The Nexus of Romantic Relationship and Motivation among Students of a University: A Quantitative Study

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Abstract  
This study is an effort to investigate the nexus of romantic relationship and motivation at university level students. The study used the survey method for data collection. A sample of 50 respondents consisting of 25 males and 25 females has been taken purposively. The results of the present study demonstrated that all of the respondents were involved in romantic relationship. The romantic relationship has motivational effects on the respondents and they perform better on their academic ground. It is obvious from the results that romantic relationship causes comfortable feeling among the partners. They share and respond to each other in time of need and support. They enjoy company of partner and get encouragement to accomplish their tasks in time.

Key words: Motivation, Romantic Relationship, Nexus, Students, University

1. Introduction  
The subject of motivation and romantic relationship has attracted number of researchers and scholars from various fields like psychology, literature, anthropology, sociology etc. However, studies in psychology on such topics dominate the field of research. According to Campbell, Oliver & Sedikides (1994), romantic relationship has so many benefits including “companionship, friendship, feeling of happiness or elation, exclusivity, feeling loved or loving another, affection and intimacy, self-development and growth and understanding, self-esteem”. Romantic friendship could be defined as a close and typically non-sexual relationship between friends, often involving a degree of physical closeness. It is observed that university routine life brings changes in food habits, friendship styles, work burden, and new tasks. Due to newness and different culture, university students take stress most of the time. They must adjust to being away from home, perhaps for the first time, and maintain a balance between high level of academic success and a new
social environment (Wright, 1967). In such a hard and demanding environment, motivational sources and outlets are constantly invoke the students mind and they get involved with partners on campuses.

Motivation refers to “the reasons underlying behavior” (Guay et al., 2010). Paraphrasing broadly motivation as “the attribute that moves us to do or not to do something” (Broussard and Garrison, 2004). Traditionally, educators consider intrinsic motivation to be more desirable and to result in better learning outcomes than extrinsic motivation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). In this context, the present study is designed to explore the nexus of romantic relationship and motivation in the study area.

2. Literature Review

Humans, particularly adolescents get involve in romantic relationships with variety of reasons. According to Aristotle, humans are “social animals” which made them long to form an intimate relationship in which love can be given and received freely which the psychologists called “the need to belong” (Myers, 2010). Rest assured of the love and care given by the persons close to them, they are secured with the trust and confidence that they are acceptable to individuals whom they can depend on for the satisfaction of their needs. (Raman, 2010) stated that being in romantic relationship involves physical contact which causes chemical arousal to the persons involved and at the same time gain love and confidence in which they are longing for.

Negative effects of romantic relationships are very evident in the report of Namaganda (2010) saying that “developing feelings of love, two weeks before exams can lead to lack of concentration during the time a learner should be revising and thus failure”. Thus, Byamugisha (as cited in Namaganda, 2010) a Psychologist and lecturer at Kyambogo University said that heart-break is not the only cause of student’s failure in exams.

The Developmental Significance of Romantic Relationships during Adolescence” by Collins (2003), it is stated that romantic relationships bring people together. They allow bonds to be formed that can influence the behavioral aspects of adolescence involved. Relationships can be described as expressions of affection, including emotional, physical, and sexual. About 70% of students age 18 describe being in a relationship as “especially romantic”. Romantic relationships are very common for young people and can often times alter an adolescents moods and their way life. These constant changes may influence things such as academic achievement. Paul and White (1990) observe that being in an intimate relationship involves trust, sensitivity, and responsiveness, being able to make a commitment, striving for equity and mutuality. For a student, it also means working to achieve academic balance. However, Zimmer (2001) find dating has a positive effect on the emotional health of adolescents.

