Family Connectedness: A Predictive role of Family Communication, Jealousy and Interpersonal Difficulties in University Students

By

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Abstract

Emotional Intelligence is a vital psychological construct useful for enhancing the digital To find out the relationship between family connectedness That is playing a predictive role in family communication, jealousy, and interpersonal difficulties in post-graduate university students. This cross-sectional study was done in private educational institutions (universities) in Lahore from May to July 2020. Data were collected from the students with their consent by using the predesigned questionnaires. Data were explored by using SPSS version 21. A sample of N=150 (men=87) and (women=83) the age range was 22-25 years and (Mean=23.62, Standard Deviation=.98) were included in this study. We found that family communication has a negative significant relationship with jealousy ($p<0.01$) and with interpersonal difficulties ($p<0.05$). A significant mean difference was found in gender that men have more interpersonal difficulties than females ($p<0.05$). The results of regression revealed that gender is a significant negative predictor of interpersonal difficulties ($p<.05$) whereas jealousy is a positive significant predictor of interpersonal difficulties in post-graduate university students ($p<.001$).

Keywords: family connectedness, family communication, jealousy, interpersonal problems, university students.

Introduction

Family connectedness is described in the way through which the family members are socially close, interconnected or share their resources with each other (CDC, 2013a). According to the pervious theoretical and empirical work the concept of connectedness is related to the wealth and importance of the healthy or strong relationships and their well-being throughout the life span for example family attachment, family warmness and family cohesion (Sturge-Apple, Davies, & Cummings, 2010). Connectedness also exist in the group of individuals or between the individual and between the social institutions for instance university

students and in an organization (Sturge-Apple, Davies, & Cummings, 2010). In the view of some researches where the connectedness is the evidence of the family linkage and social well-being on the other side the absence of the such connections has also linked the negative emotions such as jealousy and interpersonal difficulty.

Family communication is said to have an important factor that influence on person's social functioning if the individual came from the separated family cohesion, he may develop the less interpersonal problems rather than the disengaged families through that family background they may provoked more interpersonal relationship problems and face the fear of threat being rejected by the rival and develops the tendencies of jealousy. Some problems in the social circle may be witnessed in the university students which are develops by the change of organization (academic institution) this variation may indulged the student to challenge the new things such as new techniques of learning in their academic period and developed new interpersonal relations. (Al-Khatib & Samawi, 2012) (Bouteyre & Bernaud et al., 2007). Family communication effects on the children upbringing through they have emotional problems in the initial stage of the child cognitive development the parents' behavior may impact on the child perceptions which lately prominent feature of the personality for instance the jealousy is inborn behavior that jealousy is the feeling, thoughts and behavior which provoke or motivate the individual to snatch the attention of the love one or partner from the rival (Honeycutt & Ford, 2017).

Jealousy is defined as the contemplations, thoughts, feeling and behaviors that happen when an individual accepts an esteemed relationship is weakened by a rival (DeStens & Valdesolo et al., 2006). In this study the researcher wants to elicit the dimensions of jealousy why it is prevailing in our society? What are the factors behind this phenomenon why people indulged in this behavior? Jealousy directly effects on our mental health due to which we suffer from many psychological problems like neuroticism, unconditional fear, aggression, impulsiveness, anxiousness and compulsive behaviors. (Collins & Laursen, 2004a). Basically, Jealousy is the powerful negative emotion of an individual through which the person wishes or desire evil for others as well as snatch or steal something from another what he does not have. Jealousy is linked with personality characteristics like neuroticism in which person feels anxiety when his or her love one come close to another one. Jealousy is closely related to the emotional reaction towards real loss through which the person feels an unrealistic fear or threat from his/her rival. There is a linkage between the jealousy and interpersonal relationships the jealousy provoked the sense being rejected and may create the difficulties in interpersonal relations. Jealousy develops when the people interact with one another and it affects the way people that they operate behavior in social situation. Jealousy also depends upon to some social approvals. Some culture tolerates the jealousy and other even encourage jealousy while other disapproves. So, the social aspects of jealousy depend upon the cultural contexts which they have developed on their emotions but the consequences of the jealousy results disturbed the interpersonal relationships. (Lee & Shrum, 2012).

