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Research Article

The Role of Apology Proclivity and Perceived Apology Sincerity in Predicting Romantic Relationship Satisfaction among Filipino Young Adults

Eunice Lumibao*, Beatriz B. Gopez

Angeles University Foundation, Philippines

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*Corresponding author:

E-mail:

lumibao.eunice@student.auf.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Despite the importance of apologies in repairing interpersonal conflict and restoring relational harmony, limited empirical research has examined whether apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity predict romantic relationship satisfaction among Filipino young adults. This study investigated the predictive roles of apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity in predicting romantic relationship satisfaction among 418 Filipino young adults aged 21–35 years who were in committed romantic relationships. A quantitative, correlational-predictive research design was employed using the Proclivity to Apologize Measure (PAM), the Perceived Apologizer Sincerity measure, and the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Spearman's rho, and multiple linear regression with heteroskedasticity-consistent (HC3) robust standard errors. The respondents obtained a mean score of 65.70 (SD = 12.90) in relationship satisfaction, a mean score of 5.89 (SD = 1.08) in apology proclivity, and a mean score of 74 (SD = 11.60) in perceived apology sincerity. Relationship satisfaction was positively correlated with apology proclivity ($\rho = .47, p < .001$) and perceived apology sincerity ($\rho = .62, p < .001$), while apology proclivity was also positively correlated with perceived apology sincerity ($\rho = .44, p < .001$). A multiple linear regression analysis revealed that apology proclivity ($\beta = .12, p = .031$) and perceived apology sincerity ($\beta = .70, p < .001$) significantly predicted relationship satisfaction, with the model explaining 57.0% of the variance ($R^2 = .570$). Perceived apology sincerity emerged as the stronger predictor of relationship satisfaction. These findings suggested that the extent to which apologies were perceived as authentic played a more substantial role in relationship satisfaction than the tendency to apologize itself. The findings contributed to the limited literature on apology processes in Filipino romantic relationships and provided evidence to inform culturally responsive relationship counseling, psychoeducational programs, and interventions that promote healthy conflict resolution among young adults.

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Introduction

In the Philippines, collectivist values rooted in *kapwa*, or the shared sense of self in relation to others, emphasize relational harmony, interdependence, and smooth interpersonal relations expressed through practices such as *pakikisama*. This cultural framework highlights the psychological importance of restoring disrupted relationships, including through resolution practices that preserve social cohesion and group wellbeing (Alampay, 2024). Recently, there has been an increasing concern concerning relationship unsteadiness among young adults in the Philippines, reflected in reports of emotional dissatisfaction, communication breakdowns, and unresolved conflicts that may contribute to relationship dissolution (Medina, 2020). Recent studies have recognized increasing relationship instability among Filipino young adults, characterized by the growing occurrence of situationships, cohabitation, and relational red flags, such as abuse and infidelity, that undermine commitment. For instance, Hernandez et al. (2024) found that young adults often encounter relational red flags in long-term partnerships, leading to heightened caution in mate selection and lower satisfaction. Patalita (2025) further links shorter relationship durations to reduced couple satisfaction, predominantly among men who prioritize individual success. Also, Deniega (2024) reports a shift toward vague situationships driven by economic instability and fear of commitment, contributing to emotional dissatisfaction and communication breakdowns. Amidst the Philippines' constant ban on absolute divorce, under which only annulment and legal separation are available, Akmad (2024) notes that cohabitation is a common response, reflecting unstable unions in which dissolution may not be an immediate option. These changing relationship conditions highlight the importance of conflict resolution and repair strategies that may help couples manage relational difficulties and maintain their relationships. Apologies are one such conflict-repair strategy that may help restore relationships following interpersonal conflict or wrongdoing. These

circumstances highlight the need of exploring the dynamics that aid in promoting relationship satisfaction, mostly the ways in which the proclivity to apologize and the perceived sincerity of apologies influence relationship satisfaction among young adults in the country.

Romantic relationships during young adulthood are characterized by emotional intensity, rapid development, and heightened vulnerability to conflict (Graziano et al., 2024). Relationship satisfaction denotes to an individual's overall assessment of the quality of his or her romantic relationship, encompassing feelings of emotional closeness, reciprocated support, communication, commitment, and the capability to resolve conflicts (Jozefacka et al., 2023). It reflects the degree to which one's needs are met within a partnership and has consistently been associated with well-being, psychological adjustment, and long-term relational stability (Stanley et al., 2010). Contemporary perspectives highlight that relationship satisfaction is not a static trait but rather a dynamic outcome influenced by interpersonal processes, such as conflict resolution, intimacy, and expressions of care. For instance, Jozefacka et al. (2023), in a study involving young adults, found that interpersonal closeness meaningfully predicted relationship satisfaction. Additionally, relational satisfaction is shaped by moment-to-moment connections and long-term patterns of emotional regulation, such as how partners manage disagreements or express apologies. Young adulthood, encompassing the ages of 21–35 years, represents a foundational phase during which individuals forge relational competence and long-term bonds (Bishop, 2013). During this stage, establishing emotionally secure and substantial romantic relationships contributes significantly to psychological adjustment, personal growth, and health outcomes (Lin et al., 2022). Thus, how young adults manage conflict and attempt to repair relational disruptions may be important to their evaluations of relationship satisfaction.

While relationship satisfaction has been widely studied, definite behavioral predictors,

such as apology proclivity and perceived sincerity, persist to be underexplored despite their practical and emotional significance in resolving romantic conflicts, highlighting the need for further empirical investigation, particularly within the context of emotionally intense romantic relationships during young adulthood. Apologies play an important role for repairing relational damage and restoring emotional closeness after a transgression, yet their effectiveness may depend on both an individual's proclivity to apologize and the degree to which the apology is perceived as sincere. Apology proclivity refers to an individual's relatively stable, trait-like tendency to apologize, whereas perceived apology sincerity refers to how the recipient evaluates the genuineness of an apology. Thus, apology proclivity concerns the individual's tendency to initiate an apology, while perceived apology sincerity concerns how the apology is received and interpreted by the partner. For instance, Howell et al. (2011) demonstrated that apology proclivity reflects consistent tendencies shaped by personality traits, such as agreeableness and guilt-proneness, strengthening relational commitment when expressed sincerely. More recently, Lin et al. (2022) found that higher apology proclivity in honor cultures predicts the likelihood of apologizing and sustained commitment in romantic contexts, reflecting moral character and reinforcing relational value. The effectiveness of an apology also depends on how sincerely the apology is perceived. Sincerity is shaped by verbal acknowledgement of wrongdoing, expressions of remorse, empathy, and nonverbal cues that convey accountability (Ma et al., 2019; Yamamoto et al., 2021). When these behaviors align authentically, apologies can rebuild trust, reduce negative emotions, and restore communication (Hubbard et al., 2013). Conversely, apologies perceived as insincere or emotionally detached may weaken relational trust and contribute to relationship dissatisfaction (Lewicki et al., 2016). Therefore, examining both apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity allows the study to consider both the willingness to engage in apology as a repair behavior and the recipient's perception of whether that repair attempt is genuine.

Collectively, these findings underscore that apologies represent a complex interpersonal process with significant implications for romantic relationship outcomes. Yet, despite the centrality of harmony and conflict repair in Filipino relational culture, limited empirical research has examined apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity together as predictors of relationship satisfaction among Filipino young adults, particularly in Central Luzon. The region has a unique combination of urban and rural settings, diverse economic conditions, and cultural nuances that may influence relationship dynamics differently than those in more metropolitan areas. By focusing on Central Luzon, this study seeks to investigate the factors associated with relationship satisfaction among young adults within a context shaped by the convergence of modernization, urbanization, and traditional collectivist values. Understanding relationship dynamics among this population can contribute to bridging regional differences in Filipino psychological research and addressing the lack of empirical evidence on how contextual factors in understudied provinces influence young adults' romantic relationships. This gap is particularly critical given the increasing instability of romantic relationships and evolving relational norms in the country. Addressing this gap provides an opportunity to understand how culturally rooted reconciliation processes influence relational well-being among individuals who are navigating both traditional values and modern relational challenges.

Study Objectives

General Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine the predictive roles of apology proclivity and perceived sincerity in predicting relationship satisfaction among Filipino young adults aged 21–35 years.

Specific Objectives

1. To describe the respondents' level of:
 - a. Apology Proclivity
 - b. Perceived apology sincerity
 - c. Relationship satisfaction
2. To examine whether apology proclivity predicts relationship satisfaction.

3. To examine whether perceived apology sincerity predicts relationship satisfaction.

Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Apology proclivity positively predicts relationship satisfaction.

H2: Perceived apology sincerity positively predicts relationship satisfaction.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant to the advancement of relationship psychology by empirically clarifying how apology-related processes serve as predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction among young adults. By identifying proclivity and perceived sincerity as meaningful predictors, the findings contribute to a deeper understanding of relationship maintenance mechanisms, particularly those related to conflict repair and emotional accountability. These insights strengthen theoretical models of relationship functioning by highlighting apology not merely as a situational behavior but as both a dispositional and perceptual process linked to relational well-being.

This study is also significant because it provides culturally grounded evidence relevant to Filipino romantic relationships. Apology behaviors and interpretations are shaped by cultural values emphasizing interpersonal harmony and sensitivity to social evaluation. Empirical findings from this study may help clarify how such values translate into relationship satisfaction outcomes among Filipino young adults, offering culturally relevant knowledge that may refine cross-cultural theories of apology and conflict resolution. This contributes to the development of context-sensitive psychological frameworks applicable to non-Western populations.

From an applied and clinical perspective, the study holds value for psychologists, counselors, and relationship educators working with young adults. Understanding how apology tendencies and perceptions of sincerity relate to relationship satisfaction can inform assessment practices and intervention strategies aimed at improving communication and conflict resolution skills. These insights may support preventive efforts and therapeutic work

addressing relational instability during young adulthood, a period marked by heightened relational challenges.

