



## INQUIRY ON STRENGTHENING MUTUAL ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP: REASONS FOR INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

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<p><b>Received</b> 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 <b>Accepted:</b> 20<sup>th</sup> June 2021 <b>Published:</b> 23<sup>th</sup> July 2021</p>	<p>The study utilized a phenomenological inquiry approach as the study's design with a structured interview guide as the main instrument to gather data. There are 12 individuals, who have their own life-long or long timed partners, served as the study participant. A psychology specialist validated the instrument, and a researcher has a romantic relationship. The instrument comprises two questions; (a) describe a romantic relationship; (b) how to strengthen a romantic relationship? The results of the study have found that romantic relationships are abstracted. Various positive emotions are present and felt magical; must have emotional security; partners have the same thinking; had various concepts about romance and the flow relationship. They also concluded romantic relationships strengthening advice; good communication; handling with care; object constancy; firmly holding promises; being faithful, and do mutual responsibility. The concepts should also be considered in the curriculum due to the following reasons: realizing the consequences of decisions; avoid suicides and abuse; leads to positive relationships; served as Emergency Plan; and learning about emotional investment.</p>

**Keywords:** Romantic relationship, handling with care, being faithful, mutual responsibility

### INTRODUCTION

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, love and belongingness are two of the most critical wants that must be met to fulfill our lives. From the moment you are born, you have a yearning for love and belonging. As you mature, you will continue to require affection and belonging in order to thrive. Even after you reach adulthood and can self-care, these requirements persist since they are an integral aspect of being human (Thomas, 2020).

Sharry (2018) asserted that the quality of our interactions has a bearing on our mental health and well-being. The more connected we are to the people we care about, the happier we feel, and the more personal fulfillment we experience in our life. In practice, the most critical need is love and belonging, as these are necessary for the fulfillment of all other needs" (Rahim, 2013).

However, conflicts in a shared loving relationship are unavoidable. According to the Australian Institute of Professional Counselors (2010), there are seven frequent relationship difficulties. These include adultery, loss of intimacy, disagreement, a lack of communication, sexual problems, substance misuse, and breakup. Couples have difficulties when they are hesitant to be candid – typically because they believe the truth will enrage their partner and destroy the relationship. They either fail to communicate their pain or request the love or support they desire or do it in a critical or accusing manner (Lancer, 2019).

George (2016) thought that challenges should be accepted as opportunities to progress personally and professionally, even when things appear difficult. Thus, to live a simple life, we must confront new problems that stretch us and provide us with additional possibilities to be ourselves (Joseph, 2016).

According to Cross (2011), rejection and physical pain are related in that they are both distressing and share a common somatosensory representation. They discovered that missing a significant other activates the same brain regions as cocaine users waiting for their following line. In other words, love is addictive, and ending a relationship is equivalent to experiencing withdrawal (Fisher et al., 2011).

According to Vitelli (2017), interpersonal or marital troubles appear to be a risk factor for suicide. Not only are those experiencing interpersonal violence or emotional conflict at an increased risk of suicide attempts, but studies also indicate that ending a relationship can increase suicide risk. In an interview, a relationship expert named Dionisio

stated, "suicide is most frequently motivated by love. The second leading cause of suicide is a lack of love," and added that teens are at a significantly higher risk of suicide due to their "still growing state." (ABS-CBN News, 2011).

Hogan (2019) stated that any relationships withstand these obstacles, including going the distance, losing a loved one, moving in together, professional upheaval, money troubles, conflicts with friends, an unexpected illness, jealousy, and future decisions, will succeed. All romantic relationships experience ups and downs and require effort, dedication, and an ability to adapt and evolve with your partner. A healthy relationship is defined partly by a shared vision for what you want the partnership to be and where you want it to go (Robinson et al., 2019).

Yet, while schools and many other industries in this country dedicate considerable time and resources to training students for work, they do an astonishingly poor job of educating them for generous, self-respecting sex and love. The cost of this oblivion is enormous. Apart from teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted illnesses, various problems, such as substance misuse, depression, and a variety of forms of academic difficulties, frequently stem from sexual and romantic fear and failure (Weissbourd et al., 2013).

