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The Impact of Anxiety on Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

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Introduction

Anxiously attached individuals have an increased desire for love from their romantic partner yet, they often distrust it (Collins, 1996). They often perceive certain partner behaviors as a threat to the stability of the relationship (Campbell et al. 2005). Thus, leading to the idea that anxious individuals will experience less satisfaction in romantic relationships.

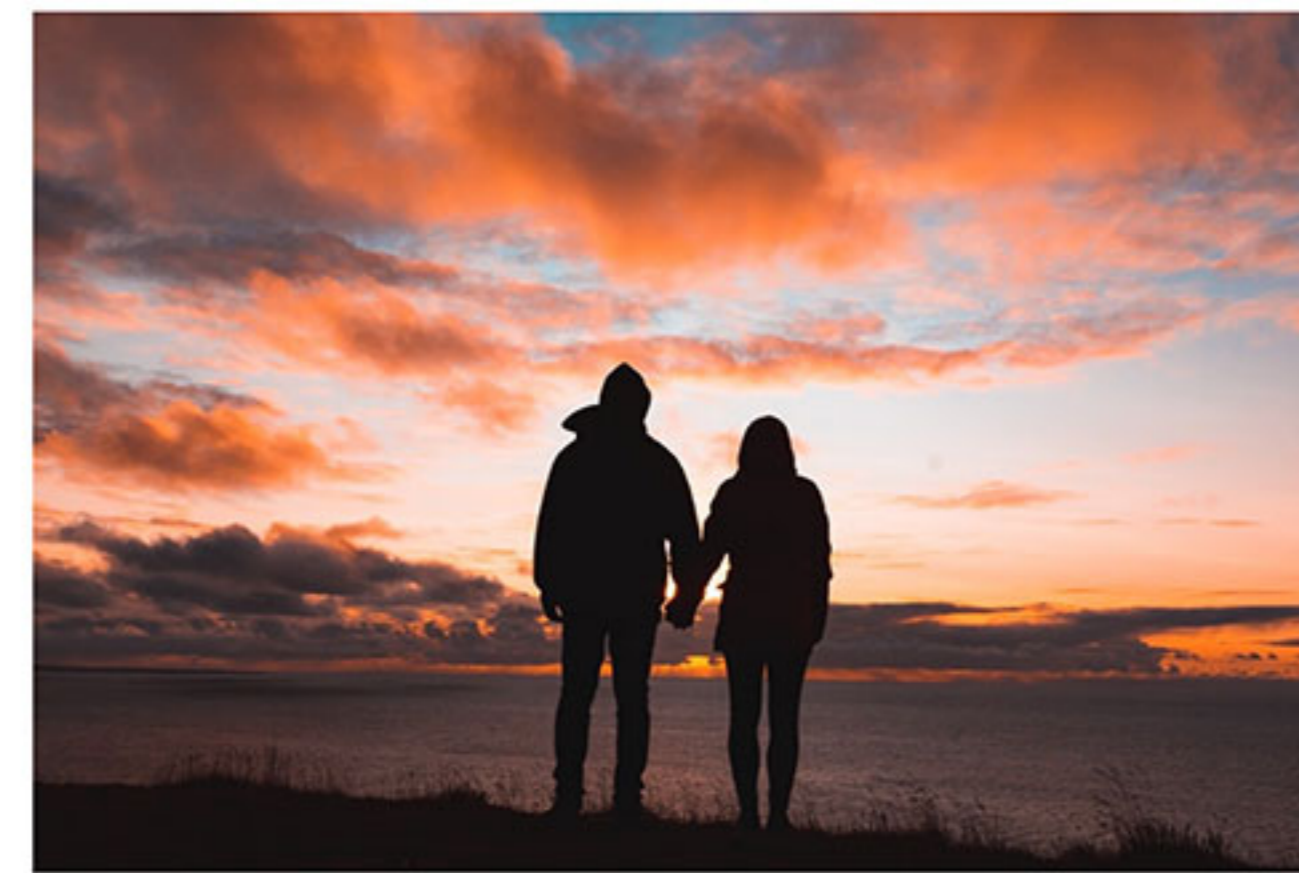


Figure 1: [Image by: Alex Iby]

Key Findings

- The null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted as a prevalence of anxiety does not indicate either high or low instance of romantic relationship satisfaction.

