



Students' Perceptions of Homophily Related Factors in University Friendships: The Case of the University of Vlora "Ismail Qemali"

Sherif Dervishi

PhD Student, Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Tirana, Tirana, Albania

Received: 17 December 2026 / Revised: 13 January 2026 / Accepted: 10 March 2026 / Published: 25 March 2026
© 2026 Sherif Dervishi.

Doi: 10.56345/ijrdv13n106

Abstract

This article examines how homophily-related considerations shape students' perceptions of the most influential criteria for forming close university friendships at University of Vlora "Ismail Qemali". Using a cross-sectional quantitative design, the study is based on a classroom-administered survey conducted between May and October 2025 with a structured 87-item questionnaire, and it presents a focused analysis of Item 28, where respondents select one factor they believe most influences the formation of their closest friendship circle. The sample (N = 84) includes first-year Bachelor's Nursing students (N = 53) and fifth-year students in the integrated Master of Science in Law program (N = 31). Overall, "shared subculture" was the most frequently reported factor (39.3%), followed by similarity in interests (34.5%) and being from the same city/village (20.2%), whereas political beliefs and socio-economic status were rarely selected. Differences between programs were not statistically significant, $\chi^2(5, N = 84) = 9.39, p = 0.094; p_{MC} \approx 0.063$; however, the association showed a moderate effect size (Cramér's $V = 0.33$), and discrepancies were concentrated mainly in low-frequency categories. The findings suggest that close friendships are perceived to rest primarily on meaning-based affinity, shared subculture and shared interests, with implications for student orientation and interdisciplinary integration initiatives; conclusions remain exploratory due to the institutional sub-sample and the reliance on a single survey item.

Keywords: homophily, university friendships, social networks, student perceptions

1. Introduction

In the sociology of social relationships, the university is seen as a space where individuals enter new relationships, build friendship networks, and position themselves within groups marked by symbolic boundaries. "Student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1999, p. 519). The formation of university friendships is not a random process; it is influenced by similarities, interests, cultural norms, and by the ways students perceive themselves and others in relation to social belonging. In this sense, the university becomes a community where students develop ties and a sense of belonging through a process of social and intellectual integration, which leads to the construction of their membership within the university community (Tinto, 1993, p. 121).

The concept of homophily the tendency to connect with "similar others" is one of the most prominent and enduring empirical regularities of social life (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954; Laumann, 1966; Verbrugge, 1977; McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987; Marsden, 1988; Burt, 1991, as cited in Kossinets & Watts, 2009, p. 405). It provides a useful framework for understanding why some social ties become closer and more stable than others. Homophily can take different forms: cultural (values, lifestyles, norms), interest-based (hobbies, goals, shared practices), territorial (common origin), or socio-economic statuses.

Meanwhile, social identity theory emphasizes that individuals construct self-understanding and a sense of

belonging through group memberships (e.g., field of study, academic level), which shapes the distinction between “us” and “them” and influences interaction preferences (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 38). These mechanisms are particularly important in academically demanding environments, where social choices are also linked to emotional support, academic collaboration, and the management of everyday pressures.

Against this background, the present study aims to provide an overview of the social orientations of university students at the University of Vlora “Ismail Qemali”, identifying which factors are most valued when forming close relationships with others. Attention is directed to whether social closeness is built primarily on subcultural foundations (a shared mindset and value alignment), on socio-economic factors (status and resources), or on pragmatic interests (similarity in interests and functional benefits gained from friendship).

This approach is important not only for understanding the structure of friendship networks, but also for explaining the dynamics of university coexistence and the potential for tension, disagreement, and conflict, as group boundaries and preferences for closeness may generate exclusion, misunderstandings, and small everyday forms of polarization. Consequently, homophily and social identity are treated as mechanisms linked to the ways students organize relationships and create cohesion or distance within the university environment.

