

Interpersonal Needs and Relationship Satisfaction among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between interpersonal needs—Perceived Burdensomeness (PB) and Thwarted Belongingness (TB)—and Relationship Satisfaction (RS) in young adults aged 18–24, based on the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide. A total of 80 participants (40 single, 40 in relationships) were selected through purposive sampling. Standardized tools—the Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (INQ-15) and the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)—were used for data collection. Analysis through SPSS revealed significant negative correlations between PB, TB, and RS, indicating that higher interpersonal distress is linked to lower relationship satisfaction. While individuals in relationships reported higher RS than singles, there were no significant group differences in PB and TB, suggesting that being in a relationship does not necessarily reduce interpersonal distress. Overall, the study highlights the importance of internal emotional states in shaping relational well-being and suggests that emotional connection matters more than relationship status alone. These findings offer valuable insights for mental health professionals working with emerging adults.

Keywords: *Perceived Burdensomeness, Thwarted Belongingness, Relationship Satisfaction, Interpersonal Needs, Young Adults, Romantic Relationships*

Humans crave connection, emotional support, and a sense of belongingness. These interpersonal needs become especially important during young adulthood, which is considered a period of self-discovery, the shaping of personal identity, and growing autonomy. Young adulthood spans ages 18 to 24 and represents the transition from childhood to adulthood. During this period, individuals fully develop their sexual and physical traits. This stage is characterized by significant cognitive, social, psychological, and physical development (Sayed, 2023).

Many young individuals acquire the education and skills that form the foundation for their future earnings and career success during this stage of life. Significant transitions often define this phase as people explore various opportunities in relationships, careers, and personal beliefs. By the time they reach their late twenties, most have made important life decisions with long-term consequences. When reflecting on their most important life experiences, adults often recall events from this formative period (Arnett, 2000).

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Healthy interpersonal relationships are considered a protective factor against stress and challenges. They offer practical assistance with tasks, emotional encouragement in daily life, shared experiences for companionship, and a foundation for social and emotional growth (Martin, 2014). Unhealthy interpersonal relationships can be characterized by ongoing conflict, frequent criticism, undue pressure, controlling behavior, and feelings of exclusion (Kenny, 2013).

The Interpersonal Theory of Suicide, introduced by (Joiner, 2009) and further developed by (Van Orden, 2012), identifies two key psychological constructs: Perceived Burdensomeness (PB), the belief that one is a burden to others, and Thwarted Belongingness (TB), the feeling of social disconnection. Though originally proposed in the context of suicidal ideation, these constructs have broader implications for emotional health and relationship satisfaction.

Despite increased interest in interpersonal needs, limited research explores how PB and TB impact relationship satisfaction specifically in young adults. Gaining insight into these dynamics can inform interventions and support strategies for counselors, educators, and mental health professionals working with this population.

Interpersonal Needs

Interpersonal needs are fundamental psychological and emotional drives that compel individuals to form social bonds, seek connection, gain recognition, and experience a sense of belonging. These needs are particularly prominent during young adulthood—a critical period marked by significant identity exploration, relationship building, and emotional development (Baumeister, 1995; Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, belongingness is a primary human motivation essential for psychological well-being. When these needs are unmet or thwarted, individuals may experience emotional distress, a decline in mental health, and reduced relational satisfaction (Pei Boon Ooi, 2022).

Two critical dimensions of unmet interpersonal needs are *perceived burdensomeness*—the belief that one is a liability to others—and *thwarted belongingness*—a sense of not being meaningfully connected. These constructs are particularly relevant to understanding the emotional experiences of young adults, who often face social comparison, role transitions, and pressure to establish intimacy and independence. The present study explores how these unmet interpersonal needs are associated with *relationship satisfaction*, an essential indicator of psychological and relational well-being.

Perceived Burdensomeness

Perceived burdensomeness refers to the internalized belief that one is a drain or liability to those around them—emotionally, financially, or practically. It is not always rooted in objective reality but rather stems from cognitive distortions or negative self-appraisals (Van Orden K. A., 2010). Individuals who experience this feeling often believe their existence imposes undue stress on others and may harbor thoughts such as “People would be better off without me.” Research indicates that perceived burdensomeness can exist even in supportive environments due to a mismatch between self-perception and external feedback (Monteith, 2013).