Review of Related Literature

Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction has long been conceptualized as a person's subjective evaluation of a romantic partnership, encompassing perceptions of closeness, intimacy, mutual support, and conflict resolution (Buhler et al., 2021). Unlike commitment or stability, which are more externally observable, satisfaction reflects an internal judgment about whether the relationship meets one's emotional, psychological, and interpersonal needs (Akmad & Abatayo, 2024). It is considered a multidimensional construct, as partners may derive satisfaction from different domains, such as emotional intimacy, sexual fulfillment, communication quality, and shared goals (Johnson et al., 2022). As such, Abreu-Alfonso et al. (2022) regard relationship satisfaction as the most comprehensive and reliable indicator of relational quality because it integrates multiple dimensions of partner interaction into a global assessment. This integrative quality makes it central to research on romantic relationships, as it predicts not only individual well-being but also relationship longevity.

While much of the foundational work on relationship satisfaction originates from Western contexts, its meaning in collectivist societies, such as the Philippines, requires nuanced consideration. Filipino culture is deeply rooted in values such as *kapwa* (shared identity), *pakikiramdam* (empathic sensitivity), and *pakikisama* (smooth interpersonal relations), which frame relationship satisfaction not merely as an individual's subjective feeling but as a reflection of relational harmony and integration with family and social networks (Alampay, 2024). For example, a Filipino young adult may perceive higher satisfaction not only when personal needs are met but also when his or her partner demonstrates respect for the family and fulfills relational obligations consistent with cultural expectations (Javier et al., 2018). Thus, the construct is multidimensional in two senses: it encompasses different inter-

personal domains and is shaped by both universal psychological processes and indigenous cultural frameworks.

Furthermore, relationship satisfaction is dynamic rather than static. It shifts in response to life transitions, conflicts, stressors, and relational growth (Jozefacka et al., 2023). This dynamic quality is particularly evident in young adulthood, when individuals navigate identity formation, shifting life goals, and increased relational autonomy (Raumbat, 2004). Satisfaction during this developmental stage reflects both the quality of the current relationship and the evolving capacity of partners to negotiate conflicts and adapt to change (Du Rocher Schudlich et al., 2013). Conceptually, therefore, relationship satisfaction in young adulthood must be understood as a construct situated at the intersection of personal evaluation, partner interaction, and cultural values, reflecting a multidimensional and dynamic process shaped by context (Bishop, 2013).

Apology Proclivity

Apology proclivity refers to stable individual differences in the tendency to apologize following interpersonal transgressions. Rather than being a purely situational response, apologizing has been conceptualized as a dispositional behavior rooted in personality structure, moral emotions, and interpersonal orientation. Early empirical work by Howell et al. (2011) established apology proclivity as a measurable construct through the Proclivity to Apologize Measure (PAM), demonstrating that individuals differ in their willingness to acknowledge wrongdoing and express remorse. Their findings indicate that apology proclivity is positively associated with acceptance, self-compassion, and concern for others, while being negatively associated with narcissism and experiential avoidance. These results suggest that individuals who are emotionally open and less defensive are more inclined to engage in apologetic behavior, framing apology as a psychologically adaptive and prosocial tendency rather than a sign of weakness.

Personality-based explanations of apology proclivity have been further advanced through the HEXACO model of personality, which comprises Honesty-Humility (H), Emotionality (E),

Extraversion (X), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), and Openness to Experience (O). Dunlop et al. (2015) found that Honesty-Humility was the strongest and most consistent predictor of apology proclivity across samples, highlighting the role of sincerity, fairness, and modesty in motivating apologies. Conscientiousness also showed a robust positive relationship with apology proclivity, indicating that individuals who are responsible and self-disciplined are more likely to take accountability for their interpersonal missteps. Agreeableness demonstrated weaker and less consistent effects, suggesting that while interpersonal warmth may facilitate apologizing in some contexts, it is moral integrity rather than social compliance that primarily drives apologetic behavior. These findings underscore that apology proclivity is grounded in ethical self-concepts and moral responsibility rather than merely in the avoidance of conflict or the desire for harmony.

Emotional processes, particularly guilt and shame, have been identified as critical affective mechanisms underlying apology proclivity. Chrdileli and Kasser (2018) demonstrated that guilt proneness is positively associated with apologizing behavior, as guilt motivates reparative actions directed toward others. In contrast, shame proneness, especially shame characterized by withdrawal and self-condemnation, was negatively associated with apologizing, as it tends to promote avoidance and defensiveness. This distinction is consistent with broader research on self-conscious emotions, in which shame often impedes interpersonal engagement. Supporting this framework, the Guilt and Shame Proneness model developed by Cohen et al. (2011), as applied in later apology research, showed that negative behavior evaluation, which is a guilt-based response, predicts apology proclivity, while shame-based withdrawal reduces the likelihood of apologizing.

Additional evidence suggests that apology proclivity is not only intrapersonal but also relationally embedded. Individuals high in apology proclivity tend to value relational maintenance and perceive apologies as meaningful tools for restoring trust and reducing conflict escalation (Howell et al., 2011). Experimental

and correlational studies indicate that apologies can reduce retaliatory responses from offended partners. However, these outcomes appear to depend on the perceived sincerity of the apology, as insincere or strategic apologies may undermine trust rather than restore it. Nevertheless, existing literature has predominantly focused on apology proclivity as a person's general tendency or willingness to apologize, with relatively limited consideration of its distinction from the recipient's appraisal of apology sincerity. This conceptual difference is particularly significant within romantic relationships because the act of apologizing reflects the apologizer's disposition, whereas perceived sincerity reflects how the recipient interprets the genuineness of that apology and its potential to facilitate relational repair.

Although the existing literature provides strong evidence that apology proclivity is shaped by personality traits and moral emotions, several critical gaps remain. Most studies rely on Western, nonclinical samples, limiting the generalizability of the findings to collectivist cultural contexts, where relational harmony, shame, and concerns about maintaining face may function differently. Furthermore, apology proclivity has rarely been examined within romantic relationships, despite the heightened emotional intensity of such relationships and the greater stakes involved in relational repair. There is also a lack of research integrating apology proclivity with relational outcomes, such as relationship satisfaction, particularly among young adults navigating developmental transitions related to intimacy. Addressing these gaps is essential, as understanding apology proclivity within culturally embedded romantic contexts may clarify how dispositional tendencies toward apologizing interact with perceived sincerity to influence relationship well-being.

Perceived Apology Sincerity

Although apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity are related to the apology process, they represent different constructs. Apology proclivity refers to an individual's dispositional tendency or willingness to apologize following interpersonal misbehaviors, whereas perceived apology sincerity concerns the

receiver's assessment of whether an apology is genuine, remorseful, and intended to repair the harm caused. Thus, apology proclivity reflects the tendency to engage in apologetic behavior, while perceived apology sincerity reflects how the quality and genuineness of that behavior are interpreted by the receiver. An individual may therefore have a high proclivity to apologize but deliver an apology that is perceived as insincere, or may apologize less frequently yet be perceived as highly sincere when an apology is offered. Maintaining this distinction is important because the present study examines both the apologizer's dispositional tendency and the recipient's perception of apology genuineness as separate predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction.

Apology sincerity refers to the perceived genuineness of an apology, including whether the transgressor is truly remorseful, acknowledges the wrongdoing, and is committed to repairing the harm caused (Lewicki et al., 2016). A sincere apology is typically characterized by a clear acknowledgement of the offense, an expression of regret, the acceptance of responsibility, and, in many cases, an offer to make amends or change one's behavior (Solum et al., 2011). These elements convey to the offended partner that the apology is more than just words; rather, it is a relational act grounded in honesty and accountability (Valipour, 2025). Apology sincerity therefore operates as a psychological marker of trustworthiness, signaling that the offender is both aware of the hurt caused and invested in restoring relational harmony (Hubbard et al., 2013).

Sincerity is central to the process of reconciliation because it determines whether the offended individual perceives the apology as meaningful (Beesley, 2010). In romantic relationships, sincerity becomes particularly salient because partners are often highly attuned to each other's emotional cues, tone, and non-verbal signals (Armentano, 2021). Thus, sincerity is judged not only by the words spoken but also by the consistency between words and actions, such as the demonstration of changed behavior after the apology. This means that sincerity is both a subjective perception and a relational process, requiring alignment between

verbal communication and behavioral follow-through.

From a psychological standpoint, apology sincerity can be linked to core constructs such as empathy, authenticity, and emotional regulation (Salmela, 2005). A partner who offers a sincere apology demonstrates empathy by validating the other's hurt, authenticity by aligning the apology with genuine feelings, and emotional regulation by resisting defensiveness or denial (Valipour et al., 2025). In this way, sincerity functions as a relational repair mechanism grounded in emotional maturity and moral accountability (Painter-Morland, 2006). It is not merely an act of politeness but an indicator of relational depth, signaling that the offender values the relationship enough to admit fault and seek restoration (Brown, 2004).

Cultural Lens of Relationship Satisfaction, Apology Proclivity, and Perceived Sincerity among Filipino Young Adults

In collectivist societies such as the Philippines, interpersonal dynamics are profoundly shaped by cultural values that emphasize harmony, interconnectedness, and mutual respect (Ali, 2023). Central Filipino concepts, such as *kapwa* (shared identity), *pakikisama* (smooth interpersonal relationships), and *pakikipagkapwa* (treating others as equals), guide expectations regarding relational behaviors (Rilveria, 2023). Within this cultural framework, apologies may be understood as extending beyond an individual expression of remorse; they may also function as relational rituals that uphold social cohesion and reinforce shared identity (Rungduin et al., 2020). Consistent with collectivist perspectives, Filipino individuals are often deeply committed to relational stability, the maintenance of harmony, and the avoidance of discord (Alampay, 2024). Accordingly, the present study adopted this cultural lens to provide a theoretical perspective for interpreting the findings.

