

# The Existence of Reciprocity in Friendship Relationship among Young Adults in Kuala Lumpur

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**Abstract:** Reciprocity has always been an unconscious drive to individuals, and this has been a norm among friendship relationships. In this study however we aimed at exploring the connection between reciprocity in friendship relationships, 200 questionnaires were randomly distributed to individuals in different areas in Kuala Lumpur, these included Sunway, Puchong, Cheras, Damansara and KLCC. A total of 100 females and 100 males participated in the study and their age groups ranged from 18 – 30 years. The respondents were selected randomly in public places. The results highlight that there is a very strong correlation between reciprocity and friendship relationships. Gender differences were also explored.

**Key Word:** Reciprocity; Friendship; Relationships

## I. INTRODUCTION

**B**ackground: Reciprocity according to some social psychologists is viewed as when an individual respond to a positive act with a positive act which is more alike to recompensing an act of kindness. Taylor, Peplau, and Sears (2006) states that in most situations individuals will often feel obliged to give back both favors and offences (p.324). In addition reciprocity is involved mostly on trading favors hence considered as a strong influential factor for human performance (Weems, n.d.). Friendship on the other end is the existence of individuals who share both extremes of likes and dislikes/attitudes, they occur also for pleasure, helpfulness and benefit. It can however exist between individuals of the same sex, opposite and it goes beyond age, cultures and personalities (Ravichandran, 1999). Friendship relations however are an essential element in the social development aspect of human life, and without it there is a deficiency in human growth (Ojanen, Sijtsema, Hawley & Little, 2010). Reciprocity in friendship relationships has submerged with years and also evidence has shown that even in the corporate world, marketers use this same tactic of reciprocity to lure customers and a primary source for manipulation (Giesler, 2006). Validating the purposes and motives of reciprocity in friendship relationships, which in turn leads to predicting friendships as a result of evaluation and expectations was the key aspect to this research.

## II. METHODS

To examine the relationships between reciprocity and friendship relationships among young adults, this study used a quantitative research as it involves figures, logic, and fixed static information (Jenkins and McCarty, 2010). This study used a quantitative exploratory descriptive design to identify,

analyze and describe factors contributing to the existence of reciprocity in friendship relationships. A quantitative research is used to determine the relationship between one thing and independent variable and a dependent variable. The target number of participants in the study were 200 young adults from various neighboring residences throughout Kuala Lumpur. An adopted questionnaire was used to assess the existence of reciprocity in friendships relationships. This research made use of a descriptive design through a process of survey. In this research, self-report method in the form of surveys was used to collect all the information regarding the existence of reciprocity in friendship relationships. This study used questionnaires to measure the two variable, which are reciprocity (Independent Variable) and friendship relationships among young adults (Dependent Variable), participants were required to answer a set of 21 questions from an adopted questionnaire. The data was then collected and calculated using the 'IBM SPSS Statistics 20' program before presenting the results.

## III. RESULT

Past studies have verified that there is a consistent relationship between reciprocity and friendship in children and adolescent. However, there are not many studies that have looked at young adults, hence this study tries to fill the gap by investigating the relationship between reciprocity and friendship relationships among young adults in Kuala Lumpur. Researchers in addition to that used surveys to collect the data on the existence of reciprocity in friendship relationships through an adopted questionnaire on reciprocity. Collected data was imported into statistical computer software (SPSS 20) for analysis. This chapter will present the analysis, discuss the results of the study so as to have more insights on the topic.

### *Participants*

The current study targeted a sample of 200 individuals, a total of 200 surveys were collected within the data collection period, with a respondent rate of 90%. In addition to that, from the 200 collected all of them were usable and filled with no missing details. We then discarded the remaining 20, as we had included the 20 from the pilot study. The study consisted of 100 young female participants and 100 young male participants. There was no assumed bias except for the sampling method of the researcher's perception of age on participants, as they had to just distribute the surveys without

asking the age of the participants. The range of the ages of the total 200 participants was from 18 to 35 year olds, with a mean age of 21 years. Out of 200 respondents, all the participants completed their questionnaires on a print version copy and no soft copy was issued to the participants.

*Instruments*

One instrument was utilized, the adopted reciprocity questionnaire that measures the levels of reciprocity and its existence, and existence in friendship relationships. So as to suit the research questions, minor details were edited to suit the study.

The questionnaire consisted to two major sets of questions, one that measured the existence of reciprocity and the other part measuring the existence of reciprocity in friendship relationships. The questionnaire consisted of 17 items, and each assessed on a Likert scale. The first part consisted mainly of the demographics, then the following questions were so direct, measuring the behavior attitudes of participants towards reciprocity. Respondents were required to rate the statement by using the scale of 1 to 5, 1= strongly disagree, and 5= strongly agree (see Appendix). Question 5-17 were rated, and higher score would indicate higher appraisal level of reciprocity in young adults.

