Papuan migrant students have, the lower the perceived perception of discrimination. On the other hand, the lower the social connectedness that an individual has, the higher the perceived perception of discrimination.

The correlation coefficient value of 0.469 shows that the strength of the relationship between social connectedness and discrimination perception is in the medium category. These findings indicate that social connectedness is related to the perception of discrimination experienced by Papuan migrant students in Jakarta, although the perception of discrimination can also be influenced by various other factors that were not examined in this study.

Additional Data Analysis

The Relationship of Gender with Social Connectedness Variables and Perceptions of Discrimination

Based on the results of the Mann-Whitney test, the Mann-Whitney U value was 15,354.00 with a significance value of 0.025 ($p < 0.05$). These results indicate that there are differences in social connectedness based on gender among Papuan migrant students in Jakarta. Based on the mean rank value, male students possess a higher social connection score (MR = 206.43) compared to female students (MR = 180.85). These findings indicate that male Papuan students tend to have higher social connections than female Papuan students.

Table 3. Statistics of the Mann-Whitney Test of Social Connectedness by Gender

Category	N	Mean Rank
Men – men	159	206.43
Women	223	180.85

Category	Neil
Mann-Whitney U	15.354.00
Z	-2.238
p	0.025

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher using SPSS (2026).

The Relationship of Participants' Age with Social Connectedness Variables and Perceptions of Discrimination

Based on the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test on the social connectedness variable, a Chi-Square value of 25.485 was obtained with a degree of freedom (df) of 10 and a significance value of 0.004 ($p < 0.05$). These results show that there are differences in social connectedness based on age among Papuan migrant students in Jakarta. Thus, age can be said to have a role in differentiating the level of social connectedness in the study respondents.

Based on the mean rank value, the 22-year-old age group had the highest level of social connectedness (MR = 231.72), followed by 24-year-olds (MR = 217.92), 25-year-olds (MR = 213.69), and 21-year-olds (MR = 211.79). Meanwhile, the 18-year-old group showed a relatively lower social connectedness value (MR = 127.58), and the 28-year-old had the lowest score (MR = 14.00), although the number of respondents in that age group was very limited.

These findings indicate that as individuals age, there is a tendency to increase in the ability to build social connections, although not entirely linear across all age groups. This can be explained through social maturity factors, life experiences, and better adaptability in older individuals in dealing with the overseas environment.

Table 4. Statistics of the Kruskal-Wallis Test of Social Connection to Age

Age	N	Mean Rank
18 years old	31	127.58
19 years old	86	176.48
20 years	100	185.39
21 years old	73	211.79
22 years old	37	231.72
23 years old	20	195.00
24 years	18	217.92
25 years	13	213.69
26 years old	1	66.50
28 years old	1	14.00
29 years old	1	235.50
Total	382	100

Category	Value
Chi-Square	25.485
df	10
p	0.004

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher using SPSS (2026).

Furthermore, based on the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test on the discrimination perception variable, a Chi-Square value of 21.865 was obtained with a degree of freedom (df) of 10 and a significance value of 0.016 ($p < 0.05$). These results show that there is a difference in the perception of discrimination based on age among Papuan migrant students in Jakarta. Thus, age also plays a role in differentiating the level of discrimination perception in the study respondents.

Based on the mean rank value, the 18-year-old age group had the highest level of discrimination perception (MR = 251.65), followed by 23-year-olds (MR = 211.60) and 19-year-olds (MR = 200.00). Meanwhile, the 22-year-old age group showed a lower level of discrimination perception (MR = 156.53), as well as the age of 21 years (MR = 179.68). Very extreme values at certain ages such as 26 and 28 years need to be interpreted carefully due to the very small number of respondents.

These findings suggest that younger ages tend to have higher perceptions of discrimination than older ages. This can be due to a higher level of sensitivity to social treatment, limited experience in dealing with discriminatory situations, and an adaptation process that is not optimal in the new social environment. In contrast, individuals with a more mature age tend to have better coping skills and the meaning of social experiences so that perceptions of discrimination are relatively lower.

Table 5. Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics of Perception of Discrimination Against Age

Age	N	Mean Rank
18 years old	31	251.65
19 years old	86	200.00
20 years	100	184.18
21 years old	73	179.68
22 years old	37	156.53
23 years old	20	211.60
24 years	18	183.83
25 years	13	183.04
26 years old	1	4.50
28 years old	1	274.50
29 years old	1	20.50
Total	382	100

Category	Value
Kruskal-Wallis H	21.865
df	10

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher using SPSS (2026).