Quatman et al. (2001) study dating status, academic performance, and motivation in high schools in the US state of California, showing that students who dated more frequently had a lower academic performance. The study supported a significant relationship between dating status and academic achievement, which can cause serious problems among university students (Prisbell,1986).While having an intimate relationship may have benefits for emotional health, that being overly involved in dating is associated with a more negative effect on the psychosocial function and health of students (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).
During adolescence, teens become interested and involved in dating because of the desire to belong with others. As a result, it is clear that over the time, romantic relationships gain in importance. Adolescents crave to have an intimate romantic relationship to which love is given and received without restriction. It is according to the need to belong theory by which individuals have the determination to connect with others in enduring, close relationships. Furthermore, the theory states that humans “share” the same need to be a part or connected with other individuals, and claims that all individuals may live life better if they are connected. Myers (2010) supported the need to belong theory by asserting that people who find a person complimenting their needs to whom they can share their problems with, makes those people more acknowledgeable. Belongingness is supported by close, intimate relationship which tends to be healthier and happier. Because of this need to belong, we can see nowadays that most university students are synchronizing their time in both academic and romantic aspect. Engaging themselves in this romantic relationship enables them to feel that someone cares for them, shows affection to them, loves them, etc. In fact, Furman (2002) reported that romantic relationships become more and more significant to adolescents in their social world as they also develop from puberty towards late adolescence in which it shows how prevalent is romantic relationship among adolescents.

3. Methodology
The current study is conducted in Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM), (Garden Campus). The motivation for the study arises from the personal observations of the respondents while observing apparent increase in relationship of male and female fellow students. In this context, the researchers wanted to know if such relationships are linked with motivation or otherwise. All those students who are involved in romantic relationship at AWKUM were the population of the study. However, their number was unknown which compel the researchers to select one definite number which could easily be approached. Hence, a sample size of 50 respondents including 25 male and 25 female were selected for the data collection. The data is collected through a motivational scale with 10 items having options of Yes and No. If a respondent has 6-10 answers in ‘yes’, we considered him/her as motivated, if 5 answers are ‘yes’ and five No, he/she will be Neutral and answers below 5 will be considered as not motivated. The collected data is analyzed at uni-variate level by drawing simple frequencies and percentages throw SPSS. The data is presented in tables and explanation is given above it.

4. Results and Discussion
The results are presented and discussed as follow:

4.1 The Nexus of Romantic Relationship and Motivation
The scale for measuring motivation level of the respondents was used which include the following statements; motivation through affection, to get good grades to ensure a brighter future with partner, expectations from partner to help in studies, feeling of motivation to do projects because of partner encouragement, feel of motivation with partner, get inspired to finish course with a romantic partner, feel comfortable to share problems with partner concerns studies, enjoy studying in a relationship, getting higher grades in a romantic relationship, feeling of motivation to study because of parents’
permission to involve in a romantic relationship. Table No. 1 shows that out of 100% respondents 84% respondents agreed that they feel motivated to study when their partners show affection to them, while the remaining 16% respondents were not agree with the statement. We concluded from this table that majority of the respondents are motivated to study by the affection of their partner. The study suggests that students’ motivation is attached with friendly, warmth and caring attitude and response of the partner (ashna). In contrast we can predict that non-friendly and cold response of the lover can be associated with demotivation and hopelessness of the respondents.

The table also shows that 90% respondents want to get good grades to ensure a brighter future with their partners, whereas 10% respondents answered ‘No’. A large number of the respondents agreed that they want to get good grades to ensure a brighter future with their partners. The results suggest that respondents are interested in providing base to the romantic relation through ensuring good results in academic. This also indicates that future relationship of the romantic partners is subject to academic performance and securing good position. It also demonstrates that 78% respondents selected ‘yes’ option while 22% respondents selected ‘no’ option that they expect their partners to help them in their studies. Majority of the respondents have expectation that their partners should help them in their studies. This expectation might be due to dependence on each other. Such expectation may also be due to the feelings that in future life they want to be married and hence produces dependency on each other. In such situation, it is expected that both the partners would support and help one another is studies at university level.

Table shows that 68% respondents feel motivated and selected ‘yes’, while 32% do not feel motivated to do their projects because their partners encouraged them to do so. Majority of the respondents feel motivated to do their projects because their partners are encouraging them to do so. This is a unique phase of the romantic relationship where partners encouragement and concern are becoming the source of in time project completion. The table indicates that 76% respondents selected ‘yes’ and 24% respondents selected ‘no’ that they feel motivated when they are with their partners. The table shows that majority of the respondents feel motivating when they are with their partners. Being partner means to be together and togetherness is a source of motivation as indicated by the results above. Detachment or parting their ways in a romantic relationship is the most difficult, heart breaking and disliked stage. It could results into madness, psychological disorders, and even suicide temptation among partners.