In the context of close relationships, this belief can be especially damaging: it may prevent individuals from expressing vulnerability, reduce their willingness to seek help, and contribute to emotional withdrawal. It can also manifest in compensatory behaviors such as over-functioning, where individuals try to compensate for their perceived burden by over-

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helping or over-apologizing, thereby disrupting healthy relational dynamics (Cramer, 2010; Hill, 2015). The persistent belief of being a burden is therefore a significant barrier to intimacy and mutual satisfaction in relationships.

Thwarted Belongingness

Thwarted belongingness is characterized by a pervasive sense of social isolation and the belief that one does not meaningfully connect with others. It encompasses feelings of loneliness, alienation, and lack of reciprocal care, even when one is surrounded by people (Van Orden K. A., 2010). For young adults navigating educational transitions, career uncertainty, or shifting social networks, feelings of disconnection can become particularly pronounced (Arnett, 2000). Social media, despite increasing digital connectivity, may paradoxically exacerbate feelings of social inadequacy and exclusion (Twenge, 2017).

Thwarted belongingness has been associated with poor psychological outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Baumeister, 1995). Within intimate or romantic relationships, this experience may manifest as emotional detachment, lack of communication, and difficulty in maintaining closeness. Over time, this sense of not belonging can erode trust and satisfaction, leading to relational conflict or dissolution. Understanding the implications of thwarted belongingness is crucial for addressing emotional needs and fostering healthier interpersonal dynamics in young adults.

Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of the quality, health, and fulfillment derived from a romantic or intimate relationship. It encompasses dimensions such as emotional intimacy, communication, mutual support, trust, and conflict resolution (Funk, 2007; Fincham, 2018). High relationship satisfaction has been linked to better psychological health, greater resilience, and positive life outcomes, while low satisfaction is often associated with increased stress, anxiety, and depression (Hendrick, 1988).

In the context of unmet interpersonal needs, both perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness can significantly impair relationship satisfaction. These experiences may hinder emotional expression, distort partner perceptions, and diminish the sense of security within the relationship (Joiner, 2009; Cramer, 2010). The **Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)** developed by (Hendrick, 1988), is frequently used in research to assess satisfaction levels in romantic partnerships. This study aims to investigate how the psychological constructs of perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness influence the overall relationship satisfaction among young adults—a group particularly vulnerable to fluctuating emotional needs and relational challenges.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Jennifer L. Hames, 2015) This study looked at how feeling like a burden to others and feeling socially disconnected are related to excessive reassurance seeking, which is often driven by fear of rejection. The researchers expected that people who felt more burdened or disconnected would seek reassurance more often, even when taking into account their level of depression and overall functioning. The study involved 415 outpatient participants (62% were women) with an average age of 28. The results showed that both feeling like a burden and feeling disconnected were strongly linked to more reassurance-seeking behavior. These findings suggest that it's important to address excessive reassurance seeking in people who feel isolated or like a burden, as it can cause more problems in their relationships, including being rejected.

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According to (Dorothy C. H. Teo, 2018), this study tested the Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (INQ) with 340 young adult men in Singapore to better understand the link between interpersonal needs and suicidal behavior. The INQ focuses on two key feelings: believing you're a burden to others and feeling socially isolated. The results showed that the questionnaire effectively measured these feelings and was reliable. The study suggests that the INQ is a valuable tool for understanding how social and emotional needs contribute to suicidal thoughts in young Asian men.

(Sanya Taneja, 2020) This study explored how physical proximity in romantic relationships affects trust, commitment, and satisfaction among young adults. Forty participants were divided into two groups: those in long-distance relationships and those in physically close ones. Using standardized tools, the study found no significant difference in relationship satisfaction between the two groups. However, long-distance couples showed higher commitment but lower trust compared to those in close relationships. These findings suggest that physical proximity influences trust and commitment in different ways.

