Loyalty and Love; Do They Impact One Another?

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Abstract: "The Power of Love"

The present study focused on questioning if single individuals will rank loyalty lower than individuals in romantic relationships. The study included a survey that had 93 participants, all over the age of 18, with no restrictions on the sex of the participant as this would not impact the study. Results were interpreted through the use of a t-test, where a predictor variable with two groups (single/ in a relationship) were compared in terms of how much they value relationship loyalty (outcome variable). The results found did not support the hypothesis but found an odd and unexpected finding, that opened another path to study. The results and findings were restricted due to participant pool size and would benefit from future research.

Introduction: "I Want To Know What Love Is"

In Canada from 2004-2005, it was reported that 4,400 marital breakdowns resulted from adultery (Statistics Canada, 2015). Adultery can be defined as "extramarital" sex that is considered objectifiable based on social, religious, moral or legal grounds. There is no firm definition of what is deemed as "adultery" but it is most often viewed as offensive to the morals of the public, that threatens social, religious, and legal consequences, which ultimately undermine a marital relationship (Statistics Canada, 2015). This paper will explore the level to which individuals rank the significance of loyalty in a romantic relationship, by differentiating the responses from those in relationships and those who are not in relationships.

Many researchers have examined the correlation between loyalty and marriage; one that stands out is the research paper by Telli & Güler (2021). This study relied on 240 married individuals and left out unmarried romantic relationships, which this study will include. It focused heavily on understanding what factors are involved in positive feelings towards an

overall relationship. The findings were not shocking, and simply put; connected the idea that positive relationship feelings are associated with positive relationships. A similar study was written and conducted by Årseth et al. (2009) where they studied university students in Norway, based on their views on romantic love and how romantic love affected their decisions within a relationship. These decisions led to the discovery that amongst that pool of participants, females gave more priority to loyalty than males but its downfall was that it restricted the age limits for the subjects. Another study conducted by Sinclair et al.; examined the impact of individual self-construals on relationships and how certain factors altered the responses from participants. Ultimately this study brought forward the impact of jealousy and other negative emotions often associated with love, and how they can be overpowered by positive emotions associated with love.

The current study does not limit the participants by age (to an extent) or by the nature of their romantic relationships, but the Sinclair et al. study offers a perspective that is not seen in this study; the impact of emotions on romantic relationships. The importance and significance of loyalty in relationships can be overpowered by many factors, but ultimately varies by person. To have an understanding of the justification individuals have or a visual demonstration of individuals' views on loyalty is priceless. A study conducted by the Mcnairs Scholars Journal in 2010 said the following: " It is a love that is supposed to stand the test of time, enduring all hardship. Romantic love emphasizes being in love with a certain individual, "the one."(2010)". This study explored love in the setting of university students and found that current views on love are often more contemporary rather than classic, and are continuously distancing from what love once was (2010). Although life is continuously evolving, does this mean all aspects of life must also evolve, if this is the case where is the line drawn, and who is drawing it? With

ever-changing societal views, there is a risk of disturbing the peace and confusing what should be objectively considered 'ever-lasting'. With this being said, when views of love (and other areas of life) are adjusted, there are effects on closely related areas; in this case, love evolving away from tradition alters society's perception of certain romantic traits, one, in particular, has a lot of weight and that is loyalty.

Through the study conducted in Dr. Parker's class, I examined if single individuals will rank loyalty lower than individuals in romantic relationships.

Method: "What Is Love?"

Participants: "When A Man Loves A Woman"

The study participants were those above the age of 18, and 93 individuals responded to the survey. Of the 93 participants, there were approximately 48 females, 37 males and 8 non-binary people, all recruited from students in Kamloops. Recruitment was voluntary and selection was random, however, this could also be reasonably interpreted as convenience sampling as students of the class were asked to send the survey to those over the age of 18. Those recruited responded to 122 items, with different scales (nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio), with the option to not respond to all questions asked.

Materials and Procedure: "Time After Time"

The constructs of this survey included relationship status (ROM_01) measured on a nominal scale of "yes" or "no" and the ranking of the importance of loyalty within a romantic relationship (ROM_08) measured on an ordinal 4-point scale with "1"= not important to "4"=very important. These two constructs were under the category of "romance", all items under

this category covered different areas of the participant's romantic history and involvement. This category of romance was one of many used in the study, but the other categories are not pertinent to the present study.

The procedure used to collect the data initially involved participants of the study being emailed by students within the PSYC 2110 course. Prior to the participants answering the survey they were made aware of their consent and participation being voluntary, this was given with the survey link alongside instructions to complete the survey. After being made aware of what the test would entail, instructions, and consent, the participants began the survey online via computer or smartphone, anonymously. The 122 items would take roughly 20-25 minutes to respond to and once the survey was submitted, the page would indicate the participant had completed everything required of them. These items fell under the categories of Demographics (5 items), Emotions (6 items), Family (13 items), Life Satisfaction (6 items), Health (18 items), Information Technology (8 items), Personality (16 items), General Self-Efficacy (12 items), Sleep and Dreams (6 items), Procrastination (12 items) and the category used in the present study, Romantic Relationships (20 items).

