

ROAD TO FOREVER: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY BETWEEN SELF-REGULATION AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

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Abstract

The researchers conducted a study to know how relationship satisfaction attributes to self-regulation among individuals who are engaging in a relationship. There were 107 males and 97 females from different campuses namely: Baliuag University, STI College, Bulacan State University, Baliwag Maritime Academy and Marian College. The study was supported with three theories namely: Self-Regulation Theory, Triangular Theory of Love, and Attachment Theory. To gather the required data for this study, data accumulated were treated and analyzed through IBM SPSS version 20 with Linear Regression Analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation to look if there is a significant relationship between self-regulation and the three components of love (intimacy, passion and commitment). The researchers utilized the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) as well as the Triangular Theory of Love Scale (TTLS) as instruments. The results that determine the relationship satisfaction shows that passion ($p=.013$) is highly predicted by self-regulation. This means that the participants who have passion within their relationship are highly satisfied with the relationship they have.

Keywords: Self-Regulation, Relationship Satisfaction, Triangular Theory of Love

Self-regulation plays an important role in adolescent development, predicting success in multiple domains including school and social relationships. According to Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, & Regalia (2001) adolescents with better self-regulatory abilities are also less likely to engage in

transgressive behaviors and more likely to engage in pro-social behaviors.

On the other hand, there has been research on adolescent self-regulation and its relation to other adjustment outcomes, less research has examined the relationship between self-regulation and adolescents' social interactions with parents, peers, friends, and romantic partners. We know little about the influence of peers and friends and even less about the influence of romantic partners on adolescent development of self-regulation (Farley & Spoon, 2014).

There are similarities and differences of regulatory demands across differing types of social relationships. For example, those who are socially excluded experience decrements in self-regulation (Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Twenge, 2005). One can assume that social exclusion like rejection and isolation as a detriment to self-regulation might extend across all relationship types. However, people can overcome these self-regulatory deficits with sufficient motivation such as the need to be accepted (DeWall, Baumeister, & Vohs, 2008) so those who strongly desire acceptance within a group may be motivated to overcome self-regulatory deficits.

A decade ago positive psychology pioneer Barbara L. Fredrickson of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill showed that positive emotions, even fleeting ones, can broaden our thinking and enable us to connect more closely with others. Having an upbeat outlook, she argues, enables people to see the big picture and avoid getting hung up on small annoyances. This wide-angle view often brings to light new possibilities and offers solutions to difficult problems, making individuals better at handling adversity in relationships and other parts of life. It also tends to dismantle boundaries between "me" and "you," creating stronger emotional attachments. "As positivity broadens your mind, it shifts your core view of people and relationships, bringing them closer to your center, to your heart (Pileggi, 2012). As Levenson and colleagues (2014) point out: "both individuals have to react to their own and their partner's emotional state, the impact of each partner's regulatory attempts

(some well-chosen, others misguided), and the unfolding sequence of action and reaction”. An individual’s emotional regulation may be evaluated in a relatively straightforward manner. Couples, however, exist in a co-regulatory context in which the overall objective is to maintain a state of optimal emotional arousal for both partners (Levenson, Haase, Bloch, Holley, & Seider, 2014).

Self-regulation is such an important skill in today’s society; it is related to many positive outcomes, such as success in school and university, social economic status, health and also relationship satisfaction. Research has shown that the ability to exercise self-regulation is important for several aspects of a relationship. For instance, Finkel and Campbell (2001) found that self-regulation can help to react in a positive and constructive way to negative comments by the partner. This can help to prevent lapsing into a vicious circle of destructive interaction patterns. In another study of Finkel and Campbell (2001) found that persons, that had the ability for self-regulation, were much more forgiving about negative behavior of their partners, compared to individuals that had been ego-depleted beforehand. It has also been found that suppressing criticism can be negative, because suppressing thoughts that are potentially threatening to the relationship requires energy. In layman’s term, the daily struggle not to mention the dirty dishes standing around might be quite ego-depleting.

Therefore to make a present finding, the researchers conducted a correlational study between self-regulation and relationship satisfaction with the aid of Self-Regulation Theory wherein it helps individual to control what he/she thinks, says and does. In addition, the Triangular Theory of Love by Robert J. Sternberg (1986) wherein it explains the topic of love in an inter-personal relationship is based on the types of love that is classified in three different scales namely: intimacy, passion, and commitment. It is important to recognize that a relationship based on a single element is less likely to survive than one based on two or more. This present study would benefit especially the couples; it can somehow give couples some insights regarding with their self-regulation capacity that increases the satisfaction

in their relationship.

Significance of the Study

This study will provide information for the couples on how to handle their relationship and how they can maintain it. The researcher will be gathering data to know one's perception and how satisfied they are in the relationship with their partner. The results from this study will be helpful to the other couples out there, because they can relate to others with same situations. This study will also serve as an inspiration on how individuals can survive with their respective relationships.

Likewise, this study will be very essential for the future researchers in the next generation, in order for them to have some insights and understanding about relationship satisfaction, self-regulation and their correlation to each other. Additionally, the objective information that will be accumulated from this study may serve as guidelines and foundation for more educated guesses that the future researchers will be going to have.

Review of Related Literature

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is a system of conscious personal management that involves the process of guiding one’s own thoughts, behaviors and feelings to reach goals. It is also defined as the process by which the self alters its own responses or inner states in a goal-directed manner (Baumeister, Schmeichel & Vohs, 2007 as cited in Fitzsimons and Finkel, 2010). According to Bandura (1982) as cited in Luchies, Finkel and Fitzsimons (2011) a vast body of research within clinical, organizational, personality, and social psychology has shown that good self-regulators are those who can direct their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to facilitate achievement of their goals enjoy a multitude of personal benefits. Successful self-regulators tend to have more successful careers, better physical health, and greater life satisfaction and personal well-being than less successful self-regulators. Demetriou (2000) and Moilanen (2007) as cited in Heo (2014) defined self-regulation behavior operationally in

terms of the two constructs, short term and long term self-regulation behaviors. Short term self-regulation behaviors indicate controlled or non-controlled behaviors at the immediate contexts such as, attention and emotional regulation while long term self-regulation behaviors denote specific behaviors in order to achieve long-term goals such as career goals and saving money for the future.

