

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS ON THE SELF-ESTEEM OF FILIPINO ADOLESCENTS

Nolan S. Iglesia ¹· Perfecto B. Cimafranca III ²

College of Teacher Education, Western Mindanao State University
Normal Road Baliwasan, Zamboanga City, 7000 Philippines

For Correspondence: perfectocimafranca@wmsu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT: *This study identified the correlation between social relationships and self-esteem of Filipino adolescents. Self-esteem is considered as a psychological construct that stimulate good mental health. Thus, exploring any possible factors that may increase or decrease such is the goal of this study. A descriptive-quantitative-correlational design was utilized with Filipino adolescents from a private evangelical high school as respondents since most self-esteem studies did not cover Filipino adolescents of this generation. Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) were adopted and used to measure the variables under study. The findings revealed that respondents have strong level of attachment to their mother, father and peers. However, only attachment to peers yielded significant relationship to self-esteem. In addition, when data were grouped according to sex, perceived socioeconomic status and marital status of parents, only attachment to father yielded significant difference in terms of SES. These results reveal the importance of good peer influence because such relationships with friends may influence the teenagers' self-esteem. Moreover, it is interesting to note how father's role as provider of the family impacts self-esteem, maybe indirectly, but still significantly. Parents, schools and other concerned authorities must think about these results to help promote good mental health of this generation.*

Keywords: IPPA, parent attachment, social relationships, self-esteem, adolescents

1. INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem has been regarded as one of many psychological constructs that affects a person way of life. [1] explained that self-esteem is the evaluation of oneself based on factors such as self-worth brought about by experience and environment in the course of one's lifetime. The increase or decrease in self-esteem bring about strong emotional reactions on a general sense. Numerous studies have discovered the importance of boosting ones self-esteem for a happier and more successful life. [2] confirmed that self-esteem and another variable were important indicators of well-being. [3] identified a significant relationship between self-esteem and school performance. [4] explained that crossed lagged regression analyses revealed low self-esteem as a good predictor of successive levels of depression. [5] found that high implicit self-esteem produce resiliency against psychological threat of death. [6] in their study suggested that self-esteem has an significant impact on life experiences and added that high and low self-esteem are more than just indicators of success and failure in life. And the list of evidences go on.

Adolescent stage is considered a crucial period of development because it is a transition phase between childhood and adulthood. Apart from physical changes, psychological transition is also critical. [7] explained that this transition is a stage of physical and mental development. The stage is prone to behavioural problems like suicide, addiction and wrong choices such as smoking, delinquency and many others. [8], [9], and [10] also confirmed that mental health problems affect children and adolescents and may cause longlasting effects when left unintervened.

With the increasing evidences, social relationships and attachments to significant others is considered more of a necessity rather than a luxury. All, or most people cannot end a day without interaction with others. [11] explained that social relationships are considered protective factors to

mental health for everyone. However, [12] stated that people experiencing mental conditions are more likely to have little to no social support and if this social links are not improved, their recovery can be delayed.

Filipino culture is popularly known around the world by its close family ties. Unlike other culture, the foundation of Filipinos in terms of socialization is undeniably family. Having that said, the researcher strongly desired to investigate how family ties of Filipino adolescents influence their self-esteem. This study was significant because not much literature tried to studied the Filipino adolescents' social relationships and its correlation to self-esteem. Although self-esteem studies is not new, only few updated studies on it has been made and published and not much especially understanding the modern Filipino adolescents. By trying to comprehend the interplay of these variables, the results can give parents, school counselors, teachers and school administrators thoughts on possible programs and interventions to provide the self-esteem needs of adolescent students for a better mental health.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEMS

This study investigated the correlation between social relationships/perceived attachments and self-esteem of present-day Filipino adolescents. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of attachment of respondents to their mother, father and peers?
2. Is there a significant relationship between the level of attachment of respondents to their mother, father and peers and self-esteem?
3. Is there a significant difference between level of attachment of respondents to their mother, father and peers and self-esteem in terms of:
 - a. sex
 - b. perceived socioeconomic status; and
 - c. marital status of parents?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study utilized a descriptive-quantitative-correlational research design through the use of two (2) adopted instruments as main tools of the study. [13] clarified that a descriptive design in research is a form of scientific investigation characterized by observation and description of phenomena being studied without external influence of the variables. [14] and [15] emphasized that quantitative methods include objectively measuring variables to be studied by assigning numbers and run statistical, mathematical or numerical analyses. Usually, these data are collected through surveys, questionnaires and other objective means. While [16] and [17] explained that correlational research is non-experimental method characterized by statistically analysing the relationship of two unrelated variables with no influence from any unwanted extraneous variable. Having that said, this design deemed appropriate for the study because it satisfied the abovementioned conditions. Moreover, the use of survey questionnaire is based on the contention of the authors [18] in [19] claimed that such is an efficient approach of data gathering involving large sample size. In addition, the present investigation collected data within a relatively short period of time suggesting that is it cross-sectional as explained by [20] in [21] Lastly, since the study utilized no intervention and established no control group, the study is determined to be non-experimental [22].

2.2. PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

The respondents are high school students in a private sectarian school. The sampling method is Total Enumeration since the school has seventy-three(73) students only. [23] expound that total enumeration is a sampling type where one chooses to study the whole population. There are two conditions to consider if one decides to use this, to wit: (a) the size of the population is relatively small; and (b) the population under study shares an uncommon characteristic(s). The researcher decided to use such sampling technique since respondents satisfied the two conditions. Likewise, considering the entire population may give a better and more accurate results for the given research locale.

In terms of gender, forty-six or 63% are male respondents. In terms of marital status of their parents, fifty-four or 74% are living together, twelve or 16.4% are separated, two or 2.7% are widowed, two or 2.7% are single mother, and three or 4.1% are remarried. In terms of perceived socioeconomic standing of respondents, fifty or 68.5% perceived fair, nineteen or 26% perceived good, and four or 5.5% perceived very good socioeconomic status.

2.3 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

2.3.1 Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA)

The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, in short IPPA, was conceptualized in order to measure teenagers' perceptions of both positive and negative aspects and dimensions of their relationship with significant others- in this case, towards their parents and close friends. The instrument specifically focused on how these people made

them feel secure and belonged. The instrument is anchored on attachment theory. [24] and [25] explained that attachment is a profound and persistent emotional connection of an individual to another for a period of time and regardless of location. The attachment theory was then materialized through this assessment tool. The said instrument measures three broad dimensions, namely: degree of mutual trust; quality of communication; and extent of anger and alienation. The instrument is a self-report questionnaire using a five-point Likerts scale where respondents choose one of the following responses: *Almost Never/ Never True, Not Very Often True, Sometimes True, Often True or Almost Always or Always True*. The instrument was revised to make it more appropriate to the present population. The instrument has sound psychometric properties. It has high reliability with internal consistency of $\alpha = .86$.

2.3.2 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale

The Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale or RSES is a widely-accepted and used instrument to measure self-esteem. Its validity and reliability properties has been established and popularly used by many researches up to today. The tool has ten items that measures self-worth in a global scale comprising of both positive and negative feelings of oneself. The scale is presumed to be uni-dimensional. Respondents answer a 4-point Likert scale setup selecting one of the following choices, namely: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree* [26].

2.4 PROCEDURE

Request letter to conduct the study was sent to the school principal. Upon approval, the schedule was arranged in order to go room to room. The researcher personally explained the study to the respondents. Ethical and social protocols were carefully observed to ensure that no person was harmed and abused during the conduct of data gathering. Since answering the instrument will only take 20-30 minutes and researcher was allowed to use class hours, the tools were retrieved right away.

2.5 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

2.5.1 CODING

To interpret the data collected, the following codes will be used in order to answer the above mentioned research problems. Table 1 below gives interpretation for the computed arithmetic mean of the IPPA.

