

ATTITUDE TOWARDS ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY AMONG INDIANS AND FILIPINOS

Remedios T. Navarro¹, Ashim Abhilash Kumar Mohanty², Edelyn A. Cadorna³, Sushama Pattnaik⁴

¹University of Northern Philippines

²University of Northern Philippines

³University of Northern Philippines

⁴Sambalpur University, Sambalpur, Odisha, India

Email: remediostnavarro@gmail.com¹, mashimabhilash@gmail.com², delwinkri@gmail.com³, sushamapattnaik27@gmail.com⁴

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Abstract

This study examined the attitude towards romantic relationships and knowledge of HIV of 250 Filipino and 150 Indian students. It also explored how the students' profile and knowledge of HIV influenced their attitude towards romantic relationships. The comparative research method determined the differences in the attitude towards romantic relationships and knowledge of HIV between the Indian and Filipino students. The correlational method on the other hand, determined the influence of HIV knowledge and profile on their attitude. The study utilized survey questionnaires to gather the needed data. Results show that there is a statistically significant difference between the students of the two countries in their knowledge of HIV. Indian students are more knowledgeable about HIV than the Filipino students. Both the Filipino and Indian students are undecided in their attitude towards romantic relationships. Number of close friends and romantic relationships and knowledge of HIV significantly influence attitude towards romantic relationships of the Filipino students. Personal factors and knowledge of HIV, taken singly and as a whole do not significantly influence attitude of the Indian students towards romantic relationships.

Keywords: Romantic Relationships, HIV knowledge, cross-cultural study, Filipinos, Indians

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INTRODUCTION

Romantic relationships play a vital role in the lives of adolescents. Sharma (n.d.) stated that the development and negotiation of romantic relationships with the emergence and integration of sexual behaviors into it as one matures are considered important and normative developmental tasks. Furman and Shaffer (2003) cited Sullivan who emphasized that romantic relationships play a significant role in shaping the adolescent's general course of development. Romantic relationships may impact key developmental tasks such as identity formation, family relationship transformations, close relationships with peers, sexuality, and career planning.

Blair and Madigan (2016) contended that the initiation and maintenance of intimate, romantic relationships link with improved physical and emotional well-being, stronger perceptions of community attachment, and better developmental outcomes.

Romantic relationships also have significant implications for health and adjustment. They influence the emotional and social development of adolescents, their future functioning and their experiences and expectations of intimate relationships in adulthood. Romantic relationships formed in adolescence may affect adult relationships either by supporting/altering the way individuals interact with potential partners or by giving concrete outcomes like marriage, pregnancy, and STDs. Romantic relationships and experiences – whether real, potential or fantasized – account for many of the intense emotions both positive (e.g., excitement, happiness), and negative (e.g. jealousy, anger, distress) that adolescents undergo (Headspace, 2012). Adolescents engage in romantic relationships for varied reasons: physical attraction, sense of intimacy and

belongingness, self-esteem and recognition. Conversely, they too stay in a relationship for varied reasons.

Romantic relationships can occur in the context of one or different cultures. Attitudes towards them and the way people manifest them could vary from culture to culture. Karandashev (2015) stated that culture has an impact on people's conceptions of love and the way they feel, think, and behave in romantic relationships. As such, the success of romantic relationships could be affected by cultural differences. Ecological perspectives emphasize the social and cultural contexts that encourage or constrain close relationships and give individuals meaning and significance. Events that occur in other settings and relationships inevitably affect adolescent romantic relationships and vice versa. (Collins, Welsh, and Furman, 2009) The study of Prakas (2016) on the attitude of Indians in New Zealand towards love, marriage, and romantic relationships revealed a continued endorsement of permanent and exclusive romantic relationships though greater acceptance of premarital sex and cohabitation was noted. The comparative study of young Indians and Americans by Bejanyan, Marshall, Ferenczi (2014), on the other, found that Indians reported greater collectivism and held stronger romantic beliefs than Americans. Further, the Indians' endorsement of more traditional gender roles partly predicted their preferences for a marital partner possessing traditional characteristics.

Sharma (n.d.) in her study concluded that the nature of sex and romantic relations among the youth slum of Mumbai Metropolitan seem to have changed. Casual sex seems to have changed very fast their concept of true love. Their risky behaviors also increased dangerously.