The Relationship of Participant Organizational Activities with Social Connectedness Variables and Perceptions of Discrimination

Based on the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test, it is known that there is a significant difference in social connectedness based on the activities of the Papuan migrant student campus organization in Jakarta with the values , , and (). In addition, there is also a significant difference in the $H = 32,451$ $df = 2$ $p < 0,001$ $p < 0,05$ perception of discrimination based on campus organizational activities with the values , , and (). These results show that there are differences in social connectedness and discrimination perceptions based on the status of organizational activities among Papuan migrant students in Jakarta. $H = 13,857$ $df = 2$ $p = 0,001$ $p < 0,05$

Table 6. Statistical Table Test of the Kruskal-Wallis Test of Social Connectedness and Perception of Discrimination Against Student Organizations on Campus

	OrMah Campus	N	Mean Rank
Total Social Connectedness	Yes, I am coming.	232	213.91
	Not Currently Participating	107	140.72
	Ever Joined	43	196.94
	Total	382	
Total Perception of Discrimination	Yes, I am coming.	232	176.59
	Not Currently Participating	107	224.16
	Ever Joined	43	190.69
	Total	382	

Category	Total SC	Total PD
Kruskal-Wallis H	32.451	13.857
df	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	0,000	0.001

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher using SPSS (2026).

Descriptively, students who are actively participating in campus organizations have the highest *mean rank* in the social connection variable (MR = 213.91), followed by students who have participated in organizations (MR = 196.94), while students who are not currently

participating in organizations have the lowest *mean rank* (MR = 140.72). Meanwhile, in the variable perception of discrimination, students who are not currently participating in campus organizations have the highest *mean rank* (MR = 224.16), followed by students who have participated in organizations (MR = 190.69), while students who are actively participating in campus organizations have the lowest *mean rank* (MR = 176.59).

These results show that students who actively participate in campus organizations tend to have a higher level of social connectedness and lower perceptions of discrimination than students who do not actively participate in campus organizations.

Based on the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test, it is known that there is a significant difference in social connectedness based on the organizational activities outside the campus of Papuan migrant students in Jakarta with the values , , and (). In addition, there is also a significant difference in $H = 28,577 df = 2 p < 0,001 p < 0,05$ the perception of discrimination based on off-campus organizational activities with the values , , and (). These results show that off-campus organizational activities affect the level of social connectedness and perception of discrimination among Papuan migrant students in Jakarta. $H = 10,924 df = 2 p = 0,004 p < 0,05$

Table 7. Statistical Table Test of the Kruskal-Wallis Test of Social Connectedness and Perception of Discrimination Against Off-Campus Student Organizations

	Off-Campus Ormah	N	Mean Rank
Total Social Connectedness	Yes, I am coming.	159	225.92
	Not Currently Participating	164	160.73
	Ever Joined	59	184.25
	Total	382	
Total Perception of Discrimination	Yes, I am coming.	159	173.47
	Not Currently Participating	164	212.60
	Ever Joined	59	181.46
	Total	382	

Category	Total SC	Total PD
Kruskal-Wallis H	28.577	10.924
df	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	0,000	0.004

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher using SPSS (2026).

Descriptively, students who are actively participating in off-campus organizations have the highest mean rank on the social connection variable (MR = 225.92), followed by students who have previously participated in organizations (MR = 184.25), while students who are not currently participating in organizations have the lowest mean rank (MR = 160.73). Meanwhile, on the perceived discrimination variable, students who are not participating in off-campus organizations have the highest mean rank (MR = 212.60), followed by students who have previously participated in organizations (MR = 181.46), while students who are actively participating in off-campus organizations have the lowest mean rank (MR = 173.47).

These results show that students who actively participate in off-campus organizations tend to have a higher level of social connectedness and lower perceived discrimination than students who are not actively participating in off-campus organizations.

Discussion

This study found a significant negative relationship between social connectedness and perceived discrimination among Papuan students in Jakarta. The findings demonstrate that college students who feel closer, accepted, and part of their social environment tend to report lower perceptions of discrimination. In contrast, college students who feel less connected to the social environment tend to report higher perceptions of discrimination.

