



A Comparative Study Between Males And Females On The Effect Of Dissolution Of Romantic Relationships On The Social And Emotional Well-Being During Late Adolescence

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Abstract

Dissolution of romantic relationships is a predominant and challenging phenomenon that has mostly been studied in the domain of academic behavior. This research aims at studying the comparison of the success of romantic relationships, and the impact created by the dissolution of romantic relationships on the social and emotional well-being of males and females during late adolescence. Simple random sampling and convenient sampling techniques were used to select 100 samples (50 males and 50 females) of late adolescents (17-19 years) from the state of Delhi. The data collected was analyzed using statistical measures such as mean scores, T-test, and standard deviation. The major findings of the study were that there is a difference in the success of romantic relationships between males and females, i.e. females have more successfully completed romantic relationships than males during late adolescence, social well-being of males and females is somewhere equally affected by the dissolution of romantic relationships during late adolescence, and emotional well-being is also somewhere equally affected by the dissolution of romantic relationships during late adolescence with a minor difference in the mean scores. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the effect of dissolution of romantic relationships on the social and emotional well-being of males and females during late adolescence is equivalent but the success of romantic relationships is more among females during late adolescence.

Key Words: Romantic Relationships, Dissolution, Late Adolescence, Social Well-being, Emotional Well-being

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Introduction:

Adolescence is a stage in which romantic or love relationships play a significant role in their development as they take the central position in their lives. A romantic or love relationship is defined as a deliberate mutual relationship that is formed when both the members of the dyad agree to spend time together. Increased interest in getting involved in romantic relationships is the focal point in adolescents' lives and has been described as the defining feature of adolescence. Close romantic relationships become more and more important to adolescents in their social world as they develop from puberty to the stage of late adolescence. Hence, it shows the prevalence of close relationships among adolescents (Furman, 2014).



Although adolescent romantic relationships are normal and can lead to development, negotiating the relationship dynamics is not always easy and convenient for adolescents (Davila 2008; Connolly and Mc Isaac 2011). They are associated with the way adolescents explore their bodies, independence, privacy, identity, and sometimes sexual orientation. Such a relationship can be a gateway to both well-being and negative outcomes. Among adolescents, romantic relationships can be stressful life events (Steinberg & Davila, 2008) and may take attention away from other areas of functioning (Joyner & Udry, 2000). Real or fantasized romantic relationships are described as the most common cause of strong positive and strong negative emotions because adolescents give them more importance than friendships or relationships with parents. But committing to a romantic relationship and its dynamics require high-level communication and problem-solving skills which may still be in the developing phase in adolescents (Shulman and Connolly 2013). All the three components (i.e. intimacy, passion, and commitment) are connected with relationship satisfaction and their connection to satisfaction varies with time as relationships evolve. All three components develop over time as couples transition from casual dating to monogamous dating to engagement (Gao, 2001).

Most adolescent relationships are short-term and only last a few weeks or months, it is unusual that such relationships have depth and complexity that make them long-lasting. The termination or dissolution of a romantic relationship can be troublesome and stressful because it influences every aspect of a person's life including emotional, psychological, social, sexual, financial, physical, and spiritual life, and sometimes affects the whole family.

Furthermore, the complicated task of managing one's changing social network after starting a romantic relationship may become even more stressful when peers reject romantic involvement. It follows a specific pattern i.e.; it begins when the problem begins to take place in the partnership and ends when both the individuals have accepted to part ways and receive closure. Personal and individual relationship factors also play a major role in deciding the fate of the breakup. Nevertheless, adolescents have several experiences handling romantic relationship conflicts, mentioning that conflicts are a common phenomenon in most relationships (Laursen and Hafen 2010).

The Significance of Romantic Relationships for Adolescence Well-being:

Romantic relationships act as a key component and prevalent part of social development (Carver et al, 2013; Connolly and McIsaac, 2009). Described as 'ongoing voluntary interactions that are mutually accepted, instead of identified by only one member of the pair', the term 'romantic relationships' means romantic status that connects two partners (Collins, 2003; Collins and Van Dulmen, 2006; Collins et al., 2009; Connolly and McIsaac, 2009).

