Academic, Emotional, Social and Motivational Correlates of Adolescent Romance

Simeon Wong

5/23/2009
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Research</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Impacts</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Impacts</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Impacts</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Impacts</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Group</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Data</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Research</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

In today’s teenage culture, dating has an important and constant presence. It is seen almost everywhere: in the halls at school, in the malls, and in the news. Even the parents of teenagers constantly worry; they try to talk to their children of its “dangers”, its impact on academics, emotions, development, and the social aspect of those involved in dating. But do these “dangers” really exist? This research project tries to answer these questions; specifically, “What are the effects of dating on teenage life?”

DEFINITIONS

Certain terms used in this research paper may have varying definitions for different people. For the sake of clarity, references to “adolescent” in this research paper refer to a person between the ages of 12 to 18 and in grades 7 to 12. “Dating”, in this paper, refers to two people who are in an exclusive loving relationship, in which both partners are only dating each other.
PRIOR RESEARCH

Prior studies have shown that adolescent romantic relationships have severe consequences. More specifically, adolescent dating has been shown to have a significant impact on a youth’s academic achievement, emotional health, social well-being and their motivation. Natsuaki et al. (2009) found that teenage romance is associated with “decreased academic, job, and conduct competence”. Other studies have also concluded that in general, dating has an overall negative impact to a teen’s life.

ACADEMIC IMPACTS
Secondary research by Quatman et al. (2001) found that:

a) High school seniors (grade 12s) involved in romantic relationships had lower grades, spent less time on studying and had lower educational goals.

b) Girls who dated during 6th and 7th grades had lower GPA scores

c) Adolescent dating during both preadolescences (8-12 years of age) and mid-adolescences (14-19 years of age) were directly related to lower academic achievement.

A survey conducted by Quatman et al. (2001) concluded that frequent dating had a direct negative impact on academic achievement regardless of grade or gender. Quatman et al. (2001) also found that frequent daters constantly achieved significantly lower on standardized achievement tests in comparison to infrequent daters. They also found that when teachers were asked to rate the academic achievement of their students, 67% of students ranked superior in achievement were infrequently or not dating at all, while only 33% of those ranked superior were frequent daters. However, among those who their teachers ranked as below average, 73% were frequent daters compared to 27% who were infrequently or not dating.

MOTIVATIONAL IMPACTS

The negative correlation of dating with academic achievement can be explained by the decreased academic motivation caused by adolescent romance (Quatman et al., 2001). Their research
suggests that there is no difference in academic motivation between boys and girls, but there is an
evident difference between grades. Quatman et al. (2001) concluded that frequent daters scored
consistently lower on their academic motivational index compared to non-frequent or non-daters.

EMOTIONAL IMPACTS

Both boys and girls who have previously dated by the age of 12 are in general, more depressed
than those who have not, and scoring on average 2.2 points higher on the Beck Depression Inventory
(Quatman et al., 2001). The evidence also suggests that girls who have dated are more depressed than
boys who have dated. Research also shows that the emotional impact of dating will lessen and
eventually become insignificant with age (Natsuaki et al., 2009).

Rubenstein et al. (1989) suggest that there is a connection between adolescent break-ups and
an increased risk of suicide among teenagers. Adolescents who are at risk of, have attempted, or have
committed suicide share several things in common. They “have experienced more life stress in the form
of...troubled peer relationships in the form of social isolation or the acute loss of a boyfriend or
girlfriend”. In other words, adolescent suicide can be linked with the termination of an adolescent
romantic relationship, among other things.

Dating also has an impact on self-esteem, with mixed positive and negative impacts in several
different areas. Quatman et al. (2001) found that adolescents who have steadily dated felt more secure
in their relationships with peers and in their personal security while they suffered a decrease in self-
esteeem relating to academic achievement.

