

Interpersonal Dependency and Psycho Social Reactions of Unrequited Love in University Students: Mediating Role of Self-Disclosure

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University students are in transitional phases of their lives, going through biological, psychological and social changes and challenges. For most students, University acts as a platform to interact with the opposite gender and to work together in groups. This interaction may lead to the development of feelings for each other and sometimes the feelings are not reciprocated back and it leads to unrequited love. Total of 306 University students were approached through purposive convenient sampling with the age range of 17-36 years with mean of 22.72 and standard deviation of 3.02. The scales used in the study were, Interpersonal Dependency Scale (Nadeem et al., 2018), Self-Disclosure Scale (Hoyt et al., 2010) and the indigenous scale that is, the scale of psycho social reactions of unrequited love in university students. Pearson Product Moment Correlation showed a direct relationship among Interpersonal dependency, Self-Disclosure and Psychosocial reactions of Unrequited Love among University students. The mediation analysis shows that negative self-disclosure is partial significant indicator of the interpersonal dependency and psychosocial reactions of unrequited love.

Keywords: Interpersonal dependency; self-disclosure; psychosocial reactions of unrequited love; university students.

The transition of individuals from adolescence to adulthood is characterized by dynamic changes in the mind, body and social relationships (World Health Organization, 1997). This transition has different impacts on different individuals. The students of the University are at the stage where their families meet their early needs and now, for education, they leave their homes for long periods and spend time in universities where they meet new people and make friends to maintain a cordial bond and to meet the social demands expected from them. University life adds stress in the life of an individual by increasing their burden of studies. In addition to meet the expectations of their parents and to balance the study life, they also have to take care of their physical health and need a balanced nutritious diet along with exercises to keep themselves fit and healthy physically, emotionally and psychologically (Lee & Loke, 2005).

Adulthood is a critical period of self and social development in humans. Interpersonal interactions take on increased importance during the transition from childhood to adulthood (Crone & Dahl, 2012) as young adults work to reconcile increased levels of autonomy from parents with cultivating a sense of relatedness and belonging outside of family networks (Collins & Laursen, 2013; Nelson et al., 2016; Turner et al., 1993). With reduced oversight from parents, greater proportions of time spent with similar-aged peers serve as the basis upon which adolescents develop important social skills for future relationships (Brown, 2013; Brown & Larson, 2009; Connolly et al., 2000). Social context plays a key role in the development of young peoples' identities, as they use others' perspectives to help verify and develop views about themselves (Pfeifer et al., 2009).

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The experience of being in love and getting that love reciprocated back is one of most exhilarating experience of one's life. Most people know how it is to be in love and have that love reciprocated back. If a person is in that phase, he/she feels as if the world is such a nicer place and he/she perceives everything around him/her as self-fulfilling. There are biological reasons for this experience as well. That involves the release of chemicals in the brain that produces the happiness. Aron and his colleagues argued that various physiological and psychological responses show the person being in love, like euphoria, obsessive thinking about him/her, focused attention on a preferred individual and craving for the emotional reunion with the loved one (Aron et al., 2005).

Unrequited love is categorized into following types depending upon the differences in the level of dependency in the relationship (Bringle et al., 2013). Crush on someone unavailable is the unrequited love in which an individual is in love with another person who is not likely to be available in the near and who is not approachable e.g. a celebrity. The second level of unrequited love depending upon the dependency in romantic relationships is the relationship in which a person is interested in another person, who is nearby e.g. a friend. The next level of dependency of the romantic interest is the stage at which the person who loves the other person decides to initiate a romantic relationship and decides to disclose his/her feelings to the person whom he/she loves. The intentions of that individual may or may not be perceived correctly by the loved one and various responses can be expected of him/her (Arriaga, 2001). The next level of dependency in a romantic relationship is the relationship in which two people had a relationship for a certain period, but then they ended the relationship. The dissolution of the relationship is not often mutual (Davis et al., 2002). The fifth level of dependency is the one in which the individual once, is in a romantic relationship but there may be differences in the intensity of love provided and experienced by the two individuals. This relationship may include the fact that one individual in a relationship is putting more efforts than the others person and the needs and desires of one person is being fulfilled but the other person is not feeling satisfied in the relationship.