Romantic involvement and the quality of the relationship within the romantic relationship seem to stimulate lower rates of alienation and isolation, an advanced self-image, an elevated level of self-esteem, and a greater level of commitment in further relationships (Cairano et al., 2006; Viejo et al., 2015; Hensel et al., 2016). The influence of romantic relationships on the well-being of adolescents depends majorly on the level of competence and skills which adolescents already possess (Davila et al, 2017) along with the evolution of the learning process.

Dissolution Distress:

Romantic relationships and romantic love are celebrated throughout the ages as one of the most overwhelming of all affective states. They have been the inspiration for some of the greatest achievements of mankind. Romantic relationships are a complex sentiment involving erotic, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components which are not impossible but difficult to disentangle.

Breakup distress is a type of stress caused by grief following the ending of a romantic relationship (Field, Diego,



Pelaez, Deeds, & Delgado, 2009). It is characterized by invasive and distressing thoughts associated with the former partner or the relationship ending, lack of breakup acceptance, changes in feelings of closeness and trust in others, and sadness, anger, and bitterness related to the breakup (Field, Diego, Pelaez, Deeds, & Delgado, 2010).

Breakup distress has been associated with greater sleep disturbances (Field et al., 2009), increased feelings of anger (Sbarra, 2006; Field et al., 2009), and anxiety (Davis, Shaver, & Vernon, 2003; Field et al., 2009), and initial depressive episode onset (Monroe, Rohde, Seeley, & Lewinsohn, 1999), all of which are simultaneously related to poorer physical health (Irwin, 2015; Chida & Steptoe, 2009; Ironson & Fitch, 2016; Moussavi et al., 2007).

Emotional regulation, in particular, has received attention as a strong predictor of breakup distress. In a study exploring the association between breakup distress and various emotional coping mechanisms (i.e., rumination, avoidance, emotional processing, and emotional expression), Wrap, Jenkins, Callahan, and Nowlin (2016) found that the use of either rumination or avoidance in response to stressful situations heightened distress following a nonmarital romantic breakup. Rumination and emotional avoidance, then, maybe the key facilitators in the development of breakup distress.

Emotional Acculturation after the Dissolution of Romantic Relationships:

The reactions to the dissolution of romantic relationships typically progress through three stages: protest, which includes crying, showing anger, disbelief, and making attempts to restore the bond and proximity with the individual; despair and sadness, and ultimately the reorganization of attachment and detachment hierarchy. Reorganization is done by upgrading new or existing partners, or by degrading ex-partners.

The three attachment styles related to post-breakup emotional adjustment include secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment styles. Individuals who feel secure about their relationship tend to face relationship breakups with increased resilience, acceptance, and emotional recovery when compared to insecure individuals (Madey SF, Jilek L, 2012; Sbarra DA, 2006). Whereas highly anxious individuals tend to respond to breakups with hyperactiveness, emotional and

psychological distress, preoccupation with ex-partners, substance abuse, and loss of sense of identity in contrast to less anxious individuals (Sbarra DA, Emery RE, 2005; Davis D, Shaver PR, Vernon ML, 2003). And, avoidant individuals do not show grief after the dissolution of romantic relationships, such as little despair, protest and rapid progression to the reorganization phase.

Rationale:

Romantic relationships and their dissolution play a vital role in the lives of adolescents because they influence their thoughts, feelings, behavior, and actions. The dissolution of romantic relationships exerts an impact on their physical, social, and emotional well-being. A study on the effects of the dissolution of romantic relationships on the social, and emotional well-being of male and female adolescents who are in the age group 17 to 19 years will be beneficial to adolescents and the people working with them (parents, teachers and other adults) to be aware of the situation adolescents go through post-breakup. And, accordingly, they can look for measures that can be adopted to reduce the impact.

Review of Literature:

The study was done by Emily J. Cross, Nickola C. Overall, Shanuki D. Jayamaha, and Chris G. Sibley of the University of Auckland, New Zealand on the topic “Does low self-esteem predict lower well-being following a relationship dissolution?”. They used the tool self-esteem scale, personality scale, propensity score matching, and data from waves 1-9 (2009-2018) of the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS). The sample of the study consisted of the

participants who had been in a relationship and had undergone relationship dissolution. The conclusion of the study was that dissolution of a relationship is associated with lower later well-being and this effect is greater for people initially lower in self-esteem. The result of the studies also shows that people who experienced a dissolution reported lower later well-being compared to people who remained in the relationship.