Empirically, the study is based on a survey conducted from May to October 2025, consisting of 87 questions (mainly Likert-scale items) in hard-copy format, designed to measure students’ experiences and perceptions related to conflict within the university environment. As part of this instrument, one key question assesses the factors students consider most important for forming close university friendships (e.g., shared culture, similarity in interests, shared origin, political beliefs, socio-economic status).

The sample includes two groups with different academic profiles: Bachelor’s students (Nursing, first year) and Master’s students (Law, fifth year), which enables the observation of patterns of social closeness at two different stages of university socialization an entry phase and a more consolidated phase of academic experience. Analytically, the study aims to (I) identify the dominant homophily factors in university friendships and (II) explore possible differences according to academic affiliation/study level as a dimension of social identity, suggesting that proximity based on perceived similarity attributes may influence social cohesion and the ways differences are managed within the student community.

2. Theoretical Background

Homophily is the principle according to which contacts and relationships between similar people occur at higher rates than those between dissimilar people. The widespread presence of homophily implies that cultural, behavioral, genetic, or material information circulating through networks tends to remain localized (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001, p. 416).

Studies on the transition to higher education emphasize that new friendships are essential for first-year adjustment and well-being. In a study of first-year students across several universities, the quality of new friendships was positively associated with university adjustment (Buote et al., 2007).

Self-Categorization Theory explains how people, depending on the situation, may view themselves sometimes as individuals (“I”) and sometimes as part of a group (“we”) (Turner et al., 1987). When a group identity becomes more salient (for example, similarity in interests), students tend to align themselves with what is considered “typical” of the group, and shared norms and expectations are formed. This helps explain why specific social groups emerge within the university context and why, at times, the “us–them” boundaries between groups become more visible.

Individuals may acknowledge that they belong to a number of social groups without necessarily adopting those classifications as social identities. Social identities are selected from the different bases of self-categorization available to an individual at a given moment. Likewise, certain social identities may be activated in some situations but not in others (Brewer, M. B., 1991, p. 477).

Various authors, including Festinger, Schachter, and Back (1963), Abu-Ghazze (1999), as well as Holahan, Wilcox, and Burnam (1978), have emphasized the importance of geographic proximity in determining who interacts with whom (Marmaros & Sacerdote, 2006, p. 83).

A shared background, interests, and racial affiliation between two individuals may increase or decrease the benefits of a given social interaction. For example, a white high school senior from Newton, Massachusetts, may have little in common with a first-year Black student from Chicago. This could increase the benefits for both, because the two individuals possess different and non-overlapping sets of information. On the other hand, if their goals and concerns are also entirely different and “orthogonal” (i.e., they do not intersect), then the value of the interaction may be low, despite a large knowledge gap between them (Marmaros & Sacerdote, 2006, p. 84).

Researchers in education have long acknowledged the importance of peer relationships for students’ wellbeing

and academic achievement (McCabe, 2016, p. 24).

Peer relationships shape students' development over time. Within a peer network, not only do personal characteristics (e.g., behavior, attitudes) change over time, but the relationships themselves also change (i.e., who connects with whom). This is referred to as the co-evolution process (Brouwer et al., 2022, p. 2).

Students who are categorized as friends are seen as a valuable source of knowledge. They tend to use friends within their program of study as a "reference point" for evaluating their own academic competence (Senior & Howard, 2014, p. 3).

Weber, Schwenzer, and Hillmert (2020) show that learning networks among university students display homophily: especially among men, same-gender partnerships are preferred, and the likelihood of forming new ties decreases as differences in students' academic ability/performance increase (p. 470). Similarly, longitudinal evidence on friendship networks suggests that "academic homophily" may arise mainly from selection (students change their friendship networks by choosing more similar peers) rather than from influence (changes in performance to match the group) (Smirnov & Thurner, 2017).

Shelton et al. (2024) emphasize that friendships are formed not only through similarity in interests/identity, but also through opportunities for contact within a shared social environment.

Especially in university settings, where program structures and class groups create opportunities for meeting and forming ties (de Matos Fernandes et al., 2024; Gilsbach & Stauder, 2025).