(Saba Aziz, 2021) This study examines the connection between romantic relationship satisfaction and feelings of loneliness among young adults. Using the Relationship Assessment Scale, Relationship Satisfaction Scale, and UCLA Loneliness Scale, data from 50 participants revealed that 80% experienced low relationship satisfaction, 94% reported dissatisfaction, and 68% felt high levels of loneliness. These findings highlight a strong link between emotional isolation and unsatisfying romantic involvement. The study underscores the importance of addressing relationship dissatisfaction as a key focus in therapeutic interventions, suggesting that occupational therapists can play a significant role in enhancing emotional well-being through strategies aimed at improving interpersonal connection.

(Ajooba, 2023) This study explored how "phubbing"—ignoring a partner to use a mobile phone—affects relationship satisfaction among young adults in dating relationships. A total of 107 participants aged 18 to 40, all in relationships for at least six months, took part. They completed surveys measuring how often they experienced this and how satisfied they felt in their relationships. The results showed a small negative link between phubbing and satisfaction, but it was not statistically significant. Overall, most participants reported moderate levels of both this and relationship satisfaction, suggesting that occasional phone use did not strongly harm their romantic relationships.

(Hill R. P.-B., 2023) This study explored suicidal thoughts in young people in the U.S. and aimed to identify factors that increase or protect against them. It focused on how negative social experiences relate to suicidal thoughts, guided by the interpersonal theory of suicide. The study involved 243 college students (mostly women, average age 20) from diverse backgrounds. The results showed that feeling like a burden on others linked negative social experiences to suicidal thoughts, but feeling disconnected did not. The study suggests that while therapy focuses on emotional support, colleges should create more positive social environments. The researchers recommend further long-term studies to better understand these links.

(Sarah Sparks, 2023) This study looked at how feeling disconnected and feeling like a burden relate to suicidal thoughts in psychiatric inpatients. It involved 139 patients who filled out surveys. The results showed that feeling like a burden was especially important in linking low social support to suicidal distress. The study highlights that improving social

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support and helping patients feel more connected and less burdensome could lower the risk of suicidal thoughts.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

This aims to study the relationship between interpersonal needs (Perceived Burdensomeness and Thwarted Belongingness) and Relationship Satisfaction among Young Adults (Single and in Relationships).

Objectives

1. To find out the relationship between dimensions of interpersonal need (Perceived Burdensomeness and Thwarted Belongingness) and Relationship Satisfaction among Young Adults (Single and In Relationships).
2. To measure the differences on the level of Interpersonal Needs (PB and Thwarted Belongingness) and Relationship Satisfaction among Young Adults (Single and In Relationships).

Hypotheses

- **H1:** There will be significant relationship between the dimension of interpersonal needs (Perceived Burdensomeness) and relationship satisfaction among Young Adults (Single).
- **H2:** There will be significant relationship between the dimensions of interpersonal needs (Perceived Burdensomeness) and relationship satisfaction among Young Adults (In Relationships).
- **H3:** There will be significant relationship between dimensions of interpersonal needs (Thwarted Belongingness) and relationship satisfaction among Young Adults (Single).
- **H4:** There will be significant relationship between dimensions of interpersonal needs (Thwarted Belongingness) and relationship satisfaction among Young Adults (In Relationship)
- **H5:** There will be significant difference on the level of Perceived Burdensomeness Interpersonal Needs among Young Adults (Single and In Relationships).
- **H6:** There will be significant difference on the level of Thwarted Belongingness Interpersonal Needs among Young Adults (Single and In Relationships).
- **H7:** There will be significant difference on the level of Relationship Satisfaction among Young Adults (Single and In Relationships).

Sample Details

In the present study, the sample of 80 Young Adults within the age range of 18 – 24 years were taken and was divided into 2 groups 40 who were single and 40 who were In Relationship.

- **Inclusion Criteria:**
 - Young Adults aged between 18 and 24 years.
 - Young Adults, regardless of relationship status (single or in relationship).
 - Ability to understand English (as the questionnaire was administered in English).
 - Willingness to participate and give informed consent.

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- **Exclusion Criteria:**

- Participants outside the age range of 18–24 years.
- Young Adults with known psychiatric diagnoses (self-reported).

