

Satisfaction in Romantic Relationship among Adolescents: Inputs to Guidance Program

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***Abstract** - Romantic relationship among adolescents are common everywhere however not all of us are true natural born, hopeful romantics. Yet there are those who struggle with the whole concept. It is not because they don't want to enjoy it with their partner but has more to do with their never having understood it. No relationships-themed resource would be complete without some helpful insights regarding the subject of romance. This study was conducted to discover whether or not there is an association between the profile and involvement in a romantic relationship among adolescent. It also outlined the timing of romantic attachment formation and its implications for relationship stability. Fifty high school students attending Batangas National High School were surveyed. Approximately one hundred percent of those surveyed were involved in a relationship. Results showed that adolescents are generally satisfied with their romantic relationships. The respondents are already confident in establishing romantic relationship. The relationship between the length of the romantic relationship and the level of satisfaction was found to be positive.*

Keywords - Satisfaction, Romantic Relationship, Adolescents, Guidance Program

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical period in development, marked by an expansion of peer networks, increased importance of close friendships, and the emergence of romantic relationships. With adolescents' transition to high school, the size and diversity of their peer networks increase and peer crowd affiliation becomes important.

Experiences with peers constitute an important developmental context for children and adolescents (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006). During adolescence, close friends surpass parents as the primary source of social support, and contribute to adolescents' self-concept and well-being.

Moreover, dating relationships emerge and become increasingly important. By age 16, most adolescents have had a romantic relationship (Carver, Joyner, & Udry, 2003). Such relationships may have mental health benefits, including the provision of social support, the enhancement of self-esteem, preparation for adult relationships, and the development of intimacy (Collins, 2003).

Romantic relationships are a prevalent component of human experience. Although romantic relationships are often characterized by positive emotions such as love and fulfillment, nonetheless conflict and its accompanying negative emotions are inevitable, as

differing needs of partners cannot always be met simultaneously.

The quality of adolescent romantic relationships can have long lasting effects on self-esteem and shape personal values regarding romance, intimate relationships, and sexuality (Barber & Eccles, 2003). Romantic relationships may be beneficial to adolescents' social and emotional functioning but they also can represent significant stressors. Romantic relationships explain 25% - 34% of the strong emotions that high school students' experience, and about 42% of these strong emotions are negative feelings, such as anxiety, anger, jealousy, and depression (Larson, Clore, & Wood, 1999).

The Batangas National High School is a very large school with many enrolled students, some of them are in a relationship especially in the adolescent period, the fourth year level. Several interpersonal theories suggest that adolescents' romantic relationships are associated with distinct patterns of social experience such as in the school. Many even in the school setting adolescents enter into a relationship but only for a temporal duration. They associate the structure of their peer networks and the quality of their relationships as that with a parent/adult and best friend. Adolescents with a boy/girlfriend report larger networks, more opposite-sex friends, and more nonschool friends. Adolescents with

longer romantic relationships report more social support with the boy/girlfriend than did adolescents with short-term romantic relationships. Temporal duration are believed to have moderated the salience of the romantic relationship. Those of short duration viewed less favorably than friend and parent/adult relationships, than those of are often longer duration. Finally, continuity in perceived quality was evident between romantic and other relationships. Overall, the results support the view that romantic relationships are embedded within adolescents' ongoing social experience and show important links to the structure and quality of their relationships with parents and with peers.

A major challenge for adolescents is to deal simultaneously with three developmental tasks: forging an identity that is unique, building skills and developing intimacy with the opposite sex, and coming to terms with new sexual desires and impulses. These tasks are often played out in the context of romantic relationships. As a result romantic relations are salient in the lives of adolescents.

According to the results of the study conducted by La Greca and Harrison (2005), gender was not found to contribute to social anxiety and depressive symptoms; however, after the other variables were entered females was found to show more social anxiety and depressive symptoms than males. High status peer affiliation and low status peer affiliation were protective factors for social anxiety; higher levels of relational victimization, lower levels of best friendship qualities, and higher levels of negative best friendship qualities each predict social anxiety and resulted in higher levels of social anxiety.

