

# Love and the Mentally Challenged: Unraveling the Affective Domain

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**Abstract** - This study describes the affective domain specifically on the psychology of emotion among mentally challenged male students as manifested by their love and attraction towards the opposite sex. Included in the study were the Mentally Challenged pupils in selected SPED Centers, aged 15 and above who were observed to have marked attraction toward another person. Respondents and experts believed that it is risky to allow mentally challenged individuals to marry due to the following reasons: the possibility that the MC can become pregnant; she will experience trauma or psychological damage if she becomes pregnant; the likelihood that the individual will voluntarily engage in sexual activity ; be exposed to situations where sexual intercourse is imposed upon her; the inability of the MC to understand reproduction and the likely permanence of that inability of the MC to care for a child. Another presumption restricting marriages is that mentally retarded persons do not make successful marriage partners. The MC's capacity to love starts and ends in Passionate Love. The feeling called love should be encouraged in class but with

proper guidance as it helps develop the MCs socio – emotional behavior for it cultivates motivation, participation, interaction, and happiness among the mentally challenged.

*Keywords* - Mentally Challenged, Affective Domain, Love, Socio-emotional Behaviors, Psychological damage, trauma.

## INTRODUCTION

“It is only through the heart that one can see rightly, what is essential is invisible to the naked eye.” If we were to base the concept of living on the very essence that Antoine St. Exupery expressed in his novelette *Little Prince*, cognition would play a limited role in the life of the Mentally Challenged. For in the quest to formulate the best possible interventions suitable to the specific needs of the mentally challenged; countless researches were focused on their cognitive domain hoping to increase their already depleted mental quotient. But have we not been informed by the same scientific researches and experiments that there was not a single assurance that showed any improvement in the I.Q. level?

In the country’s current curricula of educating the mentally challenged students, cognitive, social, and sheltered workshop skills dominated the priority listings. There has been minimal, if not none that focuses on the affective domain of the MC’s education. It was observed that there were specific numerous instances that MCs displayed their vast capacity to feel. Meaning not only that they were reduced to tantrums when they were confronted with their “triggers”; but rather, they too were reduced to complete admiration when confronted with people whom they were attracted to.

Just as “Sam” (*I am Sam the Movie*) shared his passion to a normal woman with whom he bore a child. That resulted to the conflict in the true-to-life film that starred Sean Penn and Michelle Pfeiffer. In the film, Sam was a mentally challenged father who raised his child single-handedly. The custody of the child became the subject of a court battle between Sam and the child’s mother. Sam must have been at par with

the normal man in the aspect of his affective skills, since he was able to share passion with a normal woman and eventually earned the love and trust of his daughter, who chose to be with him rather than with her mother.

Does a mentally disabled individual, without the mental capacity to even run a cash register, have the right, much less the capability to raise a child? Should we as a society, allow mentally disabled individuals to raise children? Or even marry? Wilkins (2002) makes a compelling argument that “love is the most important ingredient in raising a child, and as we learn from Sam, mentally challenged individuals are definitely capable of giving love”.

Persons with mental retardation in United States have legal rights to marry and to procreate in the hope of leading normal lives. They obtain jobs, marry, and raise children. The normalization principle among the MCs is also applied in the Philippine setting but unfortunately limited to their academic development, not in their socio – cultural aspect.

It has been observed that there were pupils with MR in SPED schools who manifest affection towards their teachers, classmates, or anyone of the opposite sex. How can a 16 - year old lad with an IQ of a 7 year old exhibit attraction toward the opposite sex? Could it be that although their intellectual ability is low, their affective domain is normal? There were some mentally challenged persons who even got married and had children.

This study did not attempt to criticize, nor prayed to put a stop to cognitive studies (of MC's), but rather to tap other possible area of focus in the attempt to establish a possible avenue of intervention. This also attempted to reshape and educate the way people think about the concept of love among people with developmental disabilities by unraveling their affective domain.

This study is conducted with the hope to pave a way in the advancement of another possible field of focus by describing the affective domain of the MC's trusting that it could somehow propose an effective intervention for specific types of MCs. The study helped identify what is important for people with Mental Retardation to succeed in living with normal people.