3. Method

3.1 Study Design and Implementation Context

This study is quantitative and employs descriptive and comparative analyses. Data collection was conducted at the University of Vlora "Ismail Qemali" in May 2025, as part of a broader survey process spanning May–October 2025. The empirical aim of this article is to provide an overview of students' social orientations in forming close friendships and to examine differences by study program profile.

3.2 Population, Sampling, and Sample Distribution

This article is based on the institutional sub-sample from the University of Vlora "Ismail Qemali," drawn from a national study aiming to produce overall conclusions about students from 12 public universities in the Republic of Albania. From a population of 46,083 students who regularly attend classes on campus, stratified sampling by university with proportional allocation was applied.

Data were collected in university classrooms from two study-program groups selected for comparative purposes: students from a Bachelor's program (Nursing, Year 1) and students from the integrated Master of Science in Law program (Year 5). The total number of respondents included in the analysis for this article is $N = 84$.

Questionnaires were completed in classrooms during seminar sessions, aiming to include the students who were present. Before completion, students were given an explanation of the questionnaire's purpose in order to obtain their informed consent, and anonymity was ensured. This approach represents within-stratum selection rather than full random sampling.

The survey sample is defined as the collection of individual observations. The number of individuals in a sample is called the sample size and is denoted by the letter n (Koni, 2025, p. 45).

3.3 Research Instrument and Collected Variables

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with 87 items, mainly on a Likert scale, completed in paper format (A4). The instrument had been previously piloted with students at the University of Tirana. In addition to the thematic items, demographic indicators were also collected (e.g., gender, employment status, and family income).

This article deliberately focuses on a targeted analysis of a single item that is Question 28 of the questionnaire: "In your opinion, which factor has the greatest influence on forming the closest group of friends at university?" Participants selected one option from the following categories: 1. being from the same place of residence, 2. similar political beliefs, 3. shared culture, 4. socio-economic level, 5. similarity in interests, 6. other.

This question is the main variable examined in this study because it directly measures the factor students consider decisive in forming close friendships. As a clear item with predefined response categories, it enables between-group comparisons and is well suited for an exploratory analysis.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure and Ethics

Questionnaires were completed in classrooms during seminar sessions. The average completion time was approximately 20–23 minutes. Participant anonymity was ensured and informed consent was obtained; institutional procedures for permissions and coordination with lecturers and the relevant administration were followed.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data were processed and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25) and Microsoft Excel.

The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics (frequencies/percentages) to address RQ1/H1, as well as between-group comparative analyses for RQ2/H2. For categorical variables, a chi-square (χ^2) test of independence was used. Because some categories had low frequencies, results are interpreted cautiously and presented as exploratory.

3.6 Limitation

The small sub-sample in the case of the University of Vlora “Ismail Qemali” increases the margin of error for generalizable analyses at the university level and also limits the ability to generalize the findings to public universities in the Republic of Albania.

The survey was conducted in two of the university’s four faculties, in the Faculty of Human Sciences and the Faculty of Health Sciences.

3.7 Alignment Table

Alignment table shows how the study is organized: it connects each objective with its research question, hypothesis, dependent variable, data source, and the analysis used.

Objectives	Research question (RQ)	Hypothesis (H)	Dependent variable (DV)	Data source	Analysis
To identify the main factors that students consider decisive in forming their closest social groups.	RQ1: Which factor is most frequently reported as the main influence in forming the closest group of friends at university?	H1: Affinity-based factors (e.g., shared subculture, similarity of interests) tend to dominate overall.	Selection of the primary friendship factor (nominal categories).	An 87-item questionnaire; analysis focused on Question 28. An institutional sub-sample within the national study using stratified sampling by university.	Frequencies and percentages; ranking of dominant categories.
To examine whether the factors for close friendships differ by study program (Bachelor/Master; Year 1/Year 5).	RQ2: Does the selection of factors for forming new friendships differ by study program	H2: The distribution of responses to Question 28 differs by study program	Selection of the primary friendship factor (Question 28; nominal categories).	Surveyed: 84 students. Limited institutional coverage across two study programs (Bachelor/Master).	Methodological explanation; statement of limitations.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