Interpersonal dependency, defined as evaluating one's own self-esteem and worth in the opinions of the other individual i.e. the dependency of an individual's self-worth on the opinions of others is known as interpersonal dependency. Interpersonal dependency is a faulty developed attitude of life, which damages the personal development of the person, and hinders the ability of that person to make the rational and practical hold on one's life (Melody, 2008). Interpersonal Dependency hinders various domains of a person's life. In emotional relationships, the addictive factor takes the shape of an urge to have a relationship with the person whom a person loves. A codependent individual has a personality that is pre disposed to start the relationships, which are emotionally draining for them (Forward, 1992). A codependent individual needs the approval of the other person at the stake of his/her own personal needs. The interdependent person's thoughts, ideas, reasoning, judgement and his/her behavior are also dependent on the other person's mood and behavior. They predominantly seek the approval and love of other person.

Self-disclosure is the sharing of information about one's own self and the feelings and experiences with the other person. There are two types of self-disclosure i.e. positive (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004) and negative (Foa & Cahill, 2001) emotional disclosures. Positive and negative self-disclosures, both are different constructs but they correlate with one another (Lyubomirsky et al., 2006). Positive Self Disclosure is the disclosure of positive feelings and experiences like happiness, excitement. The negative self-disclosure, on the other hand is the disclosure of negative feelings and experiences like distress, or times one

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felt depressed or hopeless. Disclosure of negative events is less likely to occur compared to the disclosure of positive events (Pasupathi et al., 2008). Some people disclose positive events less, because they want to seek insight. People disclose positive events with people with whom they have close bonds (McLean et al., 2007). The disclosure of positive and negative helps the individual to cope with the daily stressors and the negative events of one's life and to maintain a social bond with others (Hoyt et al., 2010).

University students are the adults, who are first time exposed to an environment, where the interaction of the opposite gender, facilitated and encouraged for invoking confidence in the individuals. These students are in the age in which the attraction to opposite gender is at its peak and the unrestricted social interaction of opposite gender might develop interest in each other romantically. The development of interest might be two-sided where both the individuals are involved in a loving relationship, whereas it might be one-sided in which only one individual has feelings for the other person, but the other person does not reciprocate them.

One-sided relationship or encounter between two individuals might lead to various unfavorable consequences on the individuals like stress, loneliness, worthlessness and many more. Having an interdependent personality may make the individuals more prone towards the experience of undesirable psychological effects, as the person with interpersonally dependent personality depends on others for his/her feelings and worth. Self-disclosure might act as a protective factor against the experience of unfavorable consequences, as disclosing your feelings, problems, and experiences to others might help the individual and prevent him/her from the adverse psychosocial consequences of unrequited love. The study aims to examine the mediating role of self-disclosure between interpersonal dependency, and psychosocial reactions of unrequited love in university students.

Method

Research Design

The current research employed a quantitative correlation survey research design.

Participant

Purposive Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data from a sample of 306 university students (Male=49% & Female=51%) with age range of 17-36 years ($M = 22.72$; $SD = 3.08$) from Lahore, Pakistan. They belonged to different levels of university education (Bachelors = 176, Masters= 107, DPT=18 and PhD=5).

Measures

The following measures were used in the main study of the research.

Demographic Form

The demographic sheet was made, which consisted of variables like age, gender, subject, year of study, degree of attachment with the parents, number of close friends, time spent with close friends, and the question about whether they are/were romantically involved in a relationship.

Psychosocial Reactions of Unrequited Love Scale

An indigenous tool on Psychosocial Reactions of Unrequited Love was used. The scale comprised of three factors that included: Feelings of Worthlessness, Stalking the other persona and Ambivalent feelings. The scale comprised of 4-point Likert scale from 0-3, where 0 denotes not at all, 1 denotes sometimes, 2 denotes often and 3 denotes always. Higher scores denote higher psychosocial reactions of unrequited love.