## FRAMEWORK

The following literatures describes distinct issues among the mentally challenged to wit: its basic definition, intelligence and emotional quotient, adaptive behavior, social competence, their cognitive and affective aspects and their possibilities in marriage and other martial issues in the hope of filling a gap in research particularly the affective aspect of the mentally challenged determined through their emotional responses.

According to Smith (2006) mental retardation is a social phenomenon that has existed since the beginning of time. From the beginning of recorded history, there had always been persons whose marked intellectual limitations have made it difficult for them to meet the demands of their social environment. What has changed over time is society's understanding of the nature of the construct to explain limited intellectual functioning and its consequence – social incompetence. Mental retardation often affects people emotionally as well as intellectually. Many mentally retarded people function on an emotional and social level that is below what is appropriate for their age. This emotional immaturity is often considered an endearing aspect of mentally retarded individuals' personalities; however, mentally retarded individuals are commonly thought of as being friendly, lovable, and possessing a child-like quality in their overall personality.

It was noted that Adaptive behavior is developed over a period of time and is a function of both mental / intellectual and social / emotional skills and abilities. Reynolds and Dombeck (2006), described mentally retarded people as significantly limited in terms of their adaptive functioning in at least two of the following areas: communication, self-care, home living, social / interpersonal skills, community resource use, self-direction, academic skills, work, leisure activities, health, and safety. These limitations significantly interfere with an individual's ability to navigate through many everyday situations. Like perhaps the MR's "ability" if not "inability" to assert what's going on inside his mind.

But beyond the stark deficiencies in the cognitive facets associated in the Mentally Challenged mind, Dorsey, (2002) asked: "Do people with mental retardation have feelings, hopes, desires, wants, expectations,

goals, dreams?" – you betcha [sic] they do. Look in their eyes, watch their faces, listen to their voices. They, each of them, want to be all they are capable of being. Each has unique abilities and ways to both participate and contribute. Each may have a mental disability, but each is able. It falls to us to find the ways to help them express themselves – to listen with all our senses, not just our ears".

Gensley (1973), as cited in Sage Journals (2009) noted that so much attention had been given to a [special] child in the cognitive domain that affective and the psychomotor domain had been neglected. She added that cognitive, affective and psychomotor behaviors are implicit in every learning experience. Gowan (no year), as cited by Gensley in Sage Journals (2009) has noted that cognitive processes must be related to affective process to generate creative behavior.

The emotional maturity of individuals who are diagnosed with mental retardation is generally a function of how severely impaired they are. Severely mentally retarded individuals are generally more emotionally immature than are individuals with mild mental retardation (Reynolds and Dombeck, 2006). Mercer (1973), as cited by Smith et al (2006) suggests that individuals are labeled mentally retarded as a function of their performance in social situations.

But what role does affective domain play in the emotional "maturity" or "immaturity" of MR's? Emotion as described by Dworetzky (1985), as cited by Carlson and Hatfield (1992) is a complex feeling – state involving conscious experience and internal and overt physical responses that tend to facilitate or inhibit motivated behavior. Plutchik (1984) as cited by Carlson and Hatfield (1992) defined it as an inferred complex sequence of reactions to a stimulus and includes cognitive evaluations, subjective changes and behavior designed to have an effect upon the stimulus that initiated the complex sequence.

Emotion then is a genetic and acquired motivational predisposition to respond experientially, physiologically and behaviorally to certain internal and external variables. Emotions include cognitive, physiological, and behavioral elements. In describing the affective domain of the mentally challenged, the researcher believes that one must understand all three aspects of emotion.

Mowrer (1960) as cited by Carlson and Hatfield (1992) for one argues that the emotions play a central role, indeed an indispensable

role, in those changes in behavior or performance which are said to represent 'learning'....The emotions are of quite extraordinary importance in the total economy of living organisms and do not at all deserve being put into opposition with 'intelligence'. However he (Mowrer) failed to mention emotion in the expression of the basic tenet of affection. The emotions are, it seems, themselves a high order of intelligence. Millenson (1967), as cited by Carlson and Hatfield (1992) argues that scientists should not be primarily concerned with people's private emotional feelings. Since actual feelings are not measurable or directly manipulable [sic], one should focus on emotional behavior instead of thoughts and feelings. The next question would be which emotional responses are innate?

