

Comparative Study

Comparative Analysis of Interpersonal Relationships and Life Satisfaction Between Singles and Individuals in Romantic Relationships

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the impact of relationship status on interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction. Using a correlational design, the research analyzed the relationship between these variables among singles and romantically involved individuals. Data were collected from 100 participants using two questionnaires: the Relationship Scale Questionnaire (RSQ) for measuring interpersonal relationships and The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) for assessing life satisfaction. The analysis revealed significant differences between singles and romantically involved individuals, with romantically involved individuals reporting higher levels of both interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction. Specifically, individuals in romantic relationships had significantly higher scores on both measures compared to singles. Additionally, a moderate positive correlation was found between interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction, indicating that better interpersonal relationships are associated with higher life satisfaction. These findings suggest that romantic involvement positively influences both interpersonal relationships and overall life satisfaction.

Keywords: *Relationship Status, Interpersonal Relationship, Life-Satisfaction*

Romantic relationships play a vital role in life, contributing to our psychological state "for better or for worse." Research highlights that romantic relationships often represent the most meaningful connections in life and are linked to higher life satisfaction (Bowlby, 1969; Morris, et al., 1988). However, this raises the question: Are those in romantic relationships the only ones living happy, fulfilled lives?

Society's View of Singlehood

Society's perception of single individuals has shifted across time. In the 1950s, being single was stigmatized and seen as abnormal. By the mid-1970s, singlehood gained acceptance as a valid lifestyle choice that could enhance happiness (Veroff et al., 1981). Today, remaining single is common, with significant growth in the single population—54 million people in the

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Received: August 17, 2024; Revision Received: August 23, 2024; Accepted: August 26, 2024

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U.S. in 2014 compared to only 4 million in the 1950s (Online Dating Statistics, 2014). Many now choose singlehood as a permanent lifestyle, delaying or foregoing marriage.

Relationship Status and Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal relationships, including those with family, friends, and coworkers, are crucial to human well-being. Research shows secure attachment leads to positive relationships and greater emotional security (Hogg & Vaughan, 2011). The quality of our friendships and close bonds often reflects our early attachment styles (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Securely attached individuals typically enjoy healthier, more fulfilling relationships, while insecure attachments can lead to lower self-esteem and strained interactions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Singlehood and Interpersonal Relationships

The stereotype that single individuals are lonely or unfulfilled is largely unfounded. Studies reveal that single individuals, particularly women, tend to have strong social skills and networks that prevent loneliness (Cockrum & White, 1985). While men may struggle more with loneliness, single women excel at building fulfilling interpersonal relationships. Supportive social networks can be key sources of happiness and validation for single people (Burr, 1979).

Romantic Relationships and Life Satisfaction

Being in a romantic relationship is generally associated with higher life satisfaction due to the emotional support and security it offers (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). However, not all relationships are fulfilling. Some individuals stay in unhappy relationships out of fear of being alone (Spielmann et al., 2013). Research indicates that quality, not just the presence, of a relationship is critical for life satisfaction. Poor-quality relationships can even lower well-being, while healthy, mutually supportive relationships enhance happiness and security (Rhoades et al., 2011).

Singlehood and Life Satisfaction

Contrary to common beliefs, single individuals can also experience high levels of life satisfaction. Factors such as career success, strong friendships, and personal fulfillment can lead to a satisfying single life (Cockrum & White, 1985). Some studies suggest that single women, in particular, may have higher life satisfaction than those in casual relationships, as they are often more self-aware and content with their choices (Gilligan, 1982).

While romantic relationships contribute positively to life satisfaction, they are not the sole path to happiness. Quality interpersonal relationships, fulfilling careers, and personal growth play equally important roles. As Maslow (1962) suggests, true happiness arises when individuals take responsibility for their lives and embrace self-actualization.

Needs and significance of study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction among individuals who are either single or in a romantic relationship. It is important to explore whether there is a significant difference in interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction based on relationship status.

This study can serve as a guide to understanding whether individuals who are single or those in romantic relationships experience better interpersonal relationships and greater life

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satisfaction. By comparing interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction according to relationship status, the study aims to determine whether one's level of life satisfaction is primarily influenced by relationship status or if it is shaped by various other factors.

Definition of Key Terms

- **Interpersonal relationship:** An interpersonal relationship can be defined as a strong deep, or close relationship with friends, family, work colleagues and or to a significant other (Hogg & Vaughan, 2011).
- **Life satisfaction:** Andrew (1974) states life satisfaction symbolizing an overarching criterion or ultimate outcome of human experience. Life satisfaction is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive.

Aim

To investigate the differences in interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction between individuals who are single and those who are in a romantic relationship, and to explore the relationship between interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction among these groups.

Objectives

- To study the significant difference of Interpersonal relationship between single and romantically involved individuals.
- To study the significant difference of life satisfaction between single and romantically involved individuals.
- To study the relationship between interpersonal relationship and life satisfaction.

Hypotheses

- **H01:** There is no significant difference in interpersonal relationships between single individuals and those who are romantically involved.
- **H02:** There is no significant difference in life satisfaction between single individuals and those who are romantically involved.
- **H03:** There is no significant relationship between interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature highlights the significant role that interpersonal relationships play in life satisfaction across various contexts. Studies such as those by Guenzi and Pelloni (2004) emphasize the importance of interpersonal dynamics in customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Similarly, research by Hamre and Pianta (2001) shows that supportive teacher-student relationships are fundamental to academic success. The studies reviewed also reveal that interpersonal relationships are influenced by multiple factors, including gender, parenting styles, and group dynamics, as seen in the findings of Hakelinda (2007) and Kosir et al. (2007). These studies underline that positive interpersonal connections are crucial for individual well-being, whether in educational settings, workplaces, or family environments.