*Frequencies*

*Demographics*

Summary results of Age

Age of respondents					
	Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	36	18.0	18.0	18.0
	19	25	12.5	12.5	30.5
	20	29	14.5	14.5	45.0
	21	22	11.0	11.0	56.0
	22	20	10.0	10.0	66.0
	23	13	6.5	6.5	72.5
	24	16	8.0	8.0	80.5
	25	9	4.5	4.5	85.0
	26	9	4.5	4.5	89.5
	27	6	3.0	3.0	92.5
	28	2	1.0	1.0	93.5
	29	6	3.0	3.0	96.5
30	7	3.5	3.5	100.0	

Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 2.0 Frequencies

From the results of the above, the highest frequency came from the respondents from the age 18. The lowest frequency however was from age respondents of 28, the average age of the respondents was 22. The explanation of the highest and the lowest could be the sphere of influence, in the sense that the age group is very vibrant and readily available and also that, it is the age group that was more accessible

*Summary results of Gender*

	N	Percentage	Mean
Male	100	50.0	22
Female	100	50.0	22
Table 2.1 frequencies gender			

Gender respondents proved to be equal in terms of their participation in answering the questionnaire, this however showed that the study had an equal percentage of respondents which is 50% woman and 50% man. This result is a total shift to the stereotypes about men and friendship, even about woman and their emotions (Tang, 2013)

*Summary results of Ethnicity*

	N	Frequency	Percent
African	200	34	17
Asian	200	135	67.5
European	200	12	6.0
South America	200	6	3.0
North American	200	1	.5
Australian	200	12	6.0

Table 2.2 Frequency for ethnicity

*Summary results of Occupation*

	N	Frequency	Percentage
Student	200	149	74.5
Unemployed	200	10	5.0
Employed	200	41	20.5

Table 2.3 Frequency Occupation

Summary of questions

Item	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	neither agree Nor disagree	Agree	Agree Strongly
I am prepared to return a favor if someone does something good for me	2 (1%)	6 (3%)	8 (4%)	86(43%)	98 (49%)
I feel compelled to return favors even when this was not agreed upon in advance	15 (7.5%)	59 (15%)	9 (29.5%)	85 (42.5%)	40 (20.0%)
I do not feel comfortable receiving favors from strangers	32 (16.0%)	61 (30.5%)	75 (37.5%)	28(14.0%)	4(2%)
I do not count a favor from parents as a favor because I feel it is their duty	15 (7.5%)	47(23.5)	48(24.0%)	49(24%)	41 (20.5%)
I believe if I ask my best friend for a favor he/she is supposed to agree all the time	17 (8.5%)	43 (21.5%)	63(31.5%)	50 (25.0%)	27(13.5%)
I expect my friend to always encourage me positively to everything that I do even it its unwise	19 (9.5%)	48 (24%)	45(22.5%)	62(31%)	26 (13%)
I do not mind friends who leak out secrets	78 (39%)	55 (27.5%)	32 (16.0%)	20 (10.0%)	15 (7.5%)
Nowadays you cannot rely on anybody else	35 (17.5%)	52 (26.0%)	74 (37.0%)	29 (14.5%)	10 (5%)
Most people do not take advantage of me because of my personality	12 (6%)	39 (19.5%)	72 (36%)	63(31.5%)	14(7.0%)
It is wiser to learn about strangers before you trust them as friends	2 (1%)	10 (5%)	44 (22.%)	88 (44%)	56 (28%)

	Often	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Regularly
How often do you lend your personal belongings to friends(e.g., phones, CD's)	1 (5%)	23 (11.5%)	92(46%)	48 (24%)	36 (18%)
How often do you lend your friends money	0 (0%)	17 (8.5%)	115(57.5%)	11 (27.5%)	20 (10.0%)
How often do I expect my friends to return a favor after lending them money	0 (0%)	66 (33%)	79(39.5%)	43 (21.5%)	12 (6%)

Table 2.4. Frequency of answers on existence of reciprocity

IV. LIMITATIONS

Reliability of questionnaires can be merely a one end devotion, hence the researcher was not as certain as to how reliable the information was, putting into consideration of the biasness that individuals have. Time frame for this study might not have given the researcher the opportunity to explore in depth the different aspects of friendships and cultures in reciprocity. In addition to that the context where this study was being conducted is limited since we are only payed attention to friendships relationships.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A study by Clark, and Ayers (1988) results show that there is a connection between reciprocity and commitments, students who were more committed to their friends reciprocated more. Baiocco, Laghi, Norcia, Cannoni, Baumgrtner, and Bombi (2014) study moreover examined the reciprocity for young children and friendships relationships and their study proved that children who had reciprocal friendships were prone to understanding of emotions and prosocial behaviors and they understood each other unlike children who were unilateral.