Adolescent dating may also have a positive impact on a youth’s emotions. Quatman et al.
(2001) found that adolescent romantic relationships may actually be a protective factor against
depression as youth rated their time spent with their dating partners as some of the most satisfying and
happiest times during their adolescence.
SOCIAL IMPACTS

An adolescent’s peers greatly impact their dating patterns and habits. Many times, it is within their peer groups that an adolescent finds a dating partner (Connolly & Friedlander, 2009). Thus, it is only natural that the relationship between dating and friendship works both ways, both having significant effects on each other. Roth & Parker (2001) found in their secondary research that as youth begin to devote time to romantic relationships, their time spent with their previous friends begin to diminish.

A survey conducted by Roth & Parker (2001) shows that 32% of teenage males and 53% of teenage females have been excluded by a best friend who began dating, while 19% of adolescent males and 21% of adolescent females have excluded someone themselves in the past because of a dating relationship. Their survey also found that teens felt jealous, angry and hurt over being excluded because of a dating relationship by their friends. Adolescent romantic relationships may cause negative emotions that pose a threat to previously existing friendships if not properly dealt with.

From the research above, adolescent romantic involvement will impact everyday life through:

   a) A decrease in academic achievement
   b) Decreased academic motivation
   c) Depression leading to a higher risk of suicide
   d) A drop in self-esteem in academic achievement, but an increase in self-esteem in the domain of peer interactions and personal security
   e) Tensions between the dating adolescent and previous friends
METHOD

PROCEDURE

Data for this research project was collected through a survey administered over the internet. Survey data would be anonymously submitted by participants, and recorded in a database that was downloaded at the end of the survey period. Each result set was assigned a random number to keep track of results. The survey was absolutely anonymous, in an attempt to promote truthfulness in the responses. The link to the survey page was distributed through "word of mouth" to instant messaging contacts, as well as through Facebook.

The survey consisted of 30 different questions, organized into 5 sections. The survey included a background information section aimed at sorting result data into demographic groups. Questions were mainly multiple choice, with several “rate out of 10” and number-based questions, such as age, and marks.

SAMPLE GROUP

In total, 116 results sets were received, 29 of which were blank and subsequently discarded. Additionally, 15 result sets were discarded because they were deemed falsified and may bias the results.

The sample group consisted of a group of 70 adolescents, 27 of whom were males and 43 of whom were females. 2 were thirteen years of age, 11 were fourteen, 37 were fifteen, 17 were sixteen, 2 were seventeen and 1 was eighteen. In terms of grade, 5 were in grade eight, 13 were in grade nine, 44 were in grade ten, 7 were in grade 11 and 1 was in grade 12. The sample group was primarily heterosexual. 59 were heterosexual, 1 was homosexual, 5 were bisexual, 4 were gender confused, and 2 left this question blank.

The majority of the sample group is not currently in a relationship. Only 23 people identified themselves as currently in a relationship, while 47 said they were not. Out of those currently in a relationship, 20 were in an exclusive dating relationship while 3 were not. 3 were only in their relationship
for less than a week, 3 were in a relationship for less than a month, while 7 were in their relationship for between 1 and 3 months, and 12 were already dating for more than 3 months. 16 said that their parents do not know about their relationship, 2 said their parents do not care about whether they are dating or not, 4 said their parents only care if their marks drop, 4 said their parents dislike their current dating partner and only 1 said that their parents liked their current boyfriend or girlfriend.
SURVEY

1. What grade are you in?
   a. 7
   b. 8
   c. 9
   d. 10
   e. 11
   f. 12

2. What is your age?

3. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female

4. What is your sexual orientation?
   a. Heterosexual
   b. Homosexual
   c. Bisexual
   d. Gender Confused

5. Are you in a relationship?
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. How long have you been in your current relationship?
   a. Less than a week
   b. Less than a month
   c. Between 1 and 3 months
   d. Longer than 3 months
   e. Not Applicable

7. Is your current relationship an exclusive dating relationship?
   (Exclusive meaning that you only have one boyfriend/girlfriend and are not seeing someone else)
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not Applicable
8. What do your parents think about your relationship?
   a. My parents don’t know I am dating someone
   b. My parents don’t care if I am dating someone
   c. My parents only care if my marks drop because I am dating someone
   d. My parents dislike my boyfriend/girlfriend
   e. My parents like my boyfriend/girlfriend
   f. Not Applicable