Methods

The 25-item questionnaire was administered to 19 Providence College students in a Research Design and Statistical Analysis Class. 16 participants were females while 3 were males. Participation was a mandatory class component which was done for credit.

The survey measured two constructs: anxiety and relationship satisfaction. 10 of the questions were positively keyed items and the other 10 were negatively keyed. 5 neutral questions to gauge demographics were included as well. The questionnaire was based on a 5-point Likert Scale with 1 indicating strong agreement and 5 indicating strong disagreement. The questionnaire was administered through Microsoft Forms and students accessed it via Sakai. The data was then analyzed through SPSS.



Figure 2: [Image by Microsoft Office]



Figure 3: [Image by SPSS]

Analyses

- The presence of large effect size ultimately indicated that the variables (anxiety and romantic relationship satisfaction) had a practical significance.
- The 95% confidence level emphasizes that a true mean was discovered.
- Most participants indicated that they agreed with the statements on the questionnaire to some degree.
- A lack of correlation amongst the variables emphasizes how anxiety does not influence relationship satisfaction for the purposes of this study.

Results

The questionnaire had strong internal reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha = .860$. Thus, leading to the use of all items on the questionnaire. Two constructs were examined: anxiety and relationship satisfaction.

- Anxiety was prevalent amongst the population. (M= 29.68, SD= 5.132)
- Relationship satisfaction was also prevalent amongst the population. (M= 28.39, SD= 12.29)

*Relationship satisfaction was assessed based on the ability to resolve conflict, maintain a trusting rapport, feel emotionally supported, etc.

*Anxiety was measured based on ability to rely on others, consideration of worry, restless thoughts, etc.

Both constructs were examined on a 95% confidence interval. For

- Anxiety: CL [27.2106, 32.1578]
- Relationship satisfaction: CL [22.2766, 34.5012]

There was also a large effect size:

- Anxiety: $d = 5.13217$
- Relationship satisfaction $d = 12.29126$

When assessing the correlation between anxiety and relationship satisfaction, no correlation was found.

- $R = .078$

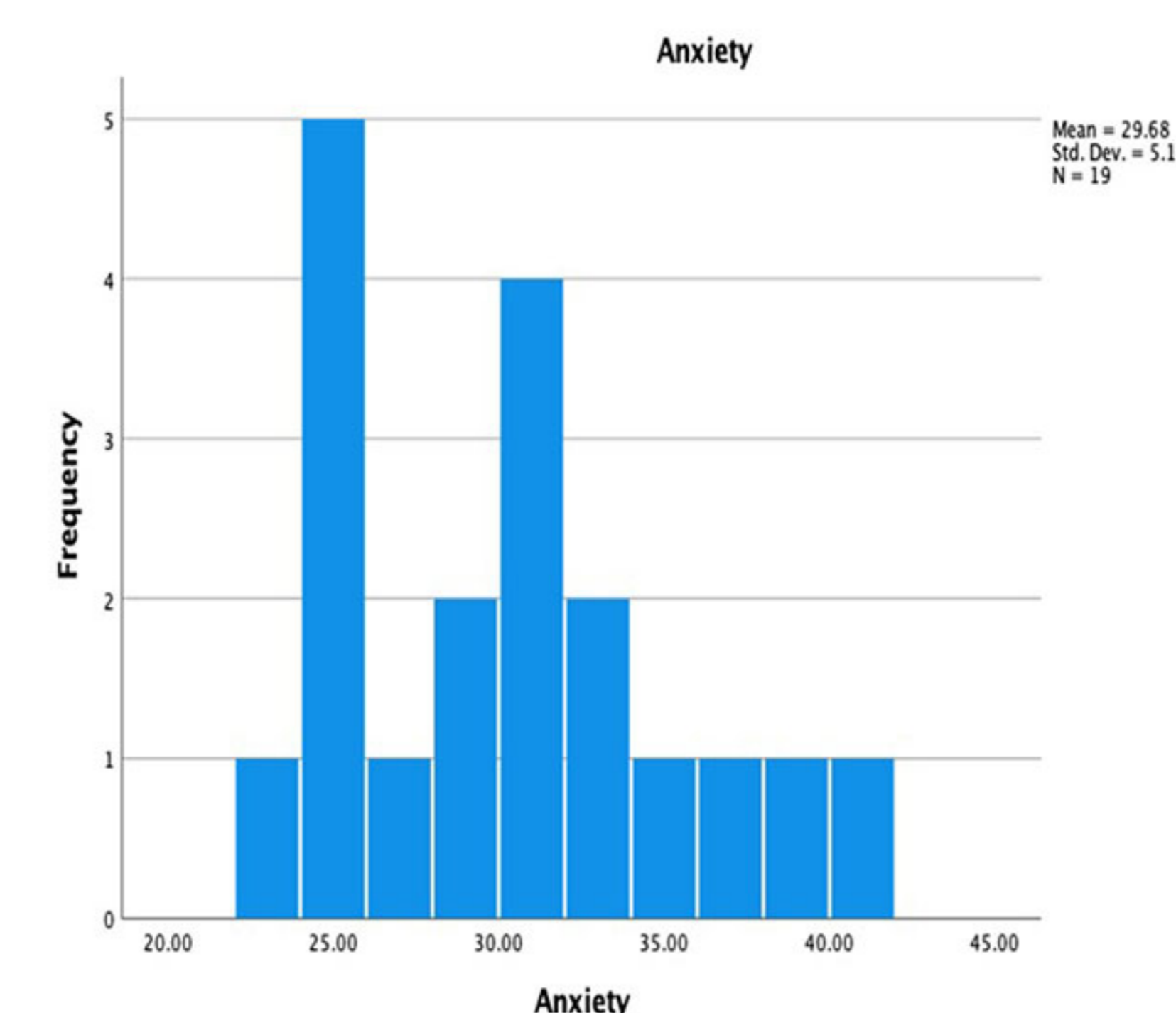


Figure 3: Anxiety Frequency

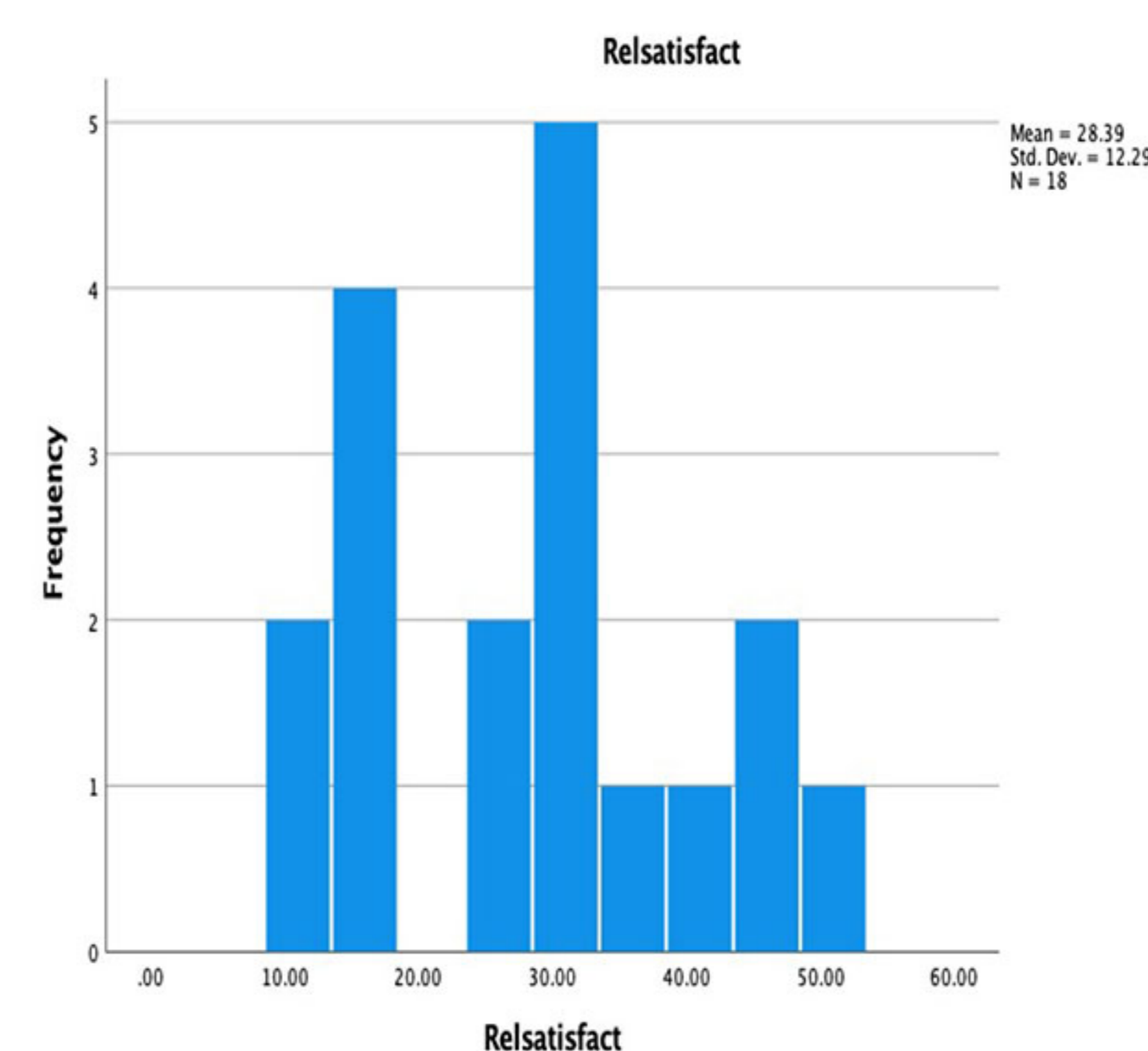


Figure 4: Relationship Satisfaction Frequency

Conclusions

There were various limitations to the study. It was administered to a very small sample population that cannot be necessarily generalized to a large population as it was a convenience sample. The way the Likert-Scale was formulated could have been problematic as greater numbers typically indicate stronger agreement and the scale utilized was reversed. Some participants were also not presently in a romantic relationship, and this could lead to a skewed perception of satisfaction levels.

Previous studies indicated that those with greater levels of attachment anxiety experienced greater mental burdens associated with maintaining romantic relationships (Stanton & Campbell 2015). Thus, producing the belief that this would lead to lower levels of relationship satisfaction. Likewise, literature also suggested that a distrust of love from partners would leave anxious individuals dissatisfied and seeking fault within themselves (Collins, 1996).

By accepting the null hypothesis, it showcases how anxiety may not impact an individual's ability to maintain satisfactory romantic relationships. This could serve as a beacon of hope (even for people like me) for those concerned about pursuing healthy social relationships.

In the future, this study could be revisited solely targeting individuals with diagnosed instances of anxiety that are presently engaged in romantic relationships. This could ultimately alter correlation levels.

References

- Collins, N. L. (1996). Working models of attachment: Implications for explanation, emotion, and behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(4), 810–832. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.71.4.810>
- Campbell, L., Simpson, J. A., Boldry, J., & Kashy, D. A. (2005). Perceptions of Conflict and Support in Romantic Relationships: The Role of Attachment Anxiety. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88(3), 510–531. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.88.3.510>

Acknowledgments

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