To the question, “In your opinion, which factor most influences the formation of the closest group of university friends?”, students at the University of Vlora “Ismail Qemali” responded as shown in the table below:

Table 2. Distribution of responses by group and overall (n and %)

Factor	Bachelor's Nursing, 1st year (N=53) n (%)	Law, 5th year (N=31) n (%)	Total (N=84) n (%)
Being from the same city/village	12 (22.6%)	5 (16.1%)	17 (20.2%)
Similar political beliefs	(0.0%)	2 (6.5%)	2 (2.4%)
Shared subculture	21 (39.6%)	12 (38.7%)	33 (39.3%)
Socio-economic status	(0.0%)	2 (6.5%)	2 (2.4%)
Similarity in interests	20 (37.7%)	9 (29.0%)	29 (34.5%)
Other	(0.0%)	1 (3.2%)	1 (1.2%)

Note: Percentages were calculated within each group and rounded to one decimal place.

These are the response data from the surveyed students in the two observed groups: Bachelor's students (Nursing, 1st year) and students in the Integrated Program "Master of Science in Law" (Law, 5th year). The main rationale for the comparative analysis is the explanatory interest in achieving a better understanding of the causal processes involved in producing an event, a characteristic, or a relationship. The strength of comparative analysis as a research design lies in its ability to introduce additional explanatory variables (Pickvance, 2005, p. 2).

4.1.1 Differences by Study Program (Chi-square test)

To examine whether the main factors students select for close friendships differ between the two study programs, I used Pearson's chi-square test of independence (2×6). The results showed no statistically significant difference between programs: $\chi^2(5, N=84)=9.39, p=0.094$. However, the association between study program and the selected factors was moderate (Cramér's $V = 0.33$). Because several cells had low expected counts, I also computed a Monte Carlo-estimated p-value (200,000 samples), which likewise did not reach conventional significance ($p_{MC} \approx 0.063$). The most noticeable differences appeared in the rarely chosen categories (political beliefs, socio-economic status, and "other"), which were selected only by Law students.

4.2 Sample Description

Table 3. Sample Characteristics (N = 84)

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Female	72	85.7%
	Male	12	14.3%
Place of residence	Urban	41	48.8%
	Rural	43	51.2%
Economic level	Low	2	2.4%
	Middle	73	86.9%
	High	9	10.7%

Based on the data in Table 2, it is evident that the gender structure is highly unbalanced, as is the case in almost all public universities in the Republic of Albania (INSTAT, 2024, p. 5). Female students account for 85.7% of the respondents, while male students represent 14.3%. This means that the results and conclusions will primarily reflect the perspective of female students, and gender-based comparisons may be limited due to the smaller number of male participants.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis

According to place of residence, representation is almost equal: those living in urban areas account for approximately 48.8%, while those living in rural areas account for about 51.2%. This is positive in terms of territorial representation, as there is no strong dominance of either group. According to the World Bank (2023), around 58.2% of Albania's population lived in urban areas, while approximately 41.8% lived in rural areas. The distribution of the sample by residence does not match the structure of the general population in the Republic of Albania, which implies an overrepresentation of respondents from rural areas and an underrepresentation of urban respondents in the sample. As a result, the findings reflect more strongly the characteristics of the rural group. Most students at the University of Vlora "Ismail Qemali" come from the rural administrative units of Vlora County and Fier County. Regarding economic status, there is a clear dominance of the "middle" category: approximately 86.9% of respondents report a medium economic level, while the low economic level is very small at about 2.4%, and the high economic

level accounts for around 10.7%. This indicates that the sample is predominantly economically “average”; interpretations involving the extreme categories (low/high) are less robust due to a degree of students’ reluctance to self-identify as either economically poor or economically wealthy.