Self-regulation is part of people's lives. Somebody must have self-regulation in making decisions or choices for their lives. Self-regulation is also a complicated process that allow people to appropriately respond to their environment (Bronson, 2000). Adults continually face situations where exercising self-regulation, especially emotion regulation, is needed to successfully meet the challenges of interacting with others on a daily basis whether it be in career, educational, or social settings; Actually, appropriate self-regulation is essential for establishing and maintaining effective interpersonal relationships and fulfilling emotional connections with others. The ability to exercise self-control, or self-regulation and its effects on adult functioning and adjustment has been the focus of research for decades. At a global level self-regulation is a multifaceted and complex construct, comprised of interrelated components, including the ability to regulate one's behavior, cognition, and emotions (Karoly, 1993).

Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli & Regalia (2001) said that adolescence with better self-regulatory abilities are also less likely to engage in transgressive behaviors and they are more likely to engage in pro-social behaviors also, the study of Busch & Hofer (2011) denotes that adolescents with high self-regulatory capacities had an increased probability of developing an achieved identity, which is associated with great well-being. Additionally, teens who displayed a stronger sense of well-being and identity appeared to develop intimate relationships easier than those with lower self-esteem. Likewise, Duckworth, Akerman, MacGregor, Salter, & Vorhaus (2009) stated that high on self-regulation tend to exhibit a high sense of efficacy in their own capabilities such as organize thoughts, pursue personal goals, and maintaining interpersonal relationships. For instance,

if the couple argues, a person who has a better self-regulatory will understand his/her partner's thoughts, feelings and perspective. Conversely, low self-regulated individual feel burdened to other people's life that makes them experience a decrease satisfaction within the relationship (Koyal, VanDellen, Fitzsimons, & Ranby, 2015).

Ludwig, Haindl, Laufs & Rauch (2016) who studied self-regulation in pre-school children's everyday life: exploring day-to-day variability and the within- and between-person structure and integrated three processes of self-regulation: Cognitive Self-Regulation, Behavioral Self-Regulation and Emotional Self-Regulation.

Cognitive Self-Regulation

Cognitive self-regulation refers to executive functions such as updating (working memory), inhibition and flexible attentional shifting (Miyake and Friedman, 2012 as cited in Ludwig, Haindl, Laufs & Rauch 2016).

In previous research focusing on long-term relationships and companionate love (Vohs & Finkel as cited in Steenbergen, Langeslag, Band & Hommel, 2011) has demonstrated that love and cognitive self-regulation plays an important role in maintaining a good partnership. For instance, research by Pronk, Karremans, & Wigboldus, 2011 as cited in Steenbergen, Langeslag, Band and Hommel (2011) has revealed that individual differences in the level of cognitive self-regulation predict a wide range of behaviors including being forgiving in close relationships, staying faithful in a relationship, resisting flirting behavior with a confederate, and mastering one's desire to meet an attractive person. Also, it is well possible that cognitive control levels are reduced in passionate lovers. For instance, taking into account the limitations to cognitive resources (Baumeister, Schmeichel & Vohs, 2007) it could be that the obsessive nature of passionate love imposes important constraints on performing well in tasks that require self-control.

These studies only showcased that committed individuals should have a cognitive self-regulation in favor to their

relationship so that when the tension between their partners arises they could be able to think at the right state regardless of what emotions they feel at that time.

Behavioral Self-Regulation

Behavioral self-regulation refers to self-control abilities and compliance, that is, the ability to internalize rules and standard as well as to inhibit predominant behavioral responses that do not conform to those rules and standards or that do not fit the demands of the environment (Denham, Warren, Bassett, Wyatt & Perna, 2012 as cited in Ludwig, Haindl, Laufs & Rauch 2016).

Self-regulation is the capacity to control and regulate one's action. There is a previous study test conducted by Dishman, Jackson, & Bray (2014) it is an experiential and behavioral processes of change as mediators of the prediction of exercise behavior by two self-regulation traits which are self-efficacy and self-motivation while controlling for exercise enjoyment and prediction of attendance by self-efficacy and self-motivation was direct and also in direct, to have an effect through positive relations with the typical use of behavioral change processes. Enjoyment and self-efficacy predicted compliance with the exercise prescription.

Also, self-regulation is one of the self's major executive functions and it refers to its active, intentional aspects and may be thought of as a part of the self which is responsible for the actions of every individual. Behavioral self-regulation can be applied to the relationship of a couple. For instance, there may be a few things about you that your partner does not like and you need to control your behavior to avoid any misunderstanding that may lead to an argument or dissatisfaction (Baumeister, 1998; Gazzaniga, Ivry, & Mangun, 1998 as cited in Baumeister, Schmeichel and Vohs, 2007).

Emotional Self-Regulation

Emotional self-regulation can be thought of as a facet of emotion regulation, but refers primarily to attempts by an individual to manage the generation, experience, or expression of

emotion, and/or one's emotional responses. Emotional control is attached to the context of emotion regulation. Emotional control is attached to the context of emotion regulation. After an emotion has been generated, emotional control can occur as part of antecedent-focused regulation prior to generation of emotion or through response-focused regulation. An extreme of pleasant and unpleasant emotions occurs when people tend to establish, develop relationships or to put an end to their relationship. Given the considerable interdependence of romantic partners on one another and the numerous occasions relation provides to make various kinds of effect, that's why a strong emotions in relationships is expected. Even the emotions that are created outside of the dyadic boundaries (for example subsequent to a disagreement with coworkers) are often brought into the romantic relationship and are capable of affecting the nature of the emotional interaction between partners (Berscheid & Ammazzalorso, 2004 as cited in Fardis, 2007). Emotional intelligence as a whole (of which emotion regulation is one part) has been found to be related specifically to romantic relationship satisfaction (Brackett, Warner, & Bosco, 2005). In addition to that, behavioral differences of men and women cannot be explained due to it is also a product of biological differences (Hatfield & Rapson, 2002; Sprecher & Toro-Morn, 2002).

