

Conflict Resolution Style and Romantic Relationship Satisfaction Among Young Adults Who are Dating

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Abstract

This study aims to empirically examine the correlation between conflict resolution style and romantic relationship satisfaction among young adults who are dating. This study involved 200 young adults as participants. The adapted and modified Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) and Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) were used to measure the constructs. The results of the analysis using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation showed that the four dimensions of conflict resolution style were significantly correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction. Integrating, obliging and compromising were positively correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction and dominating was negatively correlated, while avoiding was not significantly correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction.

Keywords: *conflict resolution style, romantic relationship satisfaction, young adults, dating*

1. Introduction

Young adults are those aged 20 to 40 years old and are the stages where the development of intimate relationship such as friendship and love occurs. According to Salkind (2006), the main psychosocial task at the young adult stage is to develop intimacy skills. This development of intimacy refers to the ability to form closeness and have relationships with others that will last a lifetime and will support the maturity of the individual throughout his life. The intimacy that is formed can build a relationship called dating.

Dating is a relationship between individuals who have a romantic relationship or continuous intimate relationship (Deb, 1962). According to Zoltan (1986) dating is marked by affection, enthusiasm, interest, longing, and intimacy. Dating can end up in the form of marriage or breakup. Bird and Melville (1994) stated that the end of dating in the form of breakup can trigger depression, stress, anxiety and other symptoms of psychological dysfunction. Therefore, people who are dating tend to maintain the quality of their romantic relationship. One of the conditions for getting good quality in a romantic relationship is determined by the level of one's satisfaction with their relationship.

According to Taylor, Peplau, and Sears (2006), romantic relationship satisfaction is an individual's subjective evaluation of the quality of the relationship. In undergoing a romantic relationship, conflict is something that cannot be avoided and it is a natural thing because couples depend on each other. Conflict can strengthen or even destroy a relationship depending on how the couples resolve the conflict (Williams, Sawyer, & Wahlstrom, 2006). Conflict only results in dissatisfaction and relationship breakdown if the couples are not ready to solve or resolve it. If someone wants to have a romantic relationship satisfaction, he is better off learning how to resolve a conflict (Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 1994).

According to Thomas (1976), everyone has a different conflict resolution style. It is implied that everyone can have one kind of style that appears more dominant, but that does

not mean that is the only style he has. Conflict resolution style is a method or technique that tends to be applied by someone in efforts to resolve conflicts between individuals (Robbins, 2003).

Rahim and Bonoma (1979) suggested five conflict resolution styles, namely avoiding, dominating, obliging, integrating, and compromising. Various studies suggested that conflict resolution style functions as an opportunity to resolve differences between individuals that lead to relationship satisfaction (Shi, 2003; Plessis, 2006; Feeney, 2008).

Greeff and Bruyne (2016) conducted a study of 57 married couples in Stellenbosch and showed that conflict resolution style is related to romantic relationship satisfaction. This study also found that one person uses more than one conflict resolution style. In addition, the style most men use is avoiding and the least is collaborating or integrating. Meanwhile, women use acomodating or obliging style the most and dominating the least.

Study conducted by Ayenew (2016) of 384 married couple (159 female and 147 male) in Addis Ababa found that conflict resolution style has a statistically significant correlation with romantic relationship satisfaction. Romantic relationship satisfaction has a positive correlation with integrating ($r=.35$, $p<.001$), compromising ($r=.25$, $p<.001$), and obliging ($r=.28$, $p<.001$), but negative correlation with dominating ($r=-.20$, $p<01$). In addition, this study also found that conflict resolution style significantly affects romantic relationship satisfaction.

Based on the explanations above, it can be concluded that conflict resolution style is related to romantic relationship satisfaction. The integrating, obliging, and compromising have a positive correlation with romantic relationship satisfaction, and the avoiding and dominating have a negative correlation with romantic relationship satisfaction. Therefore, researcher aims to empirically examine the correlation between conflict resolution style and romantic relationship satisfaction among young adults who are dating. In overall, the correlation framework that will be tested in this study can be seen in figure 1.