Interpersonal problem is persistent difficulty when people interact or attempt to interact with the others. In the research of interpersonal problem, the researcher (Lange & Couch, 2011) elaborated two kinds of interpersonal problems in the first they interact people with cold behavior then change into warmth, secondly in which they control their limits while interacting people like obedient behavior to change into governing behavior (Holtfort & Grawe et.al.,2006). Interpersonal difficulty may be developed by interpersonal expectations in which the individual may think that how people can treat himself according to their own desire or wish and then in what way the person can react to those responses. Typically in this situation people may expect the reaction of the people according to their expectations through which the

interpersonal difficulties may rises in the relationship likewise in the jealousy concern individual may regained the attention of the relational person from the rival, expectation may involve in the interpersonal problem which indicated that the jealous individual's considered only their expectations and also generalized to over the every situation. (Andersen & Chen, 2002). By saying "Blood is Thicker than Water" this phrase suggests that regardless of whatever sufferings, families are certain by blood. The most important connection is between parent-child that is considered the long-lasting and one of the close relationships that an individual experiences in life (Varga, A. 2011). The concept of family is based on the essence of family and the dynamic interaction of family in psychology (Grusec, 2011). The absence or the loss of the primary caregiver leads to anxiety, grief, and jealousy in children. Attachment theory suggested that good nurturing by the caregivers (parents) shapes the future social, cognitive, and emotional functioning of the child (John Bowlby, 1973). According to this theory, children develop internal depictions of connectedness as a result of relationships with their parents, which they consequently use in maintaining other relationships.

Orlov (1996), described there are two types of families 1) In Person-centered families and 2) socio-centered families. Families that belong to person-centered keenly consider the personality and self-development of their child. They give respect to desires and morality and unconditionally accept them as unique individuals. In contrast, socio-centered families they disregard the needs, personality and, self-development of the child. The attachment with the caregivers is Ambivalent that leads towards negative emotion such as jealousy. Some theories suggested that the jealousy is the emotional state in which the person create the perception about their interpersonal relationship is being threatened by the rival, moreover theories revealed that jealousy involves a social triangle. (Harris & Darby, 2010; Parrott, 1991; Parrott & Smith, 1993; White & Mullen, 1989). Jealousy does not have a sense of perception about the self and meaning of an interaction. (Harris, 2003; Hobson, 2010). In the context of functional framework, we can say that it is an emerging form and it can be triggered by an appraisal. It is as simple as a loved one paying attention to a rival to recover the loved one's attention.
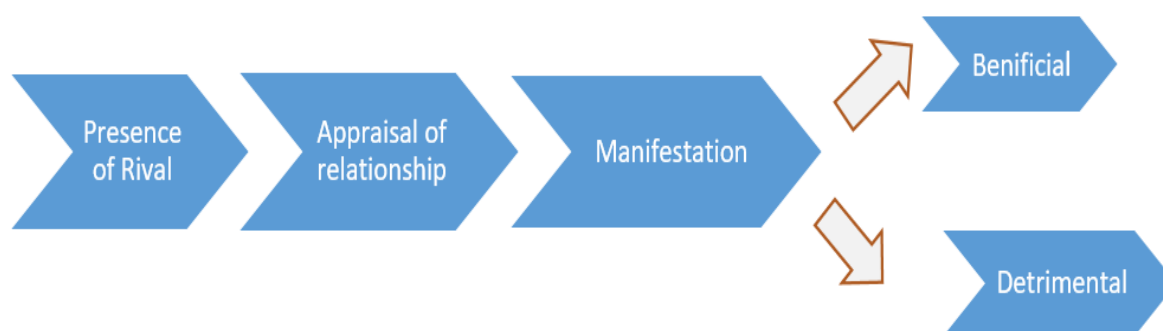

Figure 1. *The Dynamic Functional Model of Jealousy*

In the above model, the occurrences of jealousy involved appraisal of whether the presence of a rival is dangerous to their connection. The primary form of jealousy involves threats to relationship rewards including the loss of a loved one's attention, affection, or resources to another.

Methodology

This cross-sectional study was conducted in private educational institutions (universities) in Lahore from May to July 2020. The N=150 participants were selected for the

research where men were (n=87) and women were (n=83) with the age range of 22-25 years old (M=23.62, SD=.98) post-graduate university students. The judgment or purposive sampling techniques was used in the current research. The departmental research and ethical committee approved the study and Informed consent was taken from all the students. The sample included males and females aged 22-25 with 1-year job experience from Lahore. Participants from other cities with more than 1-year experience were excluded from the sample.

A proper Questionnaire was included in which the information included the students' demographic. The family cohesion questionnaire was originally developed by (Olson et al, 1995) from which two factors were selected for the study family communication and family satisfaction each factor had 10 items. The scale was translated by the doctorial faculty member of Clinical Psychology. Originally it has 62 items and a five-point Likert scale and has options very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, satisfied, very satisfied, and extremely satisfied in this current research the researcher used only two factors of it. The Jealousy scale has 3 subscales cognitive jealousy, behavioral jealousy, and emotional jealousy. It has 12 items and a five-point Likert scale and has options almost never, to some extent, moderately, most of the time, and severely. The Interpersonal Difficulty Questionnaire was originally developed by (Saleem &Ihsan et al., 2014) the scale has 6 factors and 61 items, factors namely Low self-confidence, Mistrust, Lack of boundaries, lack of Assertiveness, and stable relationships. In the current research, the researcher only two factors are the Lack of Boundaries and Unstable Relationships. It was a five-point rating scale and has convergent validity and has an option not at all, rarely, most of the time, often, and always.