For more social and cultural dimension of romantic relationships, studies reveal that people live differently the experience of love, going further than the biological sexual dimensions attached to the phenomenon (Fehr & Broughton, 2001; Sprecher & Toro-Morn, 2002). Security components, emotional commitments and love associated are more prone to women thinking. On the other hand, men associate it with sexual commitment elements and the so called "pleasure of intercourse" (Buss, 2000). Likewise, the scientific perspectives on gender attribute psychosocial explanations about the behavior of men directed to attitudes linked to work, strength and individuality, whereas women are directed towards family and care (Whatley, 2008).

In sum, self-regulation is the potential of an individual to comprehend his thoughts and goals in life that justifies through

cognitive, behavioral and emotional self-regulation. However, up to present, it is still vague whether cognitive, behavioral, and emotional self-regulation are so strongly interrelated that they form a unidimensional self-regulation factor or whether they can be empirically separated from each other despite their interrelation.

Relationship Satisfaction

According to Rusbult and Bunk (1993) as cited in Miller and Tedder, (2011) relationship satisfaction is defined as an interpersonal evaluation of the positivity of feelings for one's partner and attraction to the relationship. In other terms, relationship satisfaction refers to the feelings, thoughts or behavior within ones relationship while Guerrero, Anderson & Afifi (2011) topics of relationship satisfaction has focused on various components that have been shown to be significant of relationship satisfaction, the majority of behavior used to maintain relationships are prosocial that contains five primary maintenance strategies which are positivity, openness, assurance, social networking and task sharing, which help promote relational closeness, trust and liking in the relationship. Research suggest that relationship that contain high levels of prosocial maintenance strategies tend to be stable and committed, and people appear to be more satisfied within their relationship. Robert Sternberg suggested three essential components of love in romantic relationship namely: intimacy, passion and commitment.

Intimacy

Intimacy is the connection between partner closeness and general relationship fulfillment. It is developed in a current writing where partners tend to report large amounts of relationship fulfillment when they have feelings of closeness (Greeff & Malherbe, 2001 as cited in Joslyn, 2015) that is why the need for intimacy is the primary reason that individuals develop and maintain committed in romantic relationships. For instance, when partners feel intimate with each other, their relationship is more likely to be satisfying and stable (Greeff & Malherbe, 2001).

Likewise, as cited in Straub (2009) satisfaction for both partners is led by couples who have intimate relationship and is reportedly increasing the general well-being and life satisfaction for many individuals. Moreover, partners who report high levels of intimacy tend to be highly satisfied and maintain long-term, stable relationship (Patrick, Sells, Giordano and Tollerud 2007 as cited in Yoo, 2013).

Similarly, based on Sternberg's theory, intimacy is associated to feelings of proximity, respect, bonds, estimation of the love relationship and of the partner; it means that partners with a strong and high intimacy are more satisfied with their relationships. One of the reason that is found for low levels of relationship satisfaction and can lead to relationship issue or negative relationship results such as relationship dissolution is the lack of intimacy based on the study of (Kingsbury & Minda 1988; Waring 1988 as cited in Yoo, 2013).

Passion

Passion refers to the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena in loving relationships. The passion component includes within its purview those sources of motivational and other forms of arousal that lead to the experience of passion in a loving relationship. It is an important source of fuel that allows people to go through long and at times frustrating practice sessions, and that eventually helps them attain high levels of performance (Sternberg, 1986).

Romantic passion encompasses that powerful inclination you might have to be close to a loved one, the strong attraction to, infatuation with, and desire to be with him or her. It is the force that compels you to be near your partner and the motivational pull responsible for the feeling of missing that comes from being away from him or her (DiDonato, 2014).

People in long-term relationships who are most satisfied with their partners report that they still feel passion for their partners—they still want to be around them as much as possible, and they enjoy making love with them (Sprecher, 2006).

Furthermore, Lemieux & Hale (1996) said that if passion is not deemed important by the couple then a relationship lacking in passion may still be satisfying and stable yet, he clarified that there is a significant portion of variance in relationship satisfaction was accounted for by the three components of love. It said that if a couple doesn't considered passion as important, then a relationship that is lacking in passion may still be satisfying. Prior to that, it also said that there is a significant portion of variance in relationship satisfaction was accounted for by the three components of love. On the other hand, based on the study of Hill (2002) lack of passion indicate lower levels of relationship satisfaction while a high amount of passion indicate higher levels of relationship satisfaction.

One of the primary characteristics of passion is the time course. Passion tends to be strongest in the beginning stages of a relationship. However, with time, passion tends to dip. Often, it seems that divorce occurs when individuals start to lose the passion they had or maybe when they start to experience passion toward another. Because many people in our culture equate passion and love, and don't value intimacy and commitment as much, they may feel that they no longer love their partner when this occurs or that their "true love" is elsewhere (Tix, 2013).

Commitment

Commitment consists of two aspects, first is the short term which refers to the decision to love someone while in the long term, it is the decision to maintain that love (Sternberg, 1988). These two aspects of commitment component do not necessarily go together, in that one can decide to love someone without being committed to the love in the long-term, or one can be committed to a relationship without acknowledging that one loves the other person in the relationship. Commitment involves a conscious decision to stick with one another. The decision to remain committed is mainly determined by relationship satisfaction that a partner derives from the relationship, if a person is no longer satisfied with his/her relationship he/she will not stick to that kind of relationship. The triangular theory provides a comprehensive basis for understanding many aspects of the love that underlies close relationships.

Commitment to a romantic relationship can be most simply defined as 'the intention to maintain a relationship over time' (Stanley, Rhoades, & Whitton, 2010). However, researchers have discovered that it is a much more different concept with several domains. All models look at internal for example personal values, attraction to partner, couple identity, etc. although each has their own way of visualizing commitment.

According to Rusbult and Buunk (1993) as cited in Miller and Tedder (2011) committed partners become dependent on one another over time, and they rely on their relationship for their own well-being. Most of the partners who are committed become vulnerable to each other, and they entrust in their relationship for their own comfort. In order to be committed is to consider one's relationship a long-term investment, which encourage partners to nurture and improve their relationships (Le & Agnew, 2003). Therefore, as a reflection of that investment, committed partners are more likely to perform relationship-maintaining behaviors.

An individual who is committed to a relationship will likely choose to invest time and energy into its upkeep, whereas those who remain less committed could hardly be expected to demonstrate the same level of effort. When the individuals develop and maintain similar interest and continue to share their important values and beliefs over time the relationship are more satisfactory and more likely to continue (Davis & Rusbult, 2001). Self-regulation is a part of being committed to a person because if you have commitment with a person you should not commit to another. A person needs to control his/her behavior and feelings towards another opposite sex.

Moreover, a study of Sternberg (1986) stated that the three components of love differ with respect to a number of their properties. For example, the motivational and other arousal of the passion component tends to be relatively unstable and vary on any unpredictable basis whereas; the emotional and other connection of the intimacy component and the cognitive commitment of the decision/commitment component seem to be relatively stable in close relationships. In terms of the average,

the three components differ whether it is a short-term or long-term relationship. In line with short-term relationship, and particularly the romantic ones, the passion component tends to play an enormous part while the intimacy component might play only a moderate part, and the decision/commitment component may hit hardly any part at all. In contrast, the intimacy component and the decision/commitment component typically play relatively huge role in a long-term close relationship. Also, it differs in their commonality across loving relationships due to intimacy component appears to be at the core of many loving relationships (Sternberg & Grajek, 1984), whether that relationship is toward a parent, a sibling, a lover, or a close friend. The passion component inclines to be limited to just certain kinds of loving relationships, romantic ones in particular, whereas the decision/commitment component can be highly variable across the different kinds of loving relationships. For example, the commitment is very high in one's love for a child, but to some extent it is low in one's love for those friends who are temporary throughout the span of one's lifetime. The three components also differ in the amount of psychophysiological involvement they contribute. The passion components is highly dependent on psychophysiological involvement, whereas the decision/commitment component appears to comprise only a modest amount of psychophysiological response then intimacy component involves fairly amount of psychophysiological involvement (Sternberg, 1986).

Self-Regulation affects Relationship Satisfaction

Besides guiding the goals and ideal standards that individuals strive to attain, the success of the self-regulation efforts is also shaped by relationship process. For example, individuals tend to be more successful at achieving their personal goals when their romantic partners support their pursuits of these goals (Feeney, 2007; Overall, Fletcher, & Simpson, 2010). Individuals are also more likely to move closer to their ideal self-concepts if they perceive that their partners treat them as if they already possess these ideal attributes (Rusbult, Kumashiro, Kubacka, & Finkel, 2009). Individuals also evaluate their partners and relationships more positively if their partners help

them achieve their personal goals (Fitzsimons & Shah, 2008; Overall, Fletcher, & Simpson, 2010).

Likewise, self-regulation processes has a main role in maintaining social connections with significant others. According to the sociometer model (Leary, 2004), for instance, when people feel less valued with their partner, they tend to experience negative emotions and temporarily lower self-esteem. This, in turn, motivates individuals to increase their social inclusion with others in adaptive ways, for example, by meeting the wishes of others or being more helpful to them. The use of effective relationship building and maintenance behaviors, however, depends on how well individuals are able to control (regulate) their emotions and actions especially in stressful or challenging situations. Those who have greater self-regulatory strength are better at controlling their negative impulses, which allow them to respond to hurtful or damaging partner behaviors in more constructive ways (Finkel & Campbell, 2001). As a result, well-regulated individuals are less likely to experience negative interpersonal outcomes, especially during stressful or difficult interpersonal exchanges (Ayduk, Mendoza-Denton, Mischel, Downey, Peake, & Rodriguez, 2001).

Moreover, Vohs, Finkenauer & Baumeister (2011) found that the sum of relationship satisfaction predicted self-regulation. That is, the happier they were as romantic partners the more that both partners reported good individual resources for goal pursuit. In addition, the work of Harter (2006); Swann & Bosson (2010) hypothesized that the relationship satisfaction influences self-regulation has intuitive appeal, as close relationships are assumed to be an important source of self-regulation. In fact, the study of Finkel, Hofmann, & Fitzsimons (2015) shows that the higher the relationship satisfaction promotes a motivational mindset that is conducive for effective self-regulation, and thus, Gordon (2016) suggests that in order to improve many dimensions of the relationship, achieving intimacy bolsters the self-regulation of both partners while in view of Lafreniere, Belanger, Sedikides & Vallerend (2003) they propose that self-regulation is related to passion toward important life. Similarly, researchers presume that trait self-control may have a positive impact on wellbeing

through passion, which represents a motivational construct deeply rooted in the identity (Vallerand, Blanchard, Mageau, Koestner, Ratelle, & Léonard 2003). On the other hand, similar to the concepts ‘intimacy’ with ‘passion’, commitment is the comforting feeling of emotional bonding with another individual (Langeslag & Van-Strein, 2016). Thus, according to Brewer and Abell, (2017) revealed that relationship length was also a significant individual predictor of faith ($\beta = -.20$, $t = -2.31$, $p = .023$), such that those in longer term relationships reported less faith in their partners.

In line with age, McCullough (2009) said that it is true that age is of great importance (McCullough, 2009) when it comes to relationship, but most people are forgetting the most essential elements of a relationship that brings a couple together and those are emotions and feelings. Noshin (2009) cited the two different contexts of age matters in relationship. First, it matters because relationship involves understanding. Understanding consists a great deal of wisdom and maturity; understanding is view as a gift of maturity that can be achieved by going through long years of life experiences. For instance, partners are mature enough to understand the complexities of life, it is easier for them to keep the relationship intact, regardless on the challenges they face. This is because the mature partner basically knows his/her way around in almost every situation. On the other hand, age matters in a relationship because of social perception. There are instances when age gap is an issue when it comes to relationships; generally people are not used to seeing a couple that looks like a granddaughter and grandfather kissing in the park. However, regardless of age, relationship is essentially the result of a mutual understanding that involves the most universal feeling which is love. Age gap in a relationship is not a matter of morality, but rather a justification of one of the characteristics of love and that is “love transcends all boundaries” (Greaves, 2011) regardless of age, race and gender. Therefore, age does not matter in a relationship.

