

Love Attitudes, Rejection Sensitivity and Social Networking Usage among Young Adults

Ms. Gayathri Devi J S^{1*}, Ms. Shema Elizabeth Koor²

ABSTRACT

The study examines whether there is any gender difference and relationship between males and females in love attitude, rejection sensitivity, and social networking usage among young adults who are married and single. The study includes 132 young adults aged between 18 to 25 years (females=81, males=51, and singles=98, married=34). Measures used were the Social Networking Usage Questionnaire (Dr. Gupta & Bashir, 2018), Love Attitude Scale: short form (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986), RSQ/RS- Personal (Downey & Feldman, 1996) and Personal Data Schedule. Statistical procedures like t-tests and correlation were done using SPSS. Results of the study showed a significant difference among males and females in love attitude and rejection sensitivity, males are found to be more rejection sensitive than females. There is no significant difference among males and females in social networking usage. The study finds that there is a significant relationship between love attitudes and rejection sensitivity among young males and females.

Keywords: Love attitudes, Rejection Sensitivity, Social Networking Usage, Young adults

Young adulthood is a unique and important developmental stage. There are significant changes in social, psychological, sexual, and physical development as a person grows from childhood to maturity. Erikson notes that romantic relationships are among the most significant life events for young adults. Erikson's psychosocial development theory states that the young adult stage includes the urge for sex and closeness on a personal level. It is essential for young adults to be in close, committed relationships with other people where there is an emotional bond between them. Research indicates that a person's familial history and interpersonal abilities have a significant impact on how well a young adult love relationship develops. Adolescence and early adulthood are a time of intense peer pressure to fit in. One of the most important tasks in early adulthood is learning how to create and sustain good love relationships. Young individuals who are not finding love as a result may feel alone and out of place among their peers. At any age, falling in love is an emotional roller coaster, but for teenagers, the experience is probably much more challenging to handle.

¹Post Graduate Student, Department of Psychology, Union Christian College, Aluva.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Union Christian College, Aluva.

*Corresponding Author

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Love Attitudes

Young adults constantly search for love, care, and consideration. Individual attitudes on love will play a significant impact in determining a person's partner and involvement in intimate partnerships. The definition of love is a combination of feelings and actions that intimacy, passion and commitment. It might alter over time and have varying intensities. Love can be associated with a range of positive emotions, including happiness, excitement, and euphoria, as well as certain negative emotions such as jealousy and stress. Everyone desires to be cared for and to feel unique. People are usually in search of love. One may define love as a happy feeling that consists of attachment and affection. Love can be expressed in a different way. Some verbally convey it in a way that shows their sincerity and concern. Some prefer to show their love in a more materialistic way by giving presents, flowers, and other items. Love has been stressed as being important by several theorists. Erickson's theory of psychosocial development showing the importance of intimate relationship in one's life. Maslow has also mentioned about the love and belongingness as another important and critical need of human that is responsible for survival. Firestone & Catlett (1999) describe love as those behavior that enhance emotional well-being, sense of self and autonomy. Love has mainly three components such as passion where an individual has an intense physical attraction towards the intimate partner. The next component of love is referred as intimacy, the ability to share feelings, thoughts and it involves a psychological closeness between the partners. Finally, commitment is the conscious decision one takes to stick together with the partner.

Rejection Sensitivity

Young adulthood is a difficult time marked by widespread shifts in social roles in a variety of areas, and it is also the time when rejection sensitivity is most likely to be significant and prominent. Issues of social competence and social rejection become more salient due to the multiple contextual and role transformations that characterize this time, as well as the gradual rise in the importance of romantic and peer relationships (Harris, 1995; Larson et al., 1999). A trait known as rejection sensitivity refers to an individual's increased anxiety for rejection. It is recognized that a fundamental human motivation is the desire for approval and the hatred of rejection from those who have significance for an individual. As a result, rejection sensitivity may be used to describe a characteristic that sets some individuals apart from others. According to Baumeister & Leary (1995) the need to be accepted, included and liked by others is a fundamental human motivation. Rejection can take a variety of forms such as being ignored or avoided by others, being excluded from a group activity, being overlooked and not being responded to in a conversation, each of which would have the potential to cause hurt and unhappiness in the recipients. Sometime the people who are rejection sensitivity react to rejection with strong hostility and aggression or severe anxiety and withdrawal.