For Filipino young adults, apologies may therefore serve a dual role: they may function as practical mechanisms for conflict resolution and as symbolic affirmations of *kapwa* and relational unity. However, because Filipino cultural constructs, such as *kapwa*, *pakikisama*, and collectivist orientation, were not directly

measured in the present study, these cultural perspectives are presented as theoretical interpretations rather than empirical explanations of the findings. Recognizing this lens may therefore provide additional context for understanding how apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity relate to romantic relationships within the Filipino context, while acknowledging that future research is needed to directly examine the role of these cultural values.

Apology Proclivity and Relationship Satisfaction

Apology proclivity, defined as a dispositional tendency to apologize following interpersonal transgressions, has been consistently linked to adaptive personality traits and relational processes that support romantic relationship satisfaction. Dunlop et al. (2015) showed that Honesty-Humility most strongly predicts this proclivity, with Conscientiousness also contributing, and that higher apology tendencies align with guilt-related facets while being negatively associated with shame-related withdrawal. Trait self-control further supports apologetic behavior: individuals high in self-control report greater willingness to apologize and exhibit fewer non-apology defenses after real-life transgressions, while the experimental depletion of self-control reduces apology statements (Guilfoyle et al., 2019). Honor culture amplifies the reluctance to apologize because reputation concerns outweigh the perceived effectiveness of apologies; however, reframing honor in terms of moral virtue restores the willingness to apologize (Lin et al., 2022). Cross-cultural validation in Japan confirms that a higher proclivity to apologize correlates with agreeableness and subjective well-being, both of which are linked to healthier relationships (Ohtsubo et al., 2015). Moreover, reconciliation processes, including apology, are associated with increased subjective well-being and reduced health risks, suggesting that frequent, sincere apologies foster relationship satisfaction and overall quality of life. Collectively, these findings indicate that personality, self-regulation, power dynamics, and cultural norms shape apology proclivity, which, in turn,

underpins relationship satisfaction through enhanced forgiveness, trust, and well-being.

Perceived Apology Sincerity and Relationship Satisfaction

The sincerity with which apologies are perceived has been consistently linked to relationship satisfaction, with empirical research showing that sincerity determines whether apologies function as effective repair mechanisms or fail to resolve conflict (Ohtsubo et al., 2009). Ohtsubo et al. (2009) revealed that apologies perceived as more sincere led to greater reductions in negative affect and higher satisfaction following conflict. In contrast, apologies judged as insincere produced minimal improvements in satisfaction, suggesting that sincerity is a critical mediator of the outcomes of apology processes. Similarly, Lewis et al. (2015) found that apologies perceived as genuine, particularly those that included an acknowledgment of harm and responsibility, were more likely to restore trust and enhance satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. In the context of romantic relationships, sincere apologies signal emotional investment and accountability, which are components of relational satisfaction (Abreu-Afonso et al., 2022). Conversely, insincere apologies can foster cynicism, creating doubts about a partner's commitment and lowering satisfaction. This growing body of evidence positions perceived sincerity as a fundamental predictor of relationship satisfaction, as the effectiveness of apologies depends less on their mere presence and more on how genuinely they are perceived.

Further evidence shows that perceptions of sincerity directly shape relational outcomes by influencing partner evaluations and trust. Grunenberg (2025) found that individuals who delivered apologies that were perceived as heartfelt and authentic were rated as more trustworthy and caring, which significantly increased partner satisfaction. Empirical research by Takahashi et al. (2022) also highlighted that apologies deemed sincere were more effective in facilitating forgiveness, which, in turn, predicted higher levels of relational satisfaction. By contrast, when apologies were perceived as superficial or strategic, partners reported less forgiveness and diminished

satisfaction. This suggests that sincerity is not merely an added value but a necessary condition for apologies to enhance relationship satisfaction. Similarly, Hatcher (2010) observed that apologies conveying genuine regret produced more favorable evaluations of the transgressor, which subsequently improved the overall quality of the relationship. These findings highlight the relational consequences of perceived sincerity, as the perceived sincerity of an apology determines whether it truly repairs harm and enhances relational well-being.

Longitudinal studies provide further support for the enduring role of perceived sincerity in predicting satisfaction over time. Grunenberg (2025) reported that relationships in which apologies were consistently evaluated as sincere demonstrated higher levels of long-term satisfaction, while insincere apologies often led to lingering resentment and decreased stability. In addition, Lahiri et al. (2025) showed that perceived sincerity predicted forgiveness and satisfaction not only in immediate interactions but also in subsequent relational evaluations, highlighting its cumulative impact. Govender et al. (2022) further indicated that the perception of apology sincerity strengthens relational resilience, allowing couples to maintain relationship satisfaction more effectively despite repeated conflicts. Conversely, repeated insincere apologies have been found to erode satisfaction, as partners interpret them as signs of disengagement or an unwillingness to change. These findings converge on the conclusion that sincerity operates as a long-term predictor of relational quality and ensures that apologies translate into sustained satisfaction. Collectively, these empirical findings underscore the importance of perceived apology sincerity as a key determinant of relationship satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

The Interpersonal Process Model of Intimacy (IPMI), developed by Reis and Shaver (1988), offers a theoretically grounded explanation of how intimacy is created, maintained, and strengthened in interpersonal relationships. According to this model, intimacy does not merely emerge from time spent together but develops through a cyclical process of self-

disclosure and perceived partner responsiveness. Self-disclosure involves communicating personal thoughts, emotions, or vulnerabilities, which invites the partner into one's inner world. The partner's response, characterized by understanding, validation, and care, is then evaluated by the discloser, whose subjective perception of responsiveness determines whether intimacy is fostered or weakened. Over time, these repeated interactions shape relational schemas and expectations that guide future exchanges. Empirical studies have consistently validated the model, demonstrating that perceived partner responsiveness mediates the relationship between self-disclosure and intimacy, thereby underscoring the explanatory strength of the IPMI across diverse relational contexts (Feeney & Collins, 2015).

Although intimacy and relationship satisfaction are conceptually distinct constructs, they are closely related. Intimacy refers to the subjective experience of emotional closeness, mutual understanding, and perceived responsiveness between partners (Reis & Shaver, 1988), whereas relationship satisfaction reflects an individual's overall evaluation of the quality and fulfillment of the romantic relationship (Funk & Rogge, 2007). The IPMI proposes that repeated experiences of perceived responsiveness foster intimacy, which, in turn, contributes to more positive evaluations of the relationship. Thus, intimacy serves as an important interpersonal pathway through which relationship-enhancing behaviors influence relationship satisfaction. This theoretical linkage provides the rationale for using the IPMI as the guiding framework for the present study.

Within the IPMI framework, apology proclivity can be conceptualized as a recurring form of relational self-disclosure. By apologizing, the transgressor openly communicates an acknowledgment of wrongdoing, personal responsibility, and concern for the partner's emotional state, thereby revealing vulnerability. Each apology provides an opportunity for the partner to respond with forgiveness, empathy, or reassurance, which, when perceived as responsive, strengthens the sense of intimacy. Over time, this repetitive pattern of apology and perceived responsiveness contributes to the reinforcement of closeness and emotional

security, aligning directly with the intimacy-building mechanisms outlined in the IPMI.

The perceived sincerity of apologies further highlights the importance of responsiveness in the intimacy process. While frequent apologies create opportunities for repair, it is the partner's perception of those apologies as genuine that determines whether intimacy is strengthened. Within the IPMI, responsiveness is not defined solely by the partner's behavior but by whether the discloser perceives that his or her needs for understanding, validation, and care have been met. A sincere apology communicates genuine remorse, accountability, and commitment to the relationship, thereby enhancing perceptions of partner responsiveness. In contrast, apologies perceived as insincere may fail to validate the partner's feelings, disrupt the intimacy process, and exacerbate relational strain. Consequently, perceived apology sincerity transforms apologies from routine verbal expressions into meaningful interpersonal exchanges that foster intimacy and strengthen the relational bond.

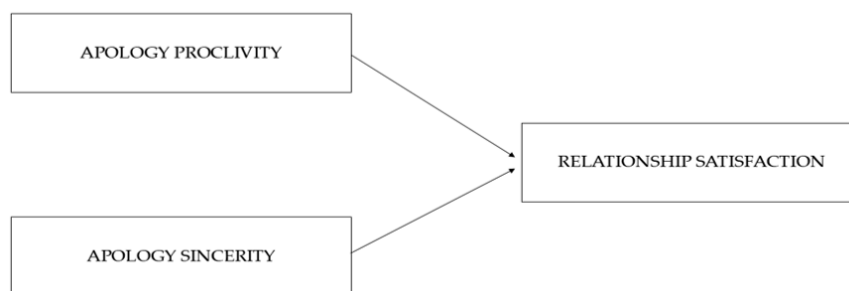
The IPMI, therefore, provides a compelling theoretical justification for linking apology behaviors, both in terms of proclivity and sincerity, to relationship satisfaction. Although the model primarily explains the development of intimacy rather than relationship satisfaction itself, it proposes that repeated experiences of responsiveness cultivate intimacy, which subsequently enhances individuals' evaluations of their romantic relationships. Sincere apologies promote intimacy by ensuring that conflicts are addressed through cycles of disclosure and responsiveness, thereby restoring trust, reducing relational distress, and reinforcing a sense of being understood and valued. Conversely, the absence of apologies or insincere attempts at repair may disrupt these cycles, leading to reduced intimacy and, ultimately, diminished satisfaction, because apology-related behaviors operate through the intimacy processes that sustain healthy and fulfilling romantic bonds.

