

Chapter 3

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP AND STRESS AMONG ADOLESCENCE

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Abstract

This present study investigated the relationship between romantic relationship and stress among adolescence. The study group was determined with the purposive random sampling method. 60 college students participated in this study. The data were collected by means of passionate love scale and perceived stress scale. The data were analysed by using Pearson correlation coefficient and t-test. The result shows that there is a significant relationship was observed between romantic relationship and stress among adolescence age group. Also there is no significant differences in romantic relationship among boys and girls.

Key words: *Romantic relationship, Stress*

Introduction

Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to adulthood. Adolescence is usually associated with the teenage years, but its physical, psychological or cultural expressions may begin earlier and end later

Adolescence in relationships may experience or stress on a day to day basis than others. Stresses can range from lack or misinterpretation of communication, wondering if a relationship will last, losing your identity, and or concerns about infidelity. In adolescence, having a girlfriend or boyfriend can boost one's confidence. When relationships are characterized

intimacy and good communication, youth are happier with themselves. Young people value the support, trust and closeness they experience in romantic relationship.

All couples experience. Sometimes stress come from problems at work or with family or friends that we carry over into our relationship. Stress can also come from the couple's issues, such as an argument, differences in wants or needs, or feeling neglected. Social relationships are also important factor in regards to the general health of adolescence. Poor social relationship can affect their physical health habits and mental health habits. Which eventually leads to developmental problems so increase alcohol consumption, substance abuse, delinquent behaviors and mortality risk.

Romantic relationship

Romantic relationship is the defined as mutual, ongoing and voluntary interactions between two partners that is characterized by specific expressions of affection and intimacy. Separate couples display a conventional approach to marriage, but each partners operate autonomously.

Romance is ever where in western culture. We see it depicted in movies, television shows and advertisement. We hear it in music. We read about it in literature, fortune cookies and astrology. We even see romance in sports, when one partner proposes to another on the big screen. The image and words we are bombarded within media serve a purpose. To better understanding this propose, let's begin by exploring the changing definition of a romantic relationship.

Traditionally a specific events (that is a wedding) determined the status of a romantic relationship. Couples were referred to as premarital (If they were not married) or marital (If they were). This distinction also described well defined social norms that dictated acceptable behaviors and interactions for each type of couple. In recent years (and for many reasons), the lines regarding romantic relationships has blurred.

A romantic relationship is defined as mutual, ongoing and voluntary interactions between two partners that is characterized by specific expressions of affection and intimacy (Collins, et al., 2009). This definition reflects contemporary ideas about romantic relationships. For example,

marital status and partner gender is ambiguous. Instead this definition focuses on interactions (if, mutual, ongoing and voluntary) and expressions (that is, affection and intimacy).

Factors influencing relationship formation success.

Many factors influence the ways we form romantic relationships and the reasons behind these formations. Segrin and Flora (2019) point to factors such as upbringing, values, attractiveness and interaction patterns,

- **Being Taken for Granted**

When we start to date someone special, our focus is on that person and building the relationship. It can be one of the most joyous and happy times of our lives. As time passes through, we can start to take our partners for granted assuming that they will always be around and doing the things that they have always done in the relationship. This can be the start of a destructive pattern as one person may start to feel resentful that their contribution to the relationship is not being recognized or supported by the other person.

- **Communication problem**

In the beginning, we listen with eagerness to everything the other person tells us, we laugh at every in joke or anecdote and file away our minds every experience or story that we learn about their life. But, after a while, we start to tune out little as we hear repeated stories or comments. This can affect the way that we communicate with our partners by not listening to what they are saying. Poor communication causes frustration and friction in relationships.

- **Intimacy**

At the start of the relationship, the two of you couldn't keep your hands off each other and the chemistry sizzled. Now, with two small children, you barely have time to greet each other in the mornings or the energy to stay awake past their bedtime. When intimacy is lacking, the relationship between the couple can often be as strained as one partner may feel that the other partner is no longer providing them with the love and reassurance that they experience at the start.

