

General Self-Presentational Strategies Used by College Students in Establishing Romantic Relationships and Friendships

Liezl Rillera-Astudillo

University of the Philippines Baguio

Abstract

This study sought to discover the general self-presentational strategies used by Filipino college students in their effort to establish close relationships. In particular, it focused on the main and interactional effects of gender, social position (initiator and target), and nature of close relationship on one's preference for a particular strategy when initiating friendships or romantic relationships. Results indicate that there are nine (9) general self-presentational strategies employed by college students when initiating close relationships. The following strategies are (1) Active Pursuer, (2) Appearance Manager, (3) Supplicator, (4) Ingratiator, (5) Subtle Initiator, (6) Social Exchanger, (7) Subtle Self-Praiser, (8) Intimacy Generator, and (9) Self-Promoter. With regard to the effect of social position, initiators and targets appear to differ in their preferences for four strategies. In particular, targets find the tactics of Active Pursuers, Supplicators, Subtle Self-Praisers, and Self-Promoters more appealing than do initiators. When it comes to the effects of gender, male initiators are more inclined to be active pursuers than female initiators. Unpredictably, male initiators are more likely to be appearance managers than female initiators. Female targets, however, are more inclined to prefer initiators who are active pursuers and intimacy generators than do male targets. Data also show that the nature of relationship has a pervasive effect, particularly on the initiators. It appears that romantic relationship initiators tend to place greater emphasis on the use of self-presentational strategies than do initiators of friendships. In addition, findings suggest that gender and nature of relationship do not share influences on the use of self-presentational strategies. Therefore, the results of the study undeniably show that initiators of close relationships are prone to put on different "faces" in order to win their targets. In general, the most appealing are those associated with the tactics of the Subtle Initiator and Intimacy Generator; while those that are least appealing come close to the strategies employed by Appearance Managers and Social Exchangers. One highlight of the study that is worth mentioning is the discovery that some tactics, which are regarded as generally appealing were not deemed as important by the research participants. By contrast, supplication, which is typically frowned upon by many, was viewed as favorable in the study. Thus, it is an oversimplification to say that self-presentational strategies are absolutely favorable or not. As evidenced by the results, there are other factors that may account for differences in people's attitudes toward and preference for self-presentational strategies.

Key words: self-presentational strategies; college students; romantic relationships; friendships.

Interpersonal attraction, as many would claim is a powerful magnet that can pull, if not bind people together. Once it hits a person, its driving force may propel him or her to pursue the other. Being attracted to someone, however, does not necessarily lead to nor entirely account for the initiation of close interpersonal bonds.

The beginning of close relationships may also be explained by circumstantial factors that could facilitate or possibly deter interaction between individuals. Typically, people are

confronted with various options for action at any given moment. The range of behavioral alternatives is also defined by behavioral expectations set by social norms. In turn, the specific ways by which people maneuver among these possibilities interact with the context they find themselves in and the contact they want to cultivate. For instance, Trenholm and Jensen (2000) suggest that situational factors, such as types of occasion, places, and dates can influence movement toward intimacy (p.299). Specifically, Valentine's Day, prom nights, college dances, and finding oneself in the company of the only other person in the party, qualify as intimacy producers, which according to Knapp (1984), create a state of "intimacy readiness" (p.192).

In addition, certain social systems have strict rules regarding the extent to which individuals, particularly the sexes, are allowed to interact (Miell & Dallos, eds., 1996, p.299). Hence, the considerable diversity in establishing close relationships may be due to cultural specificity as well.

Aside from the factors cited above, various research studies, particularly those with a social psychological thrust, have already uncovered a number of situational or environmental influences that get people together. Such studies, however only captured some aspects of relationship formation. Considering how complex this process is, there may be other significant factors that can trigger intimacy but have not been thoroughly explored in research.

One aspect to consider is the possible existence of general strategies used in initiating social contact. When people carry out this exercise, they are usually confronted with considerable risk (e.g. being ignored or rejected). Thus, the manner by which people define themselves in this context does not run far from that of an actor who sees the need to manage a stage performance. As a response to this relational schema, there may be individuals who would resort to a purposeful manipulation of their image to gain another person's approval. In one study conducted by Buss (1996), specific actions that men and women perform to make themselves attractive to members of the opposite sex were identified. While pronounced differences were noted, the results of the study failed to cluster the specific actions into general affiliative behaviors. Hence, possible relationships or commonalities among specific behaviors were left undefined.

Jones (1990) made a comprehensive description of self-presentational strategies employed by people. Despite Jones's recognition of these images as typical tactics for influencing others, still there exists a gap in behavioral research with respect to these strategies' relevance to behaviors associated with the initiation of close relationships.

Another fact that must be considered is that close relationships may take on different forms. Considering the varied intentions and expectations attached to close relations, it is of little doubt that certain strategies or tactics are preferred over others depending on the nature of

relationship people want to pursue. In other words, a particular tactic may be favorable in a friendly relation but may be deemed unfavorable in another type of relationship. In addition, one area that is worth noting for is the social positions individuals lay claim to when initiating social contacts. As explained by Lord (1997), when relationships typically start out, at least one person signifies interest and the other takes on the accepting part (p.381). Attached to these positions or roles are possible “exploratory moves” such as different initiating actions employed and criteria used for accepting offers of a close relationship (Miell & Dallos, p.80). Thus, by adopting a specific role at the outset of a relationship, the person who establishes contact may also actively contribute to how the other would define the situation. That is, whether the person on the receiving end would regard the initiator’s behavior as socially appropriate or not. The receiver’s appraisal consequently becomes a strong basis for his or her approval and acceptance of the other person’s offer.

The preference for a particular social position and initiating tactic may also be attributed to gender and other dispositional variables, which include how the person construes the interaction and his or her personal intentions.