Alternative theoretical perspectives, such as Attachment Theory, Gottman's Theory of Relationship Stability, and Social Exchange Theory, also provide valuable explanations of romantic relationship functioning. Attachment Theory emphasizes the influence of early

attachment experiences on adult relationship patterns (Hazan & Shaver, 1987); Gottman's theory focuses on interactional processes that predict relationship stability and dissolution (Gottman & Levenson, 2004); and Social Exchange Theory explains relationship outcomes in terms of perceived rewards and costs (Rusbult, 1983). While these frameworks offer important perspectives on romantic relationships, they do not specifically explain how apology-related behaviors are interpreted through perceptions of partner responsiveness and

subsequently influence relational outcomes. The IPMI was therefore selected because it directly captures the interpersonal mechanism underlying the present study, wherein apology proclivity represents a relationship-enhancing behavior, perceived sincerity reflects the partner's evaluation of responsiveness, and relationship satisfaction represents the broader relational outcome that develops through repeated experiences of intimacy and responsive interactions.

Conceptual Framework



The model illustrates the hypothesized relationships between apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity as the independent variables and relationship satisfaction as the dependent variable. The framework posits that both apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity are significant predictors of relationship satisfaction among young adults. Individuals who are inclined to apologize are expected to contribute to better conflict resolution and relational harmony, thereby enhancing relationship satisfaction. Similarly, apologies that are perceived as sincere by a partner are expected to reduce relational tension, rebuild trust, and improve overall satisfaction. Accordingly, the conceptual framework proposes direct relationships between each independent variable and the dependent variable to examine their unique and combined statistical associations.

Although the associations among the study variables may suggest that perceived apology sincerity potentially mediates the relationship between apology proclivity and relationship satisfaction, mediation analysis is beyond the scope of the present study because the research is designed to examine direct

associations rather than indirect pathways. Future research using longitudinal designs and formal mediation analyses is recommended to determine whether perceived apology sincerity functions as an intervening mechanism linking apology proclivity to relationship satisfaction.

Future Research Perspectives

Despite extensive international scholarly research on apology processes in romantic relationships, a substantial empirical gap remains in understanding apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity as joint predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction among Filipino young adults aged 21–35 years, particularly those residing in Central Luzon. To date, no empirical study has systematically examined these constructs together or situated them within the cultural, developmental, and relational dynamics of the Philippine context.

Existing literature, which has largely been based on studies conducted in Western settings, has established links between apology sincerity, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction. However, these findings have often been derived from samples reporting high

baseline satisfaction and have not incorporated predictive models that include stable apology tendencies, also referred to as apology proclivity (Schumann, 2018). Moreover, Philippine apology-related research has primarily been limited to linguistic and pragmatic analyses in second-language learning contexts, focusing on the forms of apologies rather than dispositional tendencies or perceived sincerity within committed romantic relationships (Robles et al., 2020).

Culturally, Filipino intimate relationships are shaped by collectivist values such as *kapwa* and *hiya*, which emphasize relational harmony but may also constrain direct apology behaviors when such behaviors are perceived as threatening to social face. This gap is further amplified by the lack of region-specific research, particularly in Central Luzon, whose combination of urban and rural settings and evolving relational norms has not been systematically examined.

From developmental and social perspectives, young Filipino adults increasingly experience relational instability marked by ambiguous commitment and difficulties in resolving conflict (Yabut et al., 2023). Understanding whether stable tendencies to apologize and perceptions of sincerity meaningfully predict relationship satisfaction is, therefore, essential to explaining variability in relational resilience during young adulthood.

Overall, this study addresses critical theoretical, cultural, and methodological gaps by employing a correlational-predictive design to examine apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity as predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction in a culturally nuanced Filipino sample. By doing so, it advances Philippine relationship and clinical psychology beyond descriptive accounts and provides empirically grounded insights with direct implications for culturally responsive relationship education, counseling, and preventive interventions.

Scope and Limitations

This study centered on Filipino young adults aged 21–35 years who were in romantic relationships, with the aim of examining how apology proclivity and perceived apology

sincerity predicted their levels of relationship satisfaction. The research focused on the behavioral aspect of apology proclivity, the perceptual aspect of apology sincerity, and how these two variables predicted relationship satisfaction as a global measure of relational quality. By narrowing the scope to young adulthood, the study emphasized a critical life stage during which individuals actively develop relational competence, emotional regulation, and long-term partnership skills (Robles et al., 2020).

The research was limited in several ways. First, it concentrated solely on Filipino young adults and did not include adolescents, middle-aged adults, or older adults, whose relationship experiences and conflict resolution strategies may differ. Second, the focus was restricted to apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity as predictors, leaving out other influential variables. Third, the study utilized self-report measures, which may have been influenced by participants' social desirability bias, particularly within a collectivist society that prioritizes harmony and interpersonal sensitivity.

Another limitation was that the study did not distinguish among various types of romantic relationships, such as casual dating, long-distance relationships, or cohabiting partnerships, which may involve different dynamics of apology and satisfaction. Lastly, since the design was quantitative and correlational, the study identified predictive relationships but could not establish causality or capture the depth of lived relational experiences.

An additional limitation of the present study was that Filipino constructs such as *kapwa*, *pakikisama*, *hiya*, and collectivist orientation were not directly measured. Although these concepts were used to provide a theoretical interpretation of the findings, the study could not empirically determine whether these cultural values influenced apology proclivity, perceived apology sincerity, or relationship satisfaction. Future research is encouraged to incorporate validated measures of Filipino cultural values to examine their potential roles as predictors, mediators, or moderators of apology-related processes within romantic relationships.

Another limitation concerned the sampling method and geographic distribution of participants. The study used nonprobability convenience sampling, meaning that participants were recruited based on accessibility and willingness to participate rather than through probability-based selection. Although recruitment was conducted across all six provinces of Central Luzon, the final sample was not proportionally distributed across the region. Bataan contributed 54.8% of the participants ($n = 229$), whereas Pampanga contributed 18.7% ($n = 78$), Bulacan 12.4% ($n = 52$), Zambales 11.0% ($n = 46$), Aurora 1.7% ($n = 7$), and Tarlac 1.4% ($n = 6$). Consequently, the findings should not be interpreted as equally representative of Central Luzon as a whole. The substantial concentration of participants from Bataan means that the results may reflect the experiences and relational contexts of respondents from that province more strongly than those of participants from the other provinces. This limitation constrains the external validity of the findings and warrants caution when extending the results to the broader Central Luzon population. Future research should consider probability-based sampling, provincial quotas, or stratified recruitment procedures to obtain a more balanced regional sample.

A further methodological limitation concerned the use of self-report questionnaires administered to the same participants at a single point in time. Collecting all study variables using the same measurement method may have introduced common method bias or shared method variance, which can inflate the observed relationships among variables because of similarities in the measurement approach rather than actual relationships among the constructs themselves. Future research is encouraged to reduce the potential influence of common method bias by employing longitudinal and dyadic research designs that include data from both romantic partners, incorporating partner reports or behavioral observations, and using multimethod approaches that combine self-report measures with observational or interview-based assessments.

Methods

Study Design and Locale

The study employed a quantitative, correlational-predictive design, which involved examining statistical relationships between measurable variables to predict one variable based on the values of the other variables. A quantitative approach was appropriate because the study used standardized instruments and numerical data to measure the constructs of apology proclivity, perceived apology sincerity, and relationship satisfaction. This approach enabled the objective measurement and statistical analysis of the relationships among these variables within the study sample of young adults in romantic relationships.

The research was carried out in Central Luzon, Philippines, specifically in the provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales, Aurora, and Bataan. This provided broad geographic coverage of Region III and captured geographic and economic variations that may not be represented in studies with narrower provincial scopes, thereby enhancing the contextual relevance of the study of apology behaviors in romantic relationships. Existing literature revealed a critical research gap. While national and Metro Manila-focused studies have addressed romantic relationships among Filipino young adults (e.g., Deniega, 2024; Hernandez et al., 2024), region-specific investigations in Central Luzon, despite its reported 66% urbanization rate and large young adult population, have been virtually nonexistent. Moreover, existing studies have not addressed contemporary relational repair mechanisms, such as apologies, amid rising relationship instability, leaving a gap in understanding how collectivist values manifest in this demographically pivotal region. The selection of this locale addressed the gap by providing grounded insights into the unique interplay between modernization and tradition in shaping young adults' relationship satisfaction in Central Luzon.

The key considerations for the study locale were outlined as follows:

Community Groups and Organizations. Community groups, local organizations, and online platforms catering to young adults and couples were utilized to aid participant recruitment and data collection.

Online Platforms. Social media platforms, online forums, and websites popular among Filipino young adults and couples were used to disseminate the survey and reach a broader audience.

Study Participants

Sample Size and Sampling

This study employed a nonprobability convenience sampling design, wherein participants who were readily accessible and willing to participate were included, provided that they met the predefined inclusion criteria. This approach was appropriate given the practical constraints associated with accessing individuals in ongoing romantic relationships and is commonly used in social and relationship research. However, because participants were not selected through probability sampling, the findings cannot be generalized to all Filipino young adults or the entire population of Central Luzon.

To enhance geographic coverage, recruitment was conducted across the provinces of Central Luzon through university and institutional networks, social media platforms, and

online community groups. Recruitment efforts included participants from Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Zambales, Aurora, and Tarlac. However, because the study used nonprobability convenience sampling, recruitment did not produce proportional representation across the provinces.

