

# Relationship of Romantic Jealousy & Self-Esteem Among Married Couples

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To investigate the relationship of romantic jealousy and self-esteem among married couples.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional descriptive investigation was carried out to measure the relationship of romantic jealousy and self-esteem among 100 married couples from twin cities Islamabad and Rawalpindi. It included 50 each men and women having five years to their marriage. The minimum education was bachelor's degree. The age ranged from 25-30 years. The Self-Report Jealousy Scale developed by Bringle, Roach, Andler, and Back, and Self-esteem Scale of Rifai was used out to measure romantic jealousy and self-esteem. To find out the unique, different and difficult items and to modify those according to our culture the scales were reviewed by panel of experts. A tryout study of the both scales for the purpose item-total correlation was used for internal consistency of the scales and alpha reliability measure for reliability and validity of the scales. The main study which was aimed at hypotheses testing and further validation of the scales.

**Results:** All the items were found to be internally consistent except for item no.13 &16 of the Self-Report Jealousy Scale. The alpha-reliability was 0.70 for self-report jealousy scale and 0.83 for self-esteem scale. The Pearson correlation indicates that a significant negative correlation between romantic jealousy and self-esteem among married couples. The t-test was used to measure the gender difference in romantic jealousy. A significant difference among men and women in romantic jealousy was detected.

**Conclusion:** A positive correlation was observed between romantic jealousy and self-esteem among married couples. It was further found that there is gender difference in romantic jealousy and self-esteem among married couples.

**Key Words:** Romantic Jealousy, Self-esteem, Married Couples.

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## INTRODUCTION:

The jealousy is considered among the powerful negative emotions. The jealousy provoke vicious revenge, murder, and has even spawned wars. All human species are susceptible to jealousy in one or another form, may it be envy of a co-worker or sibling rivalry. Though, the

most recognizable and strongest form of jealousy is seen among romantic partners.

The true cause of romantic jealousy is not clear, but it is manifested in many forms. Romantic Jealousy can be defined as "Extreme concern about the sexual and social exclusiveness of the current partner"<sup>1</sup>.

The jealousy has strength to grow over the time, one can feel jealous due to low self-esteem, and it distance the partners from each due to constant jealousy. The jealous partner may sense being less loved, it further drops his or her self-esteem again<sup>2</sup>.

The romantic jealousy can be explained as an amalgamation of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors and it results from the perception of a real or imagined threat to one's intimate bonding. To simplify, the "green-eyed monster" is aroused when you fear a loss of affection from a

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also a potentially destructive emotion in intimate relationship<sup>3,4</sup>.

Furthermore, after experiencing a jealousy-provoking situation, people feel even more insecure, unattractive, and dependent, making future jealous reactions even more likely (as cited in Pines & Aronson, 1983). Jealousy typically is triggered by a specific event. This event usually involves either being left out of some activity involving one's partner or something that suggests, even remotely, that the partner's affection could be lost. The situations that elicited the greatest romantic were as follows<sup>1</sup> You find out your partner is having an affair<sup>2</sup> Someone goes out with the person whom you like<sup>1,3</sup> Someone gets closer to a person to whom you are attracted<sup>2,4</sup> Your lover tells you how sexy an old boyfriend/girlfriend was<sup>5</sup> Your lover visits a person he or she used to go out with.

Pathologically jealous-prone person may imagine a threat to their relationship where there is none. Such tendencies are likely to create unnecessary problems in marital relations<sup>5,6</sup> point out that attempts to gain control over a partner through jealousy tend to resent. The jealousy consist of a triangle involving one person from the opposite sex and two of the same sex<sup>7,8</sup>. Realistically the jealous soul has a longstanding association with a person, which is violated from someone of the same sex, may it be a case of extramarital relation that feeds the jealousy among the partners. The jealous partner feels "threatened, robbed, deceived and cheated".