Interpersonal Dependency Scale

It consisted of 5 factors i.e. Negative Self Image, Help Seeking, Social Anxiety, Support Seeking, and Appeasing Others. From the 5 factors, only 3 factors i.e. Negative Self Image, Support Seeking and Appeasing others were used in the current study depending on the degree of relevance with the research variables. The scale comprised of 4-point Likert scale from 0-3, where 0 denotes not at all, 1 denotes sometimes, 2 denotes often and 3 denotes always scale (Nadeem et al., 2018).

Self-Disclosure Scale

The scale had 10 items. The scale comprised of two dimensions of self-disclosure, positive and negative self-disclosure. Positive self-disclosure refers to the disclosure of positive feelings, emotions, and experiences. Negative self-disclosure refers to the disclosure of negative feelings. The questionnaire had the flexibility to be used for self-disclosure with family, friends, spouse or people who have been through similar experiences. In the current research, we selected self-disclosure with friends because as the students come to university, they spend more time with friends, so their disclosure with friends is more likely to occur, which leads to platonic friendship which in turn further, may lead to the development of romantic relationship or attraction between opposite gender. The scale consisted of 5-point Likert scale from 0-4. Where 0 denotes not at all, 1 denotes somewhat, 2 denotes moderately, 3 denotes quite a bit and 4 denotes definitely (Hoyt et al., 2010).

Procedure

The research process was carried out in steps, where at first permission was taken from the Department of Ethical Board. The questionnaire made, by combining the demographic sheet and the scales of the variables of the research. The questionnaire was given to the participants to get it filled by taking the consent from each of the participant. The confidentiality to the participants was ensured and the questionnaires were gotten filled. The purpose of the research was briefed to the participants orally and their queries were answered. An indigenous scale for psychosocial reactions of unrequited love also developed and administered. The data was collected from 150 men and 156 women. The total number of participants from which the data was collected was 330. The forms that were discarded were 24. The forms were discarded because the students left few items or a whole scale unmarked.

Results

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was carried out to find out the relationship between interpersonal dependency, self-disclosure and Psycho social Reactions of Unrequited Love in University Students (Table 1).

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Table 1

Pearson Moment Correlations, Mean, Standard Deviation of Interpersonal dependency, Self-Disclosure and Psychosocial Reactions of Unrequited Love (N=306)

SNo	Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Interpersonal Dependency	-	-.14*	.27**	.55***	.35***	.29**	.54***
2.	Positive Self-Disclosure		-	.05	-.19**	.02	-.13*	-.16**
3.	Negative Self-Disclosure			-	.29**	.11	.11	.26**
4.	Feelings of Worthlessness				-	.66***	.48***	.97***
5.	Stalking the other Person					-	.38***	.79***
6.	Emotional Ambivalence						-	.62***
7.	Psychosocial Reactions of Unrequited Love							-
8.	<i>M</i>	43.14	13.00	10.20	32.67	11.51	7.57	51.75
9.	<i>SD</i>	15.42	4.19	4.51	20.55	6.79	5.08	28.40

Note: $p^* < 0.05$, $p^{**} < 0.01$, $p^{***} < 0.001$

Interpersonal Dependency has significant relationship with all other variables. Positive and Negative Self-Disclosure has a significant relationship with Feeling of worthlessness and Psychosocial Reactions of Unrequited Love. To test the mediation effects of positive and negative self-disclosure between interpersonal dependency and psychosocial reactions of unrequited love, mediation analysis was carried out.

Table 2

Role of Self-disclosure as a Mediator between Interpersonal Dependency and Psychosocial Reactions of Unrequited Love (N=306)

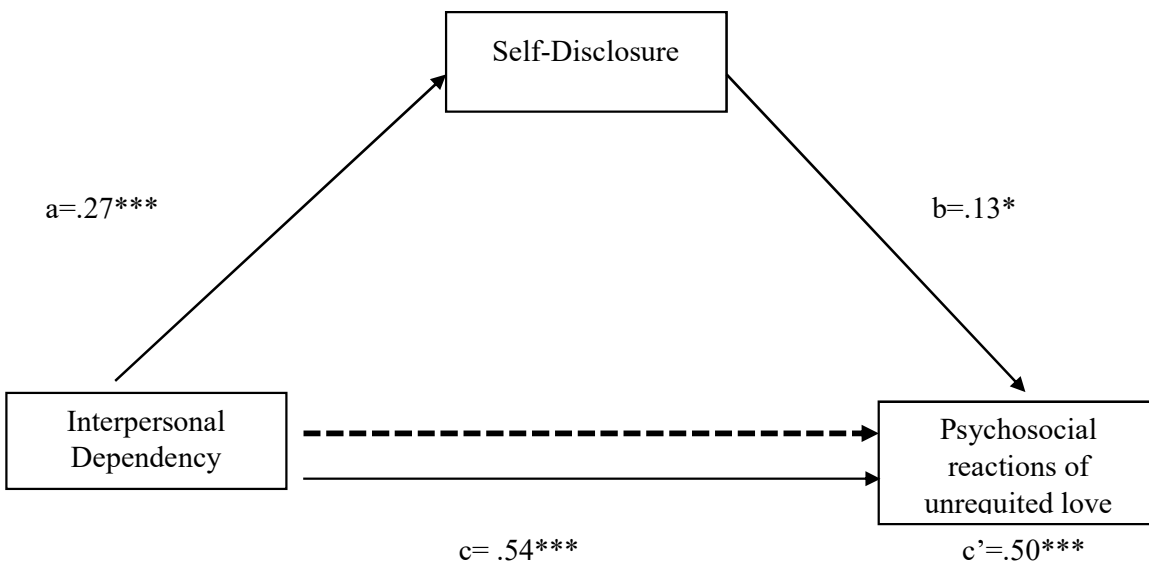
		Consequent						
		M(NSD)			Y(PSRS)			
Antecedent		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>P</i>		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>P</i>
ID (X)	a	.27	.01	.001***	c'	.50	.09	.001***
NSD (M)		---	---	---	B	.13	.32	.01**
		$R^2 = .07$			$R^2 = .30$			
		$F(1,301)=23.91, p = .001***$			$F(2,300)=65.10, p=.001***$			

Note. ID=Interpersonal Dependency, NSD= Negative Self Disclosure, PSRS=Psychosocial Reactions of Unrequited Love, $p^* < .05$, $p^{**} < .01$, $p^{***} < .001$

The table above represents the mediation analysis of negative self-disclosure on interpersonal dependency and psychosocial reactions of unrequited love. The result of the mediation analysis shows that negative self-disclosure is partial significant indicator of the interpersonal dependency and psychosocial reactions of unrequited love. The path a ($a=.27***$) shows that interpersonal dependency is a significant predictor of negative self-disclosure. The value of path b ($b=.13^*$) shows that negative self-discourse is a significant predictor of psychosocial reactions of unrequited love.

Figure 1

Mediation path framework of interpersonal dependency, Negative self-disclosure and Psycho Social Reactions of Unrequited Love (N=306)



The above model shows the mediation model of the interpersonal dependency, self-disclosure and psychosocial reactions of unrequited love. Value of the pathway $c = .54^{***}$ and that of the pathway $c' = .50^{***}$, which shows that the variable negative self-disclosure has partial mediation effect on the interpersonal dependency and the psychosocial reactions of unrequited love in university students.

Discussion

The adults, as they transition from childhood to adolescence to adulthood, undergo various biological, psychological and social challenges in their lives (Lee & Loke, 2005). This transitional period and the changes that co-occur are often challenging for the young adults. In this stage, it is generally the age in which the students generally have done with their college and they take admission in the universities to start a new phase of their lives. The university's hectic schedule and the great part of the day spent away from parents in university, lead to some sort of distance among the parents and the adults and the adults look for a sense of belongingness and relatedness outside of the family (Nelson et al., 2016). The responsibility on the adult's increases and they are expected to handle these situations effectively. The adults, as they transition from college to university, have to leave their friends behind, as every individual has different preference of career and choices which results in the seclusion of the adults from their friends in college. Hence, the loss of earlier relationships and friends is also a kind of strain. When these adults enter into universities, they are open to make new bonds of friendship (Crone & Dahl, 2012). These friendships not only help the adults to have a support system but these also enable the adults to spend the time in university in a fun way and to enjoy almost half of the day spent in the university.