The final geographic distribution was substantially uneven. Bataan accounted for 54.8% of the sample ($n = 229$), followed by Pampanga at 18.7% ($n = 78$), Bulacan at 12.4% ($n = 52$), Zambales at 11.0% ($n = 46$), Aurora at 1.7% ($n = 7$), and Tarlac at 1.4% ($n = 6$). Thus, although participants were recruited from all six provinces, more than half of the respondents came from Bataan. The sample should consequently not be interpreted as proportionally representative of Central Luzon. Rather, the findings primarily reflect the experiences of the individuals who participated, with a particularly strong representation from Bataan. This geographic concentration is important when considering the external validity and regional generalizability of the findings.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N=418)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Sex	Female	262	62.70%
	Male	156	37.30%
Relationship Type	Exclusive Dating	159	38%
	Married	102	24.40%
	Cohabiting	86	20.60%
	Engaged	71	17%
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree Holder	267	63.90%
	Graduate-Level Student	71	17%
	Graduate Degree Holder	39	9.30%
	College Undergraduate (Currently Enrolled)	35	8.40%
	High School Graduate	4	1%
	Vocational Graduate	1	0.20%
	College Undergraduate (Not Currently Enrolled)	1	0.20%
Geographic Distribution	Bataan	229	54.80%
	Pampanga	78	18.70%
	Bulacan	52	12.40%
	Zambales	46	11%
	Aurora	7	1.70%
	Tarlac	6	1.40%

The sample consisted of 418 respondents, as presented in the frequency distribution of the participants' demographic characteristics. In terms of sex, the majority of the participants were female ($n = 262$, 62.7%), whereas male respondents comprised 37.3% of the sample ($n = 156$).

With respect to relationship type, the largest proportion of respondents reported being in an exclusive dating relationship ($n = 159$, 38.0%). This was followed by married individuals ($n = 102$, 24.4%), cohabiting participants ($n = 86$, 20.6%), and engaged respondents ($n = 71$, 17.0%). Regarding educational attainment, the majority of respondents were bachelor's degree holders ($n = 267$, 63.9%). Other participants included graduate-level students currently enrolled in advanced studies ($n = 71$, 17.0%), graduate degree holders ($n = 39$, 9.3%), and college undergraduates who were currently enrolled ($n = 35$, 8.4%). Only a minimal proportion of the sample consisted of high school graduates ($n = 4$, 1.0%), vocational graduates ($n = 1$, 0.2%), and college undergraduates who were not currently enrolled ($n = 1$, 0.2%). Overall, the sample was largely composed of individuals who had attained or were pursuing tertiary education.

In terms of geographic distribution, more than half of the respondents came from Bataan ($n = 229$, 54.8%), making it the most represented province in the sample. Participants from Pampanga accounted for 18.7% ($n = 78$), followed by Bulacan ($n = 52$, 12.4%), Zambales ($n = 46$, 11.0%), Aurora ($n = 7$, 1.7%), and Tarlac ($n = 6$, 1.4%). The findings showed an uneven distribution of respondents across the provinces of Central Luzon, with a larger proportion of participants originating from Bataan than from the other provinces. This imbalance may reflect sampling bias associated with the convenience sampling method.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Participants were required to meet the following criteria to be included in the study:

1. Participants must be between 21 and 35 years of age. This age range corresponds to young adulthood, a developmental stage characterized by the formation and maintenance of committed romantic relationships

(Robles et al., 2020). By restricting the sample to individuals within this age range, the study ensured greater developmental consistency, relational stability, and ethical appropriateness, thereby enhancing the validity and interpretability of the findings.

2. Participants must have completed at least a high school education. This ensured that participants had sufficient literacy and comprehension to accurately understand and respond to the survey instruments administered in English.
3. Participants must be currently involved in a committed romantic relationship. This was operationally defined as a mutually acknowledged and exclusive partnership, such as an exclusive dating relationship, a cohabiting relationship, an engagement, or a marriage. Commitment in this study was determined through self-reported indicators of relationship status, exclusivity, and duration, with participants required to confirm that their relationship was ongoing and mutually exclusive.
4. Participants must have been in their current relationship for a minimum of three years. This criterion was established to ensure that participants had sufficient relationship experience to develop relatively stable patterns of conflict resolution, apology behaviors, and perceptions of apology sincerity. Relationship development research suggests that as romantic relationships progress, couples accumulate shared experiences and establish more stable relational patterns that permit more reliable evaluations of relationship functioning (Flora & Segrin, 2000; Cate et al., 2022; Bühler et al., 2021). Accordingly, a minimum relationship duration of three years was selected as a methodological criterion to increase the likelihood that participants had experienced repeated opportunities for conflict, reconciliation, and relationship repair.
5. Participants must be Filipino citizens. This ensured the cultural relevance of the study.

The presence and quality of the romantic relationship were quantified using the 16-item

Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16), which assesses overall relationship satisfaction. Although relationship satisfaction did not solely define commitment, it provided a validated and continuous measure of relational quality, enabling the empirical examination of how apology behaviors relate to relational outcomes.

Participants were excluded if they did not meet the inclusion criteria or if they were subject to specific conditions that could compromise the validity or ethical integrity of the study, including the following:

1. Individuals who identified as single, casually dating, or being in situationships without clearly defined exclusivity or commitment were excluded, as these relationship types may not provide a stable basis for assessing relationship satisfaction.
2. Individuals who were undergoing relationship dissolution, separation, or legal disputes, or who were experiencing ongoing abuse, were also excluded. This criterion was established to protect participants' well-being and to avoid extreme or confounded responses that could disproportionately influence satisfaction ratings.

No cutoff scores were used for the standardized measures because the study examined continuous variables. Eligibility was determined solely through the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Research Instruments

To empirically examine the relationships among apology proclivity, perceived apology sincerity, and relationship satisfaction, this study utilized three validated self-report instruments. The Proclivity to Apologize Measure (PAM) and the Perceived Apologizer Sincerity (PAS) Scale were used after explicit permission was obtained from the respective instrument developers for research purposes, while the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16) is publicly available and permitted for use in academic research. Prior to conducting the regression analysis, descriptive statistics and reliability analyses were performed to assess the internal consistency of the instruments.

Proclivity to Apologize Measure (PAM)

Apology proclivity was measured using the Proclivity to Apologize Measure (PAM), developed by Howell et al. (2011) and validated by Dunlop et al. (2015). This 18-item self-report scale was designed to assess an individual's general, trait-level tendency to apologize across various interpersonal situations. Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "Not true of me" to "Very true of me" or from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree." The scale has demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .88, confirming its reliability in assessing general apology tendencies across contexts.

Perceived Apologizer Sincerity (PAS)

Perceived apology sincerity was assessed using the Perceived Apologizer Sincerity (PAS) Scale, which evaluates the extent to which individuals perceive a partner's apology as genuine. This includes assessments of the partner's expressed remorse, acceptance of responsibility, and intention to change his or her behavior. The items were designed to reflect the recipient's subjective experience of the authenticity of an apology, incorporating both verbal and nonverbal cues. The scale has shown strong internal consistency across various samples, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .88 to .91. Its use in this study enabled a nuanced understanding of how perceived sincerity independently influenced relationship satisfaction.

Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16)

Relationship satisfaction was measured using the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16), developed by Funk and Rogge (2007). This 16-item instrument was designed to assess individuals' overall satisfaction, emotional fulfillment, and sense of commitment within romantic relationships. The CSI-16 has been widely used in relationship research and includes both direct and indirect indicators of satisfaction, such as levels of trust, communication, and mutual support. Items were answered using Likert-type response formats, and the scale has demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .94. The CSI-16 was particularly well suited for use with young adults in committed relationships, making it an

appropriate measure for this study's objectives.

To evaluate the internal consistency of the instruments in the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed using the study sample. The Proclivity to Apologize Measure (PAM) demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .79$); the Perceived Apologizer Sincerity (PAS) Scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .97$); and the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16) demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$). These findings indicate that all instruments exhibited satisfactory reliability for use in the present study.

Although the Proclivity to Apologize Measure (PAM), the Perceived Apologizer Sincerity (PAS) Scale, and the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16) were originally developed and validated in Western cultural contexts, they were selected because of their established psychometric properties and conceptual relevance to the study variables. To preserve their original psychometric characteristics, the instruments were administered in their original English versions. Because English is widely used as a medium of instruction in Philippine secondary and higher education, the study included only participants who had attained at least a high school education to help ensure adequate comprehension of the questionnaire items.

Nevertheless, the cultural validity of these instruments has not been comprehensively established among Filipino populations. Although the measures demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency in the present study, some culturally specific meanings associated with apology, sincerity, and relationship satisfaction may not have been fully captured. This limitation should be considered when interpreting the findings, and future research is encouraged to conduct cross-cultural validation and cultural adaptation studies to establish the construct validity and measurement equivalence of these instruments among Filipino samples.

Specific Procedures Based on Study Objectives

Specific Research Procedures: From Ethics Approval to Data Collection and Analysis

The research followed a systematic sequence of procedures, beginning with ethics approval. Before data collection, ethics approval was secured from the Angeles University Foundation Institutional Ethics Review Committee (AUF-IERC). Data gathering commenced only after formal clearance was received to ensure compliance with ethical standards. Following approval, participants were recruited through online platforms to maximize accessibility and reach across Central Luzon. Recruitment involved targeted posts and survey invitations disseminated through widely used social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. The survey was also circulated through university networks and shared through online relationship-focused forums and community organizations catering to young adults. The recruitment message included a brief description of the study, the eligibility requirements, and an invitation to participate voluntarily. The use of online recruitment facilitated greater accessibility, broader geographic reach, and the feasible recruitment of participants across Central Luzon.

The survey was administered online using Google Forms and was structured sequentially to ensure clarity, ethical compliance, and methodological rigor. The first section contained the informed consent form. Participants read a detailed consent form explaining the study's objectives, procedures, voluntary nature, confidentiality protections, and potential risks and benefits. Only those who actively agreed by selecting the consent checkbox were allowed to proceed. If they declined, the form automatically ended without collecting any responses. The second section contained the screening questions. Participants answered eligibility questions covering age (21–35 years), nationality (Filipino), relationship status (currently in a committed relationship), relationship duration, and English proficiency. Those who did not meet the criteria were thanked for their interest and were not allowed to continue. The third section collected demographic information. Eligible participants provided non-identifiable details, such as sex, type of relationship (e.g., exclusively dating or married), educational attainment, and location. The final section consisted of the standardized instruments,

in which participants completed the Proclivity to Apologize Measure (PAM), the Perceived Apologizer Sincerity Scale (PAS), and the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16).