Pardhi, Jungari, & Bomble (2016) in their study on the attitudes and experiences of Indian youth regarding romantic relationships and physical intimacy, found that majority of the young people spent time with opposite sex friends. Almost half stated that they were engaged in kissing before marriage. Further, 47 % of rural youth and 43 % of urban youth had their first pre-marital sexual experience when they were 15 to 18 years old. The researchers concluded that the number of background characteristics like age, sex, place of residence, religion, caste, education, determine the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of the youth in India regarding romantic relationships and physical intimacy.

Lenhart, Anderson, and Smith (2015), in their study found that of the 35 % of teens aged 13-17, 14% were in a serious relationship with a boyfriend, girlfriend or significant other; 5% in a not serious one; and 16% had some sort of romantic relationship in the past. Further, teens aged 15 to 17 were found to be twice as those aged 13 to 14 to have had some type of romantic relationship experience (44% vs. 20%) and were more open in saying they were in an active relationship, serious or otherwise (18% vs. 6%). Older teens were also found to be more sexually active than the younger ones (36% vs. 12%).

In a cross-cultural study involving Indian and Canadian youth, Dhariwal and Connolly (2013) found that Indian youth from three intra-ethnic groups differing in their levels of exposure to westernization were similar on romantic desire and relationship but not on romantic autonomy and involvement. Increasing levels of westernization led to greater autonomy from parents in partner choice and more romantic activities. The study suggested that youth in globalizing context need to be supported with the social networks especially if they have diminished access to traditional kinship resources.

Varma & Mathur (2015) stated that romantic relationships have slowly gained prominence in India though their acceptability is still low. Parents do not like to acknowledge their kids' dating even if they know about it. Further, they contend that growing urbanization, modernization and changes in parenting techniques could be some of the reasons why said relationships have gained popularity.

A study on relationships in Asia suggests that Filipinos are the most expressive compared to their counterparts in the region. Filipinos are most likely to share intimate moments with their partners and show their love for each other more than anybody else in the region. Data showed that 87% said "I love you" to their partners every week, and 68 %, every day (Afinidad-Bernardo, 2016).

De Irala et.al. (2009) in their study on what the Filipino teens think and feel about relationships, love and sexuality revealed that the students obtained information about love and sexuality mainly from their friends. However, they valued their parents' opinion more than their friends'.

The study of De Jose (2013) on a cohort of Filipino adolescents, 15-24 years old, showed that high percentages for both male and female still value virginity and are not in favor of premarital sex (PMS), multiple sex, casual sex, pornography, cohabitation, same-sex relationship, petting and female masturbation. Male masturbation, necking, and holding hands and kissing were however found by them to be acceptable. Results also indicated an increase in adolescents who engaged in PMS over time, 80% of whom did not use condom which placed them at risk of unplanned pregnancy and exposure to STIs or HIV. Further, attitude towards sex, monthly family income, gender, and sexual preference surfaced as significant predictors of sexual behaviors.

Ordinario (2016) corroborates the above findings. In her article, she stated that 35.5 % of young male and 28.7 % of young female Filipinos have engaged in PMS and that 83.8% and 73.4% of them respectively, did not use any form of protection during their first PMS.

Adolescents' engagement in sexual behaviors during their romantic relationships increases the risk of exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and births as well as increased single parenthood. According to WHO (2017), more than 70 million people have already been infected with the HIV virus, and about 35 million people have already died of HIV. Globally, as of 2016, 36.7 million people had already been living with HIV and an estimated 0.8% of adults aged 15-49 years worldwide, living with HIV. Adolescents thus face the challenge of maintaining health and relationships.

Data from the National Youth Commission shows that of the 29 Filipinos who get infected every day, more than half or 19 are 15 to 24 years old, and 25 are 15 to 30 years old (Mateo and Crisostomo, 2016). Marquez (2014) stated that awareness of AIDS among the Filipino youth has declined. Their level of knowledge of HIV transmission and prevention methods is Moderate and their comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV-AIDS, Low (17.7% males, 16% females, 25.7% college respondents). They have misconceptions about HIV transmission and 3 in 10 (30%) have discussed HIV-AIDS mostly with their same sex friends only.

