

# Review of: "Young love in contemporary China: Attitudes and behaviors in romantic relationships"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

It is my great privilege to provide feedback on this manuscript. I have reviewed the paper thoroughly and provided detailed comments below.

## **1) Abstract:**

a. Authors can consider providing elaboration on the sampling method used to select the 128 Chinese males and females living in China and abroad. For example, was the sample representative of the overall population or limited to certain age ranges or geographical locations?

b. Information on the survey instrument used should be included.

c. Implications of the findings for policymakers, educators, or other relevant stakeholders who may be interested in promoting healthy romantic relationships among young people in China can be highlighted.

## **2) Introduction:**

Instead of discussing courtship rituals in both the animal kingdom and human cultures the introduction, it could directly introduce the topic of the study, which is the attitudes and behaviors of young people in modern China in their search for love and long-term romantic relationships.

## **3) Literature Review:**

a. It is extensively done and there is a rich exploration about the various aspects of romance relationship.

b. Including more recent studies that explore the dating landscape in other regions of the world would be beneficial in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the current dating trends. This would allow for a better comparison between different cultures and highlight any significant differences between dating practices in the East and the West.

c. A theoretical framework would greatly benefit the study by providing a clear and structured foundation to navigate the research. For example, social exchange theory could be used to examine the benefits and costs of dating and relationships, and how these factors influence the decision-making process of Chinese youth. Attachment theory could also be applied to explore how early childhood experiences of attachment shape one's attitudes and behaviors in relationships. Additionally, cultural theories could be used to examine how cultural values and beliefs shape dating and relationship patterns in China. Including a relevant theory would enhance the discussion on the theoretical background

and provide a framework to help interpret the findings pertaining to the factors that influence dating and relationships among Chinese youth.

#### **4) Research Questions:**

- a. The existing questions cover multiple variables, which may make it challenging to gather and analyze data effectively. Refining the research questions to be more specific and focused would likely yield clearer insights and make it easier to draw conclusions.
- b. For RQ3, it appears to be too narrow or simplistic and can be answered with a single statistic, then it may not be a very meaningful or significant question to explore.
- c. To improve the language of RQ4, it is recommended to use a more formal tone, as the term "hookup" may be considered informal.

#### **5) Methodology:**

##### **i) Participant**

- a. The manuscript lacks a clear explanation and justification for the convenient sampling method used and the justification for the sample size determined. It is essential to provide a detailed description and justification for the sampling method as it can impact the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, a clear explanation of the sample size is important as it can impact the statistical power of the study. Providing such information would enhance the credibility and validity of the study.
- b. Information about the demographic characteristics of the participants, such as their age distribution, educational levels, and geographic locations as the inclusion and exclusion criteria, including the three categories of demographic mentioned in the introduction should be stated here in the "participant".
- c. To provide better context to the reader, it would be good to define the scope of "well-educated" more specifically in the participant section. The term "well-educated" can be vague and encompasses various levels of education that may impact the research findings. By specifying the education levels of the participants, the reader can better understand the sample and the potential implications of the study. For example, the participant section could be revised to include specific criteria for "well-educated" such as having completed a certain level of education, such as a college or university degree, or masters or PhD levels instead of just mentioning "graduated from prestigious universities in China". This would provide a more precise definition of the term and help readers understand the educational background of the participants.
- d. Additionally, to further contextualize their educational background, the author can consider providing information about the geographic location of the participants and their socio-economic status.

##### **ii) Material**

- a. The methodology used in the survey should be more clearly explained, and the study should provide information on its

reliability to increase its credibility. Without such information, readers may question the validity of the study's findings.

b. A pilot test for the questionnaire with a small sample of participants would be beneficial to identify potential issues or areas for improvement in the survey design. The current survey appears to yield expected and simplistic findings, indicating that there may be room for enhancement in the survey's content and structure.

## **6) Results:**

a. The results section is comprehensive and well-structured, with clear presentation of findings, supporting data, and effective use of tables and graphs to enhance understanding.

b. It has been noted that while the results section is presented in a rich and adequate manner, there is a need for further enhancements. Specifically, there is a lack of explanation for the statistical analyses used in the study, such as correlation analysis, T-tests, average values, Cohen's d value, and one-way ANOVA. It is crucial to include justifications for the use of the statistical analyses in the methodology section and explain how they are relevant to the study's objectives. Providing such information would enhance the readers' understanding of the study's findings and the significance of the statistical analyses used.

c. A clear explanation of how the regions were defined and selected for the study should be provided in the methodology section. This will help readers understand the rationale behind the decision to focus on the East, West, North, and South regions and how these regions were delineated. Additionally, the criteria for selecting these regions should be described in detail, including any demographic, cultural, or economic factors that were taken into account. Without this information, readers may question the validity and generalizability of the study's findings.

## **7) Limitation, discussion and conclusion**

a. Future studies to include a more diverse sample of young people from different backgrounds and educational levels to increase the applicability of the findings and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dating landscape in modern China.

b. The study relied greatly on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Furthermore, the study lacks a longitudinal design, making it difficult to track changes in attitudes and behaviors over time.

c. Authors could strengthen the discussion section by incorporating more relevant and recent literature to support the findings. Meanwhile, the findings can be contextualized within the broader literature on dating and the relationships in China, and highlight any inconsistencies or similarities between the findings and previous studies.

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## **8) References**

a. It is evident that the references used in the study are not up to date (only two from year 2022), many references are rather old. Therefore, incorporating more recent and relevant references is recommended.