Social Networking Usage

For young adults, socializing and making connections are essential components of development. People can now connect with one other at any time and from any location thanks to technological advancements. Young adults rely on different online social networks as a means of maintaining personal connections with others and as a means of forming peer relationships. Social networks are webs of interpersonal connections and social activities. It might offer a venue for people to connect with one another outside of their social circles. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms are examples. Verduyn et al., (2017) defined social networking usage refers to online behaviors that facilitates "direct exchanges" among users. Social networking behavior includes liking,

commenting, sending messages. Social networks enable the students in different areas like academics, entertainment and socialization. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Facebook enable online groups where members can broadcast and create their profiles and communicate with others through private and public messaging, gaming, and photo sharing. Additionally, technology makes it easier for people to keep up with old social ties and form new ones online.

Need and Significance of the study

Young adulthood is the period in which individuals crave for love and connections. It is the time of frequent change and exploration of various aspects in one's life such as love, work and world. Now a days online close relationships are also becoming more popular. Individual difference affects the love attitudes. Many studies give account of how different love attitudes are linked to the relationship satisfaction of young adults. People with rejection sensitivity tends to anxiously expect, readily perceive and overreact to rejection of partner. The influence of social networks over individual is much higher than previous years. The lockdown due to the covid pandemic has pushed people into heightened use of different social networking sites such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The need to stay connected during this pandemic due to lock down initiates individuals to depend more on social networking sites. Lockdown could result in many psychological distresses in people and similarly, rejection sensitivity has also affected the situation. News, now a days, reports many crimes done by intimate partners in fear of rejection. Therefore, this study tries to investigate which love attitudes of individual contribute to rejection sensitivity and whether social networking usage has any impact on these dimensions especially in young adults. These reports developed a curiosity about knowing what are the attitudes of today's young adults in Kerala about love and relationship and how much sensitive are they for rejection whether social networking have any effects on these variables. In the absence of previous related studies and observing the present social scenario of Kerala, it is essential to do such a study in this pandemic context.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Eugenia & Anna (2018) focused their study on love attitudes, psychological femininity and masculinity. The aim of the study was to determine the discrepancies between people who tend to abandon their partners in close relationship and people who engage in closed relationship. The study included total of 120 participants 60 females and 60 males aged from 18 to 30 years. The participants include adults who were engaged in closed relationships and a reference group who were involved in a closed relationship. The results showed that the rejectors score higher on ludus and pragma but lower on agape and eros in comparison with participant from the reference group. There was also a correlation between masculinity and the number of partners who were rejected by rejectors. Hence, they found that love attitudes ludus and pragma predicted being a rejector in close relationships.

Wei-Wen & Chih-Wen (2017) examined the relationship between filial piety, attitudes about romantic relationships (love attitudes) and satisfaction in romantic relationships in Chinese cultural context. A total of 412 college students in Taiwan who were currently involved or had been involved in romantic relationships participated in the study. The natural bonding between parent-child and role requirement-based interactions tend to adopt two different love attitudes: storage and agape. Both the attitudes have such a positive effect on these participant's perceptions of their romantic relationships. Children who grew in a role-based family may seems to engage in relationship without commitment and result in unstable relationship satisfaction.

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Waleed (2015) examined the individual's intentions and behaviour on social networking sites. The study proposed a model that asserts that Co-presence, intimacy, immediacy, perceived enjoyment and perceived ease of use formed individual's attitudes towards behavioural intentions to use social networking sites. The study was done on 1100 participants. A total of 421 responses were collected from male participants and 367 from female participants. The results supported the hypothesis and showed the importance of social presence's factors.

Saniya & Ajmal (2012) investigated about the perception of love in young adults. The sample consisted of 2 women of age 22 years. One was having her first and the other was having her second love affair. A semi-structured interview was conducted with the participant which has a limited set of questions. The study was based on application of grounded theory which suggests that three staged theories of love emerged describing how love develops over time, how it is perceived and what different factors are associated with it. This study has wide implications in society for parents who could get a clear picture of why do their children get involved in love affairs. One of the core limitations of this study is that the result findings cannot be generalizable as it is only done in female participants.

Georgina & Deborah (2011) examined the association of love attitudes with the initiation, maintenance and dissolution of relationships. The study was held on 51 males and 97 females of age range from 18 to 32. The results showed that ludus was relevant to all stages of relationship development and the ludic attitudes were associated with absence of concern for partner loyalty, short and uncommitted relationships and positive feelings about relationship dissolution.

Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To explore whether there is any gender difference among young adults in love attitudes, rejection sensitivity and social network usage.
- To explore whether there is any relationship between love attitudes, rejection sensitivity and social networking usage among young males and females.
- To explore whether there is any difference among singles and married in love attitudes, rejection sensitivity and social networking usage.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been formulated based on review of related literature and the objectives of the study:

- There will be no significant gender difference among young adults in love attitudes.
- There will be no significant gender difference among young adults in rejection sensitivity.
- There will be no significant gender difference among young adults in social networking usage.
- There will be no significant relationship between love attitudes and rejection sensitivity among young adults.
- There will be no significant relationship between love attitudes and social network usage among young adults.
- There will be no significant relationship between rejection sensitivity and social network usage among young adults.
- There will be no significant difference between singles and married in love attitudes.

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- There will be no significant difference between singles and married in rejection sensitivity.
- There will be no significant difference between singles and married in social networking usage.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive study research design was employed.

Population and Participants

The sample of the present study consist of 132 young adults aged between 18 to 25 years of age, selected from different districts of Kerala using Random sampling method. The participant consists of 81 females and 51 males on which 98 were singles and 34 were married. People from different religion, educational and cultural background are included. The sample includes 68 undergraduates, 61 graduates and others. 104 participants were students and 30 were working. Of the sample 56 participants were not currently in a romantic relationship, 50 were currently in romantic relationship, 28 were those who never been in any romantic relationship. The participants were visited at colleges, workplaces, houses and neighborhoods.

Measures/Tools

- **Social Networking Usage Questionnaire:** Social Networking usage is a self-report inventory with 19 items developed by Gupta & Bashir (2018) which assess the social networking usage of the individual. The items of the scale are given in statement forms. Statements in this questionnaire are constructed based on the five main dimensions such as academic, socialization, entertainment, informativeness and constraints.
- **Love Attitude Scale: short form:** Love attitudes scale is a 42-item questionnaire designed to measure attitudes towards love. The scale was designed by Hendrick & Hendrick (1986). The questionnaire combines attitudes towards one's current/recent/hypothetical partner with attitudes about love in general. The scale is broken into 6 subscales that each represents different love styles: eros (passionate love), ludus (game playing love), storge (friendship love), pragma (practical love), mania (possessive, dependent love), and agape (altruistic love).
- **Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ/RS)- Personal:** The RSQ is intended to measure an individual's levels of rejection sensitivity. This scale was developed by Downey & Feldman on 1996. The scales have two versions: one includes 8 items and the other includes 18 items. The short version of 8 item scale is used in this study. It measures the individual difference in the readiness to perceive and react to rejection. The questionnaire consists of certain situations in which respondents are asked to imagine themselves in those situations and give responses respectively.

Personal Data Schedule

The socio-demographic profile will be prepared for the purpose of the present study. This data consists of basic information regarding the participant like age, gender, marital status, relationship status, educational qualification and occupation. An informed consent is also collected from the participant that reveal their willingness to participate in the present study.

Analysis of Data

The data collected were scrutinized to find out omissions. Incomplete tools were discarded. The filled data were scored and entered into the excel sheet and converted to SPSS. The data were analysed using appropriate statistical methods employing SPSS 23 version. The main statistical techniques employed are t-test and Pearson’s correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Comparison between male and female in love attitude, rejection sensitivity and social networking usage.

Dimensions	Groups		t value	Sig
	Male (N=51)	Females (N=81)		
	Mean±SD	Mean±SD		
Eros	2.21±.95	2.04±.98	.94	0.87
Ludus	3.36±.84	2.89±.75	3.31	0.37
Storge	2.24±.99	2.11±1.19	.63	0.23
Pragma	2.75±.99	2.36±.90	2.26	0.47
Mania	2.91±.93	2.95±.95	.22	0.90
Agape	2.51±.93	3.01±1.05	2.77	0.34
Rejection Sensitivity	10.10±2.25	8.98±2.45	2.63	0.43
Social Networking Usage	3.57±.72	3.60±.54	.23	0.01

Table 1 indicates the comparison between males and females in love attitudes, rejection sensitivity and social networking usage. The table includes the sample size, mean, standard deviation and t value of both the group (male and female) respective to love attitude, rejection sensitivity and social networking usage.

Independent t test was conducted to examine whether there is any gender difference between male and female in love attitudes, rejection sensitivity and social networking usage. The t value obtained for ludus is 3.311 which is significant at 0.01 level, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant difference between male and female in the love attitude subscale called ludus. The result indicates that the males (mean, SD-3.36, .84) tends to have more ludus kind of attitude towards love than females (mean, SD-2.89, .75). This means that male’s point of view about love is as game play where female view it more as serious relationship. Males are found to take the relation not seriously and is perceived as a form of entertainment. Here the result of the present study shows that males take relationship as a time pass and only for the purpose of pleasure than females. Hence male insist short term relationships and they might be emotionally distinct from the partner and also don’t allow the partner to get emotionally attached. Sarwer et.al (1993) note that ludus is strongly connected with sexual aggression in a close relationship. So that the present study indicates that males can be more sexually aggressive than females. They are more likely to perceives the relationship as a process of abuse of another person for one’s own pleasure. The research conducted by Frey and Hojjat (1998) found that both men and women have more abundant sexual experience than people who prefer different styles of love. Our study indicates that males are more likely to have abundant sexual experience with multiple partners than that of females and also, they seem to be more sexually open. Neto (1993) argued that people who prefer the ludus style strive to get the upper hand in the relationship, being careful not to become the partner who loves more. Present study indicates that males strive to get superior position in a relationship than that of females and will be more careful not to love more which might lead to an emotional connection with the partner. People with