Dush and Amato (2005) proposed that although romantic relationships range from causal dating to marriage, research heavily focused on marriage and there are few studies which examine the indicators of well-being in other romantic relationships such as causal dating, steady dating or cohabitation. In their research, they examined subjective well-being among not only married people but also cohabitators, causal daters, and steady daters.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship satisfaction among partners in romantic relationships. This discusses the importance of romantic relationships to youth and youth development, including the benefits of healthy relationships, the risks romantic relationships may pose to adolescents, and the need for adults to support young people in developing healthy relationships. In the psychology perspective there is a lot of emotion involving in this study and the way that

the respondents thinking in their relationship that satisfy them.

Psychology poses questions about human issues and behaviours, a subject that interests many young people. They might consider, for example, why some people behave with others like that or research what others know about addiction.

Through studying psychology, students become more self-aware they develop their capacity to understand people's behaviours and responses to real-life situations and societies, past and present.

Understanding human behaviour can build students' confidence, develop their awareness of people from different backgrounds, help them to communicate more effectively, and encourage them to participate in the community.

Love is the most profound emotion known to human beings. For most people, romantic relationships are the most meaningful element in their lives. But the ability to have a healthy, loving relationship is not innate. Almost all have experienced a failed relationship, and oftentimes have to work consciously to master the skills necessary to make them flourish. The good news is that with effort and perseverance, you can learn what you need to know to make your relationship last. Research findings will contribute other options and strategies that may be used by psychologists and the self in dealing with concerns on romantic relationships.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the satisfaction in romantic relationship among adolescent. Specifically, it determined relationship between age and romantic satisfaction, to test the significant relationship between the profile and level of satisfaction, and to propose a program on counseling addressing the result of the study.

III. METHOD

Research Design

This research utilized descriptive design. The survey questionnaire asked participants to identify whether they were male or female, and also asked the duration of the romantic relationship. Relationship satisfaction was based on relationship standards, which were taken from a list of relationship standards in the Vangelistis and Daly (2004) experiment.

Participants

Data for this study came from a survey of 50 students from the Batangas National High School

conducted in January, 2013. There are 18 male and 32 females in 3 different sections.

Instruments

Survey questions were posed in a Likert-type style, where participants were asked to either agree or disagree with statements regarding how well they felt. To measure actual experiences, participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with eight factors previously found to be integral to romantic relationships: commitment, quality of communication, conflict resolution, emotional self-disclosure, affection, relational certainty/security, role within the relationship, equity and enjoyment in their relationship.

Procedures

The survey questionnaire asked participants to identify whether they are males or females, and also asked the duration of the romantic relationship. The students were asked to respond by checking a number from a five-point Likert scale to indicate their level of romantic satisfaction ranging from '5' strongly disagree to '1' strongly agree. Relationship satisfaction was based on relationship standards, which were taken from a list of relationship standards in the Vangelisti and Daly (2004) experiment.

Data Analysis

This research used survey to collect data from people who were currently at the time of the data collection is and had been in romantic relationships. A scale was adopted by the researcher to measure levels of relationship satisfaction because the questions were Likert-type, the answers were based on intervals ranging from 5 to 1, and where 5 represented strong disagreement and 1 represented strong agreement. Pearson correlation was used to analyze data and weighted mean was used to rank the answers given by the respondents. The core of the Pearson correlation coefficient is the covariance between the two variables, which illustrates two variables that are positively correlated. Weighted means play an important role in the systems of data analysis, the collection of tools employs the study of methods and procedures used for gathering, organizing, and analyzing data to understand.

Negative emotions are very low in the early development of romantic relationships. This fact was established by the positive responses of the participants. The researcher believes that as the relationship progresses both intimacy and negative emotions increase as the couple attempts to label the relationship

and determine the future of the relationship. Once the relationship is well-established, negative emotions are expected to decrease whereas levels of intimacy are expected to continue to increase.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The age range of the participants 15 to 17, got a percentage of 12 percent; for the age of 15 the lowest percent because with that age it just mean that they are not interested in having a romantic relationship, 64 percent for the age of 16, the highest percent, which mean that with this age the adolescent usually have the tendency of entering into a romantic relationship. As to gender, 64 percent of participants are females and 36 percent are males; only students who claimed to be in a monogamous romantic relationship for 3 months or longer were allowed to participate. There were varying relationship lengths: 64 percent of participants were in a relationship of 3-6 months got the highest percentage, adolescents enter into relationship that commonly lasts, within a month because they are not still consistent in the decision making in their relationship. 4 percent who were in a relationship of 6-12 months are trying to cope up with their relationship conditions, 24 percent were in a relationship for 1-2 years, and 8 percent were in a relationship for 2 or more years which implies that few adolescents taking his/her romantic relationship with a partner are seriously. Relationships in the early phases among adolescents often involve a larger amount of affiliate behaviors such as spending time together, which mostly involve positive affect and usually do not involve strong emotions or highly sensitive communication topics.