In contrast, the study of Murray, Holmes & Collins (2006) as cited in Fitzsimons & Finkel (2010) mentioned that self-regulatory challenges with close relationships is to balance

the two competing goals—to promote the health and well-being of the relationship, and to protect the self from rejection and pain. In order to promote and maintain a happy, healthy relationship, people must engage in actions oriented toward the relationship, not the self. However, the very actions that encourage the satisfaction within relationship are the similar actions that threatens satisfaction just to lessen the vulnerability of being rejected or hurt and analysts refer this process in to which individuals cope with these two conflicting goals as risk regulation. For instance, if relationship partners hope to maintain satisfying relationships then they must regulate their own thoughts, feelings, and actions to overcome self-protective actions in support to relationship-promoting ones.

Based on risk regulation model Murray, Holmes & Collins (2006) people regulate their dependency (the willingness to make themselves vulnerable to the pain of rejection or hurt) by relying on beliefs about their partner’s regard for them. For instance, when people feel loved and respected by their partner, that positive perceived regards makes them believe the “psychological insurance” to hinder self-protection goals, and to motivate them to be good partners.

Self-regulatory strategies and resources have consequences for relationships, affecting how people feel about and act toward relationship partners (Feeney, 2004; Finkel & Campbell, 2001; Karremans, Verwijmeren, Pronk & Peitsma, 2009).

Self-regulation has been defined as altering behavior to inhibit a dominant response, usually in the service of longer term goals (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). A similar concept within a romantic relationships context called the transformation of motivation, a relationship-specific form of self-regulation wherein a partner inhibits responses that maximize their own short-term interests and, instead, responds in ways that maximize long-term relationships goals. Building off of these two ideas, Wilson, Charker, Lizzio, Halford, and Kimlin (2005) introduced the concept of behavioral self-regulation within romantic relationships. Unlike previous conceptualizations of

self-regulation which focus more comprehensively on behavior, affect and cognitions, the researchers focused exclusively on behavior that reflects a voluntary attempt to make one's romantic relationship better. Not surprisingly, self-regulation is associated with increased relationship satisfaction.

Furthermore, Finkel and Campbell (2001) found that self-regulation can help to react in a positive and constructive way to negative comments by the partner. It shows that the ability to exercise self-regulation is important for several aspects of a relationship. Additionally, it can help to prevent lapsing into a vicious circle of destructive interaction patterns.

In sum, as Sternberg suggests that a balance in Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment creates a healthier love (Sternberg, 1998), he also hypothesized that a balance in the three types of physical affection (Hot, Warm, Demonstrative) would lead to a healthier and more satisfactory romantic relationship.

Theoretical Framework

Self-Regulation Theory

Self-regulation theory is systems of conscious personal management that help us control what we think, say and do. It assists us in becoming the person we want to be, in both short and long-term situations. It also refers to a complex and dynamic set of process involved in setting and pursuing goals. It is commonly used to refer to a broad set of theories that seek to describe, explain and predict these goal-directed processes. According to Karoly (1993) self-regulation specifically focuses on how people can influence their own behavior, and while it is acknowledged that self-generated behaviors and external influences are often independent, it is assumed that individuals possess the capacity to control and adjust their own behaviors. Furthermore, Baumeister (2005) self-regulation is important to social functioning that researchers have posited that it evolved primarily to help humans maintain important relationships with one another and preserve social order.

Triangular Theory of Love

Triangular theory of love was developed by Robert Sternberg (1986). According to this theory, love is made up of three components which are intimacy, passion and commitment. These three components of love interact with each other. For example, higher intimacy may lead to greater passion or commitment, just as higher commitment may lead to greater intimacy, or with lesser likelihood, greater passion. According to Sternberg the components are separable, but interactive with each other. Although all three components are important parts of loving relationship, their importance may differ from one relationship to another or over time within a given relationship. Therefore, different kinds of love which are non-love, liking, infatuated love, empty love, romantic love, companionate love and consummate love can be generated by limiting cases of different combinations of the components.

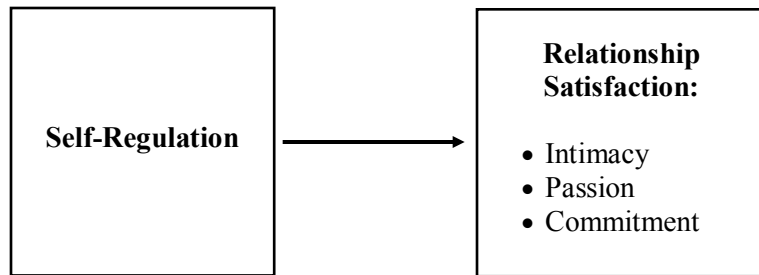
Attachment Theory

Attachment theory is a concept in developmental psychology that concerns the importance of attachment in regards to personal development. John Bowlby (1969) was the first to coin the term and his work in the late 60s established the precedent that childhood development depended heavily upon a child's ability to form a strong relationship with at least one primary caregiver, this is one of the parents. People have an attachment behavior system that helps to control how close or distant they are from others. The way people develop this system is dependent on their perception of their attachment figure. When they feel secure that the attachment figure is present and responsive, people's attachment behavior system relaxes. When they wonder whether the attachment figure is present and responsive, people's attachment behavior system becomes activated. They become upset and strive to restore closeness to their attachment figure.

Over time, people develop internal working models of attachment. These models include expectations regarding the degree to which their attachment figure will be responsive to their needs. These internal working models of attachment have

been divided into three different types: (1) secure, in which the attachment figure is seen as reliable and expected to be responsive to the infant's needs, (2) avoidant, in which the attachment figure is seen as unavailable, and the infant defensively avoids close contact with others, (3) anxious/ambivalent, in which the attachment figure is not consistently available or responsive, and the infant becomes preoccupied with checking on the attachment figure's availability.

Conceptual Framework



The paradigm shows how self-regulation affects relationship satisfaction for individuals who are engaging in a relationship. The arrow represents the relationship predicted to exist between them.