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ludus attitudes don't have a stable relationship. Here males are more likely to end the relationship than the females. The study of White, Hendrick & Hendrick (2004) showed that men perceive love as eros and ludus more frequently than women, while women prefer love to be mania and pragma. Our study also supports the result that there is a significant gender difference in ludus love style. The study done by Georgina Hammock and Deborah South Richardson (2011) found that ludus was relevant to all stages of relationship development and the ludic attitudes were associated with absence of concern for partner loyalty, short and uncommitted relationships and positive feelings about relationship dissolution. In our present study females possess lower ludus attitude than males because of the collectivistic culture that we follow insist female to be more emotionally connected and take relationship more seriously than males.

The t value obtained for pragma is 2.269 which is significant at the level of 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result indicates that there is a significant gender difference between males (mean-2.75, SD- 0.997) and females (mean-2.367, SD-0.908) in pragma style of love. The present study indicates that males have more pragmatic attitude of love than females. For the love attitude agape, the obtained t value is 2.770 which is significant at the level 0.01. This indicates that there is a significant gender difference between males (mean-2.5, SD-0.939) and females (mean-3.01, SD-1.053). Study highlights that females are more concerned with agape style of love than males. Neto (1993) has found gender difference among college students in Portugal. Particularly, their results showed that men were more agapic than females. Contradictory to this result, our study showed that females are more agapic than males. Many factors such as culture difference might be reason for such gender differences in the love attitudes.

On exploring whether there is any gender difference among young adults in rejection sensitivity, from the table 1 it is found that the obtained t value of rejection sensitivity is 2.63 which is significant at the level 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected. The present study indicates that males (mean-10.10, SD- 2.25) are more prone to rejection sensitivity than females (mean-8.98, SD- 2.45). The results shows that males are more vulnerable towards rejections when compared to females.

Table 1 indicates that there is no significant difference between males and females in love attitudes such as eros, storge and mania. The result also indicates that the t value for social networking usage between males and females are 0.23 which is not significant at the level of 0.01. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there no significant gender difference between males and females in social networking usage.

Table 2 Correlation of love attitudes, rejection sensitivity and social networking usage.

		Rejection sensitivity	Social Networking Usage
Eros	Correlation coefficient	0.12	-0.32**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.15	0.00
	N	132	132
Ludus	Correlation coefficient	-0.27**	-0.24**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.0
	N	132	132
Storge	Correlation coefficient	0.18	-0.27**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.03	0.00
	N	132	132
Pragma	Correlation coefficient	0.01	-0.33**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.84	0.00
	N	132	132
Mania	Correlation coefficient	-0.14	-0.14
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.10	0.95
	N	132	132
Agape	Correlation coefficient	0.01	-0.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.87	0.64
	N	132	132
Rejection sensitivity	Correlation coefficient	1	0.02
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.75
	N	132	132
Social Networking Usage	Correlation coefficient	0.02	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.75	
	N	132	132

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)*

Table 2 indicates the correlation of love attitudes, rejection sensitivity and social networking among young adults. The correlation coefficient of social networking usage is found to be -0.321, which indicates a negative correlation between eros style of love and social networking usage. The ludus style of love has a significant correlation between rejection sensitivity (-0.277) and social networking usage (-0.241). The result shows that ludus style of love has a negative correlation with rejection sensitivity and social networking usage. There is a significant correlation between storge and social networking usage (-0.276). Our present study shows that pragmatic people place little importance on social networking sites for forming relationship through online interactions and they might not trust people by interacting through online networks.

Table 3 Comparison between singles and married on love attitude, rejection sensitivity and social networking usage.