Vangelisti and Daly (1997) said both men and women have similar standards in relationships and value each standard similarly. They suggest this is because of the perspective of the different experiences model, which states that "a woman's caretaker role, their relatively intimate style of interaction and their communication skills create a relational context in which men's standards are more likely to be met than women's. It is possible that women pay more attention to their relational issues. This led to a research question about whether a person's gender really is related to relationship satisfaction. In this study, relationship satisfaction is relationship standards.

An important contextual characteristic of romantic relationship is the duration of the relationship, which may have important implications to the ways in which conflict and intimacy are experienced.

Table 1. Respondent Satisfaction in Romantic Relationship (N = 50)

Items	WM	VI	Rank
1. In my current relationship: I do not feel comfortable disclosing what I need or want from our relationship	3.74	Disagree	1
2. I am under-benefited.	3.54	Never	2
3. I do not feel my partner is committed to me.	3.16	Never	3
4. My partner does not try to understand my needs.	2.94	Never	4
5. My partner does not contribute as much to our relationship (financially) as I do.	2.93	Agree	5
6. My partner is not willing to compromise.	2.88	Never	6
7. My partner is not dependable.	2.86	Never	7
8. I feel that I should be able to disclose intimate, personal things about myself without hesitation	2.80	Never	8
9. I am not very motivated to be involved.	2.78	Never	9
10. I do not feel cared for.	2.66	Never	10
11. My partner sincerely reveals to me their feelings and experiences.	1.96	Agree	28
12. I am patient and forgiving of my partner.	1.94	Agree	29
13. My partner tries to understand why I am upset.	1.82	Agree	30
14. My partner and I are able to successfully reach conflict resolution.	1.90	Agree	30
15. My partner and I use open communication.	1.80	Agree	31
16. My partner often discusses our future together.	1.80	Agree	31
17. I am happy with my role in the relationship.	1.80	Agree	31
18. My partner is strongly motivated to devote their time and effort to our relationship.	1.76	Agree	32
19. My partner feels responsible for their part.	1.74	Agree	33
20. My partner listens to me.	1.56	Agree	34

Table 1 shows the ten highest and the ten lowest ranked items: I do not feel comfortable disclosing what I need or want from our relationship, 'I am under benefited', 'My partner does not try to understand my needs', 'I do not feel that my partner is committed to me', 'My partner contributes as much to our relationship (financially) as I do' 'My partner is not willing to compromise', 'My partner is not dependable', 'I feel that I should be able to disclose intimate, personal things about myself without hesitation', 'I am not very motivated to be involved', 'I do not feel cared for', 'while the lowest ranked items include: 'I am happy with my role in the relationship', 'My partner and I use open communication', 'My partner often discusses our future together', 'My partner is strongly motivated to devote his/her time to our relationship', and 'My partner feels responsible for his/her part and my partner listens to me.

The top ten highest have an interpretation of disagree and never while another ten lowest ranked with an interpretation of agree. The higher the score is, the higher the satisfaction and the lower the score is, the lower satisfaction. Relationships get better and more satisfying over time. The beginning of a relationship is when people are usually excited to be around each other, are just starting to get to know one another, and,

therefore, are not discussing difficulties in their relationship. The beginnings of romantic relationships are often marked by high levels of relationship satisfaction.

Relationship satisfaction can be measured by the emotional self-disclosure within a relationship. 'I do not feel comfortable disclosing what I need or want from our relationship' ranked 1 with a mean of 3.74. Self-disclosure is the process of telling another about one's intimate feelings, attitudes, and experience. Communicating personal information about one's self is important in relationship satisfaction, but it is also important for an individual to communicate their feelings about their partner through affectionate communication.