9. What is the average of all your school courses for the past academic year? (%)
   ______

10. What was the average of all your school courses before the beginning of your relationship (if applicable)?
    ______

11. What is the average of all your boyfriend/girlfriend’s courses for the past academic year (if applicable)?
    ______

12. Ever since the start of your relationship, how do you think your academic achievement has been impacted?
    a. Improved
    b. Stayed the same
    c. Declined
    d. Don’t know
    e. Not Applicable

13. How often does thinking about your boyfriend/girlfriend make it difficult for you to concentrate on the task at hand?
    a. Often
    b. Sometimes
    c. Rarely
    d. Never
    e. Not Applicable

14. Which of the following best describes you?
    a. I think about my boyfriend/girlfriend constantly while doing school work
    b. Thinking about my boyfriend/girlfriend distracts me from completing school work to the best of my ability
    c. Sometimes, I neglect homework to spend time with my boyfriend/girlfriend
    d. I have skipped class in order to spend time with my boyfriend/girlfriend
    e. None of the above
    f. Not Applicable
15. What is your general outlook on life?
   a. Life’s great!
   b. Everything has its good and bad side
   c. Life sucks
   d. Don’t know… Don’t care...
   e. What life?

16. What is your opinion on homework?
   a. Homework is useless and boring!
   b. Homework is boring, but I’m still going to do it
   c. Homework is okay
   d. Homework is fun

17. What is your opinion of school?
   a. School is useless and boring
   b. School is boring, but I’m still going to go
   c. School is okay
   d. School is only fun because of friends/boyfriend/girlfriend
   e. School is fun

18. What is your opinion of your parents?
   a. They are too restrictive and overprotective
   b. They are protective, but it is for my own good
   c. They are okay
   d. They are too lenient
   e. They don’t care enough
19. How many friends do you consider close enough to tell them all of your secrets?  
______

20. Do your friends like your current boyfriend/girlfriend?  
   a. Yes  
   b. Some of them  
   c. No  
   d. Not Applicable

21. Are your friends involved in a relationship?  
   a. Most of them  
   b. Some of them  
   c. A few of them  
   d. None of them

22. Do you find yourself neglecting your friends in order to spend time with your boyfriend/girlfriend?  
   a. Often  
   b. Sometimes  
   c. Rarely  
   d. Never  
   e. Not applicable

23. Do you go on group dates?  
   a. Often  
   b. Sometimes  
   c. Rarely  
   d. Never  
   e. Not Applicable
Rate your happiness in the following situations on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)

25. When you are alone with your boyfriend/girlfriend
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A

26. When you are with your friends without your boyfriend/girlfriend
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A

27. When you are at home without your friends nor your boyfriend/girlfriend
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A

28. After an argument with your boyfriend/girlfriend
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  N/A

29. How often do you feel depressed because of your boyfriend/girlfriend?
   a. Less than once a month
   b. Once or twice a month
   c. Once a week
   d. Several times a week
   e. Several times a day
   f. Not applicable