Methodology:

The research consisted of a self-constructed questionnaire with a five-point scale in which point 5 is strongly agree, point 4 is agree, point 3 is not sure, point 2 is disagree, and point 1 is strongly disagree which will provide quantitative data for the study. This chapter consists of the main objectives of the study, hypothesis framed, operational definitions of the information about the tool used, the procedure of data collection and ethical considerations made. It has also mentioned the data analysis and statistics used for the data interpretation. The methodology section allows the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability. This chapter consists of the following subsections:

Aim: To study and compare the effect of dissolution of romantic relationships on the social and emotional well-being of males and females during late adolescence.

Objectives of the Study: The study is oriented towards three objectives:

- To study and compare the success of romantic relationships between males and females during late adolescence.
- To study and compare the impact created by the dissolution of romantic relationships on the emotional well-being of males and females during late adolescence.
- To study and compare the impact created by the dissolution of romantic relationships on the social well-being of males and females during late adolescence.

The Hypothesis of the Study:

H0- There is no significant difference in the success of romantic relationships between males and females during late adolescence.

H1- There is a significant difference in the success of romantic relationships between males and females during late adolescence.

H0- There is no significant difference in the impact created by the dissolution of romantic relationships on the social well-being of males and females during late adolescence.

H2- There is a significant difference in the impact created by the dissolution of romantic relationships on the social well-being of males and females during late adolescence.

H0- There is no significant difference in the impact created by the dissolution of romantic relationships on the emotional well-being of males and females during late adolescence.

H3- There is a significant difference in the impact created by the dissolution of romantic relationships on the emotional well-being of males and females during late adolescence.

Operational Definitions:

- **Adolescence-** the phase of life between childhood and adulthood.
- **Adolescents-** individuals in the 10-19 years age group.
- **Late Adolescents-** individuals in the 17-19 years age group.

Locale : The study was conducted in the city of New Delhi, India.

Sampling Technique: Simple random sampling and convenient sampling techniques were used to collect the data.

Sample Size: Data was collected from a sample size of 100 adolescents in the age group 17 to 19 years (50 males



and 50 females).

Variables:

- **Independent variable:** dissolution of romantic relationships of males and females during late adolescence.
- **Dependent variable:** social and emotional well-being of males and females during late adolescence.

Design of the Study: A comparative research design was used.

Tools used for Data Collection:

The tool used for the study was a self-constructed five-point scale which was used to study the effect of dissolution of romantic relationships on the social and emotional well-being of males and females during late adolescents. The tool was in the form of a statement which has only close ended statements which define the aim. Total number of statements were 25 which was divided into 3 parts to define the effect of dissolution of romantic relationships i.e. romantic relationship (5 statements), effect of dissolution of romantic relationship on the emotional well-being (10 statements) and effect of dissolution of romantic relationship on the social wellbeing (10 statements).

Reliability Test:

To verify the reliability of the scale applied in the tool, the Cronbach Alpha Test and Guttman Split Half Coefficient are used. The results are as follows.

S.no.	Factor	Number of Questions	Cronbach Alpha Test	Guttman Split Half Coefficient
1.	Emotional well-being	10	0.700	-0.218
2.	Social well-being	10	0.700	0.343

The rule for testing of Cronbach Alpha Test is that if the Cronbach Alpha value is greater than 0.700, then the reliability test is accepted. The conclusion is the scale used in the tool is reliable and acceptable.

The above table indicates that the calculated values are equal to 0.700. Therefore, the reliability test is accepted and the tool is appropriate.

Validity of the Tool:

The self-constructed questionnaire was sent to three experts from the field of human development for validation, their suggestions were taken into consideration and changes were made to the tool accordingly. Data collection was done post finalization of changes.

The Procedure of Data Collection:

The procedure for data collection began with identifying individuals of the age group 17 to 19 years. Then every participant was requested to fill in the response and they were informed that the participation is voluntary and the data collected from them will be kept confidential.