Research related to life satisfaction consistently finds that it is closely linked to health practices, stress management, and overall well-being. Hawley and Klaukave (1998) found that individuals satisfied with their relationships tend to engage in healthier practices.

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Additionally, studies by Rode (2002) and Kenny et al. (2013) indicate that life satisfaction is predictive of better mental health and lower emotional distress. This review provides a foundation for the current study, which aims to examine the relationship between interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction among individuals who are single or in romantic relationships, shedding light on whether relationship status significantly impacts well-being.

METHOD

Participants

The study included a sample of 100 individuals from the Thrissur region of Kerala, India, selected using a convenience sampling method. Participants were categorized into two groups based on their marital status: 50 were classified as single, and 50 were classified as being in a romantic relationship. The majority of participants were aged between 18 and 30. Individuals in romantic relationships had been involved for an average of one to five years. Eligibility for participation required being at least 18 years old and either unmarried or in a romantic relationship. Participation in the study was voluntary.

Instruments

- 1. Relationship scale questionnaire (RSQ):** Bartholomew & Horowitz (1991) created the Relationship Scale Questionnaire (RSQ), which is used to gauge overall relationship satisfaction. A relationship questionnaire was developed to gauge a person's interpersonal relationships. This scale comprises 13 items, on a 5-point Likert scale, the participant indicated how much they agreed with the statement that it represented their favourite method of interacting to others. The relationship questionnaire has a reliability rating of 0.6 and a Cronbach's alpha of .790, indicating strong internal consistency or reliability.
- 2. Satisfaction with life scale questionnaire:** The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was used to measure overall satisfaction in the participants' life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). The five-item measure was assessed on a 7-point Likert scale, with 7 representing strong agreement and 1 representing strong disagreement. One measure of overall life satisfaction is obtained by averaging all replies on the seven-point rating system. Numerous research have confirmed the internal consistency of the five-item instrument, with alpha and test-retest coefficient consistency exceeding .80 (Pavot & Diener, 1993). For the given sample, the Cronbach's alpha was .871 to assess internal consistency and dependability. The validity and interitem correlation of the Life Satisfaction Scale are both satisfactory.

Procedure

Data collection was conducted primarily with adults, with each session taking approximately ten minutes. Two main scales were used: the Relationship Scale and the Life Satisfaction Scale. Before administering the scales, the researchers established a rapport with each participant, explaining the study's objectives and general guidelines. Participants were assured that their identities would remain confidential and that their data would be used solely for research purposes. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement. After completing the questionnaire, participants were asked to review their responses for any omissions before the questionnaires were collected.

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation, t-value, and Significance for Interpersonal Relationships

Relationship Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Significance
Singles	50	32.74	4.31	2.50**	$p < 0.05$
Committed	50	36.30	5.72		

Table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation, and t-value for interpersonal relationships between singles and romantically involved individuals. The mean score for singles ($M = 32.74$, $SD = 4.31$) was significantly lower than that for committed individuals ($M = 36.30$, $SD = 5.72$). The t-value of 2.50 was statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level, suggesting that individuals in romantic relationships have significantly better interpersonal relationships than singles.

Life Satisfaction Between Singles and Romantically Involved Individuals

The study also aimed to explore differences in life satisfaction between singles and romantically involved individuals.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, t-value, and Significance for Life Satisfaction

Relationship Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Significance
Singles	50	20.08	4.16	3.20**	$p < 0.01$
Committed	50	25.86	3.19		

Table 2 shows the mean, standard deviation, and t-value for life satisfaction. Singles reported a mean score of 20.08 ($SD = 4.16$), which was significantly lower than the mean score of 25.86 ($SD = 3.19$) reported by committed individuals. The t-value of 3.20 was statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level, indicating that individuals in romantic relationships experience significantly higher life satisfaction than singles.

Relationship Between Interpersonal Relationships and Life Satisfaction

The study further examined the correlation between interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction among singles and romantically involved individuals.

Table 3: Correlation Coefficient between Interpersonal Relationship and Life Satisfaction

Variable	Life Satisfaction
Interpersonal Relationship	0.327**

Table 3 displays the correlation coefficient between interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction. The correlation was found to be 0.327, which is statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. This result suggests a moderate positive correlation between interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction, indicating that better interpersonal relationships are associated with higher life satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study provide significant insights into the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction across different relationship statuses. The significant differences in both interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction between singles and

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romantically involved individuals suggest that being in a romantic relationship positively influences these aspects of life.

For singles, while life satisfaction can still be high, the results indicate that the presence of a romantic partner may enhance interpersonal relationships and overall life satisfaction. The significant correlation between interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction further emphasizes the importance of strong, supportive relationships in contributing to an individual's overall well-being.

CONCLUSION

The study conclusively demonstrates that romantic relationships have a positive impact on both interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction. The significant differences observed between singles and romantically involved individuals highlight that those in romantic relationships experience better interpersonal relationship and higher levels of life satisfaction. Specifically, individuals in romantic relationships report significantly higher scores in both domains compared to their single counterparts. Moreover, the positive correlation between interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction underscores the integral role of supportive and meaningful relationships in enhancing overall well-being. These findings suggest that romantic involvement not only improves relational dynamics but also contributes to a more fulfilling life experience. Future research could further explore the specific aspects of romantic relationships that most significantly influence interpersonal satisfaction and life contentment.

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Ajisha, T.T. & Fayize, P.V. (2024). Comparative Analysis of Interpersonal Relationships and Life Satisfaction Between Singles and Individuals in Romantic Relationships. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(3), 1483-1491. DIP:18.01.145.20241203, DOI:10.25215/1203.145