This study aims to ascertain the method by which romantic relationships are strengthened and its relevance to formal schooling.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a psychological, motivational theory that entails a five-tiered model of human wants, which is frequently portrayed as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. A human need is social and entails a sense of belonging. Behavior is motivated by the desire for interpersonal relationships (Mcleod, 2020).

According to Robert Sternberg's triangular theory of love, love comprises three distinct but linked components: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. In close relationships, emotional intimacy and cognitive decision/commitment components are often relatively stable; once established, they are likely to continue (Anderson, 2016).

Attachment theory is concerned with interpersonal interactions and attachments, particularly long-term relationships between parents and children and romantic partners (Cherry & Gas, 2019).

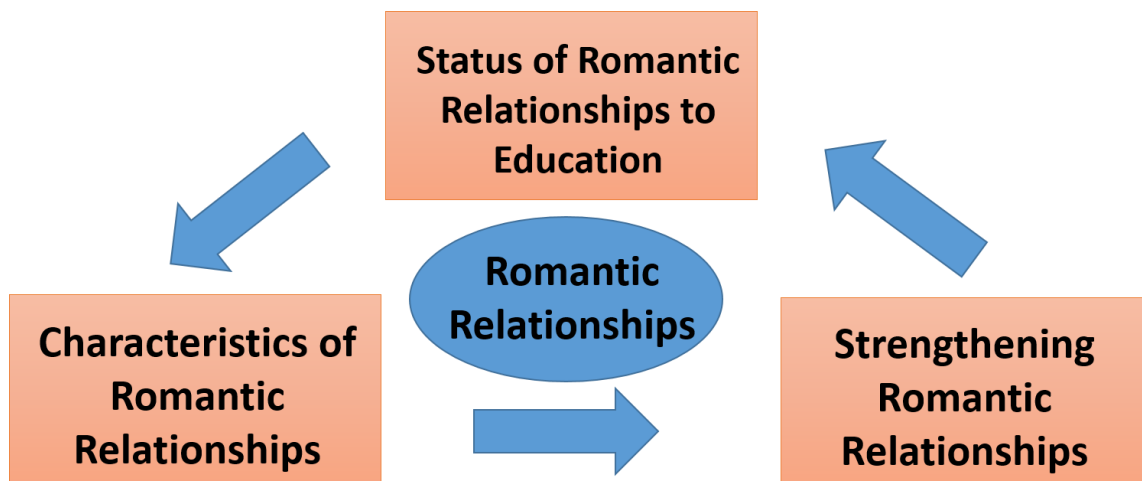


Figure 1. Conceptual Paradigm

The figure presents the conceptual paradigm of the study. After describing a romantic relationship, the study also determines how to strengthen it and its status on formal education. The data to be gathered served as baseline information for recommendations in education and the romantic relationship itself.

### METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a phenomenological inquiry approach as the study's design with a structured interview guide as the main instrument to gather data. There are 12 individuals, who have their own life-long or long timed partners, served as the study participants. The instrument was validated by a psychology specialist and a researcher who has a romantic relationship. The instrument is composed of three questions; (a) describe a romantic relationship; (b) how to strengthen a romantic relationship?; (c) in your perspective, do you think these concepts should be included in formal education?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Describing Romantic Relationship**  
**Table 1. Describing Romantic Relationship**

Themes	Sample Statement
Theme 1. Presences of Various Positive Emotions	Romantic relationship is when there is a presence of love, trust and understanding. I think these 3 things are the ingredients of a strong romantic relationship.  Love is when you feel that you're happy and grateful whenever you're with him or her.
Theme 2. Magical	That you feel the magic of love beyond explanation.
Theme 3. Emotional Security	You have that distinct feeling that infidelity will not happen as long as you trust and communicate well.  Trust when you know in yourself that your partner doesn't cheat you and vice versa.  You felt so secured whenever your partner is around.
Theme 4. Same Thoughts	Most of the time, we are thinking the same things. Literally, the same.  Understanding is when you understand the verbal and non-verbal cues without further explanation.
Theme 5. Concepts About Romance	Romantic relationship is hard to describe. What I mean is that, depending on both partner's perspective about the concept of romance.
Theme 6. Just Go With the Flow, No Matter What	In my point of view, in a romantic relationship, you do things that will make your partner happy. It doesn't need to be logical.  Sometimes, you just need to go with the flow. Live with it, as long as your happy and stable with each other, then its fine.