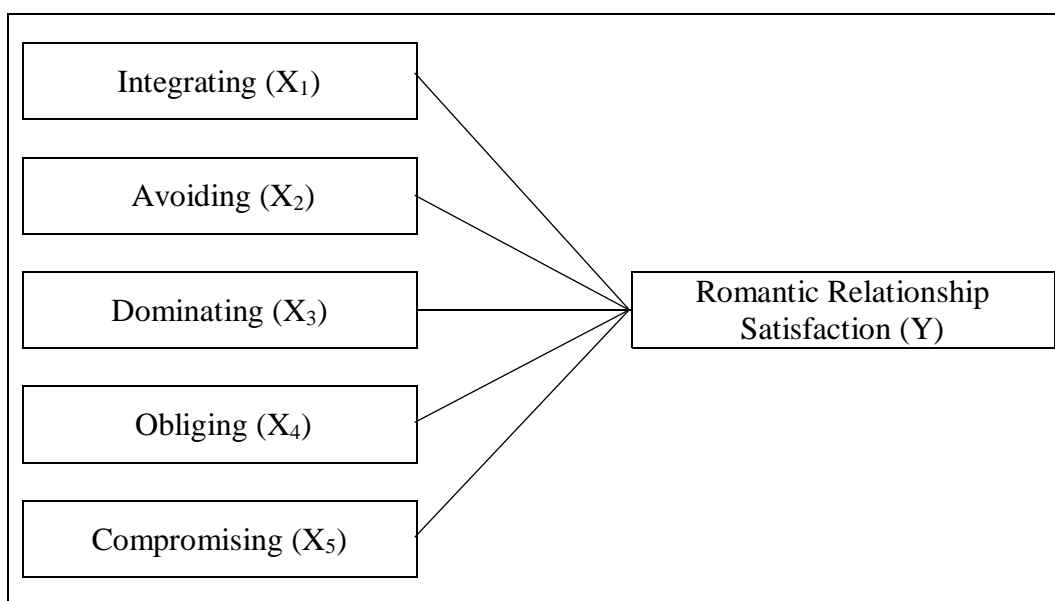


Figure 1. Correlation Framework of Variables

2. Methods

2.1. Sample

The sampling technique used in this study was non-probability sampling using purposive sampling. Samples in this study were 200 Indonesian young adults who are dating for at least 3 months, with 83 male respondents (41.5%) and 117 female respondents (58.5%) aged 20 to 25 years old ($\bar{x}_E = 21.42$; $SD = 1.007$).

2.2. Measures

This study used an identity sheet and two structured scales that have been compiled into a questionnaire. The identity sheet was used to collect respondents demographic data, containing nine items that elicits personal information of respondents.

Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) compiled by Hendrick (1988) and has been adapted and modified by Agustini (2017) was used to assess romantic relationship satisfaction in this study. This unifactorial scale was used to assess relationship satisfaction in various contexts of romantic relationships including dating. Based on the item discrimination test, there were only 5 out of 7 items used in this study with internal consistency for 0.817.

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) compiled by Rahim (1983) and has been adapted and modified by the researcher was used to assess conflict resolution style in this study. This scale was used to assess five types of conflict resolution styles, namely integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging and compromising. Based on the item discrimination test, there were 27 out of 28 items used in this study with internal consistency of each dimension range from 0.755 to 0.825.

Both scales used the 5-point Likert model, which is a scale used to assess attitudes, opinions and perceptions of a person or group of people about social phenomena.

2.3. Data analysis technique

The data analysis technique was carried out by processing the data from the questionnaire that has been collected and obtained by the researcher. Karl Pearson's Product Moment correlation was used in this study to empirically examine the correlation between each dimension of conflict resolution style (integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging, and compromising) and romantic relationship satisfaction among young adults who are dating. In this study, the SPSS version 24 for windows was used during the data analysis process.

3. Results

Based on the results of the correlation test that can be seen in table 1, it can be concluded that four of the five dimensions of conflict resolution style were significantly correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction. Romantic relationship satisfaction was positively correlated within tegrating ($r = .533$, $p < .01$), obliging ($r = .405$, $p < .01$), and compromising ($r = .440$, $p < .01$), and negatively correlated with dominating ($r = -.124$, $p < .05$). However, there were no significant correlation between avoiding and romantic relationships satisfaction.

Table 1
Correlation of the Variables

	RRC	IN	AV	DO	OB	CO
RRC	1					
IN	.533**	1				
AV	.009	-.192**	1			
DO	-.124*	-.100	.034	1		
OB	.405**	.350**	.145*	.148*	1	
CO	.440**	.742**	-.079	-.009	.373**	1

Note : RRC = Romantic Relationship Satisfaction, IN = Integrating, AV= Avoiding, DO = Dominating, OB = Obliging, CO = Compromising
*significant at $p < .05$, **significant at $p < .01$

In addition, the comparison of the empirical mean scores for each variables of this study can be seen in table 2. Integrating achieved the highest empirical meanscore for 4.20 and dominating achieved the lowest empirical meanscore for 2.97.

Table 2
Empirical Mean of the Variables

Dimension	\bar{x}_E	Total Items (n)	\bar{x}_E / n
Romantic Relationship Satisfaction	20.11	5	4.02
Integrating	29.37	7	4.20
Avoiding	19.83	6	3.31
Dominating	14.85	5	2.97
Obliging	18.20	5	3.64
Compromising	16.28	4	4.07

4. Discussion

This study aims to examine the correlation between conflict resolution style and romantic relationship satisfaction among young adults who are dating for at least 3 months. Correlation tests were carried out on each dimension of conflict resolution style with romantic relationship satisfaction. Based on the results, it showed that four of the five dimensions of conflict resolution style were significantly correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction.

Integrating was positively correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction. These result is consistent with the previous studies (Bradbury & Karney, 1993; Lim, 2000; Desmayanti, 2009; Febriany, 2011; and Ayenew, 2016) which stated that integrating has a positive relationship with romantic relationship satisfaction. This shows that the more people use integrating style in resolving conflicts with their partner, the more they satisfied with their romantic relationship. Individuals with an integrating style emphasize the importance of their relationship and have high assertions in terms of achieving their goals but also have concern for the goals of others (Thomas, 1976). This style involves collaboration from each party such as openness, exchange of information, and checking differences to get a solution that is acceptable by both parties. These positive things in the integrating style will certainly produce positive results. Besides the conflicts resolved properly, the satisfaction in the relationship will also increase (Rahim, 2001).

