

Romantic relationships: what types of relationships



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University students enrolled in the undergraduate psychology course completed a general questionnaire consisting questions regarding to romantic relationships. The survey investigated the types of relationships university students sought or were involved in, the levels of commitment and communication, relationship satisfaction or relationships length. Out of 241 participants, only 80 of them (40 males and 40 females) were randomly selected for data analysis. The results indicate a significant difference between students seeking long-term relationships and one-night stands with regards to communication between partners, $p = 0.004$. The relationships length and commitment level showed positive moderate correlation of 0.474, and $p = 0.001$, which shows a high significance. These findings suggest that university students seek for long-term and committed relationships.

Love Relationships: What Types of Relationships

Do University Students Seek

Romantic relationship between partners is part of everyone's life. In spite of people's differences, such as ethnic and cultural differences or differences in education and beliefs, they have one common purpose of life, which is to find a romantic relationship that satisfies their needs. Same ideas apply to university students as well. This research is interested in various types of relationships university students seek or are engaged in. Do students look for long-term committed relationships, short-term or casual relationships or only one-night stands?

In one study conducted by Knox, Schacht and Zusman (1999), they were interested in the types of relationships undergraduate students were

involved in or looked for. 184 undergraduates volunteered to participate in the study. 68% of women and 32% men with the average age of 19 were asked to complete a questionnaire consisted of questions about their romantic relationships. The results showed that 94% of the students had been in love before with 36% reporting three or more love relationships and 10% of them were involved with more than 5 love partners. The experimenters found out that the longer people were involved in a relationship, the more commitment they wanted to have with their partners. Knox et al. (1999) concluded that young people are more romantic and committed in their relationships than they predicted.

Another study introduced by Figueredo, Sefcek and Jones (2006) examined the degree to which individuals showed as absolute or relative preference in an ideal romantic partner. Their prediction was that individuals sought mates that were at the same level of themselves and also sought mates that were somewhat higher in conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, but lower in neuroticism than themselves. 104 undergraduate students participated in this study. 81 of them were female and 23 were male with average ages of 21 and 23. 1. They were give surveys and asked them to rate their own ideal romantic partner. The results showed that the prediction above was right.

In the second study Figueredo et al. (2006) provided, participants were asked to examine the relationships between their own self, and the actual romantic partner. The prediction was that while participants would have specific personality and mate value preferences in relation to their ideal romantic partner, it was more likely that the actual romantic partner would

reflect more positive values than they actually have. On both studies sex did not have any impact on the results, which showed again that the prediction was correct. To sum up, university students sought for romantic partners that were matches to them to some degree and they tended to overlook the personalities that their partners had that were not ideal to them.

Gonzaga, Turner, Keltner, and Campos (2005) examined two types of relationship and love, one was romantic and the second one was passionate. They also examined the emotions occurring during the two types of relationships. Romantic love is described as fulfillment a commitment role, promotion of intimacy and connection. Passionate love fulfills sexual interests, passion without commitment and any sexual contacts are less frequent in more established relationships. They predicted their results based on the emotions participants felt in the two types of relationships. They selected 63 heterosexual couples from a college and one condition was that the length of their relationship must have been at least three months. For the purposes of generalization across cultures, they selected couples from same ethnic backgrounds of Asians, Caucasians and Latinos. They filled out demographic, personality and relationship questionnaires. For example, in the commitment question, participants were asked to rate the months of dating, whether they discussed the marriage issue on the scale from 1, the lowest, to 7, the highest. In the intimacy task, they talked about relationships and how much the couple agreed on sexual relations and how enjoyable they found their sexual relations with their partner. The expected result was that romantic love relationships would correlate with positive related states such as happiness, more than passion, which fell into arousal states with concerns

and confusion. Women displayed more affiliation cues than men by the way they smiled. Men showed slightly more sexual cues than women, which is viewed as supportive of evolutionary claims regarding gender, sexual interest (Buss & Schmitt, 1993, cited from Gonzaga et al. 2005). Although there were no differences across ethnic groups in the amount of love or desire reported in the relationship, various ethnic groups had different norms for the expressions of emotions and judged it differently. The overall result showed that college students were slightly more interested in romantic relationships, which led to a greater commitment.

In order to determine what types of relationships do university students seek or have, the relationships length, levels of communication and commitment, and relationship satisfaction were considered. The prediction was that the more students are involved in a relationship, the more satisfied they feel, and the more level of commitment and communication they seek. The previous studies supports the above prediction and if it is the case, then it should follow that university students seek for long-term relationships with commitment.