HIV prevalence in India on the other hand is estimated at 0.3% and is considered the third largest in the world due to its population. India, however, has reduced its incidence with a 32% decline in new HIV infections (80,000 in 2016), and a 54% decline in AIDS-related deaths between 2007 and 2015 (UNAIDS, 2017). This could be due to the successful implementation of the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) of India (Tanwar, Rewari, Rao, Seguy, 2016; NACO, 2016) which is not only focused on treatment but also on increasing awareness among the general population about HIV prevention (Avert, 2019).

The influx of Indian students in the Philippines raises the relevance of undertaking this study. Dugal (2017) stated that the Philippines has already become a much sought after destination for Indian students seeking a medical degree. Inevitably, Filipino and Indian students interact with each other which could foster the development of romantic relationships between them.

Understanding, therefore, the attitude towards romantic relationships of the Indians and Filipinos and whether their profile and knowledge about HIV influence their attitude is imperative. While existing literatures provide perspectives on how the Filipino and Indian adolescents view love, intimacy and romantic relationships, comparison of their attitudes has not yet been undertaken. Further, while background characteristics have already been studied as determinants of attitude and experiences on romantic relationships, knowledge of HIV as a determinant has not been explored much. Results of the study, shall also add into the existing body of knowledge on the presence of cultural differences in the attitude towards romantic relationships. Results of the study will provide insights on how to help the students establish healthy romantic relationships and manage issues brought about by their profile, cultural differences and knowledge about HIV. Further, understanding the variation on how people think, feel and act in a romantic relationship could be a beneficial approach to conduit cultural integrity and diversity.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to compare the attitude towards romantic relationships between the students in two countries, the Philippines and India. Specifically, it sought to unveil profile of

the respondents, the differences between Filipino and Indian students regarding their HIV knowledge and attitude towards romantic relationships, and the establishment of the influence of profile and HIV knowledge on attitude towards romantic relationships for both groups of students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The comparative method of research was employed to answer the questions raised in the study. This method is the most appropriate to use for cross-cultural studies between two countries. It compared the students in the two countries (India and Philippines) in their attitude towards romantic relationships, and also in their knowledge of HIV. Since the secondary objective of the study is to look at the influence of HIV knowledge and profile on attitude towards romantic relationships, it likewise used the correlation method.

Participants and Study Site

A total of 250 Filipino and 150 Indian students enrolled in the University of Northern Philippines during the period August – September 2017 who willingly participated served as respondents of the study. G-Power determined the required number of participants for the study.

Instrumentation and Data Gathering Procedure

The HIV- K-Q-45 (Carey, Morrison-Beedy, and Johnson, 1997; MIDSS, n.d.) was adopted to measure the knowledge of the respondents about the transmission, prevention and consequences of HIV infection. It consists of 45 items which are answered with “true, false, or I do not know”. A single summary score is obtained by summing the number of correct answers. “I do not know” responses are treated as incorrect answers. Each correct item is evaluated by one (1) score, while a wrong item is given a zero (0) score. To facilitate interpretation of results, raw scores are transformed into percentage correct score (i.e., the number of correct/45) with higher scores indicating higher knowledge. The HIV-K-Q is internally consistent (alpha = .91) and stable over 1-week (r = .83), 2-week (r = .91), and 12-week (r = .90) intervals (Carey and Schroder, 2002).

The questionnaire on attitude towards romantic relationships was adopted from the questionnaire used by one of the authors in their unpublished study. Said questionnaire consisted of cognitive, affective and behavioral components with nine items each. The adopted questionnaire was, however, pilot tested to 171 students (128 Filipinos and 43 Indians) to establish its reliability. Factor analysis was also done to determine the components where the items are located based on the computed factor loadings. From the original 27 items, only 18 items were retained (seven items for cognitive, four items for affective, and seven items for behavioral components). The reliability of the final version of the questionnaire using the Cronbach Alpha (0.874) is high.