This finding can be understood through the concept of social connectedness put forward by Lee and Robbins (1995). Social connectedness is defined as a subjective experience of interpersonal closeness and the feeling of being part of the social environment. Individuals with high social connectedness tend to feel accepted and have a place in their social relationships. Meanwhile, low social connectedness is associated with feelings of isolation, alienation, or difficulty building meaningful interpersonal relationships (Lee, Draper, & Lee, 2001).

In the context of Papuan students in Jakarta, social connections can be formed through relationships with college friends, the Papuan student community, organizations, living environments, and the surrounding community. Positive social relationships can provide experiences of acceptance, security, and belonging. Cruwys et al. (2022) explain that the sense of belonging to a social group can provide individuals with identity, meaning, and psychological support. Thus, social connectedness can serve as a psychosocial resource that helps students navigate the adjustment process in an overseas environment.

The findings of this study align with Heikamp et al. (2020), who demonstrated that a sense of belonging is related to the engagement of individuals from minority groups when faced with discrimination. When individuals feel accepted as part of their environment, they have a greater chance of establishing positive interactions and maintaining social engagement. Conversely, experiences of discrimination can threaten a sense of belonging and push individuals away from the social environment.

However, the relationship between social connectedness and perceived discrimination should not be understood as a one-way relationship. The correlational design of this study cannot prove that social connectedness causes low perceptions of discrimination. It is possible that repeated experiences of discrimination cause individuals to become more cautious, withdrawn, or have difficulty trusting their environment, resulting in lower social connections. Therefore, the relationship between the two variables may be reciprocal, although the direction of the relationship cannot be ascertained through the design of this study.

The correlation coefficient of -0.469 indicates that the relationship between the two variables falls within the medium category. A moderate relationship strength means that social connectedness has a meaningful relationship with perceived discrimination but is not the only factor associated with variations in perceived discrimination. Variations in discrimination perceptions among Papuan students may also be related to actual discrimination experiences, environmental stereotypes, previous rejection experiences, social support, ethnic identity, resilience, coping strategies, self-esteem, and social environment characteristics.

Williams and Mohammed (2009) explain that the experience of discrimination is influenced by various interpersonal and structural factors. Discrimination can arise through daily treatment, unequal social relations, or institutional conditions that place certain groups at a disadvantage. Thus, an individual's social connectedness cannot completely eliminate the

possibility of discrimination because some sources of discrimination are beyond the individual's control.

Resilience and coping strategies may also play a role in how individuals face and interpret experiences of discrimination. Zhou and Chen (2024) demonstrate that psychological resilience and active coping strategies are related to the relationship between perceived discrimination and individual well-being. This reinforces the possibility that the relationship between social connectedness and perceived discrimination in this study is also influenced by other variables that have not yet been measured.

Descriptive results showed that most participants fell within the category of low social connectedness and low perceived discrimination based on group categorization criteria. These results need to be interpreted carefully because the high and low categories are relative to the distribution of participants' scores. A low category of perceived discrimination does not mean that discrimination has never been experienced, whereas a low category of social connectedness does not automatically indicate disruption of social relationships.

Additional analysis found differences in social connectedness by gender, with male students having higher mean ranks than female students. This finding aligns with research by Zakaria and Safitri (2020), who found differences in loneliness between migrant and non-migrant students, suggesting that gender may influence social adjustment experiences. However, this study did not measure factors that could explain the observed gender differences. Therefore, these results cannot be used to conclude that gender directly determines social connectedness. These differences may be related to patterns of social activity, interaction opportunities, forms of support obtained, or other characteristics not yet studied.

The study also found differences in social connectedness and perceived discrimination based on age. These findings are consistent with research by Corney et al. (2024), who found that age and length of residence influence subjective well-being and mental health help-seeking behaviors among international students. Nevertheless, these results need to be interpreted very carefully. Some age groups, particularly 26, 28, and 29 years old, had only one participant. An imbalance in the number of participants can cause the mean rank value to be unstable. Additionally, the Kruskal–Wallis test only shows that there is an overall difference and does not determine which age group is significantly different without a post hoc test. Therefore, it cannot be immediately concluded that increasing age always increases social connectedness or decreases the perception of discrimination.