Dominating was negatively correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction. This shows that the more people used dominating style in resolving conflicts with their partner, the less they satisfied with their romantic relationship. These results are consistent with previous studies (Desmayanti, 2009; Febriany 2011; Ayenew, 2016). Individuals with dominating style tend to resolve conflicts without thinking about their partner. According to Rahim (2001), people who use this style will exert all their abilities to win their objectives and as a result they often ignore the needs and expectations desired by their partner. Individuals who use the dominating style display behaviors such as aggression, coercion, manipulation, intimidation, contentious, uncooperative, and following what they want at the expense of others (Thomas, 1976). When dominating style is used in resolving conflict, many negative effects will occur and result in decreased romantic relationship satisfaction.

Based on the results of the correlation test, it can be seen that obliging was positively correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction. These results are consistent with the study conducted by Ayenew (2016). This shows that the more people use obliging style in resolving conflicts with their partner, the more they satisfied with their romantic relationship. Individuals with obliging style tend not to prioritize their own needs but prioritize the needs of their partners. According to Rahim (2001), this style is associated with trying to downplay differences and emphasize similarities to meet the concerns of others. By using this style, people desire to please their partner and maintain a harmonious relationship resulting in a romantic relationship satisfaction.

Compromising was positively correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction. These results are also in accordance with the study conducted by Ayenew (2016). This shows that the more people use compromising style in resolving conflicts with their partner, the more they satisfied with their romantic relationship. People with compromising style tend to make agreements to resolve conflicts. Pruitt and Carnevale (1993) stated that the compromising style is a middle way that results from a combination of high attention to individual goals and the goals of their partners. According to Rahim (2001) this style involves give and take or sharing where both parties give something to make a mutually acceptable decision. This may mean dividing differences, trading concessions, or finding a middle ground quickly. The agreement of both parties to resolve conflicts in the relationship, make people with compromising styles tend to have high romantic relationship satisfaction.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the results of this study showed that four dimensions of conflict resolution style were significantly correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction. The integrating, obliging, and compromising had a very significant positive relationship with romantic relationship satisfaction, while the dominating had a significant negative relationship with romantic relationship satisfaction. The results in this study are in line with the findings of previous research which indicate that someone who displays constructive behavior in resolving conflicts such as listening and making deals well will have higher relationship satisfaction than someone who displays destructive behavior such as aggressive and avoidance (Bradbury & Karney, 1993; Ayenew, 2016).

However, there was one dimension that was found not significantly correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction, namely avoiding. These results are in accordance with previous studies which found the same result (Desmayanti, 2009; Febriany, 2011; Ayenew, 2016). People with avoiding style are characterized by unassertive and passive behavior. According to Rahim (2001), People with avoiding style are associated with withdrawal, irresponsibility, and avoiding conflict. This causes people to procrastinate on problems until better times, or simply avoid situations that are uncomfortable for them. Individuals who avoid conflict usually do not want to discuss the conflict that occurs, usually change the topic

in conversation about conflict or withdraw easily from the problem being discussed. The researcher assumes that the reason for no significant correlation between avoiding style and romantic relationship satisfaction is because there are times when avoiding style causes negative things and there are times when this style is good to do. Individuals with avoiding style will avoid conflict so that it gives the impression that they don't care about their relationship. But on the other hand, avoiding style avoids the relationship from negative things that might happen, such as avoids partner anger and maintains harmony in the relationship. In addition, this maybe because respondents who have this style are not having this style for real, but they bring out this style by following the style that is raised by their partner (Wilmot & Hocker, 2001).

In this study, the most widely used conflict resolution style by respondents was the integrating style. This may be because it is in accordance with Indonesia's cultural background, which is strongly influenced by high collectivism (Ariawati, 2017). According to VandenBos (2015) collectivism is a social or cultural tradition, ideology, or personal view that emphasizes the unity of a group or community rather than individuality. In order to maintain harmonization, cooperation is important and in order to achieve harmonization, the goals of all parties need to be achieved. In this context, integrating style is a suitable choice for dealing with interpersonal conflicts in Indonesia.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results, it can be concluded that four of the five dimensions of conflict resolution style were significantly correlated with romantic relationships satisfaction. The four dimensions were integrating, dominating, obliging, and compromising. The Integrating, obliging, and compromising were positively correlated to romantic relationship satisfaction, while dominating was negatively correlated to romantic relationship satisfaction. However, there were no significant correlation between avoiding and romantic relationships satisfaction.

6. Suggestion

Young adults who are dating are suggested to avoid destructive behaviors such as aggressive and avoidance in resolving conflicts. In addition, use more constructive behavior in resolving conflicts such as listening and making mutual agreements so that you will have higher satisfaction in romantic relationships.

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