Ethical Consideration

The study adhered to ethical standards in research. Actual permission of all those involved in the study was sought. The students were briefed on the nature and purpose of the study

before their participation. Only those who volunteered to be part of the study served as respondents. Confidentiality of responses was strictly observed. The anonymity of the respondents was, likewise, carried out keeping their privacy secure. The respondents were therefore not required to write their names in the questionnaire, or provide information that could directly identify them. Moreover, they were not given remunerations for answering the questionnaire and for providing additional information requested by the researchers.

Analysis of Data

The researchers used the frequency and percentage to determine the distribution of the Filipino and Indian respondents in terms of personal and socio-cultural attribute; weighted mean to describe the level of knowledge on HIV, and attitude towards romantic relationships. Meanwhile, t-test was utilized to compare the Filipino from the Indian respondents in their knowledge on HIV and attitude towards romantic relationships. To establish the influence of selected factors and HIV knowledge on the attitude towards romantic relationships, the researchers used the multiple regression analysis. The study was guided by the

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Characteristics of the Respondents

The great majority of both the Filipino and Indian respondents (87.6% and 82%, respectively) are 18-20 years old. The majority (54.4%) of the Filipinos are females, stay at their homes (62%), prefer heterosexual relationships (72.4%), and never had a romantic relationship (55.6%). A considerable percentage of them (36.4%) have 16 and above close friends. In contrast, the majority of the Indians are males (58%), have 16 and above close friends (68%) and have one romantic relationship (75.3%). All of them stay in apartments/boarding houses and prefer heterosexual relationships. Differences in the profile seem to indicate that the Indians like to have many close friends and are more open to establishing romantic relationships than the Filipinos.

Knowledge of HIV of the Filipino and Indian Students

Knowledge about HIV of both the Indian and Filipino students is Low as shown by their mean percentage ratings of 16.72 and 14.70, respectively. The results of t- test (Table 1), however, showed a significant difference between their scores (p< 0.05). Said finding implies that the Indian students are more knowledgeable about the transmission, prevention, and consequences of HIV infection than the Filipinos. The significant difference in their knowledge could be attributed to several factors, one of which, could be the success of the program (NACP) launched by the government of India to combat HIV/AIDS infection as evidenced by the decrease in its prevalence (UNAIDS, 2017; Tanwar, Rewari, Rao, Seguy, 2016; NACO, n.d.). The stigma attached to HIV/AIDS, on the other hand, can continuously hinder the Filipino students from seeking information from reliable sources, hence may discuss them with their same sex friends only (Marquez, 2014) and unable to correct their misconceptions. Adolescents must be equipped with adequate knowledge about HIV if they are to protect themselves from it.

Table 1: Results of the t-test of significant difference in the knowledge about HIV between the Filipino and Indian students

| Group | Mean | Mean Difference | t-value | t-Prob. | Decision |
|-----------|-------|-----------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Filipinos | 14.70 | 2.02 | 3.056 | 0.002 | Reject Ho |
| Indians | 16.72 | | | | |

It is, however, worthwhile to note that it is only on the following items where the majority of both the respondents scored correctly: “a pregnant woman with HIV can give virus to her unborn baby; a woman can get HIV if she has anal sex with a man; using a latex condom or rubber can lower a person’s chance of getting HIV; having sex with more than one partner can increase a person’s chance of being infected with HIV; and washing drug use equipment with cold water kills HIV”. On the other hand, the least of them scored correctly on the items “women are always tested for HIV during their pap smears and a natural skin condom works better against HIV than does a latex condom”. Differences on where the least of them scored correctly can also be noted. For the Filipinos, these are: “a person can get HIV by having oral sex with a man who has HIV, a person can get HIV by giving blood; a person can be infected with HIV for five years or more without getting AIDS”. For the Indians, the least of them scored correctly on the items: “taking a test for HIV one week after having sex will tell a person if she/he has HIV; if a

person tests positive for HIV, then the test site will have to tell to all his/her partners; using a lambskin condom or rubber is the best protection against HIV”. Said findings reflect the need for both the Indians and Filipinos to enhance their knowledge about HIV.

Attitude Towards Romantic Relationships of the Filipino and Indian Students

The Filipino and Indian students are Undecided in their attitude towards romantic relationships along the cognitive (Mean= 3.06 and 3.09, respectively) and affective (Mean= 3.10 and 3.17, respectively) components. Please refer to Table 2. These seem to indicate that the respondents are ambivalent on their convictions and opinions on what romantic relationships are as well as on their feelings towards them. The behavioral component, on the other hand, obtained a Favorable rating from both respondents (Mean= 3.47 and 3.52, respectively).