Affectionate communication is a behavior that portrays feelings of fondness and positive regard to another (Floyd, 2006). Affection is a basic human need and it is met through interpersonal interaction and in forming mutually supportive relationships (Guerrero, Anderson & Afifi, 2011). Affection is a key to establishing relationships and keeping them close; the absence of it can propel the relationship into a negative state.

In addition to the open communication described above, relationship satisfaction can also be measured by

relational-certainty/security. People generally dislike uncertainty and high levels of uncertainty often lead to dissatisfaction in relationships (Guerrero, Anderson & Afifi, 2011). As a result, relational certainty is shown to be beneficial in relationships, leading to enhanced satisfaction.

‘My partner does not try to understand my needs’ ranked 4 with a mean score of 2.94. Commitment is enhanced when individuals experience relationship satisfaction, and is increased when individuals invest important or numerous resources in the relationship. This study showed that the answer ‘I do not feel that my partner is committed to me’ ranked 3 with a mean of 3.16. One such resource is the amount of time that the partners have devoted to the relationship. ‘My partner is strongly motivated to devote his/her time to our relationship’ ranked 21 with a mean of 2.14. This leads into the quality of communication between two people in a relationship.

As gender roles have begun to shift, research has shown that equity has become a contributing factor in relationship satisfaction. ‘My partner financially contributes as much to our relationship as I do’ ranked 5 with a mean of 2.93. Equity theory focuses on determining whether the distribution of resources is fair to both relational partners. Equity is measured by comparing the ratio of contributions and benefits for each person (Guerrero, Anderson & Afifi, 2011). For example, partners do not have equal contributions as long as the ratio between these benefits and contributions is similar.

Relational security can be attributed to the role a person plays in the relationship; being comfortable in that role has been shown to have an effect on satisfaction. I am happy with my role in the relationship Men who conform to society’s idea of masculine norms were more strongly associated with women’s relationship satisfaction. ‘I am happy with my role in the relationship’ ranked 31 with a mean of 1.80 Women still seem to prefer men who exhibit parts of these masculine norms.

Communication is the substance of relationships, without it there is no relationship. ‘My partner and I use open communication’ and ‘My partner often discusses our future together’ both ranked 31 with a mean of 1.80. The quality of communication is important in determining the outcome of the relationship (Guerrero, Anderson & Afifi, 2011).

When a romantic relationship begins the focus is on getting to know one another, but as the relationship continues and becomes more intimate, partners make predictions about the future of the relationship. ‘My

partner often discusses our future together’ ranked 31 with a mean score of 1.80.

The uncertainty surrounding the future of a relationship, or relational uncertainty, has been linked to more negative appraisals of one another, experiences of jealousy, and difficulty communicating with one another. Those couples who are unable to resolve the uncertainty are likely to dissolve the relationship. Those couples who are able to communicate and resolve their feelings of uncertainty are expected to continue the relationship with heightened levels of intimacy and a stronger bond (Knobloch, 2007).

Findings also suggest that at one or more points during the development of a romantic relationship partners will experience relational uncertainty. The uncertainty surrounding the future of a relationship is likely to result in more negative appraisals of one another, experiences of jealousy, and difficulty communicating with one another. Establishing a mutual understanding about the future of the relationship will decrease uncertainty and, according to our data, decrease the amount of negative conflict strategies used in the relationship.

Table 2. Relationship Between Profile and Level of Satisfaction in Romantic Relationship among Respondents (N = 50, alpha = 0.05)

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Age and Score	-0.077	0.594	Not Significant

Table 2 shows that though there is a negative relationship between age and satisfaction in romantic relationship ($r_{xy} = -0.077$), it is statistically not significant. This means that age is not a predictor of satisfaction in romantic relationships. Other variables can be affecting satisfaction in romantic relationships. Young people spend a great deal of time thinking about talking about, and being in romantic relationships (Furman, 2002), yet adults typically dismiss adolescent dating relationships as superficial.

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Studies where a majority of the relationships assessed are new or less committed are likely to yield different results than studies where a majority of relationships are more fully developed. Future research on romantic relationships in emerging adulthood should include assessing the relational context to better understand findings across studies.