4.4 *Main Finding: University Friendships are Formed Primarily Through “Meaning Based Similarity”*

Overall, the two major perceptions are: shared subculture about 39.3% and similarity in interests about 34.5%. These two variables represent the most important factors in the creation and strengthening of social relationships with fellow students, enabling them to meet and interact almost daily within university academic life. Thus, the more frequently and regularly people meet, the easier it is to form and maintain a friendship. Liking seems to emerge naturally from repeated exposure and from “being visible” to one another (Van Duijn et al., 2003, p. 57). Together, these account for approximately 73.8% of the choices. Sociologically, this suggests that the “core” of close university friendship groups is linked more strongly to everyday affinity: ways of thinking, lifestyle, communication codes, shared interests, and activities. This aligns with the idea of homophily, in that close ties tend to form where interaction is easier and where there are lower social “costs” in communication. According to Picton et al. (2017, p. 9), friendship at university is important. The findings illustrate the pathways through which relationships with other students influence students’ sense of belonging and wellbeing.

4.5 *“Being from the Same City or Village” Matters, but it is Not the Leading Criterion*

In the era of the democratisation of higher education, university environments are becoming increasingly heterogeneous (Zenelaga et al., 2025, p. 646).

Being from the same city or village about 20.2% emerges as an important factor, but it is less influential than shared subculture and common interests. Shared origin or a common place of residence can function as an initial bridge (familiarity, pre-existing networks, and a sense of security), but close ties are consolidated more strongly through alignment in subcultural values and shared interests, rather than solely by the fact of “which village or city” other students come from.

Researcher Zyhdi Dervishi argues that Albanian culture may have one of the highest levels of subcultural density (Dervishi, 2016, p. 398).

4.6 *Politics and Socio-Economic Status: Clearly Peripheral in Close Friendships*

Overall, political beliefs approximately 2.4% and socio-economic status around 2.4% as possible variables for socializing with fellow students appear at very low levels. Particularly over the last 10 years, there has been growing concern about young people’s limited engagement in political initiatives, or their involvement in activities perceived as orchestrated by traditional politics. Unfortunately, it is observed that university youth in the Republic of Albania, even in the few student protests that have taken place, have not managed to bring about meaningful social change in relation to the demands that were articulated. According to Fitim Zekthi (2025, p. 301), the case of student protest in Albania illustrates the limitations of protest politics in a partially consolidated democracy. While mobilizations displayed vibrant civic energy, their ultimate effectiveness was constrained by structural factors. First, the clientelism embedded in Albanian politics weakened the movement’s impact. Students may not perceive this variable as a “conscious criterion” for close friendships, or it may be indirectly embedded within “shared subculture” (for example, in habits, ideas, or ways of speaking), and therefore may not be reported as a separate category.

4.7 *Differences Between Programs: Small but Contextually Meaningful*

According to the empirical data, first-year Bachelor’s students in Nursing identified shared subculture around 39.6% and shared interests around 37.7% as the strongest reasons for socializing with fellow students. These two indicators are nearly equal. The variable “being from the same place” (about 22.6%) carries a relatively high weight, which may be linked to the early stage of integration among first-year students, making it easier to approach someone who comes from the same area of residence.

Likewise, fifth-year students in the integrated Law program selected shared subculture at approximately 38.7%, which remains the leading factor. One of the most qualified connoisseurs of traditional Albanian culture, Faik Konica, wrote that Albanian culture is a confederation of a large number of subcultural mini-republics (2001, p. 232).

Meanwhile, the variable “shared interests” drops to about 29.0%, and the variables “politics” and “socio-economic status” appear at low levels, at approximately 6.5% each. This may indicate that in the more advanced years of study, students perceive the environment as more differentiated, with interests spanning broader fields. Nevertheless, these differences are small and do not provide statistically meaningful evidence of strong effects. In this sample, the formation

of close university groups is explained primarily by cultural homophily and interest-based homophily, while structural factors such as socio-economic status and political beliefs appear rarely as declared determinants. This suggests that close groups are built on forms of similarity that facilitate everyday communication and create a sense of belonging, whereas other differences are either not considered decisive or are absorbed within the broader concept of "shared culture".