Variables

The present study explored the influence of perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness on relationship satisfaction. Perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness were assessed using the Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (INQ-15), while relationship satisfaction was measured through the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). Additionally, comparisons were made based on participants' relationship status (single vs. in a relationship), as reported in the demographic section of the Google Form.

Tools

Two standardized self-report questionnaires were used to assess the key constructs of the study: the Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (INQ) was employed to evaluate the interpersonal needs of Young Adults, including dimensions such as Thwarted Belongingness and Perceived Burdensomeness; and the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) was used to measure relationship satisfaction among participants currently in romantic relationships.

- **Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (INQ) – 15:** INQ-15 was developed by (Van Orden K. A., 2012), it is a standardized self-report instrument that assesses two core interpersonal constructs: **Thwarted Belongingness (TB)** and **Perceived Burdensomeness (PB)**. The scale consists of 15 items—9 measuring TB and 6 measuring PB. Participants respond to each item using a **7-point Likert scale** ranging from 1 (Not at all true for me) to 7 (Very true for me). Some items are reverse-coded. Higher scores on each subscale indicate greater levels of the respective construct. The INQ-15 has demonstrated **strong psychometric properties**, including construct validity and internal consistency across clinical and non-clinical populations (Van Orden K. A., 2012) (Hill R. M., 2015).
- **Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS):** The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), developed by (Hendrick, 1988), is a **7-item** tool designed to measure **satisfaction in romantic relationships**. It includes both **positively** (Items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6) and **negatively worded items** (Items 4 and 7), rated on a **5-point Likert scale**. Scoring for positive items ranges from 1 (low) to 5 (high), while negative items are reverse-scored. Total scores range from 7 to 35, with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction. Mean scores are obtained by dividing the total score by 7. A score above 4.0 suggests high relationship satisfaction, while scores around or below 3.5 indicate lower satisfaction. The scale demonstrates good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$) and test-retest reliability ($r = .85$), with a mean inter-item correlation of .49 (Jain, 2022).

Procedure

The research utilized a quantitative approach through an online survey method for data collection. The procedure followed a structured and ethical framework to ensure the integrity and reliability of the study.

1. A structured questionnaire was created using Google Forms. The form included an informed consent section, demographic items (age, gender, and relationship status), followed by the INQ and RAS scales.
2. A small pilot test was conducted with 10 participants to assess the clarity and effectiveness of the questionnaire. Based on feedback, minor adjustments were made.

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3. The finalized form was circulated via digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and university mailing lists. The data collection phase lasted for approximately three to six weeks.
4. Ethical principles were upheld throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, anonymity was assured, and participants had the option to withdraw at any time.
5. The responses were downloaded and organized using Microsoft Excel for initial data cleaning. Scoring was conducted for each scale based on the standardized instructions. The cleaned data was then analyzed using IBM SPSS software.
6. Relationship status, the key grouping variable, was obtained through a self-reported question in the demographic section of the Google Form.

RESULTS

This study examined the relationship between interpersonal needs—perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness—and relationship satisfaction among 80 young adults aged 18–24, equally divided between single individuals and those in romantic relationships. Standardized self-report measures (INQ and RAS) were used, and statistical analyses, including Pearson’s correlation and independent samples t-tests, were conducted via SPSS. Findings highlighted notable variations in interpersonal needs and relationship satisfaction based on relationship status, contributing to a deeper understanding of emotional well-being in young adulthood.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PB Scoring	40	18.85	10.951
TB Scoring	40	32.05	12.142
RAS Scale	40	27.53	5.038

The present analyses were conducted on data collected from a sample of 80 Young Adults aged between 18 and 24 years. Descriptive statistics for the key study variables—Perceived Burdensomeness, Thwarted Belongingness, and Relationship Satisfaction—are presented in Table 1. Participants reported moderate levels of perceived burdensomeness ($M = 18.85$, $SD = 10.951$), moderate levels of thwarted belongingness ($M = 32.05$, $SD = 12.142$), and moderately high relationship satisfaction ($M = 27.53$, $SD = 5.038$).