30. Do you ever have suicidal thoughts due to your boyfriend/girlfriend?
   a. Often
   b. Sometimes
   c. Rarely
   d. Never
   e. Not Applicable
### Survey Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Survey – Impacts of Dating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>D 15 B A B E C F 95 0 0 B A C B A C A 2 D B B E 8 8 8 3 C E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D 15 B A A D A A 80 89 90 D A C A C A C A 0 A B A D 10 10 10 1 E B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>D 16 B A B E C F 93 0 0 E E F E B B B B 0 D C E E 0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>D 15 A A D A C 93 94 92 B B C B B C B 3 B B A C 8 9 9 1 C D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>D 15 B A B E C D 97 0 0 E C F C B D A 0 D A E C 7 7 5 5 A D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>E 17 B A B E C F 90 0 0 E E F B C C C 5 D C E E 7 7 6 4 A E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>E 16 B A B E C F 91 0 0 E E F B B B B 7 D C E E 0 0 0 0 B E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>D 15 B A A C A D 96 0 0 D A E D D E E B 10 A B B D 10 7 1 1 C D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>C 15 B A B E C F 80 0 0 E E F C B C B 2 D C E D 0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>D 15 B D B E C F 90 0 0 E E F C B C C 3 D C B C A E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>D 15 A A A C A A 92 91 96 B B C B B A B 3 A A B B 10 9 2 1 C D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>D 16 B A A D A A 83 0 78 A C E B B D B 3 A D B C 10 10 7 3 A D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>D 15 B A A D A A 75 75 0 B C E A B C B 5 A B D D 8 8 8 5 A D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>B 14 B A A D C 93 95 95 A B B B B B 3 A B B B 9 8 6 4 B D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>C 15 B A B E C F 96 0 0 E E F C B D A 3 D B E D 9 7 1 2 D E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>C 14 A D A 87 80 90 A C B C B B 1 B B C D 7 4 3 1 C E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>B 14 B A B E C F 90 0 0 E E F B C E B 4 D C E C 8 8 6 4 D D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>D 15 A A A D A A 86 85 0 B B B E B C B 3 A B B D 9 9 7 3 A D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>D 16 B A B E C F 80 0 0 E E F D A A A 3 D C E E 8 8 5 1 A E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>D 15 A A B E C F 83 0 0 E E F C C C A 0 D D E E 0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>B 13 B A B E C F 89 0 0 E E F B C C B 3 D C E E 0 0 0 0 E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>C 14 B A B E C F 94 0 0 E E F B C D C 3 D C E E 0 0 0 0 E E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>C 14 B A B E C F 93 0 0 E E F A C C B 1 D C E E 10 10 10 4 A E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>D 15 B C A D A E 94 91 94 B C B A E B 2 A B B C 10 10 9 3 A D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>D 15 A A B E C F 87 0 0 E E F B C C C 1 D C E E 8 8 5 2 A E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>B 13 B A B E C F 79 0 0 E E F B B C A 5 D C C C 8 6 6 3 A C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>D 15 B A B E C C 75 72 0 E A A B B C A 8 D B C A 10 8 7 3 D C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>D 16 B A B B B A 76 0 95 A B A B B D C 2 C C D C 10 1 6 2 C D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>D 15 A A B E C F 93 0 0 E E F A D C B 5 D B E E 10 10 5 5 D D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>C 16 A A A D A C 79 80 0 A B E B C C C 0 A B B D 10 10 5 2 D D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>D 16 A A A D A A 94 94 92 B D E B C C C 4 A B C B 8 8 8 5 A D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>D 15 B A B E C F 70 70 0 D B C B B C C 4 D B B B 8 7 6 3 B C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>D 15 A A A D A B 80 80 90 A B C B A C C 5 B B A A 10 2 5 1 B B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>E 16 B C B C A A 78 0 90 C B D D B C C 9 A C C D 10 8 7 3 D D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>D 15 A A B E C F 86 0 0 E E F B C B B 2 D B E E 0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>C 14 A A A D A A 94 90 72 A A A C B B B 4 A B C B 9 8 5 3 D A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>B 14 B A A C A A 81 78 0 A C C B B A D C 6 B D C C 8 8 4 3 B D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>D 16 A A B E C F 95 0 0 E E F A B B C 1 D C E E 0 0 0 0 E E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>D 15 B D B E C F 93 0 0 E E F B C D C 4 D C E B 6 8 4 10 A E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>D 15 B A B E C F 84 0 0 E B C B B B B 2 D D C D 8 8 7 3 B D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS

When the dating adolescents were asked how, in their opinion, their marks changed because of their relationship, 26.7% said that their marks were better, 43.3% said their marks stayed the same, 13.3% admitted that their marks have dropped and 16.7% say they do not know.

25.0% of the dating group said that thinking about their boyfriend or girlfriend often makes it difficult for them to concentrate on the task at hand. 46.9% said that it only happens sometimes, 25.0% said it rarely happens and 3.1% said it never happens.