Table 2: Attitudes of the Filipino and Indian Students towards Romantic Relationships

| Components | Filipinos | | Indians | |
|------------|-----------|-------------|---------|-------------|
| | Mean | Description | Mean | Description |
| Cognitive | 3.06 | Undecided | 3.09 | Undecided |
| Affective | 3.10 | Undecided | 3.17 | Undecided |
| Behavioral | 3.47 | Favorable | 3.52 | Favorable |
| Overall | 3.21 | Undecided | 3.26 | Undecided |

The Filipinos and Indians tend to behave positively towards their romantic partners. They tend to respect, share their difficulties, worries, intimate thoughts and feelings with them and listen to their problems and concerns as well. Overall, the Filipino and Indian students are Undecided in their attitude towards romantic relationships (Mean= 3.21 and 3.26, respectively).

not significantly differ in their attitude towards romantic relationships along the cognitive, affective and behavioral components and as a whole (p>.05). These findings run contrary to the contentions of Karandashev (2015). Cultural variations in the attitude of the respondents are not evident among the items identified in the questionnaire. What they think and feel and how they behave/act towards their romantic relationships are relatively the same.

Results of t-test (Table 3) show that the Filipinos and Indians do

Table 3: Results of the t-test of Significant Difference in the Attitude towards Romantic Relationships between the Filipino and Indian Students

| Constructs of Attitude | Mean Ratings | | Mean diff. | t-value | t-Prob. | Decision |
|------------------------|--------------|---------|------------|---------|---------|------------------|
| | Filipinos | Indians | | | | |
| Cognitive | 3.06 | 3.09 | .03 | 0.677 | p > .05 | Do not reject Ho |
| Affective | 3.10 | 3.17 | .07 | 0.766 | p > .05 | Do not reject Ho |
| Behavioral | 3.47 | 3.52 | .07 | 0.581 | p > .05 | Do not reject Ho |
| Overall | 3.21 | 3.26 | .05 | 1.267 | p > .05 | Do not reject Ho |

The not-significant difference in the attitude towards romantic relationships between the Indians and Filipinos, could be because regardless of culture, adolescents are still in the process of discovering and developing healthy romantic relationships. They do not still have a clear understanding of what comprises a healthy relationship and what constitutes right and wrong behaviors in dating relationships (Sorensen, 2007). Further, the Indian students could have modified or changed their attitude as a result of their interaction with their Filipino friends, classmates, and significant others. Adapting to a new context could have led to changes in their behaviors (Collins, Welsh, and Furman, 2009).

The Undecided attitude of the respondents, however has implications for their development and future functioning. It could hinder the development of healthy relationships essential in their psycho-social, emotional and physical well-being.

The Influence of Profile and HIV Knowledge on Attitude Towards Romantic Relationships of Filipino Students

Regression analysis on the influence of profile and HIV knowledge on the cognitive component of attitude towards romantic relationships of the Filipinos shows that the influence of the combination of the variables is not statistically significant (F-ratio=1.728, F-prob > .05). These variables only explain 4.9 percent of the variance of the respondents cognitive attitude (RSq=.049). When the variables were taken singly, only number

of close friends came out as a significant predictor ($B = -0.152$, $p < .05$). This means that the number of close friends of the respondents contribute significantly to their perceptions/opinions about romantic relationship. This finding implies that the lesser the number of close friends of the respondents, the more favorable their perceptions towards romantic relationships. This could be because the more friends they have, the more varied the opinions and perceptions about romantic relationships that they will get which could lead to confusion or indecision. Their friends can either validate or contradict their experiences, thoughts and perceptions. As De Irala et.al. (2009) has pointed out, Filipino teens obtain information about love and sexuality mainly from their friends and not from their parents, hence could be influenced by them. Cojuangco (2011) also stated that parents lag behind peers as adolescents' confidants. In the context of Filipino culture, children do not openly communicate sexuality and relationship issues with their parents.