According to Gordon (2016) she suggests that in order to improve many dimensions of the relationship, achieving intimacy bolsters the self-regulation of both partners while in view of Lafreniere, Belanger, Sedikides & Vallerend (2003), they propose that self-regulation is related to passion toward important life. Similarly, researchers presume that trait self-control may have a positive impact on wellbeing through passion, which represents a motivational construct deeply rooted in the identity (Vallerand, Blanchard, Mageau, Koestner, Ratelle, & Léonard 2003). On the other hand, similar to the concepts 'intimacy' with 'passion', commitment is the comforting feeling of emotional bonding with another individual (Langeslag & Van-Strein, 2016).

It truly shows that the suggestion of Sternberg (1998) was right that having a balance in Intimacy, Passion, and

Commitment creates a healthier love, and would lead to more satisfactory romantic relationship.

Statement of the Problem

1. What are the attributes of the respondents across the demographics in terms of (a) age; (b) gender; and (c) Length of the Relationship?
2. Using the self-regulation questionnaire, what is the global scores of self-regulation?
3. What is the level of relationship satisfaction in terms of (a) Intimacy; (b) Passion; and (c) Commitment
4. Is there a significant relationship between self-regulation and the three components of triangular love for relationship satisfaction?
5. Which among the component of triangular love is highly predicted by self-regulation?

Scopes and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study is the self-regulation theory of Baumeister (2005) and sight if the self-regulation capacity can contribute on the satisfaction within the relationship. The study shows the levels for each component of love, as well as which of the components of love highly predicted by self-regulation.

The respondents for this study are limited from 200 college students who are currently engaging in a relationship with ages ranging from 18-25 years old. The researchers used two questionnaire that adopted from the work of the original proponent Frederick Kanfer (1970) and formulated by Miller and Brown (1991) from "Self-Regulation as a Conceptual Basis for the Prevention and Treatment of Addictive Behaviors", in which a likert scale was used by rating the answers as 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree), and 4 (strongly agree). Meanwhile, the second questionnaire that was used was Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale (1998) which refers to the relationship satisfaction. Moreover, the study does not necessarily mean that an individual is not self-regulated if they are not engaging in a romantic relationship conversely, the

satisfaction and being self-regulated does not vary to the type and term of their relationship.

Research Design

This research design is a descriptive-correlational quantitative type wherein it determines whether the two variables are related to each other or not. The statistical instrument used was Linear Regression Analysis that predicts the relationship between them.

Participants

The participants in this study were composed of 200 college students who are currently having a relationship with ages ranging from 18-25 years old from different campuses namely: Baliuag University, STI Colleges, Bulacan State University, Baliwag Maritime Academy and Marian College. The participants were chosen using the purposive sampling that will focus on a particular characteristics which is beneficial to the said study.

Instrumentation

Self-Regulation Questionnaire

The self-regulation questionnaire was developed as the building on the foundation work of Frederick Kanfer in 1970 and designed to assess one's ability to regulate emotions, behavior, to set and attain goals. As the number of researchers grow through the years, Miller and Brown (1991) formulated a seven-step model of self-regulation where it may reveal the causes of one's deficits or conflicts at any of these seven steps: receiving relevant information, evaluating the information and comparing it to norms, triggering change, searching for options, formulating a plan, implementing the plan and assessing the plan's effectiveness (which recycles to steps 1 and 2). The SRQ has 63 items and will be answered on 4-point likert scale wherein 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for agree and 4 for strongly agree. For the total score of the SRQ, then it is interpreted with reference to self-regulatory functioning and normative scoring

cutoffs that have been established (≥ 139 = high self-regulation capacity, 114-138 = moderate self-regulation capacity, ≤ 113 = low self-regulation capacity), this scoring used to differentiate individuals in terms of level of skill at self-regulating.

Triangular Love Scale

The triangular love scale was developed by Robert Sternberg in 1986, it is composed of 45-item scale that measures the three components of love namely: Passion, Intimacy and Commitment and each component is measured by a 15-item subscale wherein each scale is rated on 9-point likert scales (1 = not at all, 5 = moderately, 9 = extremely). Sternberg (1998) emphasized his research in the fields of intelligence, creativity, wisdom, leadership, thinking styles, ethical reasoning, love and hate. For the scoring per component, there are five verbal description provided such as "Significantly Below Average, Somewhat Below Average, Average, Somewhat Above Average, and Significantly Above Average". It also provides a comprehensive basis for understanding many aspects of the love that underlies close relationships.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers first asked for permission from the departmental deans that the students under their departments were going to be the participants of the study by giving them letter of consent with the signature of the professor of the researchers. Before, the participants proceed in administering the two tests; the researchers gave the students a short debriefing about the tests and an assurance that their answers would be confidential and would be used for academic purposes only. The first test taken was the SRQ or the self-regulation questionnaire which can be answered without time limit while the second test can administered was the triangular love scale which was answered without time limit either.

Data Analysis

The aim of this study is to examine whether self-regulation can contribute to relationship satisfaction using the

SRQ or the self-regulation questionnaire developed by (Brown, Miller, & Lawendowski, 1999) and Triangular Love Scale (TLS) (Sternberg, 1998) with the analysis used was the Linear Regression with the aid of IBM SPSS Statistics 20.

Results

Table 1. Attributes of the respondents across the demographics.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender	1.46	.50
Age	19.59	1.28
Length of the Relationship	3.30	3.00

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the attributes of the respondents across their demographics. The mean scores and std. deviation are the following: Gender $M=1.46$, $SD=.50$, Age $M=19.59$, $SD=1.28$, Length of the Relationship $M=3.30$ and $SD=3.00$.

To support, Buss (2002) said that women are more prone to think love associated with emotional commitment and security components, while men, on their turn, associate it with sexual commitment elements and the “pleasure of intercourse.” With regards to the length of the relationship, Brewer and Abell (2017) revealed that it was also a significant especially with those in longer term relationships reported less faith in their partners.

Moreover, in accordance with age, Mccullough (2009) said that age is of great importance (Mccullough, 2009) when it comes to relationship, but most people are forgetting the most essential elements of a relationship that brings a couple together and those are emotions and feelings. Noshin (2009) sited the two different contexts of age matters in relationship. First, it matters because relationship involves understanding. Understanding consists a great deal of wisdom and maturity; understanding is viewed as a gift of maturity that can be achieved by going through long years of life experiences.