The adolescents who were dating were also asked how much their boyfriend or girlfriend distracts them from their education. 13.3% said that they think constantly about their boyfriend or girlfriend when doing their work. 16.7% said that thinking about their boyfriend or girlfriend distracts them from completing their work to the best of their ability. 40.0% said that they sometimes even neglect their homework in order to spend time with their boyfriend or girlfriend. 6.7% said that they have even skipped class to spend time with their boyfriend or girlfriend, while 23.3% said that their boyfriend or girlfriend does not distract them from their education.

The entire sample group was also asked about their general outlook on life. 15.7% said that, in their opinion, life is great. 58.6% say that life is okay, it has its good and bad sides. 17.1% said that life sucked. 5.7% said that they don’t care, and 2.9% responded “What life?”

They were also asked about their opinion on homework and school. 18.6% claimed that homework is boring and useless. 51.4% said that homework is
boring, but they will still do it. 24.3% said that homework is okay, and 5.7% said that homework is fun.

5.7% said that school is useless and boring. 15.7% said that school is boring, but they think it is still worth going to school. 40.0% said that school is okay. 20.0% said that school is only fun because of their friends, boyfriend or girlfriend and 18.6% said that school is fun (see Figure A).

18.6% said that their parents are restrictive and overprotective when asked about their opinion of their parents. 41.4% said that their parents are protective, but admit that it is for their own good. 37.1% said that their parents are okay, not too restrictive, and not too lenient. 1.4% said that their parents are too lenient, and another 1.4% said that their parents do not care enough about them.

Those who were dating were asked about their friends’ opinions on their boyfriend or girlfriend. 59.1% said that all or most of their friends like their boyfriend or girlfriend. 31.8% said that some of their friends like their boyfriend or girlfriend, and 9.1% said that their friends do not like their boyfriend or girlfriend.

The entire sample group was also asked whether their friends were dating. 5.9% said that most of their friends are in a relationship. 41.2% said that some of their friends are in a relationship. 42.6% said that a few of their friends are in a relationship and 10.3% said that none of their friends are in a relationship.

The dating adolescents were also asked whether they have ever neglected their friends in order to spend time with their boyfriend or girlfriend. 12.9% said that it happens often. 45.2% said that they sometimes neglect their friends. 32.3% said that it happens rarely, and 9.7% said that they have never neglected their friends for their boyfriend or girlfriend (see Figure B).
When those who were dating were asked whether they have ever gone on a group date, 8.1% said that they often go on group dates with their friends. 18.9% said that it happens sometimes. 29.7% said that it rarely happens, and 43.2% said that they have never gone on a group date.

The sample group was also asked to rate their happiness in certain situations on a scale from 1 (least happy) to 10 (most happy). Firstly, they were asked to rate their happiness when they were alone with their boyfriend or girlfriend. 0.0% picked one to five. 4.9% picked six out of ten. 7.3% picked seven, 31.7% picked eight, 14.6% picked nine, and 41.5% picked ten.

Secondly, they were asked to rate their happiness around their friends, but without their boyfriend or girlfriend. 2.2% rated it one, 2.2% picked two, 0.0% picked three, 2.2% picked four, 4.3% picked five, 2.2% picked six, 10.9% picked seven, 43.5% picked eight, 15.3% picked nine, and 17.4% picked ten.

Thirdly, they were asked to rate their happiness when they were home alone without their friends nor their boyfriend or girlfriend. 8.3% rated it one out of ten, 2.1% rated it two out of ten, 8.3% rated it three, 6.3% rated it four, 16.7% rated it five, 20.8% rated it six, 16.7% rated it seven, 8.3% rated it eight, 8.3% rated it nine and 4.2% rated it ten.

Lastly, they were asked to rate their happiness after an argument with their boyfriend or girlfriend. 26.8% rated it one out of ten, 14.6% rated it two out of ten, 26.8% rated it three, 17.1% rated it four, 12.2% rated it five, 0.0% rated it six through nine and 2.4% rated it ten.