There are two different that explain the gender differences in romantic jealousy. Evolutionary theory proposed that the differences among genders highlight an evolved sex specific fitness risk produced by the loss of exclusive right to a reproductive partner. In contrast the sociocultural theory have proposed that the gender differences arise due to the adaption of cultural norms about the gender specific roles in romantic relationships<sup>9</sup>.

Self-Esteem is our evaluations of our worth, including the degree to which one enjoys self-respect and self-image. It is our feeling of one's positive assessment and consider oneself worthy enough<sup>10</sup>. Self-esteem is sense of liking one's self, understanding their abilities and limitations. Glasser define that it is the development of

successful identity versus a "failure" identity, subject to their self-concept<sup>11</sup>.

Self-esteem is a key verdict passed by the individual about him/herself. This ruling highlights the degree of self-worth and confidence in ones potentials. An individual having higher self-esteem considered valuable and important, and thinks oneself as a knowledgeable individual who can live happily in his/her life. The person have satisfactory and effective skills to cope with the stresses and enjoys healthier relationships with others. The person with a high self-esteem displays a higher level of patience and resilience to failures. Contrary to this the individual with a low self-esteem feels low about oneself, lacking confidence in his/her abilities and decisions. The people with lower self-esteem are vulnerable to feel devastated and get easily frustrated in difficult times. The person can lose courage to fight with hardships of life<sup>3,7,12</sup>.

Self-esteem is positively correlated with academic success in students, internal locus of control, positive body image, higher family income and perceived intimacy with parents. The self-esteem declines when there is gap between real and ideal selves<sup>9,13</sup>. Reportedly, self-esteem has been positively correlated with hope, desire to control and sense of motivation, self-determination, need for approval and negatively associated loneliness, aggression, anxiety and depression<sup>1,9</sup>.

Some researchers reported the age associated gender differences changes in the self-esteem. It was found that with age self-esteem decreases in girls and increases in boys globally<sup>8,14</sup>. Number of studies found that male adolescent scored higher and female adolescent scores lower self-esteem<sup>3,5,7,11,14</sup>.

According to studies, some people are more prone to get jealous than others. It appears that this jealousy-prone dispositions is primarily a function of poor self-esteem. Highly jealous persons tend to have a negative self-concept, to be relatively unhappy, and to feel insecure, inadequate, and dependent in their relationship<sup>9,6,14</sup>. Bohn reported moderately negative association are often found in jealousy and self-esteem globally. Though, by using self-esteem scales having subscales reported self-confidence seen positively associated with jealousy in some circumstance<sup>15</sup>.

**METHODOLOGY:****Objectives**

To find out relationship between romantic jealousy and self-esteem among married couples.

To find out gender differences in romantic jealousy.

To further determine reliability, validity of the adapted version of both of the scales.

**Hypotheses**

Focusing on the objectives, the following hypotheses have been formulated in this research

□ There will be a negative correlation between romantic jealousy and self-esteem.

□ Women will score higher jealously as compared to men in a romantic relationship.

**Definitions of the variables.**

**Jealousy:** A high level apprehension of risk of losing the romantic and social exclusiveness of their partner<sup>16</sup>.

**Self-Esteem:** Self -Esteem is the way one feels about oneself, including the degree to which one possesses self-respect and self-concept. It is the sense of personal worth and competence that persona associates with their self-concepts<sup>16</sup>.

**Sample**

The sample size for study consisted of 100 married couples from twin cities Islamabad and Rawalpindi. It included 50 each men and same number of women having five years to their married life. The minimum education levels of subjects were bachelor's degree. The age of the sample ranged from 25-30 years.

Self-Report Jealousy Scale developed by Bringle, Roach, Andler, and Back (1979) used for study but it was modified according to Pakistani culture. Original scale had 25 items but after modification it was reduced to 17 items. These were actual items measuring romantic jealousy. It is a five point rating scale ranging from (0-4) Pleased to extremely upset.

Self-esteem Scale originally developed by<sup>17</sup> was used to measure the self-esteem. It had 29 items, which were reduced to 24 after committee approach. It is also ratted according to five point ratted scale ranging from (1-5)

Reliabilities for the scale are Jealousy=. 65 and Self-esteem=. 83. Along with these questionnaires a demographic sheet was also administrated to collect information regarding education, gender and education.