Table 2. Profile of the respondents.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	107	53
Female	93	47
<u>Age</u>		
18 years old	40	20
19 years old	66	33
20 years old	53	27
21 years old	26	13
22 years old	10	5
23 years old	3	2
24 years old	1	.5
25 years old	1	.5
<u>Length of the Relationship</u>		
1-3 months	20	10
4-6 months	33	16
7-12 months	53	27
2-5 years and up	93	47
	N = 200	N = 100

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents in terms of the gender, age, status, type of relationship and length of relationship with the aid of purposive sampling. In terms of gender, 107 of the respondents are males and 93 of them are females with the total of 200 respondents. With regards to the age, 40 of the respondents are 18 years old, 66 of the respondents are 19 years old, 53 of the respondents are 20 years old, and 26 of them are 21 years old, 10 of the respondents are 22 years old, and 2 of the respondents are 24-25 years old with the total of N=200 respondents.

Moreover, the length of relationship, 1-3 months has 20 respondents, 4-6 months got 33 respondents, 7-12 months has 53 respondents, and 93 of the respondents where in 2-5 years and up with a total of N=200. The participants are from different campuses namely: Baliuag University, STI Colleges, Bulacan

Table 3. Global scores of self-regulation.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Verbal Description</i>
Self-Regulation Questionnaire	178.13	17.33	High self-regulation capacity

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the global scores of self-regulation as measured by the self-regulation questionnaire. The mean score and std. deviation was $M=178.13$ and $SD=17.33$. It shows that the global scores of self-regulation as measured by self-regulation questionnaire was categorized as “high self-regulation capacity”. In this study there are three scales to determine the self-regulation capacity which are the following: ≥ 139 (High Self-Regulation Capacity), 114-138 (Moderate Self-Regulation Capacity), and ≤ 113 (Low Self-Regulation Capacity). According to Duckworth, Akerman, MacGregor, Salter, & Vorhaus (2009) high on self-regulation tend to exhibit a high sense of efficacy in their own capabilities such as organize thoughts, pursue personal goals, and maintaining interpersonal relationships.

Table 4. Levels of relationship satisfaction per components of love.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Intimacy	108.06	23.87
Passion	101.70	24.80
Commitment	108.45	25.30

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of the levels of relationship satisfaction per component of love. The mean scores and std. deviation are the following: Intimacy, $M=108.06$, $SD=23.87$. Passion, $M=101.70$, $SD=24.80$. Commitment, $M=108.45$ and $SD=25.30$. It shows that the mean score of intimacy, passion and commitment were categorized as

“average” in their relationship satisfaction. In this study, there are five scales to determine the mean scores per component of triangular love which are the following: for intimacy, 93 (Significantly Below Average), 102 (Somewhat Below Average), 111 (Average), 120 (Somewhat Above Average), and 129 (Significantly Above Average). Likewise for passion, 73 (Significantly Below Average), 85 (Somewhat Below Average), 98 (Average), 110 (Somewhat Above Average), and 123 (Significantly Above Average) and lastly, for commitment, 85 (Significantly Below Average), 96 (Somewhat Below Average), 108 (Average), 120 (Somewhat Above Average), and 132 (Significantly Above Average). Based on the study of Greef and Malherbe (2001); Patrick, Sells, Giordano and Tollerud (2007) which stated that high levels of intimacy tend to be highly satisfied with the relationship while in high amount of passion indicate higher levels of relationship satisfaction Hill, (2002). Lastly commitment, in here individual is likely chosen to invest time and energy into its upkeep, then maintain similar interest and continue to share their important values and beliefs over time the relationship are more satisfactory and more likely to continue (Davis & Rusbult, 2001).

Table 5. Correlation of self-regulation and the three components of love.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Self-Regulation	1	
Intimacy	.271**	.000
Passion	.319**	.000
Commitment	.295**	.000

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

Table 5 shows the correlation between Self-Regulation and the three components of love wherein the analysis used was Pearson r correlation to test how each component correlates to self-regulation. Based on the results shown on the table above, there is a strong correlation between self-regulation and the three components of love with regards to relationship satisfaction

($r = .271$, $r = .319$, and $r = .295$) and indicated the p value .000 which means that the correlation coefficient of self-regulation has a highly significant relationship with the three components of love with regards to relationship satisfaction ($p < .05$).

According to Gordon (2016) she suggests that in order to improve many dimensions of the relationship, achieving intimacy bolsters the self-regulation of both partners while in view of Lafreniere, Belanger, Sedikides & Vallerend (2003) they propose that self-regulation is related to passion toward important life. Similarly, researchers presume that trait self-control may have a positive impact on wellbeing through passion, which represents a motivational construct deeply rooted in the identity (Vallerand, Blanchard, Mageau, Koestner, Ratelle, & Léonard, 2003). On the other hand, similar to the concepts ‘intimacy’ with ‘passion’, commitment is the comforting feeling of emotional bonding with another individual (Langeslag & Van-Strein, 2016).

Table 6. Regression analysis of relationship satisfaction towards self-regulation.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Intimacy	.197	3.969	.000
Passion	.235	2.496	.013
Commitment	0.48	0.413	0.680

Table 6 shows the regression analysis between the components of triangular love towards self-regulation to test which among the components of love is the predictor of self-regulation. Based on the results shown on the table above, intimacy got the coefficient of .197 with the p value of .000, then passion got the coefficient of .235 and a p value of .013 while commitment has the coefficient of .048 and p value of .680, which indicates that intimacy and passion are the predictors of self-regulation. As a support to this finding, Sternberg (1986) said that the three components differ in terms of the average, whether it is a short-term or long-term relationship. In line with short-term relationship, and particularly the romantic ones, the

passion component tends to play an enormous part while the intimacy component might play only a moderate part, and the decision/commitment component may hit hardly any part at all. However, the present findings showed that commitment is not considered as one of the predictors of self-regulation.