Ethical Consideration:

The sample was located and permission was obtained. The purpose of the study was shared with the participants. Confidentiality was maintained and they were told that all the information provided by them will be kept confidential and will only be reported as group data with no identifying information.

Data Analysis:

The data coding was done into an Excel spreadsheet and Statistical measures such as mean scores, Standard deviation, and T-test were done followed by results and discussions.

results and discussions:

The results were analyzed after the data was collected from the adolescents in the age group of 17 to 19 years through a 5 points scale. The result has been categorized into questions asked on a five-point scale.

Difference in the Success of Romantic Relationships between Males and Females during Late Adolescence.

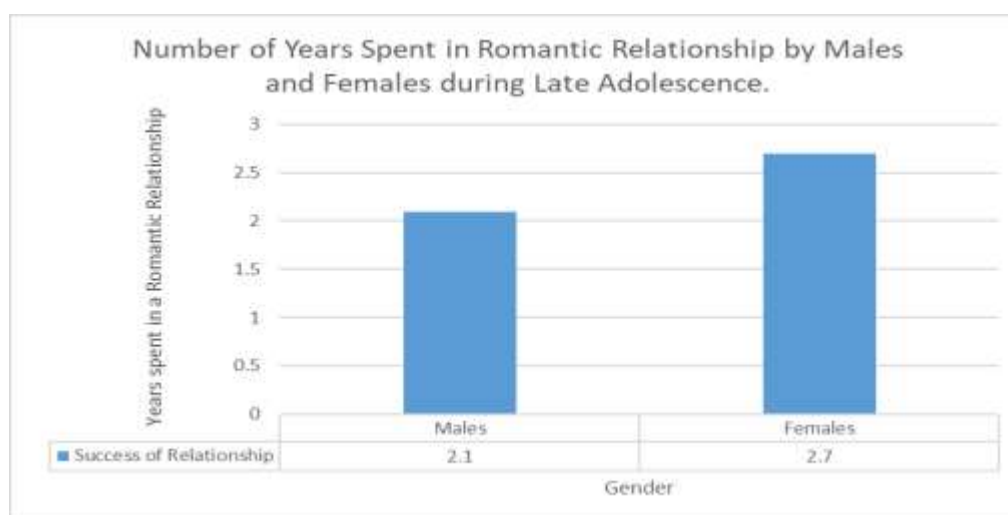
Gender	N	Mean	SD	t value
Males	50	2.1	1.3	2.019*
Females	50	2.7	1.7	

* $p < 0.05$

The above table denotes the difference in the success of romantic relationships between males and females during late adolescence. It can be observed that the mean years spent by 50 males during late adolescence is 2.1, whereas the mean years spent by females during late adolescence is 2.7 and the t-value comes to be 2.019.

Since there is a difference in the success of romantic relationships between males and females during late adolescence, the null hypothesis quoting that there is no significant difference in the success of romantic relationships between males and females during late adolescence has been rejected and the alternate hypothesis has been accepted. Therefore, it can be said that females have more success in the number of years they have spent in romantic relationships than their male counterparts during late adolescence.

Number of Years Spent in Romantic Relationship by Males and Females during Late Adolescence.



The above graph indicates the number of years spent in romantic relationships by males and females during late adolescence. A number of years spent in romantic relationships was asked to males and females of late adolescence. All 100 participants responded to this question. Responses were calculated in the form of mean and differentiated into males and females.

On average, out of 100 participants, 50 males reported being in romantic relationships for about 2.1 years whereas 50 girls reported being in romantic relationships for about 2.7 years during late adolescence. Thereby, females have more successfully completed romantic relationships than males during late adolescence.

Effects of Dissolution of Romantic Relationships on the Emotional Well-being of Males and Females during Late Adolescence.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t value
Males	50	25.68	5.69	0.701
Females	50	26.52	6.27	

The above table denotes the effect of dissolution of romantic relationships on the emotional well-being of males and females during late adolescence. Questions related to emotional well-being were asked to both males and females of late adolescence and all the 100 participants responded to this question. Responses were calculated in the form of mean and differentiated into males and females.