5. Discussion

This study is important because it examines students' integration into university life by identifying the factors they consider most important when forming close friendship groups. The findings suggest that friendship formation often follows perceived "similarity," highlighting the need to encourage more open, less judgmental interactions with peers who hold different views or values.

The results indicate that students view shared subculture and similarity in interests as the main factors in forming a close group of friends, while coming from the same city or village plays a secondary role, and political beliefs or socio-economic status are rarely mentioned. This aligns with the principle of homophily, according to which social ties are more likely to form among similar individuals because interaction is easier and relationships become more stable (McPherson et al., 2001). At the same time, from the perspective of social identity/self-categorization, "subculture" and "interests" function as bases for constructing a shared "we" category, shaping common expectations and fostering cohesion within the group (Turner et al., 1987). The low percentages for politics and socio-economic status may indicate that these are not perceived as direct criteria for friendship, or that they are absorbed within the broader meaning of "shared subculture." Researchers argue that interest in participation in political activities is in crisis, especially among young people (Kitanova, 2019, p. 1).

6. Contributions

The study's novelty is related to two elements. First, it provides evidence in a context where local studies are scarce, making visible the criteria that students use in practice to form close groups. Second, it operationalizes directly the tendency to affiliate with "similar others" through a clear empirical indicator, showing that, in the overall descriptive results, shared subculture and similarity of interests emerge as the dominant factors. This finding links the university experience to a broader social pattern: even in adulthood, including in work environments, people tend to gravitate toward individuals they perceive as similar a tendency that this study makes measurable at the level of students' lived experience.

7. Conclusions

Most students selected *shared subculture* as the main factor about 39.3%, followed by *similarity in interests* about 34.5%. Being from the same city or village was reported less frequently about 20.2%, while similar political beliefs and socio-economic status were chosen only minimally about 2.4% each. The option "Other" was selected by only one student. Across both groups (Bachelor's Nursing, 1st year, and Law, 5th year), the response pattern remains similar, with the dominance of *shared subculture* and *similar interests*.

The findings suggest that, in this sample, the formation of close university groups is primarily linked to homophily based on meaning-related foundations such as shared subculture, and to practical homophily expressed through shared interests. "The subculture construct serves as a bridge for communication within interlocking groups" (Fine & Kleinman, 1979, p. 8).

Universities could promote cross-group interaction through mixed seminar groups and student activities, encouraging students to connect beyond perceived similarity in order to support social integration and reduce informal clustering.

These conclusions reflect the patterns observed in this sample. However, they should be interpreted cautiously and not generalized too broadly, as this analysis is based on a single-item measure.

8. Acknowledgments

I thank the professors of the University of Vlora "Ismail Qemali" for authorizing and facilitating the administration of the survey on campus. In particular, I am grateful to Assoc. Prof. Enkelejd Mëhilli, Dean of the Faculty of Public Health, and Assoc. Prof. Esmeralda Laçi, Head of the Basic Unit (Department of Education), for their support in enabling data collection within the university premises. I also thank the participating students—first-year Bachelor's Nursing students and fifth-year students in the integrated Master of Science in Law program—for their time and valuable contributions to this study.