Results of the regression analysis, shown in Table 4, on the affective component of attitude towards romantic relationships also reveals no significant influence of the combination of profile and HIV knowledge ($F\text{-ratio} = 1.743$, $F\text{-prob} > .05$). The variables only explained a very low percent of variance of the respondents' feelings towards romantic relationships ($RSq = .049$). Among the variables considered in the study, only number of romantic relationships surfaced as significant predictor ($B = .166$, $p < .05$). The said finding implies that the respondents' feeling of happiness, depression, nervousness, or inhibition is influenced by how many romantic relationships they have/had in the past. Moreover, an increase in the number of romantic relationships of the respondents led to a more favorable attitude towards romantic relationships. This could be because the respondents learned from their experiences how to handle relationships better, or that they were happy and satisfied with their previous relationships. Positive experiences may breed positive emotions, just as negative experiences, negative emotions. The more said experiences are reinforced, the more likely they could become bases of how an individual feels towards romantic relationships.

Table 4: Results of multiple regression analysis of attitude towards romantic relationships of the Filipinos

| Variables | Cognitive | | Affective | | Behavioural | | Overall | |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| | Beta | t-Prob. | Beta | t-Prob. | Beta | t-Prob. | Beta | t-Prob. |
| Profile | | | | | | | | |
| Age | -0.054 | $p > .05$ | -0.088 | $p > .05$ | -0.019 | $p > .05$ | -0.101 | $p > .05$ |
| Sex | -0.018 | $p > .05$ | -0.013 | $p > .05$ | 0.109 | $p > .05$ | 0.062 | $p > .05$ |
| Residence | -0.116 | $p > .05$ | 0.096 | $p > .05$ | 0.036 | $p > .05$ | 0.023 | $p > .05$ |
| Close friends | -0.152 | $p < .05$ | -0.026 | $p > .05$ | 0.068 | $p > .05$ | -0.053 | $p > .05$ |
| Type of relationship | 0.049 | $p > .05$ | 0.008 | $p > .05$ | 0.034 | $p > .05$ | 0.057 | $p > .05$ |
| No. of romantic relationship | -0.021 | $p > .05$ | 0.166 | $p < .05$ | 0.036 | $p > .05$ | 0.121 | $p > .05$ |
| HIV Knowledge | 0.057 | $p > .05$ | 0.063 | $p > .05$ | 0.118 | $p > .05$ | 0.160 | $p < .05$ |
| Mult R | 0.220 | | 0.221 | | 0.194 | | 0.233 | |
| RSq | 0.049 | | 0.049 | | 0.038 | | 0.054 | |
| F-ratio | 1.728 | | 1.743 | | 1.329 | | 1.946 | |
| F-Prob. | 0.103 | | 0.100 | | 0.237 | | 0.063 | |

Regression of profile and HIV knowledge on the behavioral component of attitude towards romantic relationships of the Filipinos did not yield significant results. Taken singly and as a whole, said variables did not significantly influence behavioral component of attitude towards romantic relationships ($F\text{-ratio} = 1.329$; $F\text{-Prob.} = .237$). How the respondents act towards their romantic partners and whether they favor the establishment of romantic relationships or not have nothing to do with their profile and HIV knowledge.

Taken singly, regression of profile and HIV knowledge on the overall attitude of the Filipino students shows that only knowledge about HIV surfaced as a significant predictor ($B = .160$; $t\text{-Prob.} < .05$) This implies that the level of knowledge about HIV significantly influences overall attitude of the Filipino students towards romantic relationships. The higher the level of knowledge about HIV, the more positive their attitude towards romantic relationships would be. Thus, their Undecided attitude could have resulted from their low level of knowledge about HIV. As pointed out by Marquez (2014) the Filipino youth has a Low level of comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV-AIDS.

Profile and HIV knowledge, taken as a whole, were not found to significantly affect overall attitude of the Filipino students towards romantic relationships ($F\text{ ratio} = 1.946$; $F\text{-Prob.} = .063$). This finding implies that there are variables outside the scope of this study which exert greater influence on their overall attitude.

