Research Article

A Correlation Study between Self-esteem and Romantic Jealousy among University Students

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ABSTRACT

This correlation study aimed to determine the association between the level of self-esteem and romantic jealousy among selected undergraduate university students from Metro Manila, Philippines. The researchers conducted an online survey with the use of self-administered questionnaires. Purposive non-probability sampling was used to identify the 40 respondents for this study. to gather respondents. Descriptive and inferential statistics. Majority of the respondents were females (23 out of 40) and in their early stage of relationship (1-4 months). Results show that the respondents have a moderate level of self-esteem (median of 3) and high level of romantic jealousy (median of 5). A statistically significant inverse correlation was found between their level of self-esteem and romantic jealousy ($r = -0.185$, $p < .05$). The result suggests that the higher their level of self-esteem, the lower the romantic jealousy, i.e. romantic jealousy has no space if one is confident in one's romantic relationship.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Romantic Jealousy, Personal Characteristics, Undergraduate University Students

Introduction

Self-esteem plays a lead role in influencing the activities individuals involve themselves in and the satisfaction they get from being involved. For instance, a study by Çevik (2017) found that teachers with high self-esteem had high job satisfaction. The researcher found that respect gained from their environments played a vital role in the teachers' self-esteem. This would mean that as the teachers gain more respect, their self-esteem increases, increasing their job satisfaction.

Another of the many things the level of self-esteem has proven to affect is the satisfaction individuals feel in romantic relationships. According to Erol and Orth (2016), each romantic partner's level of self-esteem influences the relationship satisfaction they perceive. Likewise, when there is a change in a partner's level of

self-esteem, there is also a change in the partners' relationship satisfaction. This implies that relationship satisfaction can be defined by self-esteem. However, relationship satisfaction can also be defined by romantic jealousy. A study by Elphinston et al. (2013) stated that jealousy in romantic relationships directly affected the relationship dissatisfaction an individual feels.

As for romantic jealousy, self-esteem seems to have a big influence. Studies have shown that the lower the level of self-esteem an individual has, the higher their level of romantic jealousy is. The study of Hand (2015) supported this idea by stating that those who have lower self-esteem tend to have a greater fear of losing their partner to someone better than them.

This correlation study aimed to determine the association between the level of self-esteem and romantic jealousy among selected undergraduate university students from Metro Manila, Philippines. The level of self-esteem was identified by letting individuals self-evaluate themselves through five self-esteem domains: scholastic competence, athletic competence, romantic appeal, physical appearance, and the ability to make close friendships. As for the level of romantic jealousy, it was determined through an individual's fear of sexual and emotional infidelity. The study aimed to contribute to knowledge regarding self-esteem and romantic jealousy in the Philippine context and if there is an association between the two variables to understand further romantic relationship between.

Methods

Research Design and Sampling

This correlation study aimed to determine the association between the level of self-esteem and romantic jealousy among selected undergraduate university students from Metro Manila, Philippines.

This study covered undergraduate university students from Metro Manila who were in exclusive romantic relationships, meaning that respondents were emotionally intimate with their partners and were not pursuing third-party individuals. This study acquired a sample size of 40 respondents. A non-probability sampling method, purposive sampling technique,

was used in the selection of respondents. The following criteria were utilized: (a) must live in Metro Manila, (b) must be an undergraduate university student, (c) must be 18 years old or above, (d) must be heterosexual, and (e) must be in an exclusive romantic relationship but not married.

Ethical Consideration

During the data gathering process, the respondents of this study were not harmed in any way and their responses were properly kept confidential by the researchers. Prior to distributing the survey, full consent was acquired from the respondents through an informed consent form. With this consent form, all participants were informed of the purpose and benefits of the study as well as ensured the privacy of the data they provided. Moreover, the participants were informed of the anonymity of their participation in this research. If full consent was not given, the respondent was not forced to participate in the study. Aside from consent, any type of communication was done with utmost honesty.

Data Collection and Instrument

The study used an online survey, with the use of Google Forms, to gather the data. A self-administered questionnaire was used to gather data. The instrument consisted of three parts: 1) personal characteristics, 2) self-esteem, and 3) romantic jealousy. Romantic jealousy and self-esteem were measured through different scales used in different studies.

In the first section of this online survey foocused on measuring their level of self-esteem. Harter's (2012) and Messer and Harter's (2012) questionnaires were used as references for this study's survey questions. These questions were done through four-point Likert scales wherein a score of 1 suggests that there is a low self-perceived level of competence or adequacy, while a score of 4 indicates a high level.

In the second of the questionnaire, the level of romantic jealousy was measured. The researchers utilized an instrument created by Bringle et al. (1979) as a reference for this section. The questionnaire was created by using 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1 to 5 with 1

being "pleased," 2 being "mildly upset," 3 being "upset," 4 being "very upset," and 5 being "extremely upset." This was a 12-item scale that contained scenarios that may please or upset the respondent.

Data Analysis

The study utilized descriptive and inferential statistics in analyzing the data. The researchers computed each domain's median scores of self-esteem and the level of romantic jealousy for each individual to identify the central tendency. Moreover, they also computed the standard deviation and interpreted these using a scoring matrix. These matrices were based on the provided matrix in the studies of Harter (2012), Messer and Harter (2012), and Bringle et al. (1979).

The levels of self-esteem and romantic jealousy was interpreted as low, moderate, and high scores. The self-esteem score was divided into the following: 1 - 2, 2.01 - 3, 3.01 - 4. On the other hand, the romantic jealousy score was divided as follows: 1 - 3.35, 3.36 - 4.31, 4.32 - 5. The given ranges were scored low, moderate, and high, respectively.

Using Spearman's rank-order correlation (Spearman's Rho), the researchers assessed the correlation between self-esteem and the length of a romantic relationship. Spearman's Rho was also used to compute the correlation between the level of self-esteem and level of romantic jealousy.

The significance level of this study was set at $p<0.05$. If the p-value is less than or equal to the significance level, then it can be concluded that the variables of the study are statistically significant. The estimates of Spearman's Rho determined the strength of the correlations of the variables.

Result and Discussion

Level of Self-esteem of Undergraduate University Students

The 25-item self-esteem questionnaire was utilized in order to measure the level of self-esteem of undergraduate university students. The self-esteem domains included scholastic competence, athletic competence, physical appearance, close friendships, and romantic appeal. Overall, Table 1 shows that the respondents have a moderate level (median of 3.0) of self-esteem.

All domains except athletic competence were rated with a moderate score of 3. Athletic competence has a low rating of 2 with a standard deviation of 1.02. With athletic competence having the lowest rating out of the five, it can be assumed that the undergraduate students are not active in sports or athletics. Many students focus on attaining high academic grades and less on their physical fitness as these grades could possibly define their future.

Table 1. Level of Self-esteem of the Students (n = 40)

Level of Self-esteem	Median	SD	Qualitativ Interpretation
Romantic Appeal	3	0.97	Moderate
I believe that my charisma can romantically attract someone.	3	1.00	Moderate
I am confident in my ability to keep the romantic attraction between my current partner and me.	3	0.79	Moderate
I think that my personality and humor are more than enough to attract someone romantically.	3	0.73	Moderate
I am confident in my ability to attract people through my physical appearance romantically.	2	1.00	Low
I can easily attract people romantically.	2	0.92	Low

Level of Self-esteem	Median	SD	Qualitativ Interpretation
Scholastic Competence	3	0.96	Moderate
I often submit my assignments on time.	4	0.75	High
I can comply with my performance tasks on time.	4	0.55	High
I do my assignments quickly and efficiently.	3	0.84	Moderate
I often engage in class discussions.	2	1.01	Low
I often participate in class activities.	2	0.90	Low
Physical Appearance	3	0.85	Moderate
I wouldn't change the way my body is right now.	3	0.96	Moderate
I am satisfied with the way I look.	3	0.91	Moderate
I like my hair the way it is.	3	0.72	Moderate
I am confident in my body.	2.5	0.88	Moderate
I am confident in my facial features.	2	0.78	Low
Close Friendships	3	0.75	Moderate
I consider myself a trustworthy confidant when it comes to my close friends.	4	0.51	High
In a new environment, I can easily make new friends that I would consider close.	3	0.89	Moderate
I can easily gain and maintain other people's trust.	3	0.76	Moderate
A lot of my friends confide in me when it comes to their personal secrets.	3	0.59	Moderate
Many people trust me when it comes to sharing their emotional thoughts.	3	0.59	Moderate
Athletic Competence	2	1.02	Low
I often participate in any physical activity.	3	0.96	Moderate
I learn and adapt to any physical activity easily.	3	0.92	Moderate
I am satisfied with the skills I have when it comes to sports.	2	1.08	Low
I am confident with my skills in any sport.	2	1.07	Low
I do well in all kinds of sports.	2	0.96	Low
Overall Level of Self-esteem	3	0.95	Moderate

Legend: 1 -Strongly Disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 – Agree; 4 - Strongly Agree

Level of Romantic Jealousy of Undergraduate University Students

The level of romantic jealousy was measured using two domains: sexual infidelity and emotional infidelity. Overall, Table 2 shows a high level of romantic jealousy (median of 5 with a standard deviation of 0.93) among the respondents. Both domains have high scores of 5 with standard deviations of 0.90 and 0.94 for sexual and emotional infidelity, respectively. The high overall level of romantic jealousy proves that romantic jealousy is a common thing a partner experiences in a romantic relationship seeing as infidelity is something that would create fear in individuals who are romantically invested in each other.