Millenson's concept justifies the author's direction on understanding the mentally challenge's emotions (behavior) first instead of isolating their thoughts and feelings of love. Watson (1919), as cited by Carlson and Hatfield (1992) believed in only three innate emotional reactions namely: fear, rage and love. Millenson's (1967), as cited by Carlson and Hatfield (1992) taxonomy is much the same – he considers anxiety, anger, and elations to be the basic emotions. It is from these three basic emotions that all other emotions are derived. Watson and Millenson both argue that initially these three basic emotional responses are elicited by unconditioned stimuli (Carlson and Hatfield, 1992).

Sanchez, et al (1996) further added that fear, rage and love are basic emotions, since other emotions emerge or develop from them. At birth, the emotion or general excitement is easily discernable. The development of emotional response follows a general-to-specified pattern. Later as the child grows older, specific responses become manifest. By the age of twenty-four months, the repertoire of emotions is nearly complete. From the general emotion of anger, a more specific emotional response like jealousy or hostility develops. By the time the child is about eighteen months, he is able to express jealousy. These emotional responses are affected directly by such factors as learning and motivation. When a child is born, he is born with the capacity to love, but love as an emotional response is a product of learning and maturation (Sanchez, et al, 1996).

For the sake of discussion, the three main foci of emotions, as mentioned, were done for that very purpose. However, this study

focused only on one basic emotion in relation to the study which is love. The pleasant experiences of joy, elation, laughter, excitement, thrill, affection, and happiness have their roots in the emotional response of love.

The development of love stems from the early experiences of the individual from birth. If the child is reared with love and affection, he learns to love others. The reactions to love are learned from early childhood. They are usually patterned after affectionate [sic] responses that the individual sees or experiences (Sanchez, et al, 1996).

According to Sanchez (et al, 1996), love between sexes is governed by social and cultural values operating within the environment of the individual. Physiologically, the maturing of the sex glands during adolescence determines the emotional interest the boy manifests to a girl and vice versa. Many emotional behaviors are stimulated and motivated by love. Thoughtfulness, graciousness, and refinement in manners, kindness, gentleness, tenderness, affection, care, pride, elation, delight, and pleasure are among the positive reactions emanating from love. On the other hand, love unrequited may cause such aggressive reactions as resentment, envy, jealousy, annoyance, irritation, gloom, embarrassment, and disgust.

Emotional responses vary in intensity; how we respond to stimuli depends on the circumstances and the environment. It is a fact that we can vary our responses depending on how much we have learned to control or educate our emotions, so to speak (Sanchez et al, 1996). Moreover, Sartain, et al (1973) as cited by Sanchez, et al (1996) identified three aspects of emotion namely: physiological aspect, emotional behavior and personal emotional experience. The succeeding study focused only on emotional behavior, as a limitation of the researcher among the three aspects of emotion.

Sanchez, et al (1996) further discussed that a person who experiences an emotion manifests it almost always in some form of overt behavior. The most common of these manifestations are facial and vocal expressions. There are other ways of communicating an emotion like the use of the hands and body movements, and gestures; but people seem to pay greater attention to facial expression. It is said that many of the animal expressions of hissing, growling, snarling, barking, or the display of the teeth, have been modified into human

expressions of derision, mockery, scorn, or anger. Crying, smiling, frowning, sighing can be traced to primitive expressions. People have developed or learned definite expressions of joy, sorrow, lust, and excitement. Many of these have become universal; and you can tell easily by the expression of the face whether a person is happy, sad, eager, or angry regardless of the race. As a matter of fact, a smile is considered as a universal language expressing friendliness. Sartain, et al (1973), as cited by Sanchez, et al (1996) noted that sometimes, we are able to tell very accurately the emotional behavior of a person by merely listening to his vocal expressions. Language of laughter nearly always indicates joy among normal individuals. Weird laughter can also be distinguishable in most easy case, so we are able to judge whether a person is happy or abnormal by categorizing the kind of laughter that we hear. The laughter of normal individual would indicate happiness whereas the weird laughter of the abnormal may mean a different thing. Weeping and wailing most often indicate worry. Crying may accompany fear, anger, or in some cases, happiness. Vocal expressions are detected by means of cues. Loudness, pitch, or change of pitch may serve as a cue to the emotion being expressed. However, like in facial expressions, we may err in identifying the emotional behavior simply from listening to the vocal expression. Emotions can be judged best by reviewing the total emotional experience rather than relying on either facial or vocal cues of expression (Sartain, et al, 1973 as cited by Sanchez, et al, 1996).