The psychosocial reactions of unrequited love have a very crucial factor that is, feelings of worthlessness which is positively correlated with Interpersonal dependency. When an individual's feelings not being reciprocated and is rejected by the loved one then starts feeling less worthy and thinks low of himself (Baumeister & Wotman, 1994). The end of a relationship is not often mutual and hence, the person who still wanted to continue the

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relationship may feel neglected and that person may focus on regaining the self-worth and confidence after the rejection from the person whom he/she loves (Baumeister et al., 1993). The results of this study also show that greater the feelings of worthlessness, greater will be the experience of the psychosocial reactions of unrequited love and greater will be the interpersonal dependency in an individual (Sobolewska & Mellibruda, 1997).

Another factor of the psychosocial reactions of unrequited love is stalking. Stalking and Interpersonal dependency are positively correlated with each other. Greater the Interpersonal dependency in an individual, the more he/she will stalk the person he/she loves. This is in accordance with the literature, as the literature says that a person who is interpersonally dependent, his/her self-worth is dependent on the other person and hence, he/she starves for the presence of the other person in his/her life and seek continuous reassurances from the significant other to make himself/herself feel worthy (Shahar et al., 2004).

Unrequited love creates ambivalent feelings in an individual. At one time, the person wishes well for the person who is not reciprocating the feelings back. While, at the other time, that person the person in love wants to take revenge from that person and hates the other person. This can be explained by the literature, as love has a strong impact on the person's mind. The actions of the person whom you love cause a great impact on your mind and body. The actions and feelings of a person may change drastically by the actions of the person whom the individual love (Hill et al., 1997). These feelings of ambivalence are greater in an individual, if the person is interpersonally dependent, as the person is continuously dependent on the other person for his self-worth and therefore, slight change in the behavior of the loved one can cause changes in the feelings of the person who loves the other person (Bornstein, 2005).

This study has found the link between the positive self-disclosure and the psychosocial reactions of unrequited love. The results suggested that the people who get involved in positive self-disclosure are less likely to experience the consequences of the unrequited love. The literature suggests that people get involved in the disclosure of their own selves with the people with whom they have a strong bond and such relationship fosters respect, care and mutual understanding between the two people (Berg & Deriega, 1987). The self-disclosure is rewarding in itself and it results in the activation of the reward system in the brain (Tamir & Mitchell, 2012). This relationship between two people in which the bond is so strong that the people can disclose their feelings acts as a protective factor in the experience of psychosocial reactions of unrequited love. Presence of at least one individual in one's life, on whom you can trust and let all you information out can act as a support systems and can prevent you from the feelings of distress and loneliness (Leung, 2002).

This study states that negative self-disclosure directly correlated with the experience of psychosocial reactions of unrequited love. This is not in accordance with the literature, as the literature suggests that an individual, who discloses negative information, helps the individual in coping against the stressors of the daily life. It also enables then to develop a close bond with other people (Hoyt et al., 2010). The researches also suggest that the individuals who disclose the negative events and the experiences tend to have more satisfaction and have greater wellbeing (Kahn & Hassling, 2001). The difference in the results can be because of the personality differences in the individuals. Just like the presence of interpersonal dependency can worsen the effects of the psychosocial reactions of unrequited love. The researches states that the people who are more interpersonally dependent, are more involved in self-pity and hence, they want other to have pity on them too, that's why they tend to seek support and gain the empathy of the other people (Wobiz, 2001).

Conclusion

The research primarily focused in finding the link between the interpersonal dependency, self-disclosure and psychosocial reactions of unrequited love. The link between these variables provided beneficial knowledge in identifying the risk and protective factors that worsen or lighten the effects of the psychosocial reactions of unrequited love. This research, hence, can be proved beneficial for the university students who are facing relationship distress.

Although current study has few limitations like the sample size of the study was limited and was taken from one institute only which could effect its generalizability. Hence, future researches should consider larger sample size from multiple institutes. The data was collected from Co-education University only. The data could have collected from all boys and all girls' university as well, to see the comparison of the results. Future researches should consider longitudinal research design could have been used to find out the experience of the psychosocial reactions of unrequited love, over the course of time. The results of this study can be used in devising the therapeutic intervention for the students who are going through relationship distress. Assertiveness training can be provided as an intervention to the students undergoing the psychosocial reactions of unrequited love.

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