The estimated time required to complete the survey was 15–25 minutes, and participants were allowed to withdraw at any point without penalty. The data were stored in password-protected files accessible only to the researcher. After data collection, statistical analysis commenced. This structured procedure ensured transparency, ethical safeguards, and methodological rigor throughout the research process.

Online Survey Administration

Clear instructions were provided at the beginning of each section to promote understanding and minimize confusion. To ensure completeness, the survey was programmed so that each question had to be answered before the participant could proceed to the next item. This sequential format prevented missing data and ensured that responses were systematically collected.

To enhance accessibility, the survey was optimized for both mobile and desktop use, recognizing that smartphones are a common means of accessing the internet among Filipino young adults. Recruitment materials emphasized the voluntary nature of participation and included reminders regarding confidentiality and the participants' right to withdraw.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles and followed the guidelines set forth by the Angeles University Foundation Ethics Review Committee, ensuring the protection of participants' rights, welfare, and confidentiality. Before providing electronic informed consent, participants were provided with detailed information regarding the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. They retained the right to withdraw from the study at any point without repercussions. To safeguard confidentiality, all participants' data were anonymized and securely stored, with access restricted solely to the researcher and any other authorized individuals involved in data analysis. Furthermore, the study prioritized beneficence by

seeking to provide valuable insights into relationship dynamics and counseling practices. Potential risks, such as emotional discomfort arising from questions about personal relationship experiences, were mitigated through careful study design and the provision of support resources for participants experiencing distress. Cultural sensitivity was maintained throughout the research process, with due respect given to participants' cultural backgrounds and with adherence to ethical guidelines and local customs in research practices. By upholding transparency and integrity in data collection, analysis, and reporting, the study aimed to maintain ethical standards and contribute ethically sound knowledge to the field of psychological research.

Suitability and Authorization of the Study

The present study was deemed suitable for the field of clinical psychology, as it addressed a significant yet underexplored area: the role of apology-related processes in predicting romantic relationship satisfaction among Filipino young adults. Given the increasing prevalence of relational instability, communication breakdowns, and unresolved conflicts in romantic relationships in the Philippines, examining mechanisms that facilitate conflict repair, such as apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity, was both timely and relevant. Methodologically, the study was appropriate, as it employed a quantitative, correlational-predictive design using validated psychometric instruments. The use of standardized measures supported the reliable and valid assessment of the constructs of interest, thereby strengthening the scientific rigor of the investigation.

In terms of authorization, the study was conducted in full compliance with ethical standards for psychological research. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the Angeles University Foundation Ethics Review Committee. Participation in the study was strictly voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously maintained throughout the research process. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.

Informed Consent Process, Duration of Participation, and Withdrawal Criteria

The informed consent process followed the ethical principles outlined by the university's Ethics Review Committee. Informed consent was obtained prior to the commencement of data collection, specifically at the very beginning of the online survey. Before accessing any survey items, participants were presented with a comprehensive and accessible informed consent form embedded within the survey platform. The consent form clearly outlined the nature, purpose, and procedures of the study. It stated that the research was being conducted as part of a graduate thesis under the Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology program at Angeles University Foundation and explicitly identified the primary researcher, who was responsible for obtaining consent, as well as the academic adviser overseeing the study. Thus, consent was obtained directly by the primary researcher through the online survey interface without the involvement of third parties.

The consent form informed participants that the study sought to examine how apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity influenced romantic relationship satisfaction among Filipino young adults. It explained that participation involved answering online questionnaires composed of three standardized scales: the Proclivity to Apologize Measure (PAM), the Perceived Apologizer Sincerity Scale (PAS), and the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16), as well as basic demographic questions. The expected duration of participation was approximately 15–25 minutes.

Participants were assured that their involvement was entirely voluntary and that they could choose to decline participation at any point during the process without providing any justification. They were also informed that they could skip any question that caused discomfort and that there were no penalties or losses of benefits associated with nonparticipation or withdrawal. The form included a checkbox for participants to confirm that they had read and understood the information and voluntarily agreed to participate.

Because data collection was conducted online, a digital informed consent checkbox served as documentation of agreement. The

form emphasized that no personally identifying information was collected, thereby ensuring the anonymity of responses. Participants were also provided with the contact details of the primary researcher and the academic adviser for any questions or concerns related to the study. In addition, contact information for mental health support services was included in case any participant experienced emotional distress related to the survey content.

In summary, this process ensured that participants were fully informed about their rights, the study's purpose, the procedures involved, and the voluntary nature of their participation. These safeguards were designed to uphold the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, and respect for persons throughout the research process.

Minimization of Coercion and Undue Influence

Recruitment procedures were designed to minimize coercion and undue influence and to ensure that participation remained fully voluntary. Participants self-selected into the study by accessing the survey link. No direct solicitation, academic pressure, or incentives were used. Recruitment materials clearly stated that participation was optional, with no penalties or loss of benefits for nonparticipation or withdrawal. The study excluded minors.

Dissemination of Findings and Participant Access

The findings of this study were disseminated in ways that promoted transparency, knowledge sharing, and practical application while maintaining participant confidentiality. Upon completion, the results were compiled into the thesis manuscript and submitted to the Angeles University Foundation Graduate School for academic review. Summaries of the research findings were also presented at university forums, conferences, or seminars focused on relationship psychology and clinical practice, with the goal of informing educators, counselors, and researchers about the predictive roles of apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity in romantic relationship satisfaction.

To ensure that participants could benefit from the knowledge generated, they were

offered a summary of the study findings. A separate optional form, which was not linked to their survey responses, allowed participants to indicate their interest in receiving this summary. This arrangement maintained the anonymity of responses while providing participants with information about the overall findings and practical implications of the research. Participants were informed that the summary would present only aggregated data, without any identifying information, and would focus on general insights rather than individual-level results. This approach balanced ethical obligations to participants with the responsibility to disseminate findings appropriately. By providing access to a summary, the study promoted engagement with the research process, encouraged the evidence-based application of findings in personal or professional contexts, and increased public understanding of the factors that contribute to relationship satisfaction among Filipino young adults.

Risks and Inconveniences

The potential risks associated with participation in this study were expected to be minimal. However, there was a possibility that some participants might experience mild emotional discomfort or distress while recalling past interpersonal conflicts or emotionally charged experiences with their romantic partners, especially those involving apologies, misunderstandings, or unresolved issues. These emotional responses could arise while participants responded to questions in the apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity scales, which could indirectly prompt reflection on personal relational difficulties.

To mitigate these potential risks, participants were informed in the consent form that they could skip any question they found distressing or withdraw from the survey entirely at any point without providing a reason and without penalty. Additionally, the survey provided contact information for relevant psychological support services and other accessible mental health service providers. A debriefing message was also presented at the end of the survey, reminding participants of these options and encouraging them to seek support if they experienced lingering discomfort. The

researcher ensured that these precautionary measures upheld the ethical principle of non-maleficence and safeguarded participants' well-being throughout the research process.

Benefits of the Study

Participation in this study offered personal, academic, and societal benefits. On a personal level, respondents may have gained greater self-awareness regarding their relationship behaviors, particularly regarding how they engage in conflict resolution through apologies and how they interpret their partners' sincerity. This reflection may have contributed to more mindful and constructive relationship practices.

On the academic and societal levels, the findings contributed to the growing body of literature on romantic relationships during young adulthood, with a specific focus on culturally grounded behaviors in the Philippine context. The study aimed to inform psychoeducational programs, counseling practices, and relationship enrichment efforts that promote healthier communication and conflict resolution strategies among Filipino couples.

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Data Management

The researcher was committed to upholding the privacy and confidentiality of all participants in accordance with the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). All collected data were handled in accordance with the highest standards of ethical and professional care.

Participants were not asked to provide any personally identifiable information, such as their full names, addresses, or contact numbers, in the survey to ensure anonymity. Responses were collected through a secure online survey platform, specifically Google Forms, with all submissions stored in password-protected and encrypted digital files accessible only to the primary researcher and the thesis adviser. The dataset was anonymized, and any identifiable metadata were removed before analysis.

All research data will be retained for a period of three years after the completion or publication of the study, in accordance with standard research data retention guidelines. This

retention period allows for the verification of results and potential academic dissemination while maintaining participant confidentiality. After the retention period, all data will be securely and permanently disposed of using appropriate methods. Digital data, such as survey responses, encoded datasets, and statistical files, will be permanently deleted from storage devices and cloud-based platforms. Backup systems will also be cleared to prevent data recovery. Physical data, if any, such as printed documents or consent forms, will be shredded to prevent reconstruction or unauthorized access.

Participants could request access to a summary of the study findings by indicating their interest through a separate, optional form that was not linked to their responses, thereby maintaining complete data separation.

These measures were designed to protect participants' confidentiality, prevent unauthorized access to the data, and ensure compliance with both local data protection laws and international ethical standards for psychological research.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher declares that there are no actual, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest associated with this study. The conduct of the research, including its design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of findings, was carried out independently and solely for academic purposes. No financial, institutional, or personal relationships existed that could inappropriately influence or bias the results of the study. Specifically, the researcher did not receive any external funding, sponsorship, or material support from organizations or entities that could benefit from the outcome of the research. The standardized instruments used in this study were utilized strictly for research purposes, with proper authorization from their respective developers. In addition, the researcher maintained professional integrity by ensuring that personal beliefs, values, or experiences related to romantic relationships did not interfere with the research process. All research procedures were guided by established ethical principles in psychological

research, emphasizing objectivity, transparency, and accountability.

Statistical Analysis of Data

All statistical analyses were conducted using Jamovi (Version 2.6), an open-source statistical software program widely used in psychological and social science research because of its user-friendly interface. The analyses were guided by the study's correlational-predictive design, which aimed to examine the relationships among apology proclivity, perceived apology sincerity, and relationship satisfaction and to determine the extent to which apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity statistically predicted relationship satisfaction. Although multiple regression can estimate the predictive relationships among variables, it does not establish causal relationships because of the study's cross-sectional design.