Hence, the exploration and clarification as to how the factors considered above (i.e. nature of relationship, gender, social positions) relate to the initiation of interpersonal bonds could offer a starting point for thinking about how close relationships get off the ground.

To be able to understand how close relationships develop and flourish, it is first necessary to highlight theories and studies that form the foundation upon which this research is built.

Impression Management. In their effort to make an impact on others, people are sometimes compelled to portray themselves in less spontaneous and natural ways. One of the tactics by which they attempt to manipulate their image is by engaging in impression management or self-presentation. Compatible with this observation is Erving Goffman’s (1967) contention that the social world is a stage and every individual is a performer. He proposed that social norms practically require people to behave in socially desirable ways. Every situation people face, as Goffman (1967) elaborated, eventually puts demands on them.

Typically, impression management becomes pronounced in circumstances where one attempts to seek approval and liking of others. As illustrated in one study of behavior in job interviews (von Baeyer, Sherk, & Zanna, 1981), applicants who were made to believe that they were being interviewed by someone who’s chauvinistic in his views, presented themselves in a more traditionally feminine manner than those in another condition. Hence,

this research evidence suggests that people are likely to project a calculated image to fit their personal goals or needs in a social interaction.

Consistent with this finding, Schlenker and Weigold (1992) introduced the idea that people's agenda, whether covert or overt, systematically affect how they choose to interpret events and how they package information for the consumption of audiences.

Use of Self-Presentational Strategies. Extending Goffman's theory of "lines" are the strategic self-presentational behaviors described by Jones (1990). To curry one another's favor, one tactic they named was *ingratiation*. People who employ this strategy tend to conform, flatter, do favors, and be nice in order to be likable to others. Some people use another strategy called *self-promotion*, which puts emphasis on the expert power of the actor. On the other hand, not all people engage in activities that would charm or impress others. There are those who are not at all concerned with being amiable; thus, preferring to appear dangerous, morally worthy, or helpless instead (Trenholm & Jensen, pp.240-241).

In relation to the subject of the present study, there appears to be at least three self-presentational strategies that are relevant. Considering the specific actions that make up these tactics, ingratiation and self-promotion seem to highlight one's intentions of establishing affiliative bonds. In particular, the study conducted by Buss indicated that aside from devising ways to increase exposure to the opposite sex, both men and women respondents claimed to have taken actions, such as being likable and competent to signal that they want a close relationship (Lord, p.383).

In the Philippine setting, however, the ideal rests on giving or receiving help. Unlike Western emphasis on self-sufficiency and independence, Filipinos tend to focus on family sufficiency, enjoy being taken care of, and make people happy by being dependent on them (Guthrie & Jimenez-Jacobs, 1967, p. 98).

Therefore, aside from *ingratiation* and *self-promotion*, which are the two most common strategies used to initiate close relationships, it may also be typical for Filipinos to regard the act of *supplication* as one vital tactic in establishing propitious interpersonal encounters.

Gender and Self-Presentation. Given the differences between gender in a number of social motives and behaviors, it is not unlikely to find sex disparity in behaviors involving the initiation of close relationships. Using projective tests, the study by Hoyenga and Hoyenga indicates that the affiliative motives are different in men and women (1984, p.268). Men who score high on one scale measuring affiliate needs also tend to score high on a scale of exhibitionism. This relationship, however, is not common in women. Instead, the scores of women are positively related to nurturance (Ibid).

In 1996, Hinde cited that there are reliable differences in the behaviors of men and women in close relationships. Marking their differences on the bases of several studies, he explained that it is generally the case that men are more physically aggressive and more

assertive than women, less conforming and susceptible to persuasion, more inclined to start sex, and seek out erotic and pornographic materials than do women. Hinde also revealed that adolescent girls tend to show more pro-social behavior and to be more verbal than boys. Similarly, Block (1973) pointed out that men tend to adopt a more practical and problem oriented style of communication; while women are inclined to be more affective. . Furthermore, Eagly and Wood (1982) found that women tend to be conforming due to their efforts in preserving social harmony.

On the other hand, Filipino researchers, like Tan, Ujano-Batangan, and Labado-Española (2001) pointed out that men seem preoccupied with self-presentation that they usually see the need to come up with proper opening lines and the proper *diskarte* (tactic) of projecting an image of what is desirable. One study indicated that adolescent male respondents use terms that mix playfulness and deceit in this process of *diskarte*: *gimmick*, *bola* (fibbing), and *magpapacute* (being cute) (p.36). Female adolescents, however tend to be more dependent on males, especially when it comes to matters involving school work. Such dependence appears to complement men's desire to make a favorable impression on women because these motives somehow reinforce the initiation of mutual confidence and the development of valued relationships (Mendez & Jocano, 1979, p. 107).

The aforesaid research findings, therefore imply that males are more likely to employ strategies that are associated with self-promotional actions and to some extent, acts of ingratiation; while females tend to behave in ways that do not run far from ingratiation and supplication.

The Role of Social Position. Another aspect to consider is the individual's capacity to be aware of oneself and the world in which he or she lives. A unique quality ascribed to humanity, this consciousness comes with both the will and the ability to comprehend. According to Aronson, Wilson and Akert (1999), when a person senses certain cues of a particular social situation, he or she concurrently forms impressions of this encounter (p.19).

Hence, each person's perceptions are determined, not just by external circumstances presented to him or her, but also by the ways in which the person anticipates events. This idea was in fact postulated in the Personal Construct Theory. Being the proponent of this model, George Kelley argues that people tend to categorize and evaluate their experiences into units and align events on their own dimensions (as cited in Pervin, 1970, p.34). He also suggests that the constructs of an individual help him or her to arrive at decisions about how to act towards others. Furthermore, the action taken on the basis of personal constructs affects the consequent interaction, which in turn influences the constructs held by both parties.

Thus, Kelley's theory illustrates the importance of looking at the process of establishing close relations from the vantage point of the interactors who occupy particular social positions. In the preceding section, social positions are described as roles that individuals claim to in their interaction with others. As earlier indicated, some individuals tend to assume the instigating role while others may take on the accepting part. Relative to Kelly's contentions, people are confronted with the task of using their personal constructs as yardsticks to distinguish relevant aspects of the self that are in harmony with the situation (Trenholm & Jensen, p.159). From this, it can be deduced that the person's subjective interpretations of reality or how the individual construes his or her social position determines his or her perception and appraisal of the emerging interpersonal bond.

With similar observations, Steven Duck (1976) noted four patterns of constructs that surface in close relationships. First, impressions may be accounted for by how attractive the "interactions" are. This is eventually followed by the perception of each other's position in the social encounter. During conversations, each may start focusing attention on this other's communication style. Finally, each uses the preceding observations to come up with a more complete picture and evaluation of the other (p.27).

Schlenker and Weingold (1992), however, do not discount the fact that interpersonal exchange is still a transaction between the actor, the receiver, and the situation (p.134). They further explained that before impression management can materialize, those involved must first define the situation and assume specific roles to play.

In this vein, Holmes (2000) recognized the need to focus on the relational dyadic aspects of relationships for a better understanding of interpersonal processes. Therefore, the process of framing the description of relationships is usually fashioned in ways that suit the goals of the interacting individuals, their social positions, and the objective situation. In other words, the relational pattern of certain social positions is more likely to be tailored to a particular set of prescriptions and standards that are accounted for by roles these individuals play and the social situation.

In this study, *social positions* will be defined specifically, as either the *initiator*, which pertains to the person who establishes the social contact, and the *target* or the person who assumes the receiving end.

Gender and Social Construct. Apparently, sex differences are also present in the ways people perceive social encounters. In particular, females tend to be more sensitive than males when it comes to sensing other people's emotions, needs, and motives. According to Buck, Savin, Miller and Caul (1972), females also do better than males at interpreting emotional expressions and at expressing what they feel in such a way that others perceive them correctly.

After his extensive review of pertinent literature, Hoffman (1977) concluded that empathy was more prevalent in females than in males.

Nature of Close Relationships. Aside from exploring the main effects of gender and social position, this study's line of investigation also includes the importance and influence of the nature of relationship on the initiator's choice of self-presentational strategies and the target's evaluation of a particular strategy's appeal. In this study, the nature of close relationships is dichotomized into *friendship* and *romantic relationship*. The former is defined as a "steady concern, attachment, and caring felt toward another person" (Grasha, 1995, p. 33). The latter on the other hand, involves a "strong absorption with another person in which passion and wanting to be intimate are important components of the relationship" (Grasha, 1995, p.33).

Researchers have consistently shown that the correlates of attraction concern interacting factors, attributes of those involved and their behavior (Aronson, et.al., pp. 387-388). For relationships to develop further, however, other factors assume importance. In other words, how people feel about a relationship depends on their impressions of the gratifying aspects of the relationship, the kind of relationship they deserve, and their chances of having a better relationship with someone else (Aronson, et.al., p. 388).

One theory of attraction that is relevant to the present study, suggests that we start almost automatically to appraise others as potential friends or romantic partners (Trenholm & Jensen, p.300). Duck's Filtering Theory of Attraction explains when and how people use both verbal and nonverbal cues of others to determine their attractiveness as a relational partner (Trenholm & Jensen, p. 300). This model explains that, accompanying such evaluations is a set of criteria to evaluate each other's attractiveness. The first criterion of attraction refers to factors involving proximity, frequency of interaction, and expectations of future encounters. The next includes physical cues, relevant stimuli coming from the surroundings, and perceptions of status and similarity. The third criterion comes into view when much more information becomes available. This comprises interaction cues, like the quality of conversation, interaction distance, and eye contact. The last decisive factor allows those involved to form impressions of the other's attitude, beliefs, and personality. Sequentially, the appraisal of attraction is more likely to be based on these cognitive characteristics (Trenholm & Jensen, p.301). Hence, these cues basically give rise to one's decision about whether to like or dislike a person.

Several studies have illustrated how these criteria operate, specifically, at the start of a relationship. In one study for instance by Aron, Dutton, Aron and Iverson (1989), college students and older adults were asked to give accounts of how they fell in love or into friendship with specific people in their lives. After coding the responses, the researchers came up with the following results. For the falling in love accounts, they found that

reciprocal liking and attractiveness were considered as the strongest predictors of attraction. Mentioned only in moderate frequency were variables such as “being ready for or looking for a romantic relationship”, and being dissatisfied in a current relationship. Variables with the lowest frequencies were similarity and propinquity (as cited in Aronson, et.al., pp. 386-387). The same pattern of falling in love accounts has been found cross culturally, specifically for Chinese American and Mexican American students in the United States and for students in Japan and Russia (as cited in Aronson, et. al).

For the falling into friendship accounts, Aron and Aron in 1996 found that reciprocal liking and attractiveness were also the most frequently cited reasons. However, they were mentioned less often compared to the falling-in-love accounts. Similarity and propinquity were mentioned more in friendship attraction than in falling-in-love recollections (Aronson, et. al).

In the Philippines, Medina (2001) claims that the Filipino culture primarily sets the criteria for a suitable love object. More often, a smart attractive lady and an intelligent good-looking gentleman are both considered in the Philippine society as very “eligible” especially if they come from respectable and well-to-do families (p.117).

Aside from identifying important factors that influence the outset of a relationship, the studies discussed previously further revealed that the pathways of friendships and romantic relationships appear to take on different routes. In relation to the present study, it was speculated that the preference for a particular self-presentational strategy and the strategy’s perceived appeal may be accounted for by the nature of relationship the initiator pursues.

In summary, the course of the discussion revolved around the possible influences of gender, social position and nature of relationships on the initiation of interpersonal bonds. It must be noted, however, that these three factors were not treated simply as independent entities. Consistent with Schlenker, Weigold, and Holmes’s contention, the researcher found it necessary to look into the complexity of relationship formation. This procedure was done through an examination of the manner by which the variables mentioned above interact to produce differences in the choice and perceived appeal of self-presentational strategies.

After extensive review of relevant literature, the researcher found it logical to limit the population to college students, whose answers would hopefully address the gap in knowledge regarding relationship formation. This decision rested on the idea that friendships dramatically increase in their psychological importance during adolescence, and that romantic relations generally envelop adolescents’ lives (Santrock, 2001, p. 184). Moreover, close relationships seem to be popular conversation topics for young adults (Tan, et.al., p.31).

This study primarily sought to evaluate and extract general strategies from specific actions used by college students in their effort to establish close relationships. The effects of social position, gender and nature of relationship at the onset of such relationships were also explored. In particular, the following specific research questions were posed with the accompanying assumptions:

1. What are the general strategies employed by college students when initiating close relationships?

The hypothesis would be that, based on the assumption that people present themselves in a favorable manner when seeking approval, the general strategies that are used to establish intimate relations involve actions of ingratiation, self-promotion, and supplication.

2. Does the social position of an individual, either as an initiator or a target, affect his or her preference for a particular strategy?

It was expected that the social position of a person, whether he or she is the initiator or the target, influences him or her to prefer one strategy over the other.

3. Is the preference for a particular strategy a function of gender?

- a) Does the gender of the initiator influence his or her choice of self-presentational strategy?

The hypothesis would state that gender reliably influences the initiator's preference for a certain strategy.

- b) Does the gender of the target influence his or her preference for a certain self-presentational strategy?

The hypothesis would state that gender reliably influences the target's preference for a certain strategy.

4. Does the nature of close relationship affect one's choice of strategy?

- a) Does the nature of relationship the initiator pursues affect his or her choice of strategy?

It was expected that the nature of relationship influences the initiator's preference for a certain strategy.

- b) Does the nature of relationship the initiator pursues affect the target's perception of a certain strategy's appeal?

The hypothesis would state that the nature of relationship the initiator pursues influences the target's evaluation of a certain strategy's appeal.

5. Do gender and the nature of relationship interact when it comes to one's choice of strategy?

- a) Do the gender of the initiator and the nature of relationship he or she pursues interact when it comes to his or her choice of strategy?

It was expected that there is an interaction between the gender of the initiator and the nature of relationship in terms of one's choice of strategy.

- b) Do the gender of the target and the nature of relationship the initiator pursues interact when it comes to his or her appraisal of a certain strategy's appeal?

The hypothesis would state that there is an interaction between the gender of the target and the nature of relationship in terms of one's appraisal of a certain strategy's appeal.

Method

The study involved two basic designs. Partly, this research is descriptive as it was aimed at discovering the specific behaviors that might constitute a general tactic used in establishing close relationships.

To ferret out temporal associations between general strategies people use to establish close relationships and the two independent variables, namely: (1) Social Position: *initiator* or *target*; (2) Nature of Relationship: *friendship* or *romantic relationship*; and the moderator variable, (3) Gender: *male* or *female*, the researcher also used the quasi-experimental design.

Population and Locale of the Study

A pre-survey group of thirty (30) respondents was selected to supply the specific items that would comprise the actual study's questionnaire.

In the actual study, two hundred forty (N=240) students were selected at random. Their responses provided the data for the extraction of general strategies that are commonly used to establish close relationships. The same group of respondents was randomly assigned

to and evenly distributed across eight conditions to determine probable influences of the independent variables mentioned previously. Half of the group was assigned to the initiator condition, while the other half posed as targets. Within each group of social positions, there were sixty (n=60) male and sixty (n=60) female respondents. Furthermore, half of the respondents were assigned to friendship situation, whereas the other half was assigned to romantic situation. The eight conditions with thirty (30) respondents each were as follows:

- (1) Male, Initiator – Romantic Condition
- (2) Female, Initiator – Romantic Condition
- (3) Male, Target – Romantic Condition
- (4) Female, Target – Romantic Condition
- (5) Male, Initiator – Friendship Condition
- (6) Female, Initiator – Friendship Condition
- (7) Male, Target – Friendship Condition
- (8) Female, Target – Friendship Condition

Data Gathering Tool

A pre-survey was conducted whereby through an open ended type of questionnaire, respondents were instructed to describe in detail or elaborate on the specific actions they typically use to establish close interpersonal contacts.

On the other hand, the actual study addressed the problem of identifying general strategies commonly used by college students when establishing interpersonal bonds. This stage consisted of a questionnaire packet that included a short description of the study, an informed consent sheet, and the questionnaire. Most of the items in the questionnaire were drawn from the responses provided by the pre-survey group; while eight of these were added to represent acts of supplication (as based on Jones's description). The rest of the items were based on the study conducted by Buss.

In order to manipulate the different conditions according to independent variable effects, there were four sets of questionnaires used in the study. Variation in the independent variable was established through instructional manipulation.

The following were the different sets of instructions given to male and female respondents assigned to separate conditions:

(1) *Initiator – Romantic Condition*: If I want someone to be romantically linked with me, I typically...

(2) *Initiator – Friendship Condition*: If I want someone to be my friend, I typically...

(3) *Target – Romantic Condition*: If someone wants to be romantically linked with me, I typically find it appealing when this person ...

(4) *Target – Friendship Condition*: If someone wants me to be his or her friend, I typically find it appealing when this person...

In the actual study, the manner of responding to the sets of questionnaire was based on a four-point scale with the following anchors:

- 1 - Not True For Me
- 2 - Somewhat Not True For Me
- 3 - Somewhat True For ME
- 4 - True For Me

Data Gathering Procedure

In the pre-survey phase, each respondent was asked to fill out a questionnaire by completing a phrase that implies the person's typical choice of action when establishing close relationships. Responses drawn from this group comprised the items of the questionnaire that were used in this study.

In the actual study, the scores elicited from the respondents were utilized for the statistical extraction of general strategies used in establishing close relationships and the examination of the main and interactional effects of the independent and moderator variables.

Each of the respondents in the study was also assigned to eight conditions at random.

Gender and the nature of relationship defined the conditions for both initiator and target groups.

Treatment of Data

In response to the objectives set by this study, factor analysis was utilized to extract latent components associated with specific actions used in establishing close relations.

Specifically, Principal Components Analysis was used to extract the general strategies, sort the factors in order of importance, and identify the factor that accounts for most of the variation in all face-work strategies. An eigenvalue of 1 was initially set as the minimum criterion for extraction (Breakwell, Hammond, & Fife-Schaw, 2002, p. 387).

The Varimax and Promax were the rotational techniques used in determining the factor loadings needed for factor evaluation and interpretation. For the purpose of achieving a simple structure (Thurstone, 1948) and avoid ambiguity in the interpretation of rotated factors (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2001, p.623), factorially complex variables or items that load significantly on more than one factor were excluded in the analysis.

The index of utility for each factor loading was tentatively set at .30 as the minimum (Kerlinger, 1986, p. 572). However, this index was raised to .40 to eliminate numerous factorially complex variables that appeared in the first extraction. To confirm the genuineness of factor loading, another decisive factor was that the variable or item must have significant factor loadings in both rotations before it could be included in the factorial groupings.

T-tests for independent samples were conducted to determine the main effect of social position on self-presentation. The Factorial Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Between-Groups Design was applied to determine the main effects of the variables, social position, gender and nature of close relationship on one's choice of strategy. The Factorial ANOVA for Between-Groups Design was also used to test the interaction between gender and the nature of relationship for both initiator and target groups.

The mean scores of individual participants on each extracted factor were used as dependent variable measures in the abovementioned statistical procedures.

Analyses of associations between conditions of the independent variables (i.e. initiator vs. target, friendship vs. romantic relationship) and between male and female groups were also conducted to substantiate findings of statistical tests. Comparison was made by assessing the direction and strength of agreement between conditions or groups in terms of each factor's appeal.

Results and Discussion

The presentation of data will begin with the description and labeling of the underlying tactics accounting for the initiation of close relationships that were extracted through factor analysis. Subsequently, the discussion will center on the main and interactional effects of gender and type of relationship (friendship and romantic relationship) on the use of self-presentational strategy for each social position (initiator and target).

General Self-Presentational Strategies Used to Establish Close Relationships

Originally, the number of factors extracted with items that have at least .30 loading and a minimum eigenvalue of 1 was sixteen. These factors explain 65.976% of the total variance ($v_{to}=63$ items). Using the sixteen factors as bases, Varimax and Promax rotation procedures yielded a considerable number of items that load significantly on more than one factor. Thus, to guarantee parsimony in the study, the researcher decided to raise the index of utility for each significant factor loading to .40, from the original .30.

After careful examination of items that load exclusively on a component, the number of factors to be interpreted was reduced to nine given that some factors only comprised of single items with significant loadings; while others had combinations of seemingly incongruent items that made factor labeling more complicated. This adjustment yielded 41 items that are factorially pure variables. On the other hand, this finding guarantees that each of these items, with significant loading on a single factor, is favorable in the interpretation of the extracted components or factors. The exclusion of the last seven factors resulted in the reduction of extracted variance to 53%.

The nine factors considered for analysis are presented according to their importance in the subsequent tables. Their factor loadings derived from both Varimax and Promax rotation procedures are also included. Relative to each factor is a label and description of the ways that serve a person's tactical purposes for establishing close relationships. As indicated earlier, only factorially pure variables that constitute each factor were considered for analysis.

The Factors

This component explains 46.04% of the extracted variance (24.41% of the total variance). It is considered as the strongest factor considering the proportion of variance that is explained by it. On the basis of the different variables (items) that comprise Factor I, it can be inferred that this component describes the specific strategies of college students who are more inclined to make the first move. Individuals who usually employ this general strategy prefer to let their target know about their feelings. Often, they take the initiative of setting a date, writing, and even paying the target a visit. Otherwise, they make it a point to be physically near the target on a relatively regular basis. Other tactics that they employ to win the target are telling how special the target is, and acting sweet towards the target. Therefore, this factor is labeled as "The Active Pursuer".

Table 1**Factor I**

Item Number	Description	Varimax	Promax
57	Tell the target he or she is special	.676	.766
37	Tell the target one's liking towards him or her	.659	.741
56	Ask the target out	.657	.678
40	Call the target often	.639	.592
31	Write the target a letter	.600	.673
44	Pay the target a visit	.596	.607
38	Act sweetly towards the target	.574	.553
39	Make it a point to ride with the target	.532	.513

Factor II is another strong component as it accounts for 15.06% of the extracted variance (7.982% of the *vto*). The different items in this factor mainly suggest the strategies that college students employ to be physically attractive. In order to gain the approval and regard of their target, these individuals would go to the extent of altering their looks by putting on sexy, yet fashionable clothes and having a novel and interesting hairstyle.

Not only does this strategy reflect one's reliance on tactics intended to enhance physical appearance but it also implies one's resolve not to allow his or her efforts on appearance management be put to waste. Thus, individuals who are inclined to use this tactic boldly go out of their way to stand out and be prominent so as to be noticed by the target. They usually put emphasis on their body language and their desirable physical attributes. They use preening gestures that are associated with actions designed to call attention to the body, and are typically aimed at their target. On the basis of the descriptions above, this factor is named as "The Appearance Manager".

Table 2

Factor II

Item Number	Description	Varimax	Promax
7	Wear stylish, fashionable clothes	.726	.690
10	Wear sexy clothes	.698	.691
49	Spend more time on looks than the usual	.697	.661
4	Have a new and interesting hairstyle	.679	.679
12	Alter or change looks	.649	.614
47	Wear clothes that would make one stand out in the crowd	.627	.516
6	Go on a diet and improve physique	.578	.512

Factor III, which explains 7.58% of the extracted variance (4.02% of the *vto*), reflect the typical characteristics of college students who try to portray themselves as helpless and reliant on others. Supporting Jones's description of supplication, individuals who have the inclination to use this strategy would try to establish close relationships by exerting more effort to seek support, help, assistance and advice from the target. Hence, the label for this factor is "The Supplicator" (Adapted from Jones, 1990).

Table 3

Factor III

Item Number	Description	Varimax	Promax
21	Be visible to the target when needing help or favor	.728	.812
20	Make the target help in own troubles	.715	.712
9	Request target's assistance in project or assignment	.707	.819
32	Ask target a favor	.605	.636
25	Ask target's advice for some problems	.582	.529

The variables that comprise this factor explain 7.00% of the extracted variance (3.71% of the *vto*). The five items describe tactics used by college students to present themselves in a favorable manner, thereby increasing their attractiveness. To gain the approval of the target, some individuals have a propensity to make use of flattery (e.g. giving compliments). Aside from the sweet-talk they usually engage in, they also tend to do favors and express their liking for the target either in a subtle or more obvious manner. The above description, therefore fits Jones's depiction of strategies employed by "The Ingratiator", which is the label for this factor.

Table 4

Factor IV

Item Number	Description	Varimax	Promax
62	Send the target inspiring text messages	.630	.812
36	Compliment the target	.599	.704
3	Try to look sympathetic to target's troubles	.599	.799
35	Ask for the target's cell phone number	.535	.548
42	Text the target	.497	.524

Explaining 5.79% of the extracted variance (3.07% of the vto), Factor V is a component that explains another typology of self-presentation. The three items in this factor mainly suggest the typical characteristics of college students who also take an active part in currying another person's favor but in less noticeable ways. They give less direct signals to let the target know their feelings, such as, by smiling and greeting the target whenever they chance upon him or her. It is not uncommon for these individuals to initiate the move. On the other hand, they prefer playing the game of self-presentation rather safely by being conservative up to a certain extent. Hence, the label for this factor is, "The Subtle Initiator".

Table 5

Factor V

Item Number	Description	Varimax	Promax
19	Always smile at the target	.773	1.03
46	Greet the target every time one meets her or him	.684	.836
17	Starting a conversation with the target	.654	.841

The next factor accounts for 5.15% of the extracted variance (2.73% of the vto). College students who tend to use this strategy, largely perceive close relationships as an exchange of rewards and costs. Congruent with Kelley and Thibaut's (1978) Social Exchange Theory, the motives of these individuals appear to be rooted in a "tit-for-tat strategy". In other words, their willingness to exert effort in pleasing the target must be good enough as compared to the benefits they would reap from the relationship they plan to establish. For instance, they expect that the time, money and effort they spend to do favors for the target are traded for the target's acceptance of friendship or romance these initiators want to establish. Thus, this factor is labeled as "The Social Exchanger".

Table 6**Factor VI**

Item Number	Description	Varimax	Promax
30	Give the target gifts	.711	.836
29	Do target's school projects	.661	.808
58	Treat the target	.490	.533

Factor VII explains 4.89% of the extracted variance (2.59% of the *vto*). College students who prefer to use this self-presentational strategy try to impress the target by showing less pronounced proofs of their desirability. They tend to boost their attractiveness by often engaging in understated forms of self-promotion. Unlike the usual acts of self-promotion, however, these people deliberately play down their virtues or abilities by concealing them in their personal hobbies or activities. This factor has been labeled as “The Subtle Self-Praiser”.

Table 7**Factor VII**

Item Number	Description	Varimax	Promax
60	Tell target about books read	.783	.826
63	Tell target about movies watched	.704	.740
61	Tell target about own uniqueness	.542	.536

Factor VIII accounts for 4.46% of the extracted variance (2.36% of the *vto*). The items of this component appear to depict the different behaviors that foster familiarity and closeness. In order to “get into the target”, college students who are likely to adopt this tactic, encourage the target to engage in emotional self-disclosures (Reis and Patrick, 1996; Reis and Shaver, 1988). Matching Taylor and Altman's model of Social Penetration (1973), these individuals promote intimacy by posing as listeners and showing their targets that they can be accepting and understanding. Hence, the label for this factor is “The Intimacy Generator”.

Table 8**Factor VIII**

Item Number	Description	Varimax	Promax
16	Show interest in what target is saying	.681	.767
11	Ask target's opinions about certain issues	.640	.714
23	Offer target help	.530	.483
14	Make a way to hang out with the target	.488	.490

The last extracted factor explains 4.03% of the extracted variance (2.14% of the vto). The items in this component typify the behaviors of college students who want to be perceived as competent. They attempt to impress the target by claiming to be skilled or showing that they are good at a variety of tasks and using knotty or highly complex words rarely used by other people. Therefore, the label for this factor is "The Self-Promoter" (Jones, 1990).

The results above show that there are about nine applicable self-presentational strategies that college students employ to establish close relationships. Thus, the hypothesis which states that, "The general strategies that are used to establish intimate relations involve actions of ingratiation, self-promotion, and supplication," by some means, is confirmed. It must be noted however that aside from these three strategies, six more tactics emerged from the analysis. Perhaps one explanation for this is that the self-presentational strategies suggested by Jones may not cover all the different tactics used to initiate close relationships. Another way to look at this finding is to assume that these basic strategies can still be broken down into secondary tactics. For example, the findings indicate that the acts of self-promotion could be done in either subtle or more pronounced ways (note Factors VII and IX).

Table 9**Factor IX**

Item Number	Description	Varimax	Promax
26	Talk articulately	.724	.834
27	Act smart	.694	.759
24	Do things most people are not capable of doing	.453	.431

Effects of Social Position on the Use of Self-Presentational Strategies

To address the second problem that was centered on the influence of social position on self presentation, nine t-tests for independent samples were used. These statistical procedures yielded only four significant outcomes. The obtained t-values imply that the social position of an individual influences his or her choice of self-presentational strategies. This means that there are reliable differences between initiators and targets in their preference for certain self-presentational strategies. In particular, initiators and targets appear to be different in their regard for Factor I [$t(238) = -5.219$ $p < .001$], Factor III [$t(238) = -9.055$ $p < .001$], Factor VII [$t(238) = -2.704$ $p < .05$], and Factor IX [$t(238) = -2.201$ $p < .05$]. To point out the direction of differences, targets, compared to the initiators, give the impression that they have greater preference for acts that are associated with that of the Active Pursuer ($M_i = 2.400$ & $M_t = 2.875$), the Supplicator ($M_i = 2.287$ & $M_t = 3.000$), the Subtle Self-Praiser ($M_i = 2.470$ & $M_t = 2.733$) and the Self-Promoter ($M_i = 2.600$ & $M_t = 2.806$).

The above results which generated significant t-test scores confirmed the hypothesis, which presupposed that the social position of a college student significantly affects his or her preference for a certain strategy. Indeed, the social position of the person plays a key role in his or her perception of a certain self-presentational strategy's appeal. The findings, in a way, support Kelley's contention that people's evaluation of their interaction with others may be defined by their own personal constructs. In this case, it was their perceived social position that influenced them to choose a certain self-presentational strategy over the other. The preferred strategies mentioned above suggest the inclination of those being wooed to take pleasure in being actively pursued. This proclivity, however, does not entirely make them passive love objects or idle intimacy figures. As reflected by their choices, they also want to verify how important their role is in the initiation of relationship. As such, they welcome the other person's cry for help and encourage self-disclosure, since these acts affirm the worth of their social position. Targets, compared to initiators, also find it more appealing when initiators tend to present their capabilities in a more subdued manner.

It is also worth pointing out that the targets generally gave higher ratings. The targets could have attached lesser risks to their social positions which motivated them to be less guarded than the initiators.

Based on the scores and ranks above, there appears to be an agreement between initiators and targets with regard to their most and least preferred strategies. Factor V is the most preferred strategy in the initiation of close relationships, while Factor II emerges as the least preferred tactic. Supporting this finding, the measure of association, $p(7) = .88$ $p < .01$, indicates a very high positive relationship in the preference of initiators and targets. Perhaps, this obtained coefficient explains why there were only four significant values that emerged in the t-tests.

Overall, the findings presented above suggest relative congruence in the perceptions of both social positions as regards the appeal of certain self-presentational strategies. The strong preference for Factor V (The Subtle Initiator) indicates that people who initiate close relationships tend to use less pronounced ways (e.g. smiling, greeting, and starting a conversation) to be acquainted with their targets. Similarly, targets find it most appealing when initiators use less gaudy tactics in pursuing close relationships. The targets' preference for Factor III (The Supplicator) may indicate affirmation with the contention that Filipinos regard helping and receiving help as integral components in their social interaction (Tan, et al, 2000). Perhaps, one reason why initiators are more prudent or cautious in using this tactic is their apprehension of being labeled as overly reliant on others, which is a risk of supplication (Jones, 1990).

Effects of Gender on Self-Presentational Strategies

The factorial analysis of variance was utilized to answer Problem 3a, which focused on the influence of the initiator's gender on his or her choice of strategy. This statistical procedure yielded two gender differentials in the initiator condition. These disparities were salient in Factors I [$F(1,116) = 13.029$ $p < .001$] and II [$F(1,116) = 6.882$ $p < .01$]. Supporting the findings of Buss, male initiators ($M_{mi} = 2.610$) are more inclined to be the Active Pursuers than female initiators ($M_{fi} = 2.190$). By contrast, male initiators ($M_{mi} = 2.071$) are surprisingly more likely to be the Appearance Managers than female initiators ($M_{fi} = 1.776$). With regard to Problem 3b, which made an inquiry on the influence of the target's gender in his or her perception of a certain strategy's appeal, statistical results show that gender played an important role in the target condition. Gender differences were observed in Factor I [$F(1,116) = 5.000$ $p < .05$] and Factor VIII [$F(1,116) = 5.699$ $p < .05$]. Specifically, female targets ($M_{ft} = 3.015$) are more inclined to prefer initiators who are Active Pursuers than do male targets ($M_{mt} = 2.735$). Moreover, female targets ($M_{ft} = 3.246$) seem to prefer initiators who act as the Intimacy Generators than do male targets ($M_{mt} = 3.246$).

Based on the findings of the study, the hypotheses that indicated the significant effects of gender on the use of self-presentational strategies, are adopted, as far as the abovementioned factors are concerned.

The results of the study imply support to the traditional belief that males are generally the initiators of social interaction. Perhaps this was one of the primary reasons why the female initiators had notable reservations concerning Factor I and why female targets find Active Pursuers as appealing. What appeared unexpectedly in the results was the male initiators' preference for Factor II. Contrary to common observation that females put much emphasis on their appearance, the findings of the present study reflect the male initiators' desire to enhance their looks. Since Factor II does not solely describe acts that center on

physical appearance, one alternative explanation for such finding centers on the tendency of males to employ risky behaviors to affirm traditional masculine stereotypes of being more adventurous and flamboyant. In addition, considering the greater freedom and more flexible boundaries enjoyed by males in the social arena, it is not unusual to see them more adept in the use of various self-presentational strategies.

The Effects of the Nature of Relationship on Self-Presentational Strategies

The factorial ANOVA was also used to answer problem 4a, which posed the question regarding the effects of the type of close relationship on the initiator's preference for certain tactics. This statistical tool yielded five reliable differences in the initiator condition. These disparities were salient in Factor I [$F(1,116) = 17.784$ $p < .001$], Factor II [$F(1,116) = 18.627$ $p < .001$], Factor IV [$F(1,116) = 5.337$ $p < .05$], Factor VI [$F(1,116) = 7.805$ $p < .01$], and Factor IX [$F(1,116) = 7.905$ $p < .01$].

Taking into consideration the factors with significant values, the hypothesis that points out the influence of the nature of close relationship on the choice of self-presentational strategies is adopted.

Compatible with past findings on relationship formation, the results of this study substantiate the observation that the pathways of friendship and romantic relationship point toward different directions.

In particular, compared to the initiators of friendship, romantic relationship initiators are more inclined to be Active Pursuers, Appearance Managers, Ingratiators, Social Exchangers, and Self-Promoters. From this, it can be deduced that the preference of people who establish romantic relationships are more explicit compared to those who initiate friendships. The foregoing, therefore suggests the preoccupation of individuals who intend to establish romantic relationships, with self-presentational strategies. These initiators, therefore, are more inclined to exert more effort in actively pursuing their targets. Compared with initiators of friendships, they are more likely to flatter their targets and at the same time, place greater emphasis on playing up their strong points in order to gain the respect of their targets. It can also be gathered from the findings that initiators of romantic relations have more propensity to be concerned with the benefits they would reap from the relationship they plan to establish.

The requisites of friendships, on the part of the initiators, seem to be less demanding and restrictive that they exert less effort in exercising self-presentation. Addressing problem 4b that probed into the effects of the nature of relationship on the target's perception of presentational strategies, the Factorial ANOVA, as presented in the table on the next page, produced no significant values in the target condition.

This finding indicates that the nature of close relationship does not significantly affect the targets' preference for certain self-presentational strategies. Thus, the research hypothesis is disconfirmed.

Affirming the widely held belief that “flattery will get you somewhere”, the high scores of ingratiation suggest the impact of this strategy on relationship formation. Indeed, buttering up gains the approval of the target and will really “get the initiator somewhere”. Also worth mentioning is the relatively high rating of supplication, particularly in the target condition. As earlier noted, acts of supplication seem to be appealing to and regarded, especially by Filipinos as a vital aspect in their dealings with others (Guthrie & Jimenez-Jacobs, 1967).

Interactional Effects of Gender and Nature of Relationship on Self-Presentational Strategies

To answer problems 5a and 5b that focused on the interactional effects of gender and the nature of relationship on self-presentation, factorial Analyses of Variance for both social positions were conducted to examine the interface between the variables mentioned previously.

There are no significant interactions between gender and the nature of close relationship when it comes to the use self-presentational strategies for both initiator and target conditions. Thus, this study's findings do not confirm the hypotheses that hint at an interaction between the two variables when it comes to the use of self-presentational strategies that initiate close relationships.

Contrary to the idea posited by Schlenker, Weigold and Holmes, it appears that gender and the nature of close relationship do not share influences on the use of self-presentational strategies.

Conclusion

This study was aimed at examining the general strategies used by college students in their effort to establish close relationships. In particular, it focused on the main and interactional effects of gender, social position, and nature of close relationship on one's preference for a particular self-presentational strategy when initiating either friendships or romantic relationships.

The results of the study undeniably show that college students who try to initiate close relationships are inclined to put on different “faces” in order to win their targets. Out of the sixteen general strategies that were initially factor analyzed, the researcher was able to label nine factors that more or less reasonably account for the variance of the behavior in

question. The factor that demonstrated the highest association among items pertains to behaviors that actively pursue the target.

The interactional effects of gender and nature of close relationship were not observed in both social positions. Thus, only the independent effects of gender and nature of close relationship were observed in all the nine factors.

One significant implication of the study pertains to the role played by subject and situational (e.g. nature of close relationship) variables in the initiation of close relationships. The influence of such variables largely account for the differences in the choice of certain self-presentational strategies. Thus, the degree to which a college student prefers a certain strategy is a function of his or her gender, social position and the type of relationship he or she perceives as being initiated or intends to establish.

Another highlight of the study that is worth mentioning is the discovery that some tactics which are traditionally deemed as effective were not regarded as important by the respondents. For instance, both initiator and target participants did not put much value on physical appearance, which is popularly labeled as one of the strongest predictors of attraction. On the contrary, acts of supplication, which are typically regarded as a disadvantage and frowned upon by individualistic societies, were viewed by the research participants as relatively appealing. Perhaps, the disparity of views, can be linked to cultural differences in terms of values and traditions. Indeed, the findings of this study have supported the assertion of local scholars that reliance on others and acts of helping are integral parts in the interpersonal relations of Filipinos.

Thus, it is an oversimplification to say that certain self-presentational strategies are generally and exclusively favorable or not. As evidenced in the results of the study, a multitude of factors could actually cause disparity in people's attitudes and behaviors.

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