Even so, mentally retarded individuals presently are being moved into the mainstream and their rights should be consistent with those accorded to their peers. But, despite the fact that people with mental retardation obtain jobs, marry, and raise children, society continues to impose a number of legal and attitudinal barriers to deny retarded adults their familial rights (i.e., marriage, procreation and parenting). If the normalization principle is to apply to the sexual and familial relationships among mentally retarded persons, it will be necessary to reconsider both these restrictive legal and social practices.

According to Vitello and Soskin (1985), in a way, the lifestyle that has become available to many adult mentally retarded persons (although in many cases not by choice) is similar to that of non-retarded persons. Many adult retarded persons are living together with members of the



same or opposite sex in various community arrangements (e.g., group and boarding homes). Attempts to normalize institutional settings by integrating the sexes into smaller living units are also occurring. While these environments are being designed to encourage heterosexual interactions and normal psychosexual development, at issue is the question regarding what degree of sexual freedom should be extended to retarded persons.

Many people still marry for love, sex, social legitimacy, companionship, and/or economic stability. Vitello and Soskin (1985) stated that mentally retarded persons, too, can benefit from any of these marital advantages; the argument can be made that marriage for mentally retarded persons is particularly beneficial, given the hostility and discrimination they often encounter in community living. It has been estimated that 50 percent of all mentally retarded persons do marry (Bass, 1973 as cited by Vitello and Soskin, 1985). Yet, over 80 percent of the states (United States) treat mentally retarded persons differently from non-retarded persons for the purpose of issuing a marriage license (Linn & Bowers, 1978 as cited by Vitello and Soskin, 1985).

According to Turnbull (1977), as cited by Vitello and Soskin (1985), it is presumed that all mentally retarded persons (as with non-retarded persons) who have not been declared legally incompetent are capable of giving their valid consent to a marriage contract. But even a legal judgment of incompetence per se should not necessarily prevent a retarded person from entering into a marriage contract. Some retarded persons may be capable, as a result of education and counseling, of understanding what the marriage contract entails. In these cases they would be able to give their informed consent, and they should not be prohibited the right to marry.

According to Reynolds and Dombeck (2006), mentally retarded adults, like any adults, are physical creatures with sexual desires. These desires motivate them to be attracted to sexual partners and to engage in sexual activities. A common consequence of sexual activity, of course, is pregnancy. At various points in history, society has felt the need to regulate the reproductive capabilities of mentally retarded adults for reasons alternatively paranoid and parental in nature.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, many mentally retarded adults were subject to social policies based on the philosophy of eugenics, which suggested that some people's genetic backgrounds were inferior to other people's genetic backgrounds. Mentally retarded individuals were assumed to have inferior genetic backgrounds, and therefore a reproductive threat to the integrity of more desirable or purer genetic lines. Two strains of eugenics were influential. Proponents of positive eugenics urged elite families to reproduce in quantity to drown out the reproductive efforts of undesirables such as non-whites and mentally retarded people. Proponents of negative eugenics took the idea of genetic purity a step further by actively promoting the idea that undesirable sorts of people (including criminals, the mentally ill, and the mentally retarded) should be actively prevented from reproducing, even if this meant sterilizing them against their will (Reynolds and Dombeck, 2006).

Mentally retarded individuals are today have rights accorded to other citizens, among them the rights to marry and to have children. They also have the right to use contraception to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease. More recently, the courts have dealt with an increasing number of cases where parents of severely retarded daughters living at home have sought involuntary sterilizations.