Method

Participants

There were 241 undergraduate university students above the age of 18 who participated in the study accomplished in the Psychology research methods course 2250. Out of the above number, only 80 participants (40 males and 40 females) were randomly selected for data analysis in order to generalize the results.

Materials

Participants were asked to complete a general questionnaire in the undergraduate psychology laboratory during individual's laboratory section. Examples of some questions were what types of relationships students seek, what level of communication they have with their partner, what level of commitment they have, or how long have they been involved in their current relationship and the questions were answered on either 1 - 10 scale or filled in a blank.

Procedures

Participants were first give a consent form for signing and agreeing with the research. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study they were involved in and reviewed all ethical concerns and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and may refrain from answering any questions they prefer the omit. General questionnaires containing questions regarding romantic relationships were given to 241 participants from Psychology 2250 course. After completing the questionnaires, 80 responses were randomly selected with an even amount of male participants and female participants. After a week of delay, data was analyzed in SPSS during the laboratory section.

Results

The results obtained from 80 general questionnaires with equal amount of male and female participants provided some very positive and significant correlations about the hypotheses stated. In the study examining the types

of relationships university students seek, questions such as the level of commitment, the level of communication, the types of relationships and the length of relationships were taken into account. The first data analysis examined the correlation between the length of relationships and commitment level. The data table 1 shows a moderate positive correlation of $r = 0.474$ and $p = 0.001$. Generally, p-value is said to be significant at $p < 0.05$. In this case, the results showed a very high significance.

As hypothesized, participants seeking for high level of commitment would as well look for high level of communication. In analyzing the relationship between communication level and commitment level, the results showed a moderate correlation. The positive correlation was found to be 0.391 as shown in table 2. Using this correlation test, a very high significance was also found, $p = 0.000$.

The last analysis presents the relationship between communication level and types of relationships university students seek. To test the prediction that participants seeking for more serious relationships would also seek for high level of communication with their partners. Out of 65 responses, 44 participants were looking for long-term relationship, whereas only 2 students for one-night stand. Students who were looking for long-term relationships scored minimum of 6 and maximum of 10 on the level of communication. A big significant drop on communication level was related to students who were seeking for one-night stands. Figure 1 showed a very significant difference between long-term relationships and one-night stands with regards to communication level. The significant p-value was found to be 0.

004, which is less than alpha level of 0.05. No significant difference was found between short-term relationships and casual relationships.

Discussion

The research investigated the types of relationships university students seek. Participants were given a questionnaire with several questions, which examined

the research hypothesis. Questions such as the levels of commitment and communication, the relationships length, relationship satisfaction and types of relationships were taken into account. The results supported the hypothesis that university students seek for long-term committed relationships.

From first data analysis, the relationship between the level of commitment and relationships length showed a positive correlation with each other. As the length of relationships increased, the level of commitment increased as well. Moreover, the results showed that students are involved in a relationship that is on average one year length, which is considered as a long-term relationship. Therefore, high commitment level facilitates long-term relationships. Gonzaga et al. (2005) provided supporting evidences for the above finding, when they tested which two types of relationships students were interested in; romantic relationship with commitment or passionate relationship that fulfilled mainly their sexual interests.

In another analysis, commitment and communication levels were tested. The results showed a positive and significant correlation. The analysis of the <https://assignbuster.com/romantic-relationships-what-types-of-relationships/>

relationship between the communication level and types of relationships provided some significant results. One-way ANOVA test showed significant difference between groups seeking long-term or platonic relationships and one-night stands with regards to communication level. To sum up, when high levels of communication exist, long-term relationships are more likely to be sought. According to Arriage (2001), individuals that have high level of relationship satisfaction seek further and deeper involvement with a partner, whereas dissatisfied people consider distancing themselves.

In contrast, there are some weaknesses with the study. One major problem is that our sample does not reflect the general population, which is a threat to external validity. The survey was only given to undergraduate psychology student and vast majority if the students are female. Another weakness is that responses are more likely to be biased according to the relationship status of participants at the time of filling the questionnaire. If they were involved in a long-term relationship, they would say they desired a long-term relationship. The responses could be also influence by social desirability. Because it is more appropriate to state that they seek long-term relationships than one-night stands.

In conclusion, on the basis of positive correlation between communication and commitment level and as well the relationships length and commitment level, this supports the hypothesis. However, it would be unreasonable to conclude confidently that it applied to the general population within university students.