Correlational Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to assess the associations between interpersonal needs and relationship satisfaction, separately for individuals who are single and those in romantic relationships.

Table 2: Correlation between Perceived Burdensomeness and Relationship Satisfaction among Singles

Variable	N	r	p
PB Scoring	40	-0.724	Sig***
RAS Scoring	40		

Note: *** $p < .01$

Table 2 displays the correlation between PB and RAS among single individuals. The correlation coefficient was strong and negative ($r = -0.724$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher

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levels of perceived burdensomeness were associated with lower levels of relationship satisfaction.

Table 3: Correlation between Perceived Burdensomeness and Relationship Satisfaction among Participants In-Relationship

Variable	N	r	p
PB Scoring	40	-0.318	Sig*
RAS Scoring	40		

Note: * $p < .05$

Table 3 shows the correlation between perceived burdensomeness (PB) and relationship satisfaction (RAS) among individuals in romantic relationships. The correlation found was weaker ($r = -0.318$, $p = .045$), yet it remained statistically significant.

Table 4: Correlation between Thwarted Belongingness and Relationship Satisfaction among Singles

Variable	N	r	p
PB Scoring	40	-0.734	Sig**
RAS Scoring	40		

Note: *** $p < .01$

Among single participants (see Table 4), there was a significant negative association between TB and RAS ($r = -0.734$, $p < .001$). This correlation is stronger than what was observed in the relationship group.

Table 5: Correlation between Thwarted Belongingness and Relationship Satisfaction among Participants In- Relationships

Variable	N	r	p
PB Scoring	40	-0.564	Sig*
RAS Scoring	40		

Note: * $p < .05$

In the context of relationships (see Table 5), there was a significant negative correlation between TB and RAS ($r = -0.564$, $p < .001$). This means that participants who experienced higher feelings of social disconnection reported lower satisfaction in their romantic relationships.

Group Differences: Independent Samples T-Tests

Independent samples t-Tests were conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and relationship satisfaction between single participants and those in romantic relationships.

Table 6: Group Comparison on Perceived Burdensomeness

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p-value	Significance
Single	40	18.85	10.95	1.634	0.106	Insignificant
Relationship	40	15.10	9.53			

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The comparison of PB scores between singles and individuals in relationships (Table 6) showed no statistically significant difference ($t = 1.634$, $p = .106$). Singles reported a slightly higher mean score ($M = 18.85$) compared to those in relationships ($M = 15.10$), but this difference did not reach statistical significance.

Table 7: Group Comparison on Thwarted Belongingness

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p-value	Significance
Single	40	32.05	12.14	1.140	0.258	Insignificant
Relationship	40	29.10	10.98			

Table 7 shows that there was no significant difference in Thwarted Belongingness (TB) scores between the two groups ($t = 1.140$, $p = .258$). Singles reported a slightly higher TB score ($M = 32.05$) compared to those in relationships ($M = 29.10$).

Table 8: Group Comparison on Relationship Satisfaction

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p-value	Significance
Single	40	27.53	5.03	-2.389	0.019	Significant
Relationship	40	30.38	5.61			

The RAS scores displayed significant differences between groups, as shown in Table 8. Individuals in romantic relationships reported higher relationship satisfaction ($M = 30.38$) compared to those who were single ($M = 27.53$). The analysis yielded a t-value of -2.389 and a p-value of $.019$.

DISCUSSION

This study examined how perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness relate to relationship satisfaction in young adults, using the INQ and RAS. It also explored whether these needs predict relationship satisfaction and how relationship status influences these experiences, interpreting findings in light of existing research.

Descriptive Statistics Table: Summary of Variables

The descriptive statistics indicated that participants reported a mean score of perceived burdensomeness (PB) of $M = 18.85$ ($SD = 10.95$), a mean score of thwarted belongingness (TB) of $M = 32.05$ ($SD = 12.14$), and a mean score of relationship satisfaction (RS) of $M = 27.53$ ($SD = 5.03$). These results suggest that the young adults in the sample experienced moderate levels of perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness, while simultaneously reporting relatively high levels of relationship satisfaction. These findings align with previous research indicating that young adulthood is often characterized by interpersonal challenges alongside a strong desire for social connection (Joiner T. E., 2005) (Van Orden K. A., 2010).