Another presumption restricting marriages is that mentally retarded persons do not make successful marriage partners. Research findings refute this presumption. Floor, Baxter, Rosen, and Zisfein (1973), as cited by Vitello and Soskin (1985) surveyed the marital status of 80 formerly institutionalized retarded persons and concluded that they were capable of assuming the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood. Edgerton and Bercovici (1976), as cited by Vitello and Soskin (1985), in their 12-year follow-up study of 30 deinstitutionalized retarded persons, found that over half maintained a successful marriage.

McDevitt, Smith, Schmidt, and Rosen (1978), as cited by Vitello and Soskin (1985) reported on four marriages between deinstitutionalized retarded people. They found all of the couples were functioning adequately, none were having serious marital problems, and all were happier than those in the study who had not married. Similar findings have been reported in the research studies conducted by Mattinson

(1973) and Andron and Sturm (1973). These studies suggest that there may be little correlation between the level of an individual's mental functioning, as measured by IQ scores, and his or her performance as a marriage partner (Vitello and Soskin, 1985).

In a society where one out of two marriages ends in divorce, it would be preposterous to argue that mentally retarded persons are more prone to unsuccessful marriages. As with non-retarded persons, retarded persons may find marriage less than idyllic. Therefore, even if high rates of divorce were found among retarded persons, this should not be used as a justification to deny them the right to marry or remarry (Linn & Bowers, 1978 as cited by Vitello and Soskin, 1985). Unlike most nonretarded persons, retarded persons, who have been segregated from contact with the opposite sex and denied normative socialization processes, may be less prepared for marriage. Again, the remedy is not to deny these retarded persons the right to marry, but to create more normalizing environments with supportive family services (e.g., family-life education counseling) (Vitello and Soskin, 1985).

Mentally retarded persons are perceived as being at greater sexual risk in our society. Families with retarded relatives are concerned about the unfortunate consequences (e.g., sexual abuse and pregnancy) that may result from programmatic efforts to increase social interactions between retarded and non retarded people. These legitimate concerns need to be balanced against the right of mentally retarded persons to express themselves sexually and to have a family life of their own. In acknowledging these rights, care-providers, including parents, will have to play as important an educative role as a protective role in order to enable mentally retarded persons to develop heterosexual and familial relationships to the degree to which they are responsible (Vitello and Soskin, 1985).

The other side of the modern reproductive policy debate argues that many individuals with mental retardation are not capable of understanding the ramifications of procreating. This is especially true when severe intellectual functioning deficits are present. Many mentally retarded women may not be able to comprehend fully what is happening to their bodies during pregnancy, for example. Mentally retarded parents can legitimately be expected to have an extraordinary amount of difficulty raising a child on their own. Then there are

concerns for the welfare of resulting children in the custody of parents who themselves cannot live independently. These and other “parental” sorts of concern need to be sorted out as debate continues (Reynolds and Dombeck, 2006).

On the other hand, the concept of romantic love according to Atkinson, et al (1983) is an old one, but the belief that it has much to do with marriage is more recent and far from universal. In some non-Western cultures, marriage is still considered to be a contractual or financial arrangement that has nothing whatever to do with love. In society, the link between love and marriage has actually become stronger in the past 15 years. In 1967, about two thirds of college men, but only about one fourth of college women, stated that they would not marry a person they did not love even if the person had all the other qualities they desired (Kephart, 1967 as cited by Atkinson, et. al., 1983). Perhaps the women at that time had to be more practical about their financial security. But in a 1967 replication of the study, it was found that a full 86 percent of the men and 80 percent of the women would now refuse to marry without being in love. In fact, this researchers report that many young men and women believe that if romantic love disappears from the relationship, that is sufficient reason to end it (Campbell and Berscheid, 1976, as cited by Atkinson, et al, 1983).

A study of long term marriages in the United States and Japan suggests that these romantic views may change with time. The American marriages started out with a higher level of love than did the Japanese arranged marriages, as measures of expressions of affection, sexual interest, and marital satisfaction. Love decreased in both groups, and after 10 years, there were no differences (Blood, 1967, as cited by Atkinson, et al, 1983). As the sixteenth-century writer Giraldi put it; “The history of a love affair is in same sense the drama of its fight against time.” This does not imply, however, that all the marriages were failures: some couples had gratifying marriages and others experienced failure. The successful marriages were characterized by communication between the partners, an equitable division of labor, and equality of decision-making power. Romantic love is terrific for starters, but the sustaining forces of a good long-term relationship are less exciting, undoubtedly require more work, and have more to do with equality than with passion. A disappointment for romantics,

perhaps, but heartening news and powerful propaganda for advocates of social equality (Atkinson, et al, 1983).