The adolescents who were in a relationship were also asked how often their boyfriend or girlfriend caused them to feel depressed. 45.7% said their boyfriend or girlfriend causes them to feel depressed less than once a month. 13.0% said they only feel depressed because of their boyfriend or girlfriend once or twice a month. 19.6% said they feel depressed once a week due to their relationship. 15.2% said it happens more than once a week and 6.5% said they feel depressed due to their boyfriend or girlfriend several times each day.
Finally, the dating adolescents were asked how often their boyfriend or girlfriend has caused them to have suicidal thoughts. 3.1% said they get suicidal thoughts often due to their boyfriend or girlfriend. 9.4% said it happens occasionally. 15.6% said it rarely happens, and 71.9% said they have never had suicidal thoughts due to their boyfriend or girlfriend.
DISCUSSION

Prior studies examined in Phase 2 all point to a decrease in academic achievement due to adolescent romantic relationships. Primary research however, shows that that is not the case. The sample group was asked about their current school average and the average of their school courses before the beginning of their relationship. The mean drop in academic achievement of 0.07 is negligible. In fact, when the sample group was asked to rate whether their academic achievement has improved, declined, or stayed the same, 43.3% said their marks stayed the same and 26.7% said their marks even improved. This is compared to only 13.3% who said their marks dropped. One of the many reasons why the primary research results do not support prior research by Quatman et al. (2001) who found that dating does cause a drop in academic achievement, may be because of results being purposely biased by the sample group. Certain students may have been untruthful about their marks in an attempt to convince themselves that their relationship does not impact their academic achievement.

This idea of biased results is further supported by the fact that 25.0% of dating adolescents surveyed say that their concentration is often impacted because of their boyfriend or girlfriend. Another 46.9% say that this sometimes happens. On another question, 40.0% of the dating adolescents surveyed admitted to neglecting homework altogether just to spend time with their boyfriend or girlfriend. These statistics indirectly support prior research stating that adolescent romantic involvement does have a negative effect on academic achievement.

Motivationally, primary research shows that adolescent dating does in fact, decrease academic motivation, supporting prior research on this topic. 30.4% of dating adolescents surveyed believed that homework is boring compared to only 12.8% for non-daters (see Figure C). Moreover, the percentage of non-daters who find homework being “okay” is 29.8%, more than double the 13.0% of daters who find homework “okay”. Non-daters have a tendency to be more motivated, and have a more positive attitude towards homework than those who date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion on Homework</th>
<th>Dating</th>
<th>Non-Dating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Useless</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okay</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure C - Opinion on Homework

Chapter: Discussion – Impacts of Dating
Dating adolescents also tend to have more negative thoughts about school, and thus, less academic motivation. Figure D shows that over 6 times more percentage dating adolescents believe school is useless compared to those who don’t date. Dating adolescents tend to think school is “okay” or bearable only because of peers such as their friends or their boyfriend or girlfriend more than those who do not date. There are also more non-daters who think school is fun, compared to daters. This again supports prior research as Quatman et al. (2001) found that adolescent romance does in fact decrease academic motivation.

The decrease in academic motivation could be caused by the distractions discussed earlier. A dating adolescent would much rather think about his or her boyfriend or girlfriend than do homework, because in comparison, their boyfriend or girlfriend is evidently more “fun” and “exciting” than homework. Quatman et al. (2001) also found this to be the case. Therefore, it would demand more of someone’s attention, thus taking away from academic motivation and interest.

Emotionally, primary research shows that time spent alone with a dating partner of the opposing gender is linked to increased happiness, while time spent away from a dating partner, and consequently after an argument with a boyfriend or girlfriend, is linked with a far less positive emotional state. As seen in Figure E, time spent alone tends to be rated higher. This is obviously because spending time with a boyfriend or girlfriend is generally known to be a good thing, invoking positive emotions, while breakups tend to be associated with negative emotions.
Primary research results are relatively inconclusive about depression and thus increased suicide risk. Over 50% of dating adolescents have felt depressed because of their boyfriend or girlfriend more than once a month. This does not necessarily confirm that adolescents who have dated are in general, more depressed than those who have not, although it shows that dating may be linked to depression in support of prior research by Natsuaki et al. (2009).