**Theme 1. Presences of Various Positive Emotions**

According to Segal (2020), we have the potential to achieve the kind of love that we all desire—deep connection, mutual compassion, true commitment, and soulful caring—simply via empathy, our intrinsic capacity to share emotional experiences. Like the participants stated that *"Romantic relationship is when there is a presence of love, trust and understanding. I think these 3 things are the ingredients of a strong romantic relationship."* and *"Love is when you feel that you're happy and grateful whenever you're with him or her."* Another response is saying, *"When you laugh at your own sweet nothings."* Humor requires honesty, mainly when it deals with the most serious topics in our lives; it also requires exaggeration, which results in an embellishment of the truth (Ben-Zev, 2019).

**Theme 2. Magical**

A participant said that *"That you feel the magic of love beyond explanation."* It is the magic of love – that ineffable emotional experience of mind, body, soul, fantasy, reality – that prompts the creation of various brain chemicals that points to the reality of love (Praver, 2011).

**Theme 3. Emotional Security.**

According to Strong (2019), Security — it breeds honesty, trust, and vulnerability. Furthermore, all of those things are the key to a healthy, lasting relationship. Participants believed, *"You felt so secured whenever your partner is around."* Moreover, they greatly emphasized trust when it comes to infidelity. *"You have that distinct feeling that infidelity will not happen as long as you trust and communicate well."* and *"Trust when you know in yourself that your partner doesn't cheat you and vice versa."* participants stated. Moreover, to establish trust, one of two things can be done. Keep your word, follow through on your activities, and provide time for decision-making and reflection before rushing (Craig, 2020).

**Theme 4. Same Thoughts**

Hatfield et al. (1993) found that emotional contagion promotes behavioral synchronization and the tracking of others' sentiments at the moment, even when individuals are not deliberately attending to this information. Like the description of the participants, *"Most of the time, we are thinking the same things. Literally, the same."* and

"Understanding is when you understand the verbal and non-verbal cues without further explanation." When two people spend enough time together, their speech patterns grow to match. We imitate everything about the other person, from his or her accent to the number and length of pauses between words and sentences (Brodwin, 2015).

**Theme 5. Concepts About Romance**

"Romantic relationship is hard to describe. What I mean is that, depending on both partner's perspective about the concept of romance" a participant stated. According to Lardbucket (ND), the communication has a big impact on how people see relationships by evaluating how relational values have changed over the last few decades. That is, over time, the context of relationships has shifted due to the metamorphosis of values in connection to preferences.

**Theme 6. Just Go with the Flow, No Matter What**

In the participants' perspectives, romantic relationships are just going with the flow, do not be stiff with rationality. Like a participant said, "In my point of view, in a romantic relationship, you do things that will make your partner happy. It does not need to be logical." & Sometimes, you need to go with the flow. Live with it; as long as your happy and stable with each other, then it's fine." To love logically refers to a secure and predictable relationship that involves calculated risk. Meanwhile, loving with a gut is possible. The purpose of feeling is to generate a thousand reasons to adore someone. Additionally, you are adopting characteristics that are invisible to others (Thye, 2015).

**Strengthening Romantic Relationships**  
**Table 2. Strengthening Romantic Relationships**

Themes	Sample Statements
Theme 1. Good Communication	Share your stories to your stories to your partner. It is a way to know each other deeply. It can have strengthened through constant communication.
Theme 2. Handle with Care	Care, make your partner feel that you care and that love is present.  Make her day very special. Despite of having no special occasions, make sure to fix it before going to bed. And ladies, needs and loves caring noticeable affection, even with simple hugs and kisses has huge impact.
Theme 3. Constancy	Constancy. Be constant in this world of inevitable changes. Be constant of the real you.
Theme 4. Firmly holding Promises	Be firm with your promises. If you said that you will do something, then do it with all your heart and effort. Make sure to fulfill it.  Don't make promises lightly.
Theme 5. Be Faithful	Be faithful and firm in your love, no matter what.  Just be honest. Don't do ridiculous things and saying sorry all the time.
Theme 6. Mutual Responsibility.	Strengthening the relationship is a mutual responsibility. Do things that both will benefit euphoria.