Table 3. Comparison Between Sexes Based on Romantic Relationship Scores (N = 50, alpha = 0.05)

Sex	Mean	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Male	2.47	2.175	0.035	Significant
Female	2.19			

Table 3 shows that the responses of males and females have significant difference based on romantic relationship. If a person's relationship model is based on whom they were raised by and it was a positive experience, then it could produce a secure attachment style, higher optimism about marriage and the person would be more satisfied in their relationships. The result of the ANOVA was significant in the male with the mean of 2.47 and the female with a mean of 2.19. Individuals who perceived their relationships to be equitable report being happy more content than those who perceived their dating relationships to be inequitable.

Table 4. Comparison Between Lengths of Relationship Based on Romantic Relationship Scores (N = 50, alpha = 0.05)

Length	WM	F-value	p-value	I
3 – 6 months	2.43			
6 – 12 months	2.33	4.185	0.011	S
1- 2 years	1.93			
2 years & above	2.23			

I – Interpretation; *S* – Significant; *WM* – Weighted Mean

Post hoc tests show significant differences between 3 – 6 months & 1 – 2 years; with 3 – 6 months having higher scores for romantic relationships. Post hoc tests

Matrix Program

Specific Objectives	KRA	Program	Strategies	Responsible
1. Determine the profile of the respondents	Implemented guidance program	Group Guidance	Conduct group guidance session for fourth year students	Guidance Counselor
2. Establish the profile and relationship of the respondents	Number of students to be counseled and interview	Interview and counseling program	Conduct counseling and initial interview	Guidance Counselor
3. Measure the length of relationship	Survey	Follow-up studies	Follow-up of students who are into romantic relationship	Guidance Counselor
4. Propose a program for the result of the study	Awareness of the students	Seminars	Conduct a seminar related to romantic relationship	Guidance counselor

are designed for situations in which the researcher has already obtained significant omnibus homogeneous subsets with a factor that consists of three or more means and additional exploration of the differences among means is needed to provide specific information on which means are significantly different from each other. It focuses on the nature of communication, emotion, and influence within adolescent dating relationships.

Romantic relationship satisfaction refers to feelings, thoughts, or behaviors within a relationship associated with sexual attitudes, professed feelings of love, commitment issues, self-disclosure, and relationship investment.

Rusbult and Buunk (1993) found that couples that reported high relationship satisfaction also reported higher levels of intimacy and commitment. In fact, numerous studies that have examined the investment model show relationship satisfaction and commitment are positively correlated whereas they are negatively correlated with relationship alternatives. If an individual feels highly committed to an online partner and is anticipating future interaction with the partner in an off-line context then perceived commitment of the partner might influence satisfaction as the future success of the off-line relationship may hinge upon the partner's commitment to the relationship as it stands.

Proposed Counseling Program

It provides a basis for expecting gender differences in the ways in which adolescents navigate and experience romantic relationships. The symbolic interactions perspective that we develop highlights unique features of adolescent romantic relationships that provide for additional socialization.

It measures of competence and romantic relationship involvement was obtained from a normative community of adolescents.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Adolescents are generally satisfied with their romantic relationships. Results suggest that although success in romantic relationships has roots in general peer competence, there may be both deviant and prosocial pathways of initial romantic involvement. Early romantic involvement in early adolescence may have negative consequences for academic, and conduct domains of competence.

The respondents are already confident in establishing romantic relationship. Later in adolescence, romantic relationship involvement its significance, perhaps as it becomes a normative developmental task. Results highlight the need for developmental research on the origins and meaning of romantic relationships, one of the most controversial aspects of peer relationships.

That there is a significant between sexes and length of relationship based on romantic relationship scores. The relationship between the length of the romantic relationship and the level of satisfaction was found to be positive. The profile such as sex and length of relationship but not the age affects the respondents satisfaction in romantic relationship.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Guidance Office may provide seminar/workshop for adolescents to gain a better understanding of other factors that may influence adolescent relationship with romantic partners.

The Batangas National High School may provide guidance counseling services to adolescents to promote healthy romantic relationship.

The proposed program in guidance and counseling to promote healthy romantic relationship must be implemented by the Guidance office of the Batangas National High School.

Continued research on other variables is encouraged to aid adolescents in navigating this complex developmental period and in identifying factors that may have a significant impact on their lives.

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