



De La Salle University - Dasmariñas

**We Chat, We Share, We Love: Online Relationship Formation**

**Based on Self-Esteem and Social Anxiety**

A Research Paper Presented to

The Faculty of the Psychology Department

College of Liberal Arts and Communication

De La Salle University - Dasmariñas

Dasmariñas, Cavite

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements in

Research in Psychology (PSYM216)

Rio Elaine G. Aquino

Elisha D. Viaje

PSY43



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**ABSTRACT**

Name of the Institution: De La Salle University – Dasmariñas

Address: Dasmariñas City, Cavite

Title: We Chat, We Share, We Love:  
Online Relationship Formation  
Based on Self-Esteem and Social  
Anxiety

Authors: Rio Elaine G. Aquino  
Elisha D. Viaje

Funding Source: Parents

Cost: Php 15,000.00

Date Started: June 2013

Date Completed: March 2014



## **Objectives of the Study**

### **A. General**

1. To investigate personal factors on relationship formation via social media.

### **B. Specific**

2. To determine the level of self-esteem of people who engage in online relationship formation.
3. To determine the level of social anxiety of people who engage in online relationship formation.
4. To determine the level of development in relationships formed online.
5. To determine if there is a significant relationship between the levels of self-esteem and social anxiety and the level of development in online relationships.

### **Scope and Limitation**

This study focused on measuring the levels of self-esteem, social anxiety, and levels of development in online relationships of adolescents and adults.

This study aimed to discover if the levels of self-esteem and social anxiety significantly affect the levels of development in online relationships that will be



based on the respondents' scores on Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (1965), Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (1987), and Parks and Floyd's Levels of Development in On-Line Relationships Scale (1996).

The respondents of this study were limited to adolescents with age ranging from 12 to 18 years old and adults from 19 to 40 years old. Distribution of surveys and standardized tests were done online to utilize the use of technology. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling because the researchers have specific criteria for the respondents to be included in the study. This study was limited to the data that the researchers gathered from the 62 respondents but their demographic profiles were not used as variables.

The criteria in the purposive sampling method that was used made a heterogeneous sample that is consisted of high age range of respondents, different kinds of online relationships (friendship and romantic), and respondents are considered "techie". It did not aim to compare the levels of self-esteem, social anxiety, and development in relationships of those who form relationships face to face and through online interactions. Moreover, this study did not focus on the comparison of the mentioned variables between adolescents and adults.



## **Research Procedure**

### **Phase 1 – Preparation**

Researchers communicated online with internet users through the use of Facebook chat and Tumblr messaging system. Internet users were asked first if they are willing to participate regarding the study followed by asking if they have already experienced forming an online relationship.

### **Phase 2 – Actual Data Gathering Procedure**

A document files containing the four (4) parts of the research instrument were sent to the participants through Facebook messaging system. After they have finished accomplishing and saving the document of answered questionnaires, participants were requested to send back the file to the researchers. With the use of online media such as Facebook and Tumblr, the researchers' goals to spread the surveys and to gather more respondents were successfully achieved. Demographic profile of the respondents were gathered although it was not determined to which scores of self-esteem, social anxiety and level of development of online relationship it corresponds due to the limitation of the online survey form created.





### **Phase 3 – Scoring and Interpretation**

To be able to interpret all the information that were gathered, all data were tallied and tabulated. The results for each of the questionnaire were tallied per participant accordingly. The total scores were given corresponding score interpretations. After the data have been gathered and organized, the researchers, with the help of the statistician's computations, analyzed the data based on the stated problems.

### **Conclusion**

The following insights were drawn from the findings:

1. The level of self-esteem of individuals who formed relationships online is normal based on Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale (1965). People with high and also those with low levels of self-esteem do not tend to engage in online relationship formation. Individuals who participate in online relationship formations are more likely to have a healthy self-esteem, they were already used to be involved in online communities since virtual world is becoming normal to them and considered as part of their daily lives.
2. Based on Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (1987), online relationships are formed by individuals who do not suffer from social anxiety. It was found out that individuals who engaged in online relationship were sociable or



friendly people who are willing and confident enough to connect themselves in the online world.

3. The researchers utilized Parks and Floyd's Levels of Development in On-line Relationships Scale and determined that the relationships formed online reach the level that can be classified as moderately developed. It means that the relationship formed online may or may not entirely develop. Since, it was found out that people who engaged in online relationship displays satisfaction with the relationship that they already have and were experiencing contentment of it.
4. The researchers also concluded that there seem to be no significance with regard to any of those factors namely, self-esteem, social anxiety, and level of development in online relationship formation. The duration of the online relationship and sociability can be consider as possible factors that promotes having online relationship. With that, this study was not consistent with previous research that holds evidence for online relationship formation.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:



1. Adolescents and adults must be cautious of engaging in online relationship formation even though this kind of activity provides relationships that are close to being extremely developed. It is also recommended that adolescents must take precautions on engaging online relationship, since the online community is a vast network on which its participants are different types of people.
2. For parents, it is recommended to nourish their children's self-worth in order for them to value themselves. That will help them in coping up with anxiety. The higher a child's self-esteem, the more competent they are at dealing with the unpleasant situations in their lives.
3. For social psychologists, as they focus on social behaviors, it is recommended to focus on the concept of self-esteem and how it is related to socially anxious people in forming online relationships. Further studies are needed since lack of self-esteem can be emotionally and socially harmful for the individual, which are more likely to experience social anxiety and low levels of interpersonal confidence.
4. Utilizing the results of the study, future researchers should consider of conducting the study in a larger population. They can use the respondents' category in the level of self-esteem and social anxiety as criteria for sampling and they may have equal frequency of respondents that belong to each level



of self-esteem and social anxiety to be able to correlate more efficiently each mentioned variable to the level of development in online relationship formation. Future researchers of this study may use different standardized tests that are more recent. Also, to reduce the limitations of the result, future researchers may determine and also correlate the demographic profile of the respondents to the studied variables. Focusing on a more specific age group and type of online relationship (friendship or romantic relationship) may also help in improving the study.