Correlation Analysis: Table Interpretation

The correlation analyses showed that both perceived burdensomeness (PB) and thwarted belongingness (TB) were significantly and negatively associated with relationship satisfaction (RAS), supporting the idea that higher levels of interpersonal distress are linked to lower satisfaction in relationships.

In the single group, there was a strong negative correlation between perceived burdensomeness (PB) and relationship satisfaction (RAS), with a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.724$ ($p < .01$). This indicates that individuals who view themselves as a burden to others

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tend to have lower levels of satisfaction in their relational lives, even when they do not have a romantic partner. This aligns with (Joiner T. E., 2009) Interpersonal Theory of Suicide, which emphasizes that perceived burdensomeness is a profoundly negative cognitive-affective state that undermines feelings of connectedness and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships.

The data indicated a strong negative correlation between TB and RAS within the same group ($r = -0.734$, $p < .01$). This finding suggests that a lack of meaningful connections, which is a key aspect of thwarted belongingness, significantly reduces an individual's satisfaction with personal relationships. This aligns with previous research emphasizing the critical role of belonging for overall well-being (Baumeister, 1995).

In the relationship group, there was a negative correlation between perceived burdensomeness (PB) and relationship satisfaction (RAS), with a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.318$ ($p < .05$). Although this correlation was weaker, it was still statistically significant. This suggests that perceived burdensomeness continues to influence relationship satisfaction, even when a supportive romantic partner is involved. It is possible that being in a romantic relationship helps to reduce the impact of interpersonal distress, though it does not eliminate its effects.

Additionally, the relationship group displayed a moderately strong negative correlation between TB and RAS (Relationship Assessment Scale), with a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.564$ and a significance level of $p < .01$. Participants who felt disconnected or lacked a sense of belonging, even while in relationships, reported lower levels of satisfaction. This finding aligns with the research of (Van Orden K. A., 2010), which highlighted that the need to belong is fundamental and continues to impact satisfaction, even in romantic contexts.

Group Differences: Interpretations

Perceived Burdensomeness

No significant difference was found in perceived burdensomeness between single individuals and those in romantic relationships. This suggests that the internalized feeling of being a burden may be relatively stable and not easily influenced by relationship status. It is likely that perceived burdensomeness is more closely related to personal psychological factors, such as low self-esteem, depression, or maladaptive thinking patterns, rather than the presence or absence of a romantic partner.

Perceived burdensomeness is theoretically defined within the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide (Joiner T. E., 2009) as a deeply held belief about one's impact on others. This belief is resistant to change through external validation alone. Empirical studies, such as those by (Hill R. M., 2014), argue that feelings of burdensomeness are linked to long-standing cognitive patterns that often form early in life and are reinforced by ongoing stressors, rather than being directly alleviated by one's relationships.

In romantic relationships, individuals may encounter dynamics such as codependency, unresolved conflict, or emotional neglect, which can worsen feelings of being a burden. In these situations, the relationship might create an environment that maintains or intensifies this sense of burdensomeness instead of resolving it. Therefore, the lack of significant differences among groups regarding this issue may highlight the complexity and multifaceted nature of perceived burdensomeness as an interpersonal experience, which does not necessarily diminish simply because one is in a romantic relationship.

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Thwarted Belongingness

The scores for thwarted belongingness did not significantly differ between the two groups. This indicates that simply having a romantic partner does not ensure a sense of social integration or emotional connection. Research, such as that conducted by (Slotter, 2012) has shown that for relational presence to positively influence belongingness, it must be accompanied by emotional closeness.

The quality of a romantic relationship is crucial for individual well-being. Research shows that individuals in unfulfilling or emotionally distant relationships may experience feelings of loneliness similar to those of single individuals. (Bar-Kalifa, 2015). Perceived partner responsiveness refers to how much individuals feel understood, cared for, and appreciated by their partners, and it plays a crucial role in alