RESEARCH PAPER

Translation, adaptation and validation of the Relationship Questionnaire among portuguese young people

Tradução, adaptação e validação do *Relationship Questionnaire* em jovens portugueses

Traducción, adaptación y validación del *Relationship Questionnaire* en jóvenes portugueses

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Abstract

Background: Within interpersonal relationships, romantic relationships take on a special meaning at the end of adolescence.
Objectives: The main purpose of this methodological study was to translate and adapt the Relationship Questionnaire into the Portuguese culture.
Methodology: A questionnaire (questions related to socio-demographic characteristics and romantic relationships, as well as the relationship questionnaire) was applied to a sample composed of 127 higher education students, obtained using a non-probability purposive sampling.
Results: Results showed a 16-item scale, distributed into four factors (Possessive relationship, Controlling relationship, Demeaning relationship, and Destructive relationship), which explained 63.850% of the variance. The correlation matrix (χ^2=840.544; p<.000) and the *Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin* measure (KMO=0.815) ensured the adequacy of the factor model. The scale showed good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.847). Data confirmed that the instrument is accurate, reliable and valid. Young people have healthy relationships, though female students have better relationships than male students.
Conclusion: Results indicated that this is a reliable and valid questionnaire to assess romantic relationships.

Keywords: young person; romantic relationship; psychometrics and measures.

Resumo

Enquadramento: No âmbito das relações interpessoais, os relacionamentos amorosos assumem um significado especial no final da adolescência.
Objetivos: Este estudo metodológico teve como principal objetivo traduzir e adaptar para a cultura portuguesa o Questionário do Relacionamento Amoroso.
Metodologia: Participaram 127 estudantes do ensino superior, selecionados por amostragem não probabilística intencional, tendo sido aplicado um questionário (questões relativas a características sociodemográficas e de relacionamento amoroso e o questionário de relacionamento amoroso).
Resultados: Os resultados apontam para uma escala de 16 itens, distribuídos por 4 fatores (Relação possessiva, Relação controlo, Relação depreciativa e Relação destrutiva), que explicam 63,850% da variância. A matriz de correlação (χ^2 =840,544; p<,000) e a medida de *Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin* (KMO=0,815) garantem a adequação do modelo fatorial. Apresenta uma boa consistência interna (α de *Cronbach* de 0,847). Os dados confirmam o instrumento como rigoroso, fiável e válido. Os jovens apresentam uma qualidade de relacionamento saudável, sendo este relacionamento melhor nas raparigas que nos rapazes.
Conclusão: Os resultados indiciaram estarmos perante um questionário fiável e válido para avaliar o relacionamento amoroso.

Palavras-chave: jovem; relacionamento amoroso, psicometria e medidas.

Resumen

Marco: En el ámbito de las relaciones interpersonales, las relaciones amorosas adquieren un significado especial al final de la adolescencia.
Objetivos: El objetivo principal de este estudio metodológico ha sido traducir y adaptar a la cultura portuguesa el Cuestionario de Relaciones Amorosas.
Metodología: Se contó con la participación de 127 estudiantes de enseñanza superior seleccionados por un muestreo no probabilístico intencional, y con un cuestionario (cuestiones relativas a las características sociodemográficas y de las relaciones amorosas, así como el cuestionario de relaciones amorosas).
Resultados: Los resultados se reflejan en una escala de 16 ítems, distribuidos en 4 factores (relación posesiva, relación de control, relación de desprecio y relación destructiva), que explican el 63,850 % de varianza. La matriz de correlación χ^2 = 840,544; p<,000) y la medida de *Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (*KMO=0,815) garantizan la adecuación del modelo factorial. Asimismo, presenta una buena consistencia interna (α de *Cronbach* de 0,847). Los datos confirman que el instrumento es riguroso, fiable y válido. Las relaciones entre los jóvenes son por tanto sanas, aunque la calidad de estas es mejor en las chicas que en los chicos.
Conclusión: Los resultados indican que nos encontramos ante un cuestionario fiable y válido de evaluación de las relaciones amorosas.

Palabras clave: joven, relaciones amorosas, psicometría y medidas.

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Introduction

One of the developmental tasks which adolescents/ young people face relates to the establishment of quality interpersonal relationships, which will influence the construction of their identity, integrity, autonomy, self-concept, self-esteem and emotional management.

Within the interpersonal relationships, romantic relationships should be highlighted. At this stage of life, adolescents are characterised by greater autonomy towards their family, develop same-sex peer relationships and start dating. Dating and establishing romantic relationships represent a transition to adulthood and, for many adolescents, they are even manifestations of the state of being adult (Hand & Furman, 2009).

Romantic relationships take on greater importance at the end of adolescence, when adolescents try to balance the construction of intimacy with that of identity. Collins, Welsh, and Furman (2009) confirmed the existence of associations between romantic relationships in adolescence and aspects of individual development, such as building a personal identity, adapting to changes in family relationships, engaging in harmonious peer relationships, being successful at school and developing their sexual maturity.

With regard to gender differences, girls tend to report higher quality levels of the romantic relationship, particularly regarding intimacy and satisfaction (Connolly & McIssac, 2011).

The literature reveals the existence of differences in the characteristics of the adolescent romantic relationships according to age (Adams, Laursen, & Wilder, 2001). In their early stages, romantic relationships are mainly characterised by high levels of affiliation, which are translated into a search for physical closeness, the sharing of activities and companionship (Adams et al., 2001). With an increase in age, there is the tendency to search for emotional closeness, manifested through interdependence, reciprocity and diversity of activities between partners, as well as through daily social interaction (Adams et al., 2001; Pinto, 2009). Markiewicz, Lawford, Doyle, and Haggart (2006) found that, at the beginning of adolescence, peer support levels increase. However, there is a decline in late adolescence and, at this stage, the support is provided by the romantic partner.

The romantic relationship is a phenomenon in which independence and mutual admiration result in a form of understanding and comprehension of the romantic partner, with each member of the dyad becoming an attachment figure. From this perspective, a healthy relationship would be one in which each individual has its own identity and wants to do his/her best for the beloved person, without expecting any reward (Rosset, 2004).

According to Sangrador (as cited by Fiol, 2007), love can be understood as an attitude (a positive attitude or an attitude of attraction for another person, which includes a predisposition to think, feel and behave in a particular way towards that person), an emotion (feeling or passion that includes certain physiological reactions) or a behaviour (caring for the other person, being with her/him, meeting her/his needs). It is, therefore, necessary to look deep into the study of romantic relationships in terms of behaviours, feelings, concepts and motivations.

Romantic relationships tend to influence individuals in a positive way, meeting their expectations, aiding in solving their problems and promoting the satisfaction of their needs (Pinto, 2009). They are also protective factors for victimisation and loneliness (Woodhouse, Dykas, & Cassidy, 2012). Despite the fact that the establishment of a romantic relationship represents a developmental task for adolescents/young people, the same is not always positive, rewarding and suitable for both partners. Thus, the following problems may arise: social isolation, social shyness and anxiety, and violence (Shulman & Kipnis, 2001).

Romantic relationships in adolescence/youth may vary in intensity (mild-extreme) and quality (pleasant-painful). Madsen and Collins (2011) found that adolescents who dated fewer partners in mid-adolescence and who experienced a better quality dating relationship demonstrated romantic relationships characterised by negotiation of conflicts on the basis of mutual satisfaction, caregiving and attention to the partner in young adulthood. On the contrary, adolescents who dated more partners displayed greater negative affectivity in romantic relationships in young adulthood.

Studies conducted in recent years have shown that violence in romantic relationships is a frequent and habitual phenomenon, and that it frequently begins during the dating relationship (Muñoz-Rivas, Gómez, O'Leary, & Lozano, 2007).

Indirect aggression toward romantic partners is used more frequently by females and these relationships are mediated by jealousy (Arnocky, Sunderani, Miller, & Vaillancourt, 2012).

Romantic jealousy is a feeling that is usually present in romantic relationships. Although for many people jealousy may be a manifestation of love, affection, and zeal towards another person, it is, in fact, a feeling that produces anguish in many partners and it can reach unhealthy forms, with adverse consequences for the physical and mental health of the individuals involved. In these cases, jealousy becomes pathological and unhealthy, leading to an uncontrolled and control-taking obsession (Almeida, Rodrigues, & Silva, 2008). A major desire for total control over the partner's feelings and behaviours emerges in this type of jealousy.

Jealousy usually arises when a much appreciated romantic dyad is threatened. It involves a certain restriction on the other, because somehow the jealous partner interferes with the other partner's behaviour and his/her freedom, thus becoming possessive and controlling. Jealousy may have its roots in an affective insecurity due to a rival's interference and may involve feelings such as fear, suspicion, mistrust, anguish, anxiety, anger, rejection, indignation, embarrassment and loneliness, among others, depending on each person (Arnocky et al., 2012).

In a relationship affected by jealousy, people are generally treated as objects by their own partners. Many cancel each other out and lose much of their identity to become what the jealous partner wants them to be, trying to match all of his/her expectations (Almeida et al., 2008).

Ideally, the adolescents/young people's romantic relationships should reflect a relationship of care and attention, encompassing, at the same time, personal, social and relational changes and challenges (Pinto, 2009). Thus, it is important to promote a better understanding of the romantic experiences established over time and their impact on health and well-being (Starr et al., 2012).

There is the need to address the issue of romantic relationships and attention to the other so as to prevent violence and abusive relationships, with the ultimate purpose of avoiding dominant and victimising relationships. To this end, it is necessary to develop psychopedagogical and didactic instruments so as to assist in the personal development of such

relationships in educational settings, particularly among adolescents and young people (García, 2008). It is important to identify the quality of young people's romantic relationships so as to optimise them, converting them into an opportunity and a context to promote their personal and relational development. At the level of intervention, the promotion of skills and personal resources to ensure personal well-being will also be imperative, transforming romantic relationships into the most positive realities possible, promoters of the experience and experimentation of feelings for the other and the relationship of intimacy and commitment, aiming at the satisfaction of the dyad.

Taking into account the importance of the romantic relationships established by young people and their implications in various areas, and since there is no validated instrument for the Portuguese population that could assess those aspects, this study aimed to adapt and validate into Portuguese the *Relationship Questionnaire (*RQ) and determine the quality of romantic relationships among Portuguese young people.

Methodology

Population and sample

To achieve the study aims, a methodological study was conducted involving 127 students attending a higher education institution in central Portugal during the academic year 2010/2011. The following inclusion criteria were established to select the non-probability purposive sample: being 18 years old or more; having or having had a boyfriend/girlfriend; and not being married.

Given that the questionnaire consisted of 22 items and in line with Pestana and Gageiro (2005), who pointed out that the minimum valid responses (N) per variable (K) is: 5x 22., the minimum sample required would be 110 adolescents

Instrument

A questionnaire composed of two groups of variables was used: socio-demographic characteristics (gender and age) and the characteristics of the romantic relationship (having a boyfriend/girlfriend, type of relationship, sexual component in the relationship, frequency of contact, and future of the relationship).

The *Relationship Questionaire* (RQ) was also used. The QR-PT consisted of 22 questions with three response options ("yes", "no" and "sometimes") aimed at assessing the existence of signs that indicated a non-healthy relationship (National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, n.d).

The cultural adaptation process which corresponds to the linguistic and conceptual validation followed the international guidelines (Rahman, Waheed, & Hussain, 2003) described below.

Linguistic and conceptual equivalence of the *Relationship Questionnaire*

The linguistic and conceptual equivalence corresponds to the cross-cultural adaptation of the instrument, and it was performed according to the method recommended by the literature.

The translation from English into Portuguese of the RQ was performed by two Portuguese professionals who were fluent in English and familiar with the objectives of the study. During the period of translation, some contacts were established with the translators to explain the purpose of the measuring instrument and the objectives underlying each item so that the translation would keep the same meaning as the original version (item equivalence).

The analysis of the differences between both translations was performed by three experts in the area and in Portuguese language, which resulted in the first version of the RQ in Portuguese (Portugal).

The back-translation of the first version in Portuguese (Portugal) was performed by two other translators, who had no prior knowledge of the original questionnaire.

After all versions had been analysed and compared and no significant discrepancies were found, the instrument was adjusted, which resulted in the second version of the RQ in Portuguese (Portugal).

The creation of a panel of experts and submission of the instruments for their analysis aimed at validating the existence of the concepts in the culture of the target population and, should they exist, checking whether they were similarly interpreted in both cultures. The panel was also requested to review the presentation of the instruments, their instructions and the rating scale so as to ensure their reproducibility. During this process, the suggestion was made for answers to be made on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (often). This was because the

reliability of a scale increases considerably when more than two response options are provided, making it easier to specify them. Higher scores corresponded to less healthy romantic relationships.

The next step consisted of using the thinking aloud method. The 3rd version in Portuguese (Portugal) was applied to a group with similar characteristics to those of the study population. The sample comprised six students who voluntarily accepted to answer the questionnaires and contribute with comments.

This procedure aimed at testing the format and visual design of the instrument in the target population; the clarity of the instructions and the different items; and the receptiveness and adherence to the contents. It was also assessed whether the instrument was drafted with clarity, without bias, whether it requested the necessary information and whether the presentation allowed for correct filling. There were no suggestions for changes.

Psychometric equivalence of the RQ-PT

The psychometric equivalence refers to the extent to which the psychometric properties of different versions of the same instrument are similar. However, it should be pointed out that the original version was not a scale and, therefore, it was not subjected to any statistical procedure. For this reason, we followed the procedures of Streiner and Norman (2008), which will be described in the chapter on results.

Formal and ethical procedures and data analysis

After the formal authorisation for the cultural and linguistic adaptation of the Portuguese version of the RQ was obtained and the translation and back-translation processes were completed, permission to conduct the study was requested and obtained from the directing board of the higher education institution. The questionnaire was then applied in the classrooms after the respondents' informed consent. Following data collection, the data were inserted and processed in the *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS) software, version 17.

The psychometric properties of the instrument were calculated using descriptive summary measures, item-total correlations (excluding the respective item) and the Cronbach's alpha as a measure of internal reliability. The construct validity was assessed through principal component analysis with orthogonal rotation

using the varimax method. The Student's t-test was also used to assess whether the mean results of both male and female groups were statistically different.

In all items of the scale, the 'non-response' rate was less than 3%, thus, for statistical purposes, non-responses were replaced by the mean valid cases of the variable (Pestana & Gageiro, 2005).

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics and characteristics of the relationships in the sample

The students' mean age was 19.6 years (SD= 3.8), ranging between 18 and 27 years, and 78.7% (100) of participants were female. All students were attending the 1st-year of a higher education degree and 8.7% were working students. During data collection, 36% did not have a boyfriend/girlfriend. Of the 101 participants who answered the question on the type of relationship that they had or had had with their boyfriends/girlfriends, 82.2% reported that it was/had been a stable relationship. In total, 45% of participants reported that they contacted with their boyfriends/girlfriends several times a week and 55.1% believed that the future of the relationship would imply living together. For 87.9% of participants, the dating relationship involved a sexual component. The dating relationships of the 122 participants who answered this question lasted, on average, 17.4 months (SD = 17.4), ranging between 1 and 84 months.

Table 1

Distribution of the sample according to the characteristics of the relationship*

Characteristics of the relationship		No.	%
Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend at the moment (a) (n= 125)	Yes	80	64.0
	No	45	36.0
What is (was) your type of relationship (n= 101)	Recent	12	11.9
	No compromise	6	5.9
	Stable	83	82.2
Frequency with which you are (or were) in contact with your boyfriend/girlfriend (a) (n= 80)	Less than once a month	2	2.5
	Once a month	1	1.3
	Every 15 days	7	8.8
	Once a week	14	17.5
	Several times a week	36	45.0
	Once a day	7	8.8
	Several times a day	13	16.3
Future of this relationship (n= 69)	Marry	26	37.7
	Live together	38	55.1
	Stop dating	5	7.2
Sexual component in the dating relationship (n= 99)	Yes	87	87.9
	No	12	12.1

* Although the sample was composed of 127 participants, not all of them answered every question.

Psychometric properties of the RQ-PT

The psychometric properties were determined by assessing reliability and validity. This study resulted in a final scale consisting of 16 items. The study of the items and the reliability was carried out according to the following criteria: assessment of the correlation coefficient between the various questions and the total score and assessment of Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α), both for the total items and for the total scale, as the various items were excluded one by one.

Bearing in mind these criteria, we found that the item-total correlations were all positive, quite high and highly significant ($p < 0.001$). All correlation coefficients were greater than 0.30. Corrected item-total correlations ranged between 0.302 and 0.743, and the mean inter-item correlation confirms the homogeneity of the set of questions (Streiner & Norman, 2008).

As for the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α), we found that, in almost every item (except for item 1), the value decreased when it was deleted, which means that the

items improved the homogeneity of the scale when they were present. Item 1 was not deleted because, had it been deleted, it would not have significantly improved the Cronbach›s alpha and, theoretically, it is important to the scale. None of the items showed values lower than 0.80. The Cronbach›s alpha for the total items was 0.847 (Table 2), which, according to several authors, is a good value (Pestana & Gageiro, 2005; Streiner & Norman, 2008).

Table 2

Statistics of homogeneity of the items and coefficients of internal consistency (Cronbach's α) of the RQ-PT

Item	Mean	SD	Corrected R	Cronbach's α
1. Does your girlfriend or boyfriend tease you in hurtful ways?	1.59	1.021	.302	.854
2. Is he/she jealous of your other friends?	2.13	.979	.566	.833
3. Does he/she ignore your opinions or interests?	1.47	.682	.531	.835
4. Does he/she check up on you?	1.70	.915	.743	.819
5. Does he/she accuse you of flirting with other people?	1.31	.668	.667	.827
6. Does he/she tell you how to dress, or who you can hang out with?	1.32	.684	.491	.837
7. Does he/she insist that you spend all of your free time together, and get angry when you want to do other things?	1.64	.855	.603	.830
8. Does he/she tell you that no one else wants you for a girlfriend/boyfriend?	1.23	.659	.458	.839
9. Does he/she make all the decisions?	1.23	.527	.380	.842
10. Does he/she insult or humiliate you or call you names?	1.08	.296	.400	.844
11. Does your boyfriend or girlfriend tell you it's your fault when he or she is mean to you?	1.17	.463	.576	.836
12. Are you afraid of him/her?	1.07	.419	.402	.842
13. Does he/she ever pressure you for sex?	1.14	.505	.500	.838
14. Has he/she ever destroyed something that belonged to you?	1.07	.311	.333	.845
15. Has he/she ever (even once) hit you?	1.04	.231	.453	.844
16. Has he/she gotten too serious about the relationship too fast?	1.75	1.008	.465	.841
Cronbach's α			.847	

Validity

Principal component analysis was used to assess the validity and, more specifically, the internal structure of the instrument. In order to maximise item loading, the Varimax method of orthogonal rotation was used. After successive analyses and according to statistical and interpretability criteria, a principal component analysis was used following the Kaiser rule. To obtain a harmonious and reliable factor structure, items were deleted according to the following criteria: factor loading less than or equal to 0.3; and simultaneous correlation between two factors, the distance between both values being no more than 0.1.

According to these criteria, the results of the analysis showed that the 16 items were organised in four factors which explained 63.865% of the variance (Table 3).

Table 3 also showed that the hypothesis of the correlation matrix being an identity matrix was rejected ($\chi^2 = 840.544$; p < .000) and that the *Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin* measure (KMO = 0.815) was close to the unit, thus ensuring that the adequacy of the factor model to this correlation matrix was high. It should also be noted that the lowest value of communalities was 0.47.

The name assigned to each factor sought to reflect the overall conceptual content of its items: controlling relationship; possessive relationship; destructive relationship; and demeaning relationship.

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Table 3

Principal components matrix after varimax rotation of the 16 items of the QR - PT

	h²	F1	F2	F3	F4
2. Is he/she jealous of your other friends?	.590		.668		
4. Does he/she check up on you?	.720		.675		
7. Does he/she insist that you spend all of your free time together, and get angry when you want to do other things?	.656		.758		
9. Does he/she make all the decisions?	.571		.465		
16. Has he/she gotten too serious about the relationship too fast?	.619		.768		
5. Does he/she accuse you of flirting with other people?	.687	.699			
6. Does he/she tell you how to dress, or who you can hang out with?	.524	.556			
11. Does your boyfriend or girlfriend tell you it's your fault when he or she is mean to you?	.686	.768			
12. Are you afraid of him/her?	.549	.608			
13. Does he/she ever pressure you for sex?	.758	.831			
1. Does your girlfriend or boyfriend tease you in hurtful ways?	.560				.736
3. Does he/she ignore your opinions or interests?	.705				.743
8. Does he/she tell you that no one else wants you for a girlfriend/boyfriend?	.470				.600
10. Does he/she insult or humiliate you or call you names?	.680			.694	
15. Has he/she ever (even once) hit you?	.778			.816	
14. Has he/she ever destroyed something that belonged to you?	.663			.791	
			18.19 17.90 14.72		13.02
% Variance explained			63.85		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin			.815		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		840.544; p<0.0001			

F1= Controlling Relationship; F2= Possessive Relationship; F3= Destructive Relationship; F4= Demeaning Relationship

Cattell's scree plot of the RQ-PT (Graph 1) confirms the adequacy of the factor matrix to the analysed data. There is a slope up to the fourth component, which corresponds to a larger distance between eigenvalues (Pestana & Gageiro, 2005).
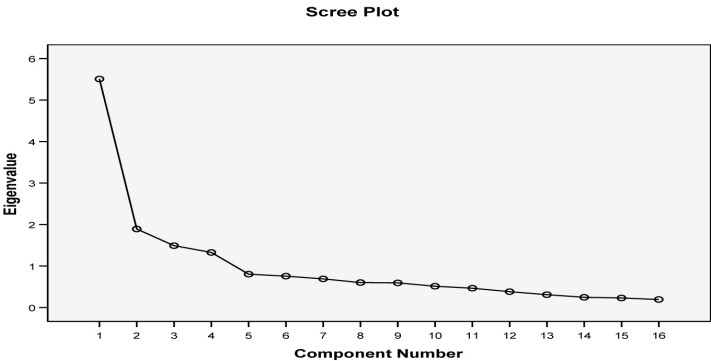

Figure 1. Cattell's Scree Plot of the RQ-PT.

Table 4 shows a correlation ranging from low (0.274) to high (0.825) between the various subscales and between them and the RQ-PT total score. They are also positive and significant correlations (p≤0.01), indicating that they measure the same construct.

Table 4

Pearson's correlation between the various subscales and the total of the RQ-PT

	Possessive Relationship	Controlling Relationship	Demeaning Relationship	Destructive Relationship	RQ-PT total
Possessive relationship		0.551	0.413	0.274	0.825
Controlling relationship	0.551		0.362	0.399	0.753
Demeaning relationship	0.413	0.362		0.376	0.769
Destructive relationship	0.274	0.399	0.376		0.559
RQ-PT total	0.825	0.753	0.769	0.559	

Quality of the romantic relationship

Table 5 shows that, in terms of the quality of the romantic relationship, male respondents obtained, on average, higher scores than females, both for the total scale and the different factors. This corresponded to less healthy romantic relationships. These differences were statistically significant in terms of the total quality of the romantic relationship (t= 2.338; p= 0.021), controlling relationship (t= -3.063; p= 0.003) and destructive relationship (t= 2.302; p= 0.023).

Table 5

Mean and standard deviation obtained in the RQ-PT according to gender, and results of the Student's t-test

	Female		Male		t	p
	M	DP	M	SD		
Quality of the romantic relationship	1.31	0.31	1.49	0.47	2.338	.021
Possessive relationship	1.66	0.64	1.81	0.65	1.075	.284
Controlling relationship	1.15	0.28	1.41	0.68	3.063	.003
Demeaning relationship	1.40	0.55	1.58	0.74	1.412	.160
Destructive relationship	1.04	0.16	1.16	0.40	2.302	.023

Discussion

This study aimed to adapt and validate the Relationship Questionnaire for the Portuguese language and determine the quality of the romantic relationship among Portuguese young people. It had the participation of 127 students attending a higher education institution in central Portugal during the academic year 2010/2011. On average, students were 19.6 years old (SD= 3.8), were mostly females (78%) and had no boyfriend/girlfriend (36%). As for the type of relationship that they had or had had with their boyfriends/girlfriends, of the participants who answered the question (101), most of them (82.2%) reported having or having had a stable relationship and contacting their boyfriends/girlfriends several times a week (45%). In addition, 87.9% believed that the future of their relationship would be living together. These results are in line with those pointed out by some authors (Adams et al., 2001) who mentioned differences in romantic relationships among adolescents according to age. Thus, the initial phases are characterised by high levels of affiliation, such as the search for physical closeness, sharing of activities and companionship (Adams et al., 2001). The final stages are characterised by the search for emotional closeness, which is manifested through interdependence, reciprocity, and diversity of activities between the dyad as well as through daily social interaction (Adams et al., 2001; Pinto, 2009). Most of them (87.9%) reported that dating involved a sexual component.