Results: "Just The Way You Are"

An independent-groups t-test was used to determine whether individuals differed in views of loyalty depending on if they were in a relationship or not. The independent-groups t-test compared loyalty (ROM_08), on relationship status (ROM_01). The t-test was used as the predictor variable ROM_01 had two possible outcomes: yes or no. In addition to this reasoning, the test was also used as the outcome variable ROM_08 was an ordinal scaled variable. My hypothesis was not supported: Participants in the ROM_01 - Relationship Status item who

responded "Yes" did not score higher than participants in the ROM_01 Relationship Status item who responded "No", $t(84) = -.17$, $p = .864$, Mgroup(yes) - 3.72, Mgroup(no) = 3.74. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate this, as both outcomes are compared to the predictor variables, where it is evident that there is no significance within the findings.

Figure 1. Case Processing Summary for T-Test.

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
ROM_01 Are you currently in a romantic relationship? * ROM_08 How important to you is loyalty in a relationship or potential relationship?	86	92.5%	7	7.5%	93	100.0%

Figure 2. Comparison of two outcome variables to predictor variable.

ROM_01 Are you currently in a romantic relationship? * ROM_08 How important to you is loyalty in a relationship or potential relationship? Crosstabulation

			ROM_08 How important to you is loyalty in a relationship or potential relationship?			
			2.00 Somewhat important	3.00 Very important	4.00 Extremely important	Total
ROM_01 Are you currently in a romantic relationship?	1.00 Yes	Count	2	9	36	47
		Expected Count	2.2	8.2	36.6	47.0
		% within ROM_08 How important to you is loyalty in a relationship or potential relationship?	50.0%	60.0%	53.7%	54.7%
	2.00 No	Count	2	6	31	39
		Expected Count	1.8	6.8	30.4	39.0
		% within ROM_08 How important to you is loyalty in a relationship or potential relationship?	50.0%	40.0%	46.3%	45.3%
Total		Count	4	15	67	86
		Expected Count	4.0	15.0	67.0	86.0
		% within ROM_08 How important to you is loyalty in a relationship or potential relationship?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Discussion: "At Last"

Based upon the results of this study, my hypothesis "if single individuals will rank loyalty lower than individuals in romantic relationships" was not supported. In fact, there was an interesting finding in that single individuals often ranked loyalty at the highest option (4.00), and certain individuals actively in a romantic relationship ranked loyalty at the second lowest option (2.00). This finding was particularly unique, and evokes the need for future research, as compared to other studies, this was not what was observed. In the study at the Norwegian university by Årseth et al. the 362 participants ranged in a similar age category of 19-49 years old, but what was noticed was that women rated loyalty higher than men, but did not attribute these individuals' exact relationship status (Årseth, et al., 2009). Another study with a similar age category conducted by Sinclair, et al. (2005) examined 116 university students from the University of Winnipeg but focused on how self-construals impact romantic relationships. Self-construals were not reflected in the present study, so there could be some improvements made in this regard and room for future research. However, the study by Sinclair et al. found that the way an individual feels about themselves is what they will bring forward to their romantic relationships (Sinclair et al., 2005), this was not examined in the present study and has the potential to have had an influence on the given findings. Both studies and the present study differed from the last study that was observed by Telli et al. (2021) where 240 married participants responded to many instruments to better understand their own tendencies in relationships. This study although using a specific romantic relationship status (focusing on married couples), found that if one viewed higher satisfaction in their relationship scored lower on jealousy, and neglect and higher on forgiveness (Telli et al., 2021).

Collectively these studies found what my study had the intention to find. To expand upon this area, better-worded questions and items would be ideal. As although many were thought-provoking, some questions were restrictive for example, ROM_01 could be expanded to "Have you ever been in a romantic relationship in the last month", allowing individuals who have recently separated to make an impact on the findings (has the potential to skew the results, as they may view loyalty differently due to the nature of their separation). Responses could also be affected based on where the category for "Romance" was listed in the survey, as there were 122 items to be answered, and fatigue effects could have been playing a large role, in the lack of differentiation in individuals' responses.

Limitations of the study included the size of the participant pool, with only 93 survey takers, the variety in the pool was limited, and biased due to the researchers (Students) being able to select who they sent the survey. In my own case, I knew some of my peers were less likely to respond and/or complete the survey. So, I selected my peers who would respond to the survey around this barrier, which I am certain many other classmates did as well, but this ultimately restricts the true results of the population studied. Another limitation of the study would be defining romantic relationships, as not all view certain stages with the same severity, ie; some people may view more "short-term" relationships as equally valuable to "long-term" relationships, so this might impact the definition of what is considered as romantic relationships.

Future research should focus on more specific participants, if there was a more selective process for who would take this survey and participate in my study, my preference would be people who view romance as an important factor in their everyday lives, regardless of their own relationship status. However, having more specific participants does not correlate to the number

of participants needed, as this would drastically need to increase for any true discoveries to be made.

In a world where everything seems to be replicable, replaceable and indistinguishable, one thing we collectively seek out is love. When this becomes shadowed by unimportant things like jealousy, fear, or hate, love becomes a lot harder to find. Even if it can be replicated, there is nothing like the real thing. Loyalty is a major component of romantic relationships, and strengthening loyalty will also strengthen the bond between people or oneself. Loyalty encompasses devotion and respect, and if a person was able to show someone they thought they loved, a lack of devotion or respect, how might they treat themselves? Loyalty and love are good indicators of the self and maybe a potential area to look at when studying mental health.

References: Endless Love

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