Table 1. Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment

Range	Descriptor	Interpretation
4.21-5.0	Almost Always or Always True	Very Strong
3.41-4.20	Often True	Strong
2.61-3.40	Sometimes True	Average
1.81-2.60	Not Very Often True	Weak
1-1.80	Almost Never or Never True	Very Weak

Table 2 below shows the coding and interpretation of data for the computed arithmetic mean of the Rosenberge Self-esteem Scale.

Table 2. Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale

Range	Descriptor	Interpretation
3.26-4.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
2.51-3.25	Agree	High
1.76-2.5	Disagree	Low
1-1.75	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

2.5.2 STATISTICAL TOOLS

To determine the IPPA score of respondents, the mean score for each category (Mother, Father, Peers) were computed. For the RSES, overall mean was taken. For the significant relationship between IPPA scores and self-esteem, Pearson Product Moment Coefficient also known as Pearson *r* was the statistical treatment applied. For the significant difference in terms of sex, t-test was used; and perceived socioeconomic status of respondents and marital status of their parents, Two-way ANOVA was applied.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Level of Attachments

To answer research question number 1: What is the level of attachment of respondents to their mother, father and peers?, the arithmetic mean was computed.

Table 3. Level of Attachments

	Mother	Father	Peers
Grand Mean	3.60	3.43	3.51
Interpretation	Strong	Strong	Strong

The table above shows the level of attachment of adolescents to three significant people. It can be gleaned that the level of attachment of adolescents to their mother, father and peers revealed a “*Strong*” attachment. This implies that the adolescents covered in the study have a positive relationship with these individuals. This confirms the common notion that Filipinos cherish their relationships with family and loved ones and thus tries to settle arguments and disputes that may jeopardize the said connections.

3.2 Significant Relationship between Level of Attachments and Self-Esteem

To answer research question 2, Is there a significant relationship between the level of attachment of respondents to their mother, father and peers and self-esteem?, Pearson *r* was applied.

Table 4. Significant Relationship between Level of Attachments and Self-Esteem

Attachment	Self-Esteem	Pearson <i>r</i>	p-value	Interpr.
Mother	3.60	0.170	0.151	No Sig.R.
Father	3.43	2.68	0.203	No Sig.R.
Peers	3.51	0.307	0.008	Sig.R.

It can be gleaned that mother and father yielded no significant relationship to their self-esteem. This implies that the kind of relationship towards their parents do not affect their self-esteem. However, Pearson *r* yielded significant relationship between peers and self-esteem. This implies that the higher the level of attachment of respondents to their peers, there is a high tendency that self-esteem will also increase and vice versa. From these findings, it can be inferred that teenagers somehow and in some way value much their attachment and socializations with friends as it influence their level of self-esteem.

3.3 Significant Difference between Level of Attachments and Self-Esteem when grouped according to sex, perceived socioeconomic status and marital status of parents.

To answer research question 3, Is there a significant difference between level of attachment of respondents to their mother, father and peers and self-esteem of the respondents in terms of: (a) sex; (b) perceived socioeconomic status; and (c) marital status of parents?, t-test and Two-way ANOVA were employed.

Table 5. Significant Difference in terms of Sex

Sex	Attachments	Mean	N	t _{ob}	p-value	Interpr.
Male	Mother	3.62	46	0.381	0.704	No Sig. D.
Female		3.57	27			
Male	Father	3.47	46	0.698	0.487	No Sig. D.
Female		3.36	27			
Male	Peers	3.40	46	-1.85	0.068	No Sig. D.
Female		3.69	27			
Male	Self-Esteem	2.70	46	0.71	0.478	No Sig. D.
Female		2.64	27			

The table revealed no significant difference across variables when data are grouped according to sex. This implies that male and female respondents have similar or same level of the above mentioned variables.