Hatfield and Walster (1978), as cited by Carlson and Hatfield (1992) point out that most people distinguish between two forms of love – passionate love and companionate love. Passionate love is sometimes labeled as “puppy love”, a crush”, “lovesickness”, “obsessive love”, “infatuation”, or “being in love”. It is a state of intense longing for union with another. Reciprocated love (union with the other is associated) with fulfillment and ecstasy. Unrequited love (separation) with emptiness, anxiety, or despair. A state of profound physiological arousal”. By contrast, Companionate love is sometimes called “true love” or “conjugal love”. It is far less intense emotion. Hatfield and Walster (1978) define it as “the affection we feel for those with whom our lives are deeply entwined”.

Finally, in Edgerton’s Cloak of Competence (1967) as cited by Smith, et al (2006) sought to understand what was important for people with mental retardation to succeed living in the community. The study was a report of many interviews with people released from institutional care. Their experiences were quite varied – some marrying, some holding full - time jobs, some living with families, others ending up in jail, living in squalor, or being victimized in one way or another. Across the interviews, however, there was one recurring theme among all the different kinds of lifestyles: the need to appear normal.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study attempted to describe and explain the observable behaviors of the mentally challenged in the aspect of their affective domain specifically on their emotion as manifested by their expression of love towards the opposite sex. Through the deductive - qualitative method of research, this study employed narrative descriptions gathered through open-ended interviews and naturalistic observations to identify specific social–emotional behaviors and changes manifested by the subjects in expressing affection and attraction.

Male mentally challenged students in selected Special Education Centers, aged 20 years old and above, who were observed to have marked liking or attraction toward another person, be it in school

or at home are the subjects of the study. The Snowball approach was employed, where subjects studied were chosen or referred to by their teachers, parents, significant others or caregivers.

To reinforce the observable affective behaviors as manifested by the mentally challenged students, their teachers, parents, significant others, caregivers, and the person they were attracted to were also interviewed to describe their perceptions and reactions to the MC's socio-emotional aspects. The mentally challenged students were also interviewed in an informal, conversational manner, regardless of their erratic response, hoping to gather their perceptions and feelings for others. Aside from classroom observations, home visits and interviews, anecdotal records from the teacher and parents were also reviewed by the researcher. An informed consent form was secured to assure the security of the subjects in any event that will expose them to any form of danger and violation to their rights or any violation thereof in the directive of research ethical standard.

## RESULTS

### **I. Socio – Emotional Behaviors of the MC Manifested in Expressing Affection and Attraction**

Justine and Patrick (not their real names) manifested similar observable behaviors when the person they like was around. Smiling, blushing, sharing, positive physical contact and giving of verbal compliments. Justine repetitively uttered “gwapa” (pretty) to his Ate Pam. He also blushed and found it hard to look at Ate Pam. Patrick showed signs of embarrassment and kept hiding his face in his palms. It was noticed that physical responses of the MCs are similar to how normal people respond to a positive emotion of love and affection.

On the facial expressions of the mentally challenged, they blush like normal persons if the object of their affection is around. They smile often and such manifestations are similar to the rest of the MC's observed by the researcher from the different research locales.

It is believed that in the emotional response called love, the aspect of emotional behavior specifically on the facial expression is similar to that of normal individuals, since smiling is a universal expression.

But the vocal expression is different knowing that the laughter of the mentally challenged is without inhibition, loud, and without any reason at all. Normal individuals laugh only when prompted.

## **II. How MCs Manifest Attraction and Affection to Others and How they React on the Same**

It was noticed that the mentally challenged seemed to lack a sense of inhibition and embarrassment in the presence of their love. Justine kept on shouting Ate Pam's name and he told everyone about it, even while Teacher Cora was discussing. There was unending verbal compliments like "*gwapa*" (pretty) or even bluntly saying to her: "*naibog baya ko nimo*" (I like you).