Dimensions	Groups		t value	Sig
	Singles (N=98)	Married (N=34)		
	Mean+SD	Mean+SD		
Eros	2.089+0.917	2.169+1.139	0.410	0.139
Ludus	3.239+0.837	3.029+0.773	1.286	0.449
Storge	2.045+1.014	2.500+1.33	2.068*	0.027
Pragma	2.576+0.973	2.338+0.904	1.252	0.273

Dimensions	Groups		t value	Sig
	Singles (N=98)	Married (N=34)		
	Mean+SD	Mean+SD		
Mania	2.964+0.947	2.852+0.947	0.590	0.872
Agape	2.813+1.066	2.845+0.959	0.154	0.304
Rejection sensitivity	9.283+2.496	9.805+2.225	1.079	0.141
Social Networking Usage	3.623+0.620	3.507+0.615	0.940	0.729

Table 3 indicated the comparison between singles and married in love attitude, rejection sensitivity and social networking usage. The t value obtained is 2.068 which is significant at the level of 0.01. The result showed that there was a significant difference between singles and married on the love attitude storge. The present study highlights that married (mean-2.50, SD-1.33) individual are more likely to possess storgic style of love when compared to singles (mean-2.04, SD-1.01). Table 3 also indicates that there is no significant difference between singles and married on attitudes of love other than storge and also no particular difference was seen on rejection sensitivity and social networking usage among singles and married.

Findings of the Study

- There is a significant gender difference among young adults in love attitudes. Males are found to be more ludic and pragmatic than females where females found to have agape style of love than males.
- There is a significant gender difference among young adults in rejection sensitivity. The results shows that males are more sensitive towards rejections when compared to females.
- There is no significant gender difference among young adults in social networking usage.
- There is a significant relationship between love attitudes and rejection sensitivity among young males and females. There is a negative correlation between ludus attitude of love and rejection sensitivity.
- There is a significant relationship between love attitudes and social networking usage among young males and females. People with eros, ludus, storge and pragma style of love has a negative correlation with social networking usage.
- There is no significant correlation between rejection sensitivity and social networking usage among young males and females.
- There is a significant difference among singles and married in love attitudes. Married individuals have storgic style of love when compared to singles.
- There is no significant difference among singles and married in rejection sensitivity.
- There is no significant difference among singles and married in social networking usage.

Implications

The present study has provided an insight about gender difference in love attitude, rejection sensitivity and social networking usage among young adults. The study revealed that there is a significant gender difference in love attitudes among young adults. Young adulthood is the period in which an individual search for love and connections. This study provides a better understanding about the attitude of love each gender carries. So that the study will enhance one's knowledge about the kind of relationship they engage by understanding the love attitude they have. Present study will help the young adults to define what one wants out of

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love and provide an idea about how to approach one's romantic life. Understanding the love attitudes will make people aware about their love relations and help them to overcome relationship obstacles and better coping and interactions that might contribute their overall quality of their personal as well as social life. Lockdown due to Covid-19 results in many psychological distresses among people. Rejection sensitivity is one of the serious issues that is subjected to many crimes reports recently in Kerala. News reports of Kerala points out that there is an increase in male young adult's tendency to murder their intimate partners and cyber attacking them on different social networks in fear of rejection. The present study provides an evident information that males are more vulnerable as well as sensitive towards rejections of any forms. Most of the young adults react to these rejections in an aggressive or hostile way. Result of the present study gives a warning information that male young adults are more rejection sensitive so better coping mechanisms can be taught to these young adults at the primary level itself. Assertiveness training and training that make them strong enough to face rejections positively can be provided to young adults. Social media plays a crucial role in the life of young adults. The study indicates that there is no such gender difference can be seen in usage of Social Medias among young adults. Awareness about the pros and cons of technologies and cyber networking will helps the young adults to use such social networks in a healthy way. Positive social interactions will enhance their quality of life and aids further development. The present study also provides an idea that there is a significant difference in love attitudes among singles and married. This will create an understanding about the attitude towards love when an individual is with and without partner. By understanding love attitudes will create a foundation for both personal and mutual growth. This will make an individual efficient to interact in a relationship with the degree of openness, honesty and thereby strengthens their relationship on the basis of in-depth understanding about different love attitudes two individual possess in a relationship.

Limitations

- The present study was conducted only on a limited number of samples.
- There was only limited time to conduct the study because of the covid restrictions.
- Practical experience of meeting people and collecting data was restricted due to covid situations.
- Participants may be reluctant to share the information due to the sensitivity of the topic.
- Tools used in the present study are self-reporting so that it might increase the responses biases.

Suggestions for further study

- The inclusion of more variable and sample groups might improve the clarity of this study.
- The sample consist of people from diverse geographical areas would add to the generalizability and richness of the data.
- Assessment tools with robust psychometric properties can be used.
- The equally represented sample groups can be taken so that it might enhance the validity of the research.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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