As this instrument has not yet been subjected to any psychometric study, it is not possible to make any comparison. However, it is possible to highlight that the questionnaire resulting from this study showed good psychometric characteristics. It had a good internal consistency (a Cronbach's α of 0.847), and the Cronbach's alpha for the total items was considered good (Pestana & Gageiro, 2005; Streiner & Norman, 2008). None of the items showed values lower than 0.80.

Results pointed to a 16-item scale, distributed by 4 factors (Possessive relationship, Controlling

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relationship, Demeaning relationship and Destructive relationship), which explained 63.850% of the variance.

As regards the quality of the romantic relationship, the data showed that the respondents' romantic relationships were healthy, taking the median as a reference value. The indicator with less healthy results was the item "Is he/she jealous of your other friends?" (M=2.1; SD=0.97), which is in line with Almeida et al. (2008), who emphasise that jealousy tends to be present in romantic relationships and it may even reach unhealthy forms.

In this sample, the results showed the absence of violence in romantic relationships, although studies refer to it as a frequent and habitual phenomenon, which frequently begins during the dating relationship (Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2007). The quality of romantic relationships may positively impact young people's development, which is in line with Pinto (2009), and be a protective factor for victimisation and loneliness (Woodhouse et al., 2012).

However, considering that higher scores corresponded to less healthy romantic relationships, young males established, on average, less positive relationships than females, since they scored higher, both for the total scale and the different dimensions. Therefore, despite the fact that a romantic relationship should be translated into an attitude of understanding and comprehension between the romantic pair, in which each individual had its own identity and wanted to do its best for the beloved person without expecting any reward (Rosset, 2004), positive relations do not always happen. We also verified that differences according to gender were statistically significant in terms of the total quality of the romantic relationship, the controlling relationship and the destructive relationship. These results are in line with Shulman and Kipnis (2001), who mention that dating relationships are not always positive and rewarding. On the other hand, studies (Almeida et al., 2008; Arnocky et al., 2012) show that romantic relationships mediated by jealousy, control and possession affect young people's interpersonal development. In this sample, the dimension *possessive relationship* presented the highest scores in both groups.

From a perspective of preventing violent, dominant and victimising relationships, it is important to develop psychopedagogical and didactic instruments so as to intervene among adolescents and young people from a developmental point of view, particularly in educational settings, as recommended by García (2008).

Thus, the results obtained from adapting the QR-PT to the Portuguese Relationship Questionnaire confirm that this questionnaire is accurate, valid and has good psychometric properties. The scale consists of 16 items distributed by four factors (Possessive relationship, Controlling relationship, Demeaning relationship and Destructive relationship), which explained 63.850% of the variance. It has good internal consistency (Cronbach›s α, 0.847). This confirms that it may be used with confidence in future studies to assess romantic relationship among adolescents, as well as in educational practice to assess the effectiveness of interventions among this population group.

Further studies should include larger samples, selected in different areas of the country.

To sum up, we believe that this study may contribute to understand the quality of young people's romantic relationships so as to optimise them and lead this population group to their personal and relational development.

Conclusion

Recent studies show that romantic relationships take on a special meaning in adolescence and youth, and associations may be observed between them and various aspects of the individual development.

Results indicated that the scale had good internal consistency and reliability, confirming it as an accurate and valid instrument with good psychometric characteristics. Thus, it may be used in future studies, being very important to the nursing practice in the domain of adolescents and young people.

The validation of the RQ-PT for the Portuguese population is, therefore, an added value for research instruments intended for young people, as it makes it possible to determine the quality of their romantic relationships and implement intervention programmes that aim at the development of personal and relational skills which promote healthy, responsible and rewarding intimate relationships.

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