Differences were also found based on organizational activities both on and off campus. Descriptively, students who are actively involved in organizations have a higher mean rank of social connectedness and lower perceived discrimination than students who are not actively involved. Organizations can provide opportunities for students to interact, form group identities, gain support, and develop a sense of belonging.

These findings align with the view that involvement in social groups can support a sense of belonging and connectedness (Cruwys et al., 2022). Research by Grishina et al. (2023) also demonstrated the effectiveness of community friendship groups on participant social and mental health outcomes. Additionally, Grieve et al. (2013) found that social connectedness can be derived through various social platforms, both online and offline. However, the results of this study do not prove that organizational activity leads to increased social connectedness or a decrease in the perception of discrimination. It is possible that students who have high social

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connections from the beginning are more interested in joining organizations. Thus, the relationship between organizational activities and the two variables needs to be further investigated through longitudinal or experimental designs.

Research Limitations

This research has a number of limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study employed a cross-sectional design, where data on social connectedness and perceived discrimination were collected at a single point in time. This design did not allow researchers to observe changes in both variables over time and could not determine the direction of the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables.

Second, data were collected using self-report questionnaires. Participants' answers depended on memory, understanding of the items, conditions at the time of filling out the questionnaire, and willingness to report personal experiences. Measurement of the two variables using the same method may also cause common method bias, where the relationship between variables may be influenced by the similarity of measurement methods.

Third, the research utilized purposive sampling techniques. Participants were obtained through Papuan student networks and communities as well as the distribution of online questionnaires. Therefore, participants with access to such networks may have been more likely to participate than students who do not have similar social networks. The research results cannot be generalized directly to all Papuan students in Jakarta or Papuan students in other regions.

Fourth, the study has not measured several variables that may be related to social connectedness and perceived discrimination, such as social support, ethnic identity, resilience, coping strategies, self-esteem, economic conditions, previous experiences of discrimination, and the quality of the campus environment. The non-inclusion of these variables may be one reason why the relationship between the two variables is only in the medium category.

Fifth, the measurement of perceived discrimination has not distinguished the context in which discrimination experiences occur, for example in the campus environment, residence, transportation, public services, or social media. The research has also not distinguished between sources of discrimination and forms of interpersonal and institutional discrimination. Consequently, the study results cannot explain the specific context of discrimination that most participants experience.

Sixth, length of stay in Jakarta was only used as a participant criterion and was not analyzed as a variable that might affect the relationship between the two variables. In fact, length of stay may be related to the adaptation process, breadth of social networks, and interaction experiences while in Jakarta.

Seventh, some groups in the additional analysis had a very disproportionate number of participants. This condition is especially evident in age grouping, so comparisons between age groups need to be interpreted carefully. The study also did not conduct post hoc tests to determine significantly different group pairs.

Eighth, the consistency of the version, the number of items, and the process of adapting the measuring instruments still need to be explained in more detail. Future research should report on the translation process, expert assessment, construct validity testing, and reliability of measuring instruments systematically so that the suitability of the instruments for Papuan students can be ensured.

CONCLUSION

Based on the Spearman correlation analysis, a significant negative relationship was found between social connectedness and perceived discrimination among Papuan students in Jakarta, with a correlation coefficient of $r_s = -0.469$ and $p < 0.001$, indicating a moderate relationship strength. This finding suggests that higher levels of social connectedness among Papuan students were associated with lower levels of reported perceived discrimination, and vice versa. Therefore, the research hypothesis stating that there was a negative relationship between the two variables was supported. Additional analyses revealed differences in social connectedness based on gender, age, and involvement in campus and off-campus organizations. Students who actively participated in organizational activities tended to demonstrate higher levels of social connectedness and lower levels of perceived discrimination. However, these findings should be interpreted cautiously because the study employed a correlational design, which does not allow conclusions regarding causal relationships, and some demographic groups had unequal participant distributions.

Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal designs and mixed-method approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between the two variables. Further studies should also involve participants from various cities and universities with more diverse characteristics. Variables such as social support, ethnic identity, resilience, and coping strategies should be considered as potential mediators or moderators. Practically, universities are encouraged to develop inclusive environments through cross-cultural orientation programs and safe mechanisms for reporting discrimination. The government and managers of educational affirmation programs should also provide social and psychological support for Papuan students, extending beyond educational access and financial assistance, to promote their academic success and psychological well-being while studying away from their home regions.

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