



Discovering the Impact of Emotion Regulation and Interpersonal Communication on Romantic Relationships Among Adults

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Abstract

Purpose of present study was to find the relationship between emotion regulation and interpersonal communication on romantic relationships among adults. Convenient sampling was used for the selection of the research sample. The sample of this study consisted of (N=300) adults including (n=150) males and (n=150) females (married couples) from Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The age of participants ranged from 25-35 years. Research protocols included demographic sheet, Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, Interpersonal Communication Scale and Romantic Partner Scale. Data was assessed by SPSS23 V. Results show that emotion regulation and interpersonal communication are positively correlated with each other. Emotion regulation is also positively correlated with romantic relationships. Similarly, interpersonal communication is also positively correlated with romantic relationships. Results further explained that emotion regulation and interpersonal communication have significant impact on romantic relationships. Moreover, the results indicated that males have significantly high rates of emotion regulation as compared to females. Similarly, males are higher in interpersonal communication as compared to females. Males also rate higher in romantic relationships as compared to females.

Introduction

This idea is not a new one that people's life is directly or indirectly shaped via their interaction. Whatever happens, but the connection between quality of Interpersonal relationship and one's overall quality of life which includes daily routines, communication with others, daily activities, one's job etc. remains important. As other activities are important in life, the same way maintaining positive and contented connections with others is important to life. And these connections or relationships are affected by daily Interpersonal Communications.

Emotion Regulation

In normal situations emotion is an incredibly short and conscious experience that is characterized with the aid of excessive mental activity. There are numerous meanings of emotions and there is no agreement on a single definition. Usually, emotion is related to mood, temperament, persona, disposition and motivation. In a few theories, cognition is an important aspect of emotions. The one who is acting emotionally appears as though he or she is no longer thinking but in the interpretation of activities, intellectual strategies are still active [1].



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Emotion regulation can be defined as the processes by which individuals influence the emotions they have, when they have them, and how these emotions are experienced and expressed. In accordance with Gross (1998), the procedure of emotion regulation may be conscious as well as unconscious, usual and spontaneous as well as controlled. Emotion regulation plays important role during alterations in the way of interrelation among constituents of response as the emotion spread out such as during elevated physiological responding in absence of overt behavior [2]. Emotion regulation includes extrinsic and intrinsic mechanisms which are accountable for evaluating, monitoring and modifying emotional reactions. Emotion regulation is a complex phenomenon that includes stimulating, inhibiting as well as modulating one's condition or behavioral outcome in certain condition.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal Communication is a type of Communication in which people exchange information, feelings and meaning using verbal and nonverbal messages such as language, tone of voice, facial expressions, body language and gestures is called Interpersonal Communication. In other words face to face Communication is called Interpersonal Communication. All social interaction is able to impart information and is communicative and any social process conjectures Communication process [3].

With the help of theory and research from Sociology, Social Psychology and Linguistics, Hartley (1993) provided an understanding and outline that how people use language, gestures and facial expressions to communicate with each other [4]. Interpersonal Communication is defined as the Communication from one person to another person, the Communication which is face to face and finally the style and the content of Communication show the personal attributes of the individuals and the roles played by them in a society and the relationship between them in the social setting.

Romantic Relationships

In a relationship, partners are passionately in love with each other. They provide support, empathy; encouragement, strength, psychological support and conflict resolution with the other partner. According to Farooqi (2014) [5], the basis of romantic relations is the supportive attitude and good communicational interaction between the partners. Furman and Simon (2008) defined romantic relationship as the selection of romantic partners truly based on the particular characteristics required in the other partner [6]. The feeling and expression of passionate love between two partners is known as romantic relationship. When you have a romantic relationship with someone, you share attitudes, visions, dreams, strengths and vulnerabilities with that person.

The term "romantic relationships" refers to mutually acknowledged ongoing voluntary interactions. Compared to other peer relationships, romantic ones typically have a distinctive intensity, commonly marked by expressions of affection and current or anticipated sexual behavior. The term "romantic experiences" refers to a larger category of activities and cognitions that includes relationships and also varied behavioral, cognitive, and emotional phenomena that do not involve direct experiences with a romantic partner. This category includes fantasies and one-sided attractions ("crushes"), as well as interactions with potential romantic partners [7].

Methods

Problem statement

The present study aimed to find the relationship between emotion regulation and interpersonal communication on romantic relationships among adults.