Results

The N=150 where men were (n=87) and women were (n=83) with the age range of 22-25 years old (M=23.62, SD=.98) post-graduate university student

Table 1: *Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Means, and Standard Deviations of scales Family Cohesion, Jealousy, and Interpersonal Difficulty Scale.*

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Family Communication		.45***	-.23**	-.08
2. Family Satisfaction			-.23**	-.08
3. Jealousy Scale				.67***
4. Interpersonal difficulty				….
M	33.6	33.6	22.2	19.2
SD	7.91	7.91	8.61	9.07

Note: FCS=Family Communication Scale. FSS=Family Satisfaction Scale, JS=Jealousy Scale, IDAS-Interpersonal Difficulty Scale, M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation
*p<0.05, **p<.0.01, ***p<0.00

The above table of correlations shows that family communication is a positive significant correlation with family satisfaction whereas a negatively significant correlation is with Jealousy. It means that if the family has more positive communication with family members they have more positive satisfaction levels and have fewer Jealousy concerns and there is no relationship between family communication and Interpersonal difficulties. Moreover, Jealousy is highly positive and significant with Interpersonal Difficulties which indicates that if an individual has more Jealousy concerns it increases the Interpersonal Difficulties with others.

Table 2: *Mean Values, Standard Deviation and t-values of Gender and Family Communication, Family Satisfaction, Jealousy and Interpersonal Difficulty (N=150)*

Factors	Gender	M	SD	t	P<	UL	LL
FCS	Men	33.5	7.61	.08	.931	2.46	-2.69
	Women	33.7	8.19				
FSS	Men	33.5	7.61	.08	.930	2.46	-2.69
	Women	33.7	8.19				
JS	Men	22.8	9.08	.74	.459	3.85	-1.74
	Women	21.7	8.25				
IDAS	Men	21.1	10.10	2.27	.024*	6.25	.445
	Women	17.7	7.90				

Note: FCS=Family Communication, FSS=Family Satisfaction, JS-Jealousy Scale, IDAS=Interpersonal Difficulty Scale, M= Mean, SD= Standard deviation, p<=Significance level, UL= Upper Limit, LL=Lower Limit *p<0.05, **p<0.001

The table describes the significant mean difference in gender on interpersonal difficulties that men score higher than women which means that men have more interpersonal difficulties proneness than women.

Table 3: Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Predictors for University Students (N=150).

Model	SEB	β	t	p
Step I (R=.24,ΔR^2= .02)				
Age	1.49	.09	1.15	.250
Gender	1.48	-.06	-.81	.040*
Education level	1.50	-.13	-.16	.110
Step II (R= .26, ΔR^2= .02)				
Family system	1.50	.02	.25	.800
No. of. siblings	1.48	-.06	-.81	.410
Step III (R= .72, ΔR^2= .49)				
Jealousy	.06	10.91	10.91	.001***

Note. Only significant results are reported in steps I, II, III *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.000. Step I F (5, 150) =1.86, p<.05, Step II F(6, 150)= 1.73 p<.05, Step III F(8, 150)= 19.06, p>.01; Sum FCS=total of Family communication scale; Sum FSS=total of family satisfaction scale; Sum JS= total of Jealousy scale

The table of regression shows the model in which model I gender is a significant positive predictor of interpersonal difficulties in university students. Whereas in model II, the Family system and No. of siblings were the non-significant predictor of interpersonal difficulties in university students. In model III jealousy is the positive significant predictor of interpersonal difficulties in university students.

Discussion

In the student population jealousy is a serious concern. This is the first investigation that indicated if the family has lacked communication and dissatisfaction it increases interpersonal difficulties in the individuals. A study by Mattingly, Whitson, & Mattingly, 2012) also confirms the theory of anxiety explaining that jealousy is provoked by the situation. Family is emotional bonding in which the emotional sentiments are involved they have the sympathetic

and affiliations feelings for each other and have some expectations that they understand every situation through which they being going through which reduces their jealousy concerns of them and decreases their interpersonal problems as well (Hampson & Beavers, 1993). It was also confirmed by this research that family cohesion might affect the developmental period of adolescence. The relationship with parents is at risk because afterward in the young hood (university adults) may have conflicts with their parents which affects their interpersonal difficulties although family cohesion is most important for life span stages. (Honeycutt & Ford, 2001). In this study, it was revealed that male has more interpersonal difficulties than female. Jealousy is a positive significant predictor of interpersonal difficulties in university students

Conclusion

To sum up, this investigation is that the unhealthy communication and dissatisfaction of family members generate problems in the individuals which motivated them towards jealousy concerns and proneness to interpersonal difficulties. As the study revealed that if the family system is more communicative and satisfied then the family members have fewer interpersonal difficulties and jealousy.

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