It can be observed that out of 50 males, 25.68 males have faced the effect of the dissolution of romantic relationships on their emotional well-being during late adolescence. Whereas, out of 50 females, 26.52 females have been affected emotionally after the dissolution of their romantic relationships during late adolescence. And, the t-value comes out to be 2.019.

Since there is a minor difference in the mean values of the effect of dissolution of romantic relationships on the emotional well-being of males and females during late adolescence, the null hypothesis quoting that there is no significant difference in the effect of dissolution of romantic relationships on the emotional wellbeing of males and females during late adolescence has been accepted and the alternate hypothesis has been rejected.

Effects of Dissolution of Romantic Relationships on the Social Well-being of Males and Females during Late Adolescence.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t value
Males	50	28.24	5.30	0.306
Females	50	28.56	5.13	

The above table indicates the effect of dissolution of romantic relationships on the social well-being of males and females during late adolescence. Questions related to social well-being were asked to both males and females of late adolescence and all the 100 participants responded to this question. Responses were calculated in the form of mean and differentiated into males and females.

It can be observed that out of 50 males, 28.24 males have faced the effect of the dissolution of romantic relationships on their social well-being during late adolescence. Whereas, out of 50 females, 28.56 females have been affected socially after the dissolution of their romantic relationships during late adolescence. And, the t-value comes out to be 0.306. There is not much difference in mean values of males and females, the effect of dissolution of romantic relationships on the social well-being of males and females during late adolescence has been somewhat equivalent.

Since there is a minor difference in the mean values of the effect of dissolution of romantic relationships on the social well-being of males and females during late adolescence, the null hypothesis quoting that there is no significant



difference in the effect of dissolution of romantic relationships on the social wellbeing of males and females during late adolescence has been accepted and the alternate hypothesis has been rejected.

Conclusion:

Research titled “A Comparative Study Between Males and Females on The Effect of Dissolution of Romantic Relationships on The Social and Emotional Well-being During Late Adolescence” has discovered the success of romantic relationships and the effect of the dissolution of romantic relationships on the social and emotional well-being of males and females during late adolescence. The research compares the effect of the dissolution of romantic relationships on the social and emotional well-being found between males and females. It also looks into the success in the number of years both males and females have spent in romantic relationships during late adolescence.

Romantic relationships during late adolescence have gained developmental importance and have both positive and negative outcomes for adolescents. Certain factors in the lives of adolescents, such as high-risk behaviors, unhealthy relationships, and others force them to become a part of a crisis. This impacts their relationships with family, studies and other opportunities, thus affecting their developmental process.

Romantic relationships play a significant role in adolescent development, but for many teens, dating relationships are not successful and hence become troublesome. The development of romantic relationships through dating is a charming and crucial part of adolescence. Dating stays a prominent topic of discussion among teens and as they grow, they eventually start spending more time with their romantic partners than with their parents or friends. This relationship is quite new to adolescents and they stay confused in distinguishing romantic relationships from a familiar sibling or peer relationships. Even though the dissolution of romantic relationships affects emotional and social well-being, adolescents are prone to be a part of it and consider it the centre of attention in their lives. Individuals in healthy romantic relationships report increased emotional support, self-esteem and quality of life (Sedikides et al., 1994; Voss et al., 1999; Pateraki and Roussi, 2013). Thereby, it seems that the dissolution of romantic relationships affects the social and emotional well-being of adolescents because such a relationship holds a significant position in their lives.

- The study found that on average, during late adolescence, females spend 2.7 years in their romantic relationships in comparison to males who spend 2.1 years making their romantic relationships successful. This is because females are more committed, caring and serious toward the other person.
- Since out of 50 males and 50 females, 25.68 males and 26.52 females respectively have been affected emotionally due to the dissolution of romantic relationships during late adolescence, there is an almost equivalent effect of dissolution of romantic relationships on the emotional well-being of males and females during late adolescence
- And, 28.24 males (out of 50) and 28.56 females (out of 50) during late adolescence have been reported to be affected socially after the dissolution of their romantic relationships. Hence, there is not much difference in the effect of the dissolution of romantic relationships on the social well-being of males and females during late adolescence.

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