Objectives

1. To find out the relationship between emotion regulation and interpersonal communication among adults.
2. To explore the relationship between emotion regulation and interpersonal communication on romantic relationships among adults.
3. To investigate differences in rates of emotion regulation, interpersonal communication and romantic relationships among adults across gender.

Hypotheses

Following hypotheses are formulated to achieve the objectives of the study;

1. There will be a positive relationship between emotion regulation and interpersonal communication among adults.
2. The relationship between emotion regulation and interpersonal communication will have an impact on romantic relationships among adults.
3. There will be differences in rates of emotion regulation, interpersonal communication and romantic relationships among adults across gender

Operational definition

Emotion regulation: Emotion regulation refers to the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them and how they experience and express these emotions [8].

Interpersonal Communication: Face to face Communication presented as a form of internal and external factors comprising of external perception and internal disservice is called Interpersonal Communication. External perception is defined as an individual's skill to interact with other people and internal Dis-service is defined as an individual's desire to communicate with other people [9].

Romantic relationships: A strong mental attachment along with physical attraction between two individuals where there is an extreme emotional desires to connect with that person. Romantic relation is full of sentiments, feelings, and cares for the other person's happiness more than one's own by prioritizing them over one's own self [7]. This relationship will take the form of affiliation in present study.

Sample

Convenient sampling was used for the selection of the research sample. The sample of this study consisted of (N=300) adults including (n=150) males and (n=150) females. Participants of this study included married couples, who were selected from different areas of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The age of participants ranged from 25-35 years.

Instruments

Demographic sheet: Demographic sheet was formulated to access the name of the participant, age, gender and family system.

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ): The ERQ was developed by Gross, J.J., & John, O.P. (2003). The items on this scale are related to the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them and how they experience and express these emotions. This scale consists of ten items. The total possible score may range from 10 (indicating low ability of emotion regulation) to 70 (indicating high ability of emotion regulation). Cronbach’s alpha calculated for this scale was with good reliability (Gross, & John, 2003).

Interpersonal Communication scale (ICS): Interpersonal Communication Scale (ICS) was developed by Jared M., Akdemir & Ozgur in 2016. It was created to measure face to face Communication. It consisted of two subscales, which measured the external perception and internal Disseverance. There were 7 items in the questionnaire. First 4 items measured external perception and last 3 items measured internal Disseverance. There were no negative scoring items in the scale.

Romantic Partner Scale (RPS): The Romantic Partner Scale was developed by Zacchilli and Hendricks (2012). The scales consist of 39 items and six subscales. The minimum score of the scale is 0 and the maximum score of the scale is 156. The reliability of the romantic Partner conflict Scale is alpha reliability ($\alpha = .91$). Six factors were given the following subscale names: Compromise, Domination, Avoidance, Submission, Separation, and Interactional reactivity [10].

Procedure

Informed consent was taken from the participants before filling the questionnaires. The research protocols were administered to the participants along with verbal instructions. They included demographic sheet, Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, Interpersonal Communication Scale and Romantic Partner Scale. The data from this method was tabulated to conclude the results of the research using SPSS software. Reliability analysis, Correlation, t test and regression analysis were used to test hypotheses of the study. Data was statistically analyzed by statistical package for social sciences (SPSS23 V).

Results

The present study aimed to explore the impact of emotion regulation and interpersonal communication on romantic relationships among adults. Emotion Regulation Questionnaire was used to access strategy of regulating emotions, Interpersonal Communication Scale was used to measure rates of interpersonal communication and Romantic Partner Scale was used to explore Compromise, Domination, Avoidance, Submission, Separation, and Interactional reactivity among partners. Reliability analysis, Correlation, t-test and regression analysis were used to test hypotheses of the study. Data was statistically analyzed by statistical package for social sciences (SPSS23 V).

Table 1 indicates the Cronbach’s alpha reliability of Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, Interpersonal Communication Scale and Romantic Partner Scale. It shows that all scales have high alpha reliability including Emotion Regulation Questionnaire ($\alpha =$

.82), Interpersonal Communication Scale ($\alpha = .73$) and Romantic Partner Scale ($\alpha = .88$) thus concluding that the data gathered by these instruments is reliable for data analysis.

Table 2 indicates correlation coefficients for Emotion Regulation, Interpersonal Communication and Romantic Relationships among adults. The results show that emotion regulation and interpersonal communication are positively correlated with each other ($r = .76^{**}$, $p < .01$). Emotion regulation is also positively correlated with romantic relationships ($r = .68^{**}$, $p < .01$). Similarly, interpersonal communication is also positively correlated with romantic relationships ($r = .81^{**}$, $p < .01$).