Table 2. Level of Romantic Jealousy (n=40)

Level of Romantic Jealousy	Median	SD	Interpretation
Sexual Infidelity	5	0.90	High
Your partner sent explicit photos of himself or herself to someone else.	5	1.25	High
Your partner had oral sex with someone else.	5	0.96	High
Your partner goes to a club and intimately dances with other people without you knowing.	5	0.95	High
Your partner has sexual phone conversations or messages with someone else.	5	0.87	High
Your partner intimately kisses someone else.	5	0.52	High
Your partner engages in sexual intercourse with someone else.	5	0.30	High
Emotional Infidelity	5	0.94	High
Your partner states that he/she wishes you were more like someone else.	5	1.03	High
Your partner expresses the desire that you both should develop romantic relationships with other people.	5	0.82	High
Your partner flirts with someone else.	5	0.87	High
Your partner lies to you about who he/she is with because that person may be a threat to your relationship.	5	0.72	High
Your partner doesn't acknowledge you as his/her romantic partner when talking to someone who may be a threat to your relationship.	4.5	1.08	High
Your partner talks about his/her unusual fondness towards someone else.	4	1.01	Moderate
Overall Level of Romantic Jealousy	5	0.93	High

Legend: 1 - Not Upset At All; 2 - Mildly Upset; 3 – Upset; 4 - Very Upset; 5 - Extremely Upset

Correlation between the Level of Self-esteem and Level of Romantic Jealousy

Overall, Table 3 shows statistically significant, inverse, very weak correlations between their level of self-esteem and their level of romantic jealousy (r = -0.185, p<.05).

Looking at the specific domains, for scholastic competence (Rs = - 0.031, p > 0.05) and athletic competence (Rs = -0.179, p > 0.05), these correlations were negative. On the contrary, close friendships (Rs = 0.025, p > 0.05) and romantic appeal (Rs = 0.095, p > 0.05) had positive correlations. The domain with a moderate negative correlation with the overall romantic jealousy is the physical appearance (Rs = -0.312, p > 0.05). As for the correlation between the domains of romantic jealousy and the overall level of self-esteem, it was found that there are inversely weak correlations for both sexual infidelities (Rs = -0.169, p > 0.05) and emotional infidelity (Rs = -0.135, p > 0.05). Previous studies suggest that there were significant correlations between self-esteem and romantic jealousy for both men and women, which supports the idea that people with lower self-esteem would be more likely to be jealous, while individuals with higher self-esteem tend to be less jealous (Hand, 2015; Stieger et al., 2012). This study supports these studies as results found statistically significant correlation, however, weak.

Two of the domains of self-esteem were found to be significantly correlated with one of the domains of romantic jealousy. Athletic

competence and the fear of emotional infidelity has a negatively moderate correlation (Rs = -0.321, p < 0.05), while the ability to create close friendships and the fear of emotional infidelity has a positive one (Rs = -0.358, p < 0.05). The negative correlation found between self-perceived athletic competence and the fear of emotional infidelity supports the idea that self-esteem and romantic jealousy are negatively correlated, which implies that those who are more confident in their athletic abilities tend to fear less about the possible emotional intimacy their partners might develop towards other people.

As for the correlation between the ability to make close friendships and the fear of emotional infidelity, however, positive moderate correlations were found. This would mean that as an individual's perceived ability in making close friendships increases, romantic jealousy does as well. This contradicts the idea that as self-esteem increases, romantic jealousy decreases. Although the researchers did not find any study that focuses on the correlation between the two, a study regarding a partner's new-found friendships is seen as a threat. Worley and Samp (2014) found that individuals tend to be concerned about emotional intimacy, which may influence emotional infidelity. This implies that as individuals perceive themselves to be greater at making close friends, the bigger their fears of emotional infidelity would be because they acknowledge that new-found friendships can create emotional intimacy.

Table 3. Correlations between the Level of Self-esteem and the Level of Romantic Jealousy

	Sexual Infidelity	Emotional Infidelity	Overall Level of Romantic Jealousy
Scholastic Competence	0.021	0.027	-0.031
Athletic Competence	-0.091	**-0.321***	-0.179
Physical Appearance	-0.287	-0.133	-0.312
Close Friendships	-0.045	**0.358***	0.025
Romantic Appeal	0.105	0.002	0.095
Overall Level of Self-esteem	-0.169	-0.135	**-0.185***

Legend: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001
0.0 to 0.29 → weak (or no) correlation, 0.30 to 0.59 → moderate correlation, 0.60 to 0.99 → strong (or perfect) correlation

Conclusion

A moderate level of self-esteem (median of 3) and high level of romantic jealousy (median of 5) were found among undergraduate university students from Metro Manila. The researchers found that the athletic competence of the undergraduate university students tend to be lower than the other domains of their self-esteem. Meanwhile, both domains of romantic jealousy were remarkably high.

A statistically significant, inverse correlation was found between their level of self-esteem and romantic jealousy which suggests that the higher their level of self-esteem was, the lower the level of romantic jealousy is, i.e. romantic jealousy has no space if one is confident in one's romantic relationship. Looking at the specific domains of self-esteem with romantic jealousy, there was a negative moderate correlation between the self-perceived athletic competence and the fear of romantic jealousy. This implies that as individuals are more confident in their athletic competence, the less they fear emotional infidelity. Secondly, there was a positive moderate correlation between the self-perceived ability to make close friendships and the fear of emotional infidelity, suggesting that the better the individuals perceive their abilities to make close friendships, the more they fear emotional infidelity.

Overall, the study suggests that as the athletic competence increases, romantic jealousy decreases; however, it also suggests that as the perceived ability to make close friendships

increases, romantic jealousy does too, which supports the idea that self-esteem and romantic jealousy are negatively correlated.

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