Initially, the collected data were screened for completeness and accuracy, and only responses that satisfied the inclusion criteria were retained for analysis. Next, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to evaluate the internal consistency of the Proclivity to Apologize Measure (PAM), the Perceived Apologizer Sincerity Scale (PAS), and the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16).

Subsequently, descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the characteristics of the sample and the study variables. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe demographic characteristics, such as sex, relationship type, educational attainment, and geographic location, while means and standard deviations were calculated for apology proclivity, perceived apology sincerity, and relationship satisfaction.

Following the descriptive analyses, the distributions of the study variables were examined through the visual inspection of histograms. Because several study variables deviated from normality, Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was employed to assess the strength and direction of the relationships between apology proclivity and relationship satisfaction and between perceived apology sincerity and relationship satisfaction (Schober et al., 2018). Spearman's rho was selected

because it is a nonparametric measure that does not require variables to be normally distributed.

Thereafter, the assumptions of residual normality, homoscedasticity, and the absence of problematic multicollinearity were assessed. Residual histograms, quantile-quantile (Q-Q) plots, and normality tests indicated minor deviations from normality. However, the residual distribution was considered sufficiently acceptable for regression analysis. Multicollinearity diagnostics revealed no evidence of problematic collinearity between the predictors, with all variance inflation factor (VIF) values below the recommended threshold and the highest VIF recorded at 1.40. In contrast, the Breusch-Pagan test indicated a significant violation of the homoscedasticity assumption ($p < .001$), suggesting the presence of heteroskedasticity in the residuals.

Following assumption testing, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed to

examine the statistical associations of apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity with relationship satisfaction and to estimate their relative contributions within the regression model. Given the presence of heteroskedasticity, heteroskedasticity-consistent (HC3) robust standard errors were employed to obtain more reliable estimates of the standard errors, test statistics, and significance levels. This approach allowed for the evaluation of the unique and combined statistical contributions of apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity to the variation in relationship satisfaction within the regression model while accounting for the violation of the homoscedasticity assumption. The regression coefficients were interpreted as indicators of statistical prediction within the model and not as evidence of causal influence.

Finally, statistical significance for all analyses was evaluated using an alpha level of .05.

Result

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of the Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	M	SD
1. Relationship Satisfaction	—	.47***	.62***	65.70	12.90
2. Apology Proclivity	.47***	—	.44***	5.89	1.08
3. Perceived Apology Sincerity	.62***	.44***	—	74.00	11.60

Note. Values below and above the diagonal represent Spearman's rho (ρ). ** $p < .001$.

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and Spearman correlations among relationship satisfaction, apology proclivity, and perceived apology sincerity. Relationship satisfaction had a mean score of 65.70 ($SD = 12.90$), apology proclivity had a mean score of 5.89 ($SD = 1.08$), and perceived apology sincerity had a mean score of 74.00 ($SD = 11.60$).

The correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive associations among all variables included in the study. Based on the guidelines for interpreting correlation strength provided by Schober et al. (2018), relationship satisfaction was moderately and positively correlated with apology proclivity ($\rho = .47$, $p < .001$) and perceived apology sincerity ($\rho = .62$,

$p < .001$). The moderate magnitude of these correlations suggests that, although the variables were meaningfully associated, relationship satisfaction may also be influenced by additional interpersonal and contextual factors beyond apology-related behaviors and perceptions. Apology proclivity was positively and significantly correlated with perceived apology sincerity ($\rho = .44$, $p < .001$). These findings indicate that participants who reported a greater tendency to apologize also tended to report higher perceptions of apology sincerity. Because the study employed a correlational design, these findings should be interpreted as associations rather than as evidence of causal relationships.

Table 3. Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Relationship Satisfaction

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI
Intercept	65.71	0.42	—	157.64	< .001	[64.90, 66.52]
Apology Proclivity	1.32	0.61	.115	2.17	.031	[0.51, 2.12]
Perceived Apology Sincerity	0.78	0.06	.697	13.76	< .001	[0.70, 0.85]

Model fit: $R^2 = .570$, Adjusted $R^2 = .568$, $F(2, 415) = 275.52$, $p < .001$

Note. Estimates were obtained from a multiple linear regression model using heteroskedasticity-consistent (HC3) robust standard errors to account for the violation of the homoscedasticity assumption. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = robust standard error; β = standardized regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval.

The confidence intervals reported in the regression table were based on heteroskedasticity-consistent (HC3) robust standard errors. The regression coefficients (B) remain unchanged from those obtained through ordinary least squares estimation. However, because the analysis detected heteroskedasticity, HC3 robust standard errors were applied. These robust standard errors were then used to compute the t-values, p-values, and corresponding 95% confidence intervals.

Thus, the confidence intervals were not “adjusted” through a separate correction or transformation. Rather, they were derived using robust standard errors that account for heteroskedasticity, making statistical inference more reliable when the homoscedasticity assumption is violated.

A multiple linear regression analysis with heteroskedasticity-consistent (HC3) robust standard errors was conducted to examine the extent to which apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity predicted relationship satisfaction. This approach was applied because of evidence of heteroskedasticity, as indicated by a significant Breusch-Pagan test ($p < .001$), ensuring that statistical inferences remained robust despite the violation of the homoscedasticity assumption.

The overall model was statistically significant, $F(2, 415) = 275.52$, $p < .001$, accounting for 57.0% of the variance in relationship satisfaction ($R^2 = .570$, adjusted $R^2 = .568$). This indicated that the model explained a substantial proportion of the variance in relationship satisfaction. Among the predictors, perceived apology sincerity showed a strong and statistically significant positive relationship with relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .697$, $t = 13.76$, $p < .001$).

Apology proclivity also showed a statistically significant positive relationship with relationship satisfaction, although its relative contribution was smaller ($\beta = .115$, $t = 2.17$, $p = .031$). Overall, the findings indicate that both apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity significantly predicted relationship satisfaction, with perceived apology sincerity emerging as the stronger predictor within the model.

Discussion

This study examined the relationships among apology proclivity, perceived apology sincerity, and relationship satisfaction among Filipino young adults. Given the limited literature on apology-related processes in Filipino romantic relationships, the present findings contribute to the growing body of evidence by demonstrating significant positive associations among all the study variables. Among the variables examined, perceived apology sincerity showed the strongest association with relationship satisfaction, followed by apology proclivity, while apology proclivity was moderately associated with perceived apology sincerity. These findings suggest that both dispositional tendencies to apologize and perceptions of apology sincerity are meaningfully associated with relationship satisfaction within the present sample.

Relationship Satisfaction and Apology Proclivity

The results indicate a significant positive correlation between apology proclivity and relationship satisfaction ($\rho = .47$, $p < .001$), suggesting that individuals with a stronger dispositional tendency to apologize are more likely to report higher levels of satisfaction in their

romantic relationships. This finding supports the hypothesis that apology proclivity is positively associated with relationship satisfaction and may reflect interpersonal characteristics associated with constructive conflict management.

From the perspective of the Interpersonal Process Model of Intimacy (Reis & Shaver, 1988), apology proclivity may be conceptualized as a form of relational self-disclosure in which individuals who readily apologize signal accountability, vulnerability, and concern for their partners' emotional experiences. Individuals who are more willing to apologize may, therefore, also be more likely to demonstrate responsiveness during interpersonal conflicts, which is consistent with behaviors associated with intimacy and relational closeness. However, because the present study employed a correlational design, these findings indicate only that apology proclivity is associated with higher relationship satisfaction and do not establish that apology proclivity leads to greater intimacy or relationship satisfaction.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding may also be understood in light of relational values such as *kapwa* and *pakikisama*, which emphasize interpersonal harmony and connectedness (Alampay, 2024). Although these constructs were not directly measured, they provide a plausible cultural context for interpreting the observed association between apology proclivity and relationship satisfaction.

The findings are likewise consistent with research among Filipino couples demonstrating that constructive interpersonal communication is positively associated with marital satisfaction. In particular, Vazhappilly and Reyes (2016) indicated that effective communication, characterized by openness, empathy, and responsiveness, significantly predicted marital satisfaction among Filipino couples, suggesting that behaviors reflecting accountability and relational repair, such as apologizing, may similarly contribute to relationship quality.

Relationship Satisfaction and Perceived Apology Sincerity

The strongest observed relationship was between perceived apology sincerity and relationship satisfaction ($\rho = .62, p < .001$),

indicating that individuals who perceived their partners' apologies as genuine and heartfelt were substantially more likely to report higher relationship satisfaction. This finding suggests that perceived apology sincerity is closely associated with relationship satisfaction. However, because the study employed a cross-sectional design, the direction of this association cannot be determined. It is possible that perceiving apologies as sincere is associated with higher relationship satisfaction, but it is equally plausible that individuals who are more satisfied with their relationships are more likely to perceive their partners' apologies as sincere. Nevertheless, the strength of the observed association may indicate that, within the present sample, partners' interpretations of apologies were closely associated with relationship satisfaction, suggesting that subjective evaluations may be an important consideration in understanding interpersonal repair within romantic relationships.

These findings are consistent with previous research showing that apologies perceived as sincere are associated with forgiveness, trust restoration, and reduced negative affect following interpersonal conflict (Ohtsubo et al., 2009; Takahashi et al., 2022). Within romantic relationships, where emotional investment and interdependence are high, perceived sincerity may reflect partners' evaluations of relational commitment, accountability, and emotional attunement. This interpretation is consistent with the Interpersonal Process Model of Intimacy, which emphasizes that perceptions of responsiveness and genuine concern are associated with greater relational closeness.

Importantly, the relatively strong magnitude of the observed association suggests that perceived apology sincerity was more strongly associated with relationship satisfaction than was apology proclivity within the present sample. However, this finding should be interpreted as reflecting the relative strength of the observed statistical associations rather than as evidence of causal relationships.