**Theme 1. Good Communication**

According to Hardy (2020), timidly communicating with people is closing its doors up for other people, even loved ones. They caged thoughts and feelings for varied reasons. A partner who does not have regular communication holds one of these two reasons; they fear rejection, or they two concern that they are frightened to upset the other. A participant stated that "Share your stories to your stories to your partner. It is a way to know each other deeply. It can have strengthened through constant communication. & "3 C's – Communication, care and constancy. Communication, it's the most vital. Have time to talk amidst your busy sched. A simple kumusta is okay." A simple discussion can significantly aid in the growth of a relationship. Maintaining relationships is neither easy nor difficult if communication is stable. According to Lovebondings (ND), when both parties are knowledgeable about particular subjects, there is a greater sense of openness and flexibility in the relationship, making it easier to maintain.

**Theme 2. Handle with Care**

Brenner (2017) believes that in order to have a caring relationship, the following ABC characteristics must be present: adaptable, benevolent, conscientious, dedicated, equal, flexible, generous, honest, interested, just, kind, loving, mature, nurturing, open, present, present, quality, reasonable, soulful, truthful, united, virtuous, willing,

extraordinary, Yin/Yang, and Zeal. As a result, the participant concluded that the key to having a healthy relationship is to be compassionate. They said, *"Care, make your partner feel that you care and that love is present."* and *"Make her day very special. Despite of having no special occasions, make sure to fix it before going to bed. And ladies, needs and loves caring noticeable affection, even with simple hugs and kisses has huge impact."*

### **Theme 3. Constancy**

A participant stated that *"Constancy. Be constant in this world of inevitable changes. Be constant of the real you."* Because in "failure," we loss something. Failure to maintain object constancy is analogous to failing to maintain the positive of a connection. Additionally, when we suffer a loss, we experience grief, along with all the accompanying emotions. Thus, success in object constancy has a significant impact on a relationship (Formica, 2008). Consistency with an object is the capacity to maintain an emotionally good state of mind in the presence of someone angry, hurt, or disappointed (Dodgson, 2017).

### **Theme 4. Firmly holding Promises**

Promises are a commitment, according to Promise Behavioral Health (2020). Individuals who have strong relationships have a better level of emotional intelligence and are more likely to adhere to their commitments. Because commitment entails trust, this was obvious from the participant's attitudes toward promises. *"Be firm with your promises. If you said that you will do something, then do it with all your heart and effort. Make sure to fulfill it."* and *"Don't make promises lightly."*

### **Theme 5. Be Faithful**

According to Horton (2016), a person demonstrates respect for their partner's flaws by remaining committed and silently assisting them in compensating for such flaws. A participant is adamant about remaining faithful. They said, *"Be faithful and firm in your love, no matter what."* and *"Just be honest. Don't do ridiculous things and saying sorry all the time."* People who do not cheat are honestly satisfied with their partner and their relationship. They do not cheat because of not wanting to hurt or be hurt or avoid destroying their relationship (Buriss, 2019).

### **Theme 6. Mutual Responsibility**

Having a romantic relationship is a shared responsibility. Both individuals involved in this intimate relationship should work together to make the relationship healthy. Sacrifices are both done by each other. As insist by the participant, *"Strengthening the relationship is a mutual responsibility. Do things that both will benefit euphoria"*.

## **Romantic Relationship and its Strengthening Concepts in a Formal Education Setting**

### **Theme 1. Realize the Consequences of Decisions**

Moore (2021) stated that you should consider the ramifications of your decision to stay or leave with your relationship carefully. The repercussions may have a significant impact on your future, either positively or negatively. This indicates that every decision should be handled seriously as if it were a matter of life and death. As insists by the participant, *"Yes, having a formal education about this could help students and future partners to realize the consequences of their decisions towards their mutual romantic relationship."*

### **Theme 2. Avoid Suicides and Abused**

According to Moskos et al. (2004), psychological, environmental, and social factors can contribute to suicidal anguish. Suicides can be avoided if the formal education system takes a proactive role. As insists by the participant, *"Yes, especially nowadays that many suicides and abused happening due to lack of knowledge towards these matters. So to decrease it, education is very important."* and *"Yes, because most of the teens are becoming more aggressive in this matters. And society has tolerated their actions, that might lead to their future demise."*

Thus, based on a study, relationship problems were the leading cause of suicide. According to its profile of non-fatal self-harm cases, approximately 52 to 87 percent of suicide hospital admissions cited marital or relationship issues (GMA News, 2015).

### **Theme 3. Leads to Positive Relationship**

According to Preston Kanak (2013), maintaining a happy mindset can help spread positive emotions and inspire others to be optimistic. It is related by the statement of one of the participants, *"Yes. Because being knowledgeable on this concept leads to a much stable and more healthy relationship."*

### **Theme 4. Served as Emergency Plan.**

Jessie (2019) stated that *"if you desire to be in a healthy and emotionally positive relationship, considering an emergency plan is needed. It is not a maybe-later, next-month, or we'll-get-around-to-it-one-day sort of thing. It is an important factor in a relationship has frequently missed."* It is related by the statement of one of the participants, *"Yes, knowing the risk and factors of falling in and out of love is like an emergency plan. Knowing it in advance can save lives and future of people."*

### **Theme 5. Learning about emotional investment.**

According to Johnson (2019), the degree of investment is critical in a love connection. As partners, we should invest unconditionally in terms of space, time, and affection. However, those are undoubtedly frightening and difficult to accomplish. Nonetheless, it is lovely and transformational. As insists by the participant, *"Yes. Because emotional feelings greatly affect our daily lives. Like in teens situations nowadays, they give full priority about romance and the like. So, their lives for them became more complicated."*

Table 3?

Themes	Sample Statements
<b>Theme1. Realize the Consequences of Decisions</b>	Yes, having a formal education about this could help students and future partners to realize the consequences of their decisions towards their mutual romantic relationship.
<b>Theme 2. Avoid Suicides and Abused</b>	Yes, especially nowadays that many suicides and abused happening due to lack of knowledge towards these matters. So to decrease it, education is very important.  Yes, because most of the teens are becoming more aggressive in this matters. And society has tolerated their actions, that might lead to their future demise.
<b>Theme 3. Leads to Positive Relationship</b>	Yes. Because being knowledgeable on this concept leads to a much stable and more healthy relationship.
<b>Theme 4. Served as Emergency Plan.</b>	Yes, knowing the risk and factors of falling in and out of love is like an emergency plan. Knowing it in advance can save lives and future of people.
<b>Theme 5. Learning about emotional investment.</b>	Yes. Because emotional feelings greatly affect our daily lives. Like in teens situations nowadays, they give full priority about romance and the like. So, their lives for them became more complicated.

**CONCLUSION**

The study concludes the description on Romantic Relationship. It also establishes solutions to strengthen the romantic relationships.

1. A romantic relationship has been described in various ways. It is abstracted and its the presence of various positive emotions and feels magical. A healthy romantic relationship has been established by emotional security. Partners had already established this relationship, same thinking or behavior has frequently occurred. Though they have similarities yet, they have various concepts about romance. Lastly, partners should know riding random waves of their relationship.
2. To strengthen a romantic relationship, partners should have; good communication; handle a relationship with care; must have object constancy; firmly holds unto promises; be faithful, and always share responsibilities.
3. To consider the romantic relationship and its strengthening process in a formal education curriculum with the reasons, including; realizing the consequences of decisions; avoid suicides and abused; leads to positive relationships; served as Emergency Plan; and learning about emotional investment.

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