Table 3 illustrates regression analysis to study the interacting effect of emotion regulation and interpersonal communication on romantic relationships among adults. The table depicts that emotion regulation ($\beta = 2.8$, $p < .01$) and interpersonal communication ($\beta = 3.7$, $p < .01$) have significant impact on romantic relationships. The value of R^2 shows that 76% of variance is accounted for romantic relationships by both emotion regulation and interpersonal communication. The above stated prediction is significant at $F (71.36)$ and $p < .01$.

Table 4 showed the results of t-test for comparing mean differences in rates of emotion regulation, interpersonal communication and romantic relationships between males ($n = 150$) and females ($n = 150$). Thus indicating that males ($M = 43.0$, $SD = 6.3$) have significantly high rates of emotion regulation as compared to females ($M = 39.4$, $SD = 8.9$). Similarly, males ($M = 52.6$, $SD = 8.1$) are higher in interpersonal communication as compared to females ($M = 59.5$, $SD = 3.0$). Males also rate higher ($M = 112.2$, $SD = 16.8$) in romantic relationships as compared to females ($M = 112.2$, $SD = 14.7$).

Table 1: Psychometric properties of Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, Interpersonal Communication Scale and Romantic Partner Scale (N=300)

| Scale | N | α |
|-------|----|----------|
| ERQ | 10 | .82 |
| ICS | 7 | .73 |
| RPS | 39 | .88 |

Note: ERQ: Emotion Regulation Questionnaire; ICS: Interpersonal Communication Scale; RPS: Romantic Partner Scale.

Table 2: Correlation matrix for Emotion Regulation, Interpersonal Communication and Romantic Relationships among adults (N=300)

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|-----------|---|-------|-------|
| ERQ | 1 | .76** | .68** |
| ICS | - | 1 | .81** |
| RPS | - | - | 1 |

$p < .01^{**}$

Note: ERQ: Emotion Regulation Questionnaire; ICS: Interpersonal Communication Scale; RPS: Romantic Partner Scale.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Emotion Regulation and Interpersonal Communication on Romantic Relationships among adults (N=300)

| Variables | Romantic Relationships | |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------|
| | B | 95 % CI |
| Constant | 114.0 | [0.6, 8.2] |
| ERQ | 2.8 | [-2.5, 2.6] |
| ICS | 3.7 | [-2.7, 2.9] |
| ERQ*ICS | 0.76 | [-3.3, 3.8] |
| R ² | 4.26 | - |
| F | 71.36 | - |

Note: CI: Confidence Interval

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-values of Emotion Regulation, Interpersonal Communication and Romantic Relationships between Males (n=150) and Females (n=150).

| Scales | Male (n= 150) | | Female (n= 150) | | 95% CI | | |
|--------|---------------|------|-----------------|------|--------|-----|-----|
| | M | SD | M | SD | T | LL | UL |
| ERQ | 43.0 | 6.3 | 39.4 | 8.9 | 4.0 | 1.8 | 5.3 |
| ICS | 52.6 | 8.1 | 59.5 | 3.0 | 9.5 | 5.4 | 8.2 |
| RPS | 112.2 | 16.8 | 102.4 | 14.7 | 5.3 | 6.3 | 9.4 |

P<.001, df= 298

Note: ERQ: Emotion Regulation Questionnaire; ICS: Interpersonal Communication Scale; RPS: Romantic Partner Scale

Conclusion

The purpose of present study was to find the relationship between emotion regulation and interpersonal communication on romantic relationships among adults. The results show that emotion regulation and interpersonal communication are positively correlated with each other. Emotion regulation is also positively correlated with romantic relationships. Similarly, interpersonal communication is also positively correlated with romantic relationships. Results further explained that that emotion regulation and interpersonal communication have significant impact on romantic relationships. Moreover, the results indicated indicating that males have significantly high rates of emotion regulation as compared to females. Similarly, males are higher in interpersonal communication as compared to females. Males also rate higher in romantic relationships as compared to females.

Implications, limitations and suggestions

- This study has offered some insights and guidelines for future research.
- The sample taken in the study was taken only from Islamabad and Rawalpindi. For future studies, corporate evaluations among several cities can be conducted with a good sample size

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