- **Time poor**

When you were younger and in love and didn't have a mortgage and family, you could spend hours together browsing flea markets, going to the beach and dining out. It seems that with both of you working, being parents and trying to keep up with friends and family members, as well as participating in the local football club and the school p and c- there is never any time for just the two of you. When you are both stretched and involved with other activities, a couple can often feel the strain.

- **Family interference**

When we become a couple, we often feel that it is just the two of us but not fair in to the relationship, we discover that our families are part of it as well. Family members can mean well but may actually end up interfering in the choices a couple make unwanted advice, although given with the best intentions, can cause problems for a couple. This can result in external pressure on the relationship and could generate a few arguments between the couple and or the other family members.

Triangular theory of love

The triangular theory of love explains the topic of love in an interpersonal relationship. Psychologist Robert Sternberg's theory describes types of love based on three different scales: Intimacy, passion and commitment

- Intimacy – Which encompasses feelings of attachment, closeness, connectedness and bondedness.
- Passion – Which encompasses drives connected to both limerence and sexual attraction
- Commitment – which encompasses, in the short term, the decision to remain with another, and in long term, plans made with that other.

It is important to recognize that a relationship based on a single element is less likely to survive than one based on two or more. Different stages and types of love can be explained as different combinations of three elements. For example, the relative emphasis of each component change over time as an adult romantic relationship develops.

- Liking in this case is not used in a trivial sense. Sternberg says that this intimate liking characterizes true friendship, in which a person feels a bondedness, a warmth and a closeness with another but not intense passion or long term commitment.

- Infatuated love is often what is felt “Love at first sight”. But without the intimacy and the commitment components of love, infatuated love may disappear suddenly.
- Empty love: Sometimes a stronger love deteriorates in to empty love, in which the commitment remains, but the intimacy and passion have died, in cultures in which arranged marriages are common, relationships often begin as empty love.
- Romantic love: Romantic loves are bonded emotionally (as in liking) and physically through passionate arousal
- Companionate love is often found in marriages in which the passion has gone out of the relationship, but a deep affection and commitment remain. Companionate love is generally a personal relationship you build with somebody you share your life with, but with no sexual or physical desire it is stronger than friendship because of the extra element of commitment. The love ideally shared between family members is a form of companionate love, as is the love between deep friends or those who spend a lot of time together in any a sexual but friendly relationship.
- Fatuous love can be exemplified by a whirlwind courtship and marriage in which a commitment is motivated largely by passion without the stabilizing influence of intimacy.
- Consummate love is the complete form of love, representing the idea relationship toward which many people strive but which apparently few achieve. Sternberg cautions that maintaining a consummate love may be even harder than achieving it. He stresses the importance of translating the components of love into action, “Without expression” he warns, “even the greatest of loves can be die” (1987, P.341) consummate love may not be permanent. For example, if passion is lost overtime, it may change companionate love.

The balance among Sternberg’s three aspects of love is likely to shift through the cause of a relationship. A strong dose of all three components found in consummate love typifies, for many of us, an ideal relationship. However time alone does not cause intimacy, passion and commitment to occur and grow. Knowing about these components of love may help couples avoid pitfall in their relationship, work on the areas that need improvement or help them recognize when it might be time for a relationship to come to an end.

Stress

According to WHO stress can be defined as any type of change that cause physical, emotional or psychological strain. The term “stress”, as it is currently used was coined by Hans Selye in 1936, who defined it as “the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change”.

Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated angry, or nervous. Stress is your body’s reaction to a challenge or demand. In short bursts, stress can be positive, such as when it helps you avoid danger or meet a deadline. But when stress lasts for a long time, it may harm your health.

There are two main types of stress:

- **Acute Stress:** This is a short term stress that goes away quickly. You feel it when you slam on the brakes, have a fight with your partner, or ski down a steep slop. It helps you manage dangerous situations. It also occurs when you do something new or exciting. All people have acute stress at one time or another.
- **Chronic Stress:** This is stress that lasts for a longer period of time. You may have chronic stress if you have money problems, an unhappy marriage, or trouble at work. Any type of stress that goes on for weeks or months is chronic stress that you didn’t realize it is a problem. If you don’t find ways to manage stress, it may lead to health problems. When you have chronic stress your body stays alert, even though there is no danger overtime. This puts you at risk for health including,

Symptoms of chronic stress

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Depression or anxiety
- Skin problems like acne or eczema
- Menstrual problem

Theoretical contribution to stress

- Fight or flight response:

The earliest contribution to stress research was Walter Cannon's (1932) description of the fight or flight response. Cannon proposed that when an organism perceives a threat, the body is rapidly aroused and motivated via the sympathetic nervous system and the endocrine system. This concentrated physiological response mobilizes the organism to attack the threat or to flee, hence it is called fight or flight response. Fight refers to aggressive responses to stress, such as getting angry or taking action etc.

- Selye's General adaptation syndrome:

Hans Selye's work on the general adaptation syndrome. Selye exposed rats to a variety of stressors, such as extreme cold and fatigue, and observed their physiological response. All of them produced the same pattern of physiological change. They all led to an enlarged adrenal cortex, shrink thymus and lymph gland, and ulceration of the stomach and duodenum. From these observations, Selye (1956) developed the general adaptation syndrome. He argued that when a person confronts a stressor, it mobilizes itself for action. Then the person will respond with the same physiological pattern of reactions. The general adaptation syndrome consists of 3 phases. Alarm phase, Resistance phase and exhaustion phase.

- Tend-be-friend.

S.E. Taylor and colleagues developed the Tend be friend. Theory maintains that, in addition to fight or flight people and animals respond to stress with social affiliation and nurturing behavior toward offspring. These responses to stress may be especially true of women.

Tend be friend is a behavior exhibited by some animals, including humans, in response to threat. It refers to protection of offspring (tending) and seeking out their social group for mutual defense (be friending)

Need and significance of the study

This study is conducted to identify how romantic relationships and stress affect adolescents. This study is important in these days because romantic relationships as well as stress of the adolescence are increasing day by day. Adolescent romantic relationships are important. As well as aiding identity development, adolescent romantic relationships - both short term and long term - can provide positive learning experiences about the self, for example through influencing self-esteem and beliefs about attractiveness and self-worth, and raising status

in the peer group stress can negatively impact on relationships. Often people keep their stress to themselves, which makes it difficult for their partners to understand what they are going through and to provide support. So in this study let us try to explore how much romantic relationships are affected by the stress.

Key terms

- Romantic relationship
- Stress

Method

The procedure pertaining to the present study romantic relationship and stress among adolescents.

Methodology has its own importance in scientific investigation because objectively in many research investigation cannot be obtained unless it's carried out in a very systematic way and planned manner. This chapter deals with the approach and way this research has been conducted. It maps the methods and materials utilized for this research.

Objectives

The present study has a set of following objectives:

- To examine the relation between romantic relationship and stress among adolescents.
- To examine how romantic relationship effect on adolescent age
- To examine how stress effect among adolescent use group.

Hypothesis

The present study has a set of following hypothesis:

- **H1:** There is a significant relationship between romantic relationship and stress among adolescent use groups.
- **H2:** There is a significant difference in romantic relationship among boys and girls

Research design

Correlation analysis is used in this study.

A sample of 60 adolescents are taken. The data was collected from college students and non-college students.

- **Inclusion criteria:**

Subjects who are adolescent

- **Exclusion criteria:**

Subjects who are not married

Measures

Only questionnaire measure were used in the present study. All measures employed are widely used ones in psychological research, with well-established psychometric properties.

Tools

Passionate love scale

Passionate love scale was develop by Hatfield and Walster (1978). The passionate love scale has 30 items. The instrument is designed to measure an individual's level of passionate love toward another person. The scale usually require 30 minutes of respondents time where respondent answer on passionate love scale.. The questions are open to interpretation making this scale suitable for adolescents with a range of background. A series of studies indicated that PLs is highly reliable, coefficient of alpha was 0.94 for 30 item version. The construct validity of passionate love scale is reveals that, this has excellent internal consistency and correlation. The validity of PLS is 0. 53.

Scoring

For the passionate scale, the possible responses to each item ranged from

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

The individual items are simply summed to produce a total score. The interpretation are

- 106-135 point = Wildly, even recklessly in love
- 86-105 point = Passionate, but less intense
- 66-85 point = Occasional bursts of passion
- 45-65 point = Tepid, infrequent passion

- 15-44 point = The thrill is gone

Perceived stress scale

Perceived stress scale was developed by Cohen et al. (1983). The perceived stress scale is a 10 item questionnaire it is widely used to assess stress levels in young people and adults. It evaluate the degree to which an individual, has perceived life as unpredictable, uncontrollable and overloading over the previous month. Internal consistency reliability for perceived stress scale is alpha 0.82. The convergent validity of perceived stress scale is 0.64

Scoring

For Perceived stress scale, firstly reverse score for questions 4, 5, 7&8. On these 4 questions, change the scale like this 0=4, 1=3, 2=2, 3=1, 4=0. Then add scores for each item to get a total score. Individual scores on the perceived stress scale can range from 0 to 40 with higher scores indicating higher perceived stress.

Interpretation of perceived stress scale are

- Score ranging from 0-13 would be considered low stress
- Scores ranging from 14-26 would be considered moderate stress.
- Score ranging from 27-40 would be considered high perceived stress

Procedure

The researcher went to the various colleges in Manjeri and Perinthalmanna. The permission to conduct the study was obtained from the college and concerned departments. The details of instruction were printed in the first page of each scale. The participants were asked to read the instruction carefully given on the top of each scale. A concern form was also given with scale. The data was collected through direct method giving the questionnaire directly to the subject. After having collected the data, it was tabulated very carefully for analyzing the data. So that the result can be interpreted and briefly communicated in the comprehensive manner. Descriptive statistics and crobachs alpha for each scale were also determined.

Statistical analysis done in the study

Pearson correlation coefficient

A coefficient of correlation is simple index represent the relation between two variable can be computed in the different ways depending on the nature of data. The standard kind of correlation coefficient of correlation and one of the most computed is Pearson product moment coefficient (Pearson). Generally the value of a vary from the value of +1 which indicate perfect positive correlation (ie, x increases y also increase). Although zero indicate the complete independence or on correlation whatever and down to -1.00 means perfect negative correlation. (ie, x increase, y is decrease). If two variable correlate with each other there is a reason to believe in the existence of common relationship development be interfered from this information alone. Additional criteria would be required.

T-test

A t test is a statistical test that is used to compare the means of two groups. It is often used in hypothesis testing to determine whether a process or treatment actually has an effect on the population of interest, or whether two groups are different from one another. A t test is appropriate when the collected sample is small, random sample from some statistical “population” and want to compare the mean from your samples to another value. The value for comparison could be a fixed value. (eg:10) or the mean of a second samples The t value is the score obtained when you perform t-test. It represents the difference between the mean or average scores of two groups, while taking into account any variation in scores.

Result and discussion

In a design report, the results and discussion involve an evaluation of the research design or method used. In a feasibility or case study, the results and discussion section would involve the feasibility or evaluating the success of one or more solutions. The scale used in this study is passionate love scale and perceived stress scale.

The study on romantic relationship and stress among adolescence conducted among the adolescent boys and girls in Malappuram district. The sample was collected from 60 college students. The scales used in this study are passionate love scale and perceived stress scale. The passionate love scale was developed by Hatfield and Walster in (1978) and it consist of 30 items. The perceived stress scale is a 10 item questionnaire originally developed by Cohen et al. (1983).

Table-1 Demographic variables

Demographic factors		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	31	51.667
	Female	29	48.33
Age	15-21	60	100

Table-1 shows the demographic variables of the present study. This study is conducted among 60 college students. The selected samples are currently pursuing graduation in different colleges at Manjeri and Perinthalmanna. The sample contain a total of 31 males and 29 female. The corresponding percentage of males is 51.667 and that of females is 48.333 respectively.

Table-2 the correlation between romantic relationship and stress.