Discussion

This study utilized the descriptive-correlational research method to determine if there is a significant relationship between self-regulation and relationship satisfaction. This study also aspires to find the relationship between self-regulation and relationship satisfaction.

Pertaining to problem one, what is the global scores of self-regulation as measured by self-regulation, shows that the global scores of self-regulation as measured by self-regulation questionnaire was categorized as “high self-regulation capacity”. In support to this study, (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli & Regalia 2001) reported that adolescence with better self-regulatory abilities are also less likely to engage in transgressive behaviors and they are more likely to engage in pro-social behaviors.

Furthermore, Duckworth, Akerman, MacGregor, Salter, & Vorhaus (2009) stated that high on self-regulation tend to exhibit a high sense of efficacy in their own capabilities such as organize thoughts, pursue personal goals, and maintaining interpersonal relationships. For instance, if the couple argues, a person who has a better self-regulatory will understand his/her partner’s thoughts, feelings and perspective.

Moving on the second research problem, regarding the level of relationship satisfaction in terms of the three components of love. This study adopted the questionnaire from Sternberg (1998) which was comprised of the three components which are: Intimacy, Passion and Commitment. Findings showed that the intimacy, passion and commitment were under the category of “average” which indicates that the three components of love for relationship satisfaction are strongly correlated with self-

regulation. There have been a lot theories formulated concerning that correlation exists between relationship satisfaction and self-regulation. Rusbult & Buunk (1993) as cited in Miller and Tedder (2011) stated that relationship satisfaction is defined as an interpersonal evaluation of the positivity of feelings for one's partner and attraction to the relationship wherein Sternberg (1986) suggested three essential components of love in romantic relationship namely: intimacy, passion and commitment.

Intimacy refers to the connection between partner closeness and general relationship fulfillment and when partners feel intimate with each other, their relationship is more likely to be satisfying and stable (Greeff & Malherbe, 2001 as cited in Yoo, 2013). Likewise, partners who have intimate relationships can lead to the satisfaction for both partners and reportedly increases the general well-being and life satisfaction for many individuals (Straub, 2009).

In terms of passion, it is the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena in loving relationships (Sternberg, 1986). Also, the force that compels you to be near your partner as well as the motivational pull which is responsible for the feeling of missing that comes from being away from him or her. The research of Sprecher (2006) stated that people in long-term relationships who are most satisfied with their partners report that they still feel passion for their partners—they still want to be around them as much as possible, and they enjoy making love with them that is why the higher the amount of passion the higher the level of satisfaction in the relationship (Hill, 2002).

Additionally, commitment defined as the intention to maintain a relationship over time' (Stanley, Rhoades, & Whitton, 2010). An individual who is committed to a relationship will likely choose to invest time and energy into its upkeep, when the individuals develop and maintain similar interest and continue to share their important values and beliefs over time the relationship are more satisfactory and more likely to continue (Davis & Rusbult, 2001).

With regards to the third research question stating, "Is there a significant relationship between self-regulation and the three components of love for relationship satisfaction?" findings showed that there is a strong correlation between self-regulation and the three components of love with regards to relationship satisfaction due to the p value of .000 which means that the correlation coefficient of self-regulation has a highly significant relationship with the three components of love with regards to relationship satisfaction ($p < .05$).

To support this finding, Gordon (2016) suggests ways to improve the relationship and she denotes that achieving intimacy bolsters the self-regulation of both partners. Likewise, Vohs, Finkenauer & Baumeister (2011) found that the sum of relationship satisfaction predicted self-regulation. That is, the happier they were as romantic partners the more that both partners reported good individual resources for goal pursuit. Moreover, in view of Lafreniere, Belanger, Sedikides & Vallerend (2003) they propose that self-regulation is related to passion toward important life. Similarly, researchers presume that trait self-control may have a positive impact on wellbeing through passion, which represents a motivational construct deeply rooted in the identity (Vallerand, Blanchard, Mageau, Koestner, Ratelle, & Léonard 2003). On the other hand, similar to the concepts 'intimacy' with 'passion', commitment is the comforting feeling of emotional bonding with another individual (Langeslag & Van -Strein, 2016).

Pertaining to the last research problem: "which among the component of triangular love highly predicts self-regulation?" Findings showed that intimacy and passion are the predictors of self-regulation of an individual in the relationship. According to Sternberg (1986), he stated that the three components of love differ with respect to a number of their properties. For example, the motivational and other arousal of the passion component tends to be relatively unstable and vary on any unpredictable basis whereas; the emotional and other connection of the intimacy component and the cognitive commitment of the decision/commitment component seem to be relatively stable in close relationships. In terms of the average,

the three components differ whether it is a short-term or long-term relationship.

Furthermore, the three components differ in their commonality across loving relationships due to intimacy component which appears to be at the core of many loving relationships (Sternberg & Grajek, 1984), whether that relationship is toward a parent, a sibling, a lover, or a close friend. The passion component incline to be limited to just certain kinds of loving relationships, romantic ones in particular, whereas the decision/commitment component can be highly variable across the different kinds of loving relationships. For example, the commitment is very high in one's love for a child, but to some extent it is low in one's love for those friends who are temporary throughout the span of one's lifetime. The three components also differ in the amount of psychophysiological involvement they contribute. The passion component is highly dependent on psychophysiological involvement, whereas the decision/commitment component appears to comprise only a modest amount of psychophysiological response then intimacy component involves fairly amount of psychophysiological involvement (Sternberg, 1986) which means that it is not because the recent findings showed that the passion and intimacy are the only predictors it automatically denotes that commitment does not affect self-regulation. In fact, among the three components, the commitment component hit hardly at any kinds of relationship (Sternberg, 1986).

Recommendation

It is recommended that this study should be explored more for the other possible aspects that can improve and influence the satisfaction within the relationship also, expand the findings in terms of homosexual relationships and discover what are the facets of the respondents' demographics such as age, gender and length of relationship.

Moreover, marital relationships should be included for future research to determine the differences between the two variables in terms of relationship satisfaction attributes to self-

regulation in the future. The researchers also recommended pursuing a further study on what are the impacts of the three processes under self-regulation with regards to relationship satisfaction.

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