Table 6. Significant Difference in terms of perceived SES

SES	Attachments	N	Mean Square	p-value	Interpr.
VG	Mother	4	0.44	0.245	No Sig. D.
G		19			
F	Father	50	1.59	0.025	Sig. D.
VG		4			
G	Peers	19	0.26	0.544	No Sig. D.
F		50			
VG	Self-Esteem	4	0.14	0.377	No Sig. D.
G		19			
F		50			

Legend: 5- Very Good (considerably better than most others); 4- Good (considerably better than many others); 3- Fair (considerably equal to others); 2- Bad (considerably worse than many others); and 1- Very Bad (considerably worst than most others)

Note: 2- Bad and 1- Very Bad perceived socioeconomic statuses were not included since no respondents reported such response.

The table above shows the variables that yielded significant and no significant differences when data were grouped according to socioeconomic status as perceived by the respondents. It can be gleaned that Mother Attachment, Peer Attachment, and Self-esteem yielded no significant difference. This implies that regardless of the adolescents socioeconomic standing in life, they experience the same level of these variables. However, when the mean square of Father Attachment was statistically tested, the p-value 0.025 is lower than alpha = 0.05. Therefore, there is significant difference in the level of father attachment of adolescents when data were grouped according to socioeconomic status.

This implies that there is a difference in the level of father attachment of adolescents with higher economic status than adolescents with lower socioeconomic status. In the Filipino culture, although modernization allowed both parents to work, it is still generally expected that fathers are the breadwinner of the family. It can be inferred then that the economic living status and amount of money the father puts in the family somehow tends to influence their child’s self-esteem.

Table 7. Significant Difference in terms of Marital Status of Parents

Marital Status	Attachments	N	Mean Square	p-value	Interpr.
LT	Mother	54	0.572	0.096	No Sig. D.
S		12			
W		2			
SM		2			
R	3				
LT	Father	54	1.003	0.055	No Sig. D.
S		12			
W		2			
SM		2			
R	3				
LT	Peers	54	0.379	0.478	No Sig. D.
S		12			
W		2			
SM		2			
R	3				
LT	Self-Esteem	54	0.034	0.922	No Sig. D.
S		12			
W		2			
SM		2			
R	3				

Legend: LT (Living Together); S (Separated); W (Widowed); SM (Single Mother); SF (Single Father); and R (Remarried)
 Note: Single Father was not included because no respondent answered this choice.

It can be gleaned that the variables stated above yielded no significant difference in terms of marital status of parents. This implies that regardless of the marital status of parents, the adolescent respondents experience the same kind of attachment to the three significant people in their lives and level of self-esteem. This further implies that the respondents despite the kind of marital status they are in still received the same amount of love and security.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and in spite of the constraints and limitations of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

First, respondents have *strong* level of attachment to mother, father and peers. Second, respondents level of attachment to mother and father have no significant relationship with self-esteem. However, peer attachment revealed significant relationship. Last, when data were grouped according to sex and marital status of parents, no significant difference was detected in all the variables while in terms of perceived socioeconomic status, only the variable “attachment to father” yielded significant difference.

5. IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study generated the following implications:

The study shed a confirmation of how Filipino adolescents still value a positive, loving and secure relationships with parents and peers contrary to the negative label some have given to the present generation. That being said, parents must continue to take time to know and bond with their adolescent children. For the schools, they are encouraged to integrate lessons and initiate programs and activities that foster the family love and security that adolescents need. Parenting seminar/trainings must continue in the schools and monitoring as to the impact of such activities is also suggested. Since the adolescent stage is a critical transition period, the study affirms that friends play a significant role. Filipino adolescents are encouraged to join peers who are good influence for a better mental health. Clubs/ organizations may be organized in schools that foster good values and right conduct. And lastly, fathers must be empowered as to their indirect but significant influence on boosting their child’s self-esteem. The findings of this research serve only true to the population of the school under study because this was intentionally done to benefit them. However, future researchers are also encouraged to use the same and/or other methods to get a grasp of the mental health of present-day adolescents covering also public schools.

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