Similarly, 62% respondents show that they get inspiration from their romantic partners to finish their course. However, 38% respondents disagree with the statement. The results show that a large number of the respondents are inspiring to finish their course when they are having romantic partners. Likewise, 82% respondents are getting more comfort when they discuss their problems and concerns in their studies to their partners. While 18% do not feel comfort. Among the respondents, 54% enjoy studying when they are in a relationship. However, 46% do not enjoy study. Although majority of the respondents show their feelings as that study is enjoyable when partner is along with, however, non-agreement with the statement is also represented with a considerable number of the respondents.
In a response to a negative statement where respondents are not thinking of higher grades if they are in romantic relation, majority opted no with 68% while 32% respondents marked yes option. Similarly, less number of people feels motivated to study because their parents allow them to involve in a romantic relationship while majority stated the other side of the picture. In fact, in Pakhtun society majority of parents do not allow such relationship rather strictly discourage it. Therefore, it seems that respondents are not motivated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Motivation Scale</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I feel motivated to study when my partner shows affection to me.</td>
<td>42(84%)</td>
<td>8(16%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I want to get good grades to ensure a brighter future with my partner.</td>
<td>45(90%)</td>
<td>5(10%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I expect my partner to help me with my studies.</td>
<td>39(78%)</td>
<td>11(22%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I feel motivated to do my projects because my partner encouraged me to do so.</td>
<td>34(68%)</td>
<td>16(32%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I feel motivated when I’m with my partner.</td>
<td>38(76%)</td>
<td>12(24%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I’m inspired to finish my course when I have a romantic partner.</td>
<td>31(62)</td>
<td>19(38%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I get more comfortable when I discuss my problems and concerns in my studies to my partner.</td>
<td>41(82%)</td>
<td>9(18%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I enjoy studying when I’m in a relationship.</td>
<td>27(54%)</td>
<td>23(46%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I think I cannot get higher grades when I’m in a romantic relationship.</td>
<td>16(32%)</td>
<td>34(68%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I feel motivated to study because my parents allow me to involve in a romantic relationship.</td>
<td>12(24%)</td>
<td>38(76%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field Survey: 2016
Note: Values presented in the above table indicate frequency while values in the parenthesis represent percentage.

4.2 Status of Motivation of the Respondents
Table No.2 shows that 68% of the respondents get motivated from involving in romantic relationship, 20% respondents remained neutral while the motivation level of the 12% respondents decreased as evident from the results shown in table above. Therefore, it can be concluded that students get motivation from the romantic relationship. Similar results were observed by Collins (2003); Myers (2010); Raman (2010) by asserting that romantic relationship provides confidence to partners which motivate them to struggle for better future and ultimately they secure a bright and successful future.
Table No. 2: Status of Motivation of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivated</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Motivated</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field Survey: 2016
Note: Values presented in the above table indicate frequency while values in the parenthesis represent percentage.

5. Conclusion

The main objective of the study is to understand the nexus motivation with the romantic relationship among university students. The study shows a very strange and interesting result almost contrary to the popular perception of Pakhtun community. It is evident from the study that romantic relationship in majority of the cases is positively related to motivation of the respondents. The encouraging and caring response of the partners becomes a source of better results in academics as well ensures bright future. In fact, the results are logical as in Pakhtun society romantic relationship means readiness for getting married where the whole life is to be spent together unless divorced. Therefore, partners are dependent on each other and supporting each other in their educational and social life. In romantic relationship most of the respondents feel motivated to study when their partners show affection to them. They feel comfort to discuss study problems with their partners and having good expectations from them. In nutshell, involvement in a romantic relationship could predict a higher level of motivation would indicate a great possibility that it would offer positive effects to their academic performance.

References