		Romantic relationship
Stress	Pearson correlation	0.280*
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.030
	N	60

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (at 2-tailed)

Table-2 shows the correlation between romantic relationship and stress among adolescence. The Pearson correlation co-efficient of romantic relationship and stress is +0.280 at 0.05 level significance. It means that there is a positive correlation existing between these variable. Hence if the romantic relationship is increasing the level of stress also increase. Likewise if the romantic relationship is decreasing, the stress level is also decreasing among adolescent age group. There for, the hypothesis there is a significant relationship between romantic relationship and stress among adolescence is accepted. Hence the factors influencing on romantic relationship formation may affect in the success of the relationship.

There is a significant relation between romantic relationship and stress. The romantic relationship provides an opportunity learning how to maintain intimacy, relationship and build positive self-concept. As well as aiding identity development, adolescent romantic relationship- both short- term and long term- can provide positive learning experience about the self. For example through influencing self-esteem and beliefs about attractiveness and self-worth, and rising status in the peer group.

There is a study on the topic the ‘influence of adolescent's romantic relationship on individual development 'conducted by Jin Honghao et. al in 2021. The study analyzes the effect of adolescent’s romantic behavior on individual development. The result shows that adolescents, romance distracts adolescent's academic attention and lower academic performance. Hence the stress is increasing. Likewise in the normal life of adolescence, the romantic relationships always leads to more stressful situations. It affect academics, work, family environment, healthy social interactions. In extreme cases may leads to toxic relationships and greater consequences.

Table-3 mean, t value, and significance (2-tailed)

	Gender	N	Mean	t-value	Significance 2-tail
Score in	1	31	180.68	-0.422	0.674
Romantic relationship	2	29	174.76	-0.422	0.675

Table-3 shows the mean, t value and level of significance. The mean of score of romantic relationship of males is 180.68 and that of females is 174.76. The corresponding t-value is -0.422 and -0.422 respectively. The level of significance of boys is 0.674 and girls is 0.675 respectively. In this study the t value is negative. Hence there is no significant difference in romantic relationship among boys and girls. So the hypothesis there is a significant difference in romantic relationship among boys and girls is rejected.

In this study we found that there is no significant difference in romantic relationship among boys and girls. Generally boys are more focused on passion and fun in the relationship than girls are. Girls tend to be more focused on keeping it light and fun. Here this study contradict with these general assumptions.

I can’t find any other study to support the present study. Here, it is clear that there is no significant difference in romantic relationship among boys and girls. It is because that, now a days the adolescent aged girls and boys are try to overcome their comfort zone. As result these aged girls and boys express their romantic relation with their opposite sex. When compare the current adolescent age group with a 10 years back adolescent age group, we can see so many

differences. The present adolescents always feel free to ask anything and everything at anywhere, irrespective of their status and prestige. They have no limits to express their emotions with others. They just want to express what is come to their mind. So, this study got such an outcome.

Summary and conclusion

The study on romantic relationship and stress among adolescence was conducted with the following objectives:

- To examine the relation between romantic relationship and stress among adolescents.
- To examine how romantic relationship effect on adolescent age
- To examine how stress effect among adolescent age group.

The study was conducted among college students in Malappuram district. 60 college students were selected by convenient sampling. The study was carried out by using passionate love scale by Hatfield & Walster (1978) and Perceived stress scale by Cohen et al (1983). The age of the sample ranged from 15-21 years. Passionate love scale was used to assess the level of romantic relationship and Perceived stress scale was used to assess the level of stress.

Conclusion

- Very significant relation was observed between romantic relationship and stress among adolescenceage group. There for, the hypothesis “There is a significant relationship between romantic relationship and stress among adolescentage group" is accepted.
- Very low level difference was observed in romantic relationship between boys and girls. Therefore the hypothesis “There is a significant difference in romantic relationship among boys and girls” is rejected.

Limitations

- The data collection was done in few colleges in Malappuram district and the result may vary in other parts of the district.
- The sample size was too small.
- The period of research study was short.
- The interest of the subjects was very low. So, the responses given by the respondent may not fully accurate.

Recommendation

- Premarital counseling sessions can be conducted in order to maintain good romantic relationship between partners.
- We can conduct yoga and meditation to minimize the stress of adolescents.

Suggestion for further research

- Google forms can be used for more easier data collection
- The study might be conducted in different districts for comparison purpose.

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