**Data Analysis.**

The data was analyzed through Alpha Reliability, Pearson product moment correlation and *t*-test to measure the internal consistency of scores, correlation and gender differences respectively by using SPSS 22.

**RESULTS:**

All the items were found to be internally consistent except for item no.13 &16 of the Self-Report Jealousy Scale. The alpha-reliability was 0.70 for self-report jealousy scale and 0.83 for self-esteem scale (Table-I). The Pearson correlation shows that there is significant negative correlation between romantic jealousy and self-esteem among married couples (Table-II). *t*-test was used to measure the gender difference in romantic jealousy. The findings indicated that there is no significant difference between men and women in romantic jealousy.

In order to test the first hypotheses Pearson Correlation was used to measure the relationship between romantic jealousy and self-esteem. Table III shows the relationship between romantic jealousy and self-esteem.

**Table I: Alpha Reliability of the Self-Report Jealousy Scale & Self-Esteem Scale.**

Scale	No. of Items	Alpha Coefficient
Self-Report Jealousy Scale	17	0.70
Self-Esteem Scale	24	0.83

**Table II: Correlation between Romantic Jealousy & Self-Esteem (n=100)**

Romantic Jealousy	-.39*
Self-Esteem	**p <.01

Indicating there is significant negative relationship between Romantic Jealousy and self-esteem.

**Table III: Gender Differences in Romantic Jealousy (n=50)**

Sex	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>
Men	73.40	5.6273	2.370
Women	81.720	2.1685	2.370

Indicating that there is a significant difference between men and women in romantic jealousy. Although the mean scores of women are greater as compare mean scores of men.

### DISCUSSION:

The research hypothesized a negative relationship between romantic jealousy and self-esteem in married couples. The previous literature review on the relationship of romantic jealousy with self-esteem shows that both variables are negatively correlated. If subjects have high level of self-esteem they will score low on Self-Report Jealousy Scale and vice versa. The increase in one variable causes decrease in the other variable. In order to support above claim Self-Report Jealousy Scale<sup>1,7</sup> was put into test. The Pearson correlation was used to measure the relationship. The study found that significant negative correlation between these variables. It is note worthy that most respondents in case of romantic jealousy scored at very upset and extremely upset. The above results are according to the White theory of romantic jealousy<sup>7,15</sup>, which states that two kinds of sufferings are caused in response to loss of a romantic partner loss of relationship and loss of self-esteem. Also supported that some people are prone to get jealous than others. These people tend to have low self-esteem<sup>1,4,8,9</sup>.

The second hypotheses, to find out gender difference in romantic jealousy; t-test was used to measure such differences. It shows a significant difference was found. Although women has scored higher than men on Self-report Jealousy Scale. The differences in mean scores of men and women suggest an indication of women being more jealous.

Sociocultural theorists also support the gender differences in romantic jealousy that women are more jealous than men in a romantic relationship in our society. According to them the experience of romantic jealousy depends on cultural specific socialization regarding behaviors that threatens close relationships, and gender differences in jealousy result from gender-specific socialization that affects perceptions of these threats<sup>10,11,16</sup>. Our society is totally a male dominant as well as for that reason women might be more jealous in our culture because they more threatened to loss of relationship. It is also

supported by explanation for gender differences in jealousy-evoking stimulus sensitivities depends on gender differences in needs for intimacy and social support. Men are often socialized to remain emotionally independent whereas women are socialized to cultivate emotional bonds with others<sup>5,8,6</sup>. Women have more threat of social isolation and more sensitive to its possible occurrence<sup>6,9,13,16</sup>. Therefore women are more jealous as compared to men.

### CONCLUSION:

The study concluded that there is positive correlation between romantic jealousy and self-esteem among married couples of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. It was further found that there is gender difference in romantic jealousy and self-esteem among married couples of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

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