References

- Astin, A. W. (1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(5), 518–529.
- Brewer, M. B. (1991). The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17(5), 475–482. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167291175001>
- Brouwer, J., de Matos Fernandes, C. A., Steglich, C. E. G., Jansen, E. P. W. A., Hofman, W. H. A., & Flache, A. (2022). The development of peer networks and academic performance in learning communities in higher education. *Learning and Instruction*, 80, 101603. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2022.101603>
- Buote, V. M., Pancer, S. M., Pratt, M. W., Adams, G., Birnie-Lefcovitch, S., Polivy, J., & Wintre, M. G. (2007). The importance of friends: Friendship and adjustment among 1st-year university students. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 22(6), 665–689. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558407306344>
- de Matos Fernandes, C. A., Hoffman, M., & Brouwer, J. (2024). Antecedents of student team formation in higher education. *Learning and Instruction*, 92, 101931. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2024.101931>
- Dervishi, Z. (2016). Lente të ndërveprimit simbolik. EMAL.
- Fine, G. A., & Kleinman, S. (1979). Rethinking Subculture: An Interactionist Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 85(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1086/226971>
- Gilsbach, J., & Stauder, J. (2025). Digital communication and tie formation amongst freshmen students during and after the pandemic. *Social Networks*, 81, 53–66. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2024.12.002>
- INSTAT. (2024). Education enrollment statistics 2022-23. <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/11614/education-enrollment-statistics-2022-23.pdf>
- Kitanova, M. (2019). Youth political participation in the EU: Evidence from a cross-national analysis. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 23(7), 819–836. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2019.1636951>
- Koni, M. (2025). Biostatistika: Koncepte bazë dhe aplikime për shkencat biologjike, mjekësore dhe sociale (Botimi i 3-të). Emal.
- Konica, F. (2001) Vepra, vëllimi 2. Dudaj.
- Kossinets, G., & Watts, D. J. (2009). Origins of Homophily in an Evolving Social Network. *American Journal of Sociology*, 115(2), 405–450. <https://doi.org/10.1086/599247>
- Marmaros, D., & Sacerdote, B. (2006). How Do Friendships Form? *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 121(1), 79–119. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/121.1.79>
- McCabe, J. (2016). Friends with Academic Benefits. *Contexts*, 15(3), 22–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504216662237> (Original work published 2016)
- McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Cook, J. M. (2001). Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27(1), 415–444. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.415>
- Pickvance, C. (2005). The four varieties of comparative analysis: The case of environmental regulation. Paper presented at the NCRM/ESRC Symposium “Small and Large-N Comparative Solutions”, University of Sussex, 22–23 September 2005
- Picton, C., Kahu, E. R., & Nelson, K. (2017). Friendship supported learning – the role of friendships in first-year students' university experiences. In Proceedings of the 3rd Students Transitions Achievement Retention and Success (STARS) Conference (2–5 July 2017, Adelaide, Australia). <https://unistars.org/papers/STARS2017/08A.pdf>
- Senior, C., & Howard, C. (2014). Learning in friendship groups: developing students' conceptual understanding through social interaction. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01031>
- Shelton, J. N., Turetsky, K. M., Park, Y., & Eikenburg, L. (2024). Diverse friendships: Formation, maintenance, and benefits. In M. Hojjat & A. Moyer (Eds.), *Modern relationships*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197655504.003.0015>
- Smirnov, I., & Thurner, S. (2017). Formation of homophily in academic performance: Students change their friends rather than performance. *PLOS ONE*, 12(8), e0183473. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0183473>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33–47). Brooks/Cole.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the Social Group: A self-categorization Theory*. New York: Blackwell
- Van Duijn, M. A. J., Zeggelink, E. P. H., Huisman, M., Stokman, F. N., & Wasseur, F. W. (2003). Evolution of sociology freshmen into a friendship network. *The Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, 27(2–3), 153–191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222500390213137>
- Weber, H., Schwenzer, M., & Hillmert, S. (2020). Homophily in the formation and development of learning networks among university students. *Network Science*, 8(4), 469–491. <https://doi.org/10.1017/nws.2020.10>
- World Bank. (2023). Urban population (% of total population) (SP.URB.TOTL). World Development Indicators. <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators/Series/SP.URB.TOTL>
- Zekthi, F. (2025). The Impact of Student Protests in Albania and Political Outcomes: A Critical Approach. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 15(4), 294–304. <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2025-0138>
- Zenelaga, B., Dervishi, S., Masaro, C., Gabčo, J., & Weiss, E. (2025). Exploring causes and consequences of university students' conflicts: A scoping review. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 16(2), 643–657. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2025.3.643.657>