Apology Proclivity and Perceived Apology Sincerity

A moderate positive association was observed between apology proclivity and

perceived apology sincerity ($\rho = .44, p < .001$), indicating that individuals who reported a greater tendency to apologize also tended to report higher perceptions of apology sincerity. The association suggests that, while the two constructs are related, they remain conceptually distinct. Thus, a greater dispositional tendency to apologize does not necessarily correspond to the perception of an apology as more sincere. This distinction suggests that the tendency to apologize and the perceived authenticity of apologies represent different aspects of interpersonal repair, highlighting the value of examining both constructs simultaneously when investigating relationship processes.

Within the Philippine context, this distinction may be particularly meaningful because interpersonal relationships are often guided by the cultural values of *kapwa* and *pakikisama*, which emphasize the maintenance of harmonious relationships (Alampay, 2024). While apologizing may help preserve social harmony, Filipino partners may also evaluate whether an apology genuinely reflects accountability and concern for the relationship. However, because the present study employed a correlational design, these findings should be interpreted as associations rather than as evidence of causal or reciprocal relationships.

Predictive Role of Apology Variables on Relationship Satisfaction

The regression analysis demonstrated that both apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity significantly predicted relationship satisfaction among Filipino young adults. However, perceived apology sincerity emerged as the stronger statistical predictor within the present model, suggesting that perceptions of apology authenticity were more strongly associated with relationship satisfaction than was the mere tendency to apologize. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that relationship behaviors perceived as genuine and emotionally responsive are associated with more positive relationship outcomes. It also aligns with Philippine evidence emphasizing the importance of communication quality, rather than the mere occurrence of communication behaviors, in relation to relationship satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2021).

Perceived apology sincerity remained significant after accounting for apology proclivity, indicating that it explained unique variance within the regression model. However, this should not be interpreted to mean that apology sincerity is the sole or primary determinant of relationship satisfaction, as relationship satisfaction is influenced by numerous interpersonal and individual factors that were beyond the scope of the present study. Accordingly, the regression coefficients should be interpreted as reflecting the relative statistical contributions of the study variables within the present model rather than their overall importance in explaining relationship satisfaction.

While apology proclivity represents a dispositional willingness to engage in reparative behavior, perceived apology sincerity reflects the partner's evaluation of the authenticity, accountability, and emotional meaning of the apology. Together, these findings suggest that apology-related processes are meaningfully associated with romantic relationship functioning among Filipino young adults. By examining apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity within the same predictive model, the present study extends previous literature that has typically examined apology-related variables independently.

Theoretical Implications

The findings extend the Interpersonal Process Model of Intimacy (Reis & Shaver, 1988) by suggesting that perceptions of sincerity may represent an important consideration in how reparative behaviors are interpreted within romantic relationships. Although the model emphasizes partner responsiveness, the present findings indicate that evaluations of apology authenticity are also positively associated with relationship satisfaction. Because perceived apology sincerity was not examined as a mediating process, this interpretation should be regarded as a theoretical implication rather than as evidence of an underlying mechanism. Additionally, the findings are consistent with personality-based perspectives on interpersonal repair, which conceptualize apology proclivity as reflecting relatively stable characteristics, such as Honesty-Humility and guilt proneness (Dunlop et al., 2015).

From a cultural standpoint, the findings may also be interpreted as consistent with collectivist relational perspectives, as they demonstrate that apology functions not only as a moral or interpersonal behavior but also as a culturally embedded mechanism for maintaining kapwa-based harmony. In the Philippine context, sincerity may carry heightened relational importance because of the strong emphasis on interpersonal authenticity and social harmony. Although these cultural values were not directly measured, they provide a plausible framework for understanding why apology-related variables were positively associated with relationship satisfaction among Filipino young adults. Future studies that directly assess indigenous Filipino relational values may further clarify their role in apology processes and relationship functioning.

Practical Implications

The results have several implications for clinical and counseling practice. First, interventions aimed at improving romantic relationships may benefit from emphasizing not only the occurrence of apologies but also their perceived authenticity. Couples may benefit from communication training that highlights the acknowledgment of harm, emotional validation, and accountability as key components of sincere apologies. Second, relationship education programs may help individuals distinguish between superficial apology behaviors and genuine relational repair efforts. This distinction may be particularly relevant in collectivist contexts, where apologies may sometimes be used to restore surface-level harmony without addressing underlying relational issues. Third, clinicians working with couples may consider assessing how partners interpret each other's repair attempts. A misalignment between apology behaviors and perceived sincerity may represent a critical point for intervention in addressing relational dissatisfaction.

These implications are consistent with communication-based interventions for Filipino couples described by Vazhappilly and Reyes (2017). Emotion-focused communication programs have been associated with improvements in marital relationships. Although the present study did not evaluate intervention

outcomes, the findings suggest that emphasizing sincere expressions of remorse, empathy, and accountability may be a valuable component of relationship counseling and education.

Conclusion of the Discussion

Overall, the findings indicate that both apology proclivity and perceived apology sincerity are positively associated with relationship satisfaction among Filipino young adults, with perceived apology sincerity demonstrating a stronger statistical association within the present sample. Although causal conclusions cannot be drawn, the findings highlight the importance of considering both dispositional tendencies and partners' subjective evaluations of apologies in understanding relationship satisfaction. By examining these variables simultaneously within the Filipino context, the study contributes to the limited literature on apology-related processes in romantic relationships and provides a basis for future culturally informed research and relationship-focused interventions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This study examined the relationships among apology proclivity, perceived apology sincerity, and relationship satisfaction among Filipino young adults. Based on the findings, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, the respondents generally reported moderate to high levels of relationship satisfaction, apology proclivity, and perceived apology sincerity. This indicates that, within the sample, participants generally reported relatively positive relational functioning, including a greater tendency to apologize and higher perceptions of apology sincerity.

Second, all the study variables were significantly and positively correlated with one another. Relationship satisfaction was significantly associated with apology proclivity, indicating that individuals who reported a stronger tendency to apologize also tended to report higher relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction also demonstrated a stronger positive association with perceived apology sincerity, suggesting that the perceived genuineness of apologies was more strongly associated with

relationship satisfaction within the present sample. Additionally, apology proclivity was positively associated with perceived apology sincerity, indicating that individuals who reported a greater tendency to apologize also tended to report higher perceptions of apology sincerity.

Third, the overall pattern of findings suggests that apology-related processes are meaningfully associated with romantic relationship functioning. Among the study variables, perceived apology sincerity demonstrated the strongest statistical association with relationship satisfaction, highlighting the importance of how apologies are interpreted within romantic relationships.

Fourth, when interpreted through the Interpersonal Process Model of Intimacy, the findings are consistent with the proposition that perceived partner responsiveness is associated with higher relationship satisfaction. Within the present study, apologies perceived as authentic, emotionally attuned, and indicative of genuine relational repair were more strongly associated with higher relationship satisfaction. However, these findings should be interpreted as statistical associations rather than as evidence of causal relationships.

Lastly, within the Filipino context, the findings may be interpreted as consistent with relational values such as *kapwa*, *pakikisama*, and the maintenance of interpersonal harmony. However, because these cultural constructs were not directly measured, these interpretations should be regarded as theoretical interpretations rather than empirical conclusions. Future studies that directly assess Filipino cultural values are needed to determine their role in apology processes and relationship satisfaction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

For Romantic Couples and Young Adults

Individuals in romantic relationships are encouraged to develop apology skills that emphasize accountability, empathy, and behavioral change rather than relying solely on the

act of saying sorry. Couples are encouraged to engage in open discussions regarding how apologies are communicated and interpreted to reduce misunderstandings arising from perceived insincerity. Practicing active listening, emotional validation, and collaborative conflict resolution may also strengthen relationship satisfaction by enhancing the perceived sincerity of repair attempts.

For Mental Health Professionals and Counselors

Psychologists, counselors, and relationship therapists may integrate apology-related communication training into couples' interventions. Structured interventions may include communication skills training, role-playing exercises, emotion-focused dialogues, and guided apology-repair exercises that help partners acknowledge responsibility, validate each other's emotions, and formulate meaningful behavioral commitments following interpersonal conflicts. Clinicians may also assess perceived apology sincerity during couple assessments as a potential indicator of unresolved conflict, relational trust, and readiness for reconciliation. Integrating these components into evidence-based approaches, such as Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), may strengthen conflict resolution and improve relationship satisfaction.

For Relationship Education and Psychoeducational Programs

Universities, community organizations, and youth development programs may incorporate modules on conflict resolution and apology processes into relationship education initiatives. These programs should highlight the psychological and relational importance of sincere apologies, especially in collectivist cultural contexts, where harmony and relational repair are highly valued. Program modules may include recognizing the characteristics of sincere apologies, developing empathy and perspective-taking skills, managing emotional reactions during conflict, and practicing effective repair strategies through case discussions, reflective activities, and communication workshops. These programs may be incorporated into premarital education, relationship enrichment

seminars, and mental health promotion initiatives to strengthen healthy romantic relationships among Filipino young adults.

For Future Researchers

Future studies are encouraged to build upon the present findings by employing longitudinal or dyadic research designs to better examine the temporal and reciprocal relationships among apology proclivity, perceived apology sincerity, and relationship satisfaction. Researchers are also encouraged to examine whether perceived apology sincerity mediates the relationship between apology proclivity and relationship satisfaction through formal mediation analysis and to explore additional mediating or moderating variables, such as forgiveness, attachment style, emotional regulation, and cultural values, including *kapwa*, *hiya*, and *pakikisama*. Furthermore, future investigations may evaluate the effectiveness of apology-based counseling interventions and psychoeducational programs in improving relationship satisfaction. Expanding the study to diverse regions of the Philippines and utilizing mixed-methods or qualitative approaches may also provide a more comprehensive understanding of apology processes within Filipino romantic relationships.

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