The results also show that 71.9% of adolescents who are dating have never had suicidal thoughts due to their boyfriend or girlfriend. Again, this does not necessarily mean that dating will or will not increase the risk of suicide. The results do point to the fact that dating does not increase the risk of suicide; rather most adolescents who do date will not have suicidal thoughts.

Socially, primary research does show that friendships may be neglected because of a boyfriend or girlfriend. 45.2% of dating adolescents surveyed admit to sometimes neglecting their friends in preference of spending time with their boyfriend or girlfriend. 12.9% admit that they do it often. This supports prior research in showing that adolescents tend to neglect their previous friends in favour of their boyfriend or girlfriend. It is to be expected because of several possible reasons, one of which could be that teenagers look for new things to explore, and when they acquire a new boyfriend or girlfriend, they want to spend as much time with them as possible because of this urge to try new things. Another reason, supported by the research results is that dating adolescents tend to rate time spent with their boyfriend or girlfriend as happier times than time spent with friends (see Figure F).
IMPLICATIONS

The results do implicate that adolescents who date are more prone to be academically distracted by their dating partner. The results also conclusively show that an adolescent’s friendships are impacted negatively when they start dating.

These results could help those working with adolescents to diagnose social and academic problems caused by adolescent romance. It could also help those who are entering a relationship to take steps to prevent any negative social impact.

LIMITATIONS

There are quite a few limitations to this research project that may have influenced the primary research results. Firstly, this survey was conducted over the internet. Users were not tracked in any way, and thus, repeated malicious users could have biased results by submitting multiple, and potentially falsified results.

Because this survey was administered over the internet, there is no control over the geographic area in which the sample group is situated. This can introduce a bias because of the different standards used in measuring academic achievement in different cities or school boards. Thus, any comparison of marks may potentially yield a bias.

Secondly, this survey was geared mainly towards adolescents who are currently in a romantic relationship. Unfortunately, 67% of the sample group were not in a relationship. The lack of results for those who are in a relationship could be another potential bias.

Lastly, the format of the survey does not use a standardized way to compare emotional and social impacts. Most of the questions used were largely opinion based, without any numeric and standardized way to compare results. There were also various “often, sometimes, rarely, never” type questions used in the survey. These questions could lead to a bias because of the failure to define “often”, “sometimes”, “rarely” and “never”. Various members of the sample group may have different interpretations of those terms.
Secondary research results could have been impacted by the lack of research in this field. The research of adolescent dating is a relatively new area of research, and as such, there has not been many research projects conducted about adolescent dating. Because the only research paper found which directly addresses adolescent dating was conducted at a school in the southern United States, results obtained in that research project may differ from what would be found across Canada.
**Future Research**

To investigate this topic further, another survey on a larger, more diverse sample group is suggested. The survey would be conducted nation-wide across various grade levels. The survey would also be improved with a standardized method of determining levels of depression and motivation, as well as digging deeper into social effects. The survey would include a more in-depth demographic profile to determine whether the effects of adolescent romance are associated with socioeconomic status, race, religion, culture or other demographic variables. A second, slightly modified survey would be administered to members of the sample group which are not dating, with questions aimed at determining how they feel their friendships have been impacted by adolescent romance. A third survey would be administered to teachers of the sample group to further study the academic and motivational impacts of dating in the classroom.

The sample group of the new research project would include equal number of students in each grade from 7 to 12. Members of the sample group would also be spread out evenly across Canada and the United States. The survey would be completed on paper in the classroom. To encourage honesty in survey responses, student anonymity would be guaranteed, and each survey package would be identified by a number only. Packages would be in no way associated with the student. This new research project would give further insight into the topic of adolescent dating.

**Conclusion**

In summary, these “dangers” of dating do somewhat exist, although probably not as adversely as most believe. The academic impacts of dating on an adolescent are negligible, although academic motivation is evidently and negatively impacted. Socially, dating, on average, does influence an adolescent’s social life, but this impact is easily preventable. In terms of depression and risk of suicide, the results do show that most adolescents who do date are not at risk of suicide, and have in fact, never even thought about suicide. Therefore, we can say that the positive emotional aspects of dating could outweigh the negative impacts, if adolescent romantic relationships are handled properly.
REFERENCES