The Influence of Profile and HIV Knowledge on Attitude Towards Romantic Relationships of Indian Students

Multiple regression analysis on the influence of profile and HIV knowledge of the Indian students, as reflected in Table 5, reveals that taken singly and as a whole, said variables were not found to significantly influence their cognitive ($F\text{-ratio} = 0.741$, $F\text{-Prob.} = 0.594$), affective ($F\text{-ratio} = 0.872$, $F\text{-Prob.} = 0.50$), behavioral ($F\text{-ratio} = 0.163$, $F\text{-Prob.} = 0.976$) and overall attitude ($F\text{-ratio} = 0.872$, $F\text{-Prob.} = 0.501$) towards romantic relationships. Not even close friends, the number of romantic relationships, and HIV knowledge which surfaced as significant predictors for the Filipinos have bearing on their attitude. The aforementioned result implies that the opinions, perceptions, feelings, and

behaviors of the respondents towards romantic relationships are affected by other factors not included in the study.

Table 5: Results of multiple regression analysis of attitude towards romantic relationships of the Indian students

| Variables | Cognitive | | Affective | | Behavioral | | Overall | |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Beta | t-Prob. | Beta | t-Prob. | Beta | t-Prob. | Beta | t-Prob. |
| Profile | | | | | | | | |
| Age | 0.023 | p>.05 | 0.086 | p>.05 | -0.006 | p>.05 | 0.067 | p>.05 |
| Sex | -0.094 | p>.05 | -0.100 | p>.05 | -0.009 | p>.05 | -0.125 | p>.05 |
| No. of Close friends | 0.084 | p>.05 | -0.040 | p>.05 | -0.044 | p>.05 | -0.012 | p>.05 |
| No. of romantic relationship | -0.087 | p>.05 | 0-0.047 | p>.05 | 0.045 | p>.05 | -0.049 | p>.05 |
| HIV Knowledge | -0.020 | p>.05 | 0.104 | p>.05 | -0.036 | p>.05 | 0.034 | p>.05 |
| Mult R | 0.158 | | 0.171 | | 0.075 | | 0.150 | |
| RSq | 0.025 | | 0.029 | | 0.006 | | 0.023 | |
| F-ratio | 0.741 | | 0.872 | | 0.163 | | 0.663 | |
| F-Prob. | 0.594 | | 0.501 | | 0.976 | | 0.652 | |

From a cultural perspective, religion, which is an important part of India's culture (Pardhi, Jungari, & Bomble, 2016), could be one of the factors that influences their attitude. Religions have their own set of expectations on the behaviors of both sexes, and on how to establish romantic relationships.

The ecological perspective on romantic relationships, on the other hand, contends that social and cultural contexts may encourage or constrain close relationships and give them meaning and significance and that changes in the context can also lead to changes in one's behavior (Collins, Welsh, and Furman, 2009). Living in a different social setting requires the Indian students to undergo a process of adaptation which inevitably could affect their attitudes and behaviors. Further, being away from home could also be an avenue for the Indian students to explore their growing need for independence from their parents and make decisions on their own. Thus, whether they favor romantic relationships or not or engage into it or not is affected by their traditional orientation, exposure to the Filipino culture and their need of parental independence as adolescents. Varma & Mathur (2015) stated that while romantic relationships gained prominence in India, its acceptability by parents is still low.

CONCLUSIONS

Knowledge of HIV of the Filipino and Indian students though Low, significantly differ. Indian students are more knowledgeable about HIV than the Filipino students. Both the Filipino and Indian students have an Undecided attitude towards romantic relationships. Number of close friends and romantic relationships, and knowledge of HIV significantly influence the attitude towards romantic relationships of the Filipino students. The attitude of the Indian students towards romantic relationships is not significantly influenced by their profile and knowledge of HIV, taken singly and as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The host university may conduct symposia and information dissemination campaigns as immediate measures to enhance knowledge and remove misconceptions about HIV as well as develop wider perspectives in understanding and establishing healthy romantic relationships both for the Indians and Filipinos. The use of culture sensitive and culture friendly materials and approaches which allow students greater participation on sexuality and relationship issues may be considered. Orientation and training of parents as the primary source of information and

guidance to their children particularly on sexuality related issues should be deemed essential. A study /revisit on the HIV and sex education programs of both countries may be conducted to identify areas that need to be strengthened. Philippines particularly its DOH, may however benchmark from the NACP of India to determine strategies applicable to the Filipinos.

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