In addition to that reciprocity does not only occur in humans, even animals have proved to have reciprocated attitudes towards each other, a longitudinal study primates had traits of grooming in food sharing especially the chimpanzee's, and this proved that reciprocity not only does it lie in human

behavior, even animals reciprocate to their mates (Adrian, Groof, Stevens, Schaik, 2012).

Applied Value

According to the knowledge that we have on research in psychology, we understand that every research and knowledge that we have is to help the world/people around us, it can be of benefit if applied. This study has shown that since there is a relationship between reciprocity and friendship relationships, there is a greater opportunity for these theories to be used both in a positive and in a negative way. Reciprocity could be a platform were young adults can utilize it by engaging in prosocial behaviors which can be helpful to the communities and people around them moreover even to the marginal communities. By marginal we would refer to the deaf, the blind, the homeless etc. It can benefit friendships in that it bonds friendships and reduces conflict in the work place, colleges, or homes. It can be used to change people attitudes on life, behaviors and conform it more to the positive side of civic engagement. The existence of reciprocity is unconsciously explored in this paper to the respondents, and being aware of it will help future researchers. This study however in a nutshell has paved way to greater research in the future by giving us room to start on a smaller sample and on an unfamiliar topic.

*Test of Normality*

The protocols of a research states that before we continue to investigate the correlation of the dependent variables, we should conduct a normality test. Hence a normality test was carried out to examine the dependent variable, which is friendship relationships. The results were presented as below:

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Total- RF	.083	200	.002	.986	200	.045
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction: p>0.05						

Table 2.5 Normality test

For us to calculate the Skewness and Kurtosis values in pursuit of the normality of our information, we divide the measures with the SE (standard error) which should give us a value which is within +/- 1.96 range.

Hence the skewness measure is 0.004/ 0.172 (SE value), which gives a 0.023 and for the kurtosis values -0.421/0.342 (SE value) = -1.230. We can conclude that the falls in the range of +/-1.96 which shows that our data is approximately normally distributed in terms of skewness and kurtosis

Looking at the normality of the data, Shapiro and Wilk (2011) states that if a sample size is smaller than 2000, we should refer to the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality. Referring to the table above the p-value should be greater than 0.05 thus (p> 0.05). So based on SPSS the p-value is stated as (Sig) which is the significance value. So in this table the significant value of Shapiro-Wilk was 0.045 which when we round up it gets to 0.05 which is right at the margin hence we approximately consider it as normally distributed.

Below is the Normal QQ plot which states that the dots should be along the line which indicates that the data is approximately normally distributed. Hence from the graph, they are normally distributed in support of the histogram.

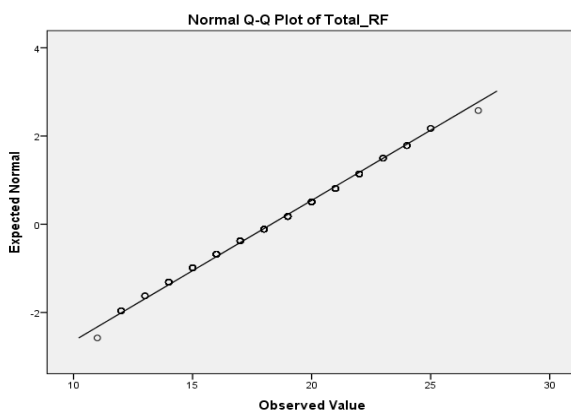


Figure 2.5 Q-Q Plot for Normality

*Pearson Correlation for Reciprocity in Friendship Relationships*

The correlation coefficient is .732 and this shows that it is statistically significant. Quinnipiac.edu (2014) states that the concept of correlation can be interpreted under positive and negative correlations (Pearson’s r). However, they are only unsophisticated estimations for interpreting strengths of correlations: if r = +.7 or higher, it means that there is a very strong positive relationship; +.40 to +.69 strong positive relationships; +.30 to +.39 moderate positive relationships; +.20 to +.29 weak positive relationships; +.01 to -.19 no or negligible relationship; -.20 to -.29 weak negative relationship; -.30 to -.39 moderate negative relationship; -.70 or higher very strong negative relationship (quinnipiac.edu, 2014). Hence with the results it shows that there is a strong positive relationship between reciprocity and friendship relationships.

The p-value is shown as .024, this means that it is <.05 meaning that we reject the null hypothesis in saying that there is a consistent relationship between reciprocity and friendship relationships. If p value (p<.05) we reject the null hypothesis.

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