They were often very shy when asked about their feelings. They blushed and hid behind their hands. And yet, they were not ashamed to tell the person that they like him / her. They are susceptible to falling passionately in love. Although physiologic and emotional behaviors, specifically facial expressions, may be similar to that of normal individuals, the self – perception and judgment are not. The normal individual's perception of love is so much different from the mentally challenged. To normal persons, there is commitment. More than passionate love (the intense longing for union), they hope for commitment in the future. The mentally challenged does not even understand the word 'commitment' in love. As long as the person they like is around, they are happy and they feel secure.

## **III. Socio-Emotional Behavior Change Manifested When They Express Attraction and Affection**

On the basis of Emotional Behavior, several changes were manifested by the mentally challenged subjects when they expressed attraction and affection towards others. From looking sick and weak in the morning class, to a brightened and excited face when the object of their affection arrived, these were just initial manifestations that Justine and Patrick showed. Justine manifested echolalia. He always repeated Ate Pam's name. He also imitated whatever his Ate Pam was saying. Both men were elated, smiling and laughing often, even

at times when there was no reason to laugh. Justine became talkative while Patrick became participative in class, that he was able to finish coloring his valentine card with the help of Jairah (the object of his affection). Justine readily offered to sew beads for the bracelet he and Ate Pam were doing. Patrick's shyness was gone. The quiet mentally challenged boy all of a sudden tended to be very cooperative in tasks assigned. Both subjects were socially interacting in class.

One interesting positive change was the subjects' high level of participation and cooperation. The presence of the objects of their affection was somehow an advantage as they do well in class activities. Having their favorite person around enhances their academic and functional performance.

#### **IV. Perception of the Significant Others' of the Mentally Challenged' Affective Manifestations Towards the Opposite Sex**

When the parents were asked if they would allow their special child to marry someday, the parents were even dreadful and offended with the idea considering it as highly impossible. Parents consider it too risky to leave their special children to be carried away with their emotion. Most them feared of unwanted pregnancy for the mentally challenged daughters. Others, feared of rape.

Another fear a parent had, perhaps even more prevalent than the fear of separation, was the thought of their child being sexually active and possibly producing children. The parents did not agree to their child getting married or having a special relationship with a member of the opposite sex. They were concerned about the possibility of their child bearing children. Most felt that their children were not capable of meeting the demands of caring for a small infant, let alone facing the demands of a lifetime of child rearing.

### **DISCUSSION**

Love, as mentioned by literatures, is one of the basic and universal responses regardless of race and culture. Attempts were made to discover whether this universality is also applicable to levels of intellect or mental capacity. In the emotional response called love, it should be



described based on the three aspects of emotion specifically, physiologic aspect, emotional behavior and socio – emotional experience.

The aspect of emotional behavior specifically of the facial expression is similar to the normal individuals, since smiling is a universal expression. People smile when they are happy and if they like the person. Thus, a smile is associated with friendliness. Likewise, the vocal expression is different knowing that the laughter of the mentally challenged is without inhibition, loud, and without any reason at all. Normal individuals laugh only when prompted.

## CONCLUSION

Love, as a basic emotional response regardless of race and culture, is also universal based on the level of intellect and mental capacity. The mentally challenged are also capable of loving, based on the three aspects of emotion specifically, physiologic aspect, emotional behavior, and socio – emotional experience. The aspect of emotional behavior, specifically of the facial expression, is similar to the normal individuals since smiling is a universal expression. People smile when they are happy and if they like the person. Likewise, the vocal expression is different knowing that the laughter of the mentally challenged is without inhibition, loud, and without any reason all.

The capacity to love knows no mental disability. All (normal or mentally disabled) were born with the inherent feeling of love. But the MCs capacity to love only starts and ends in passionate love only. It is impossible for them to experience companionate love when they lack good judgment and discernment.

Mental maturity must check the innate emotional tendencies. That is why, left with their own emotions, MC's are in a big jeopardy as they could not make sense and they could not organize their thoughts and emotion logically. Their emotional immaturity, that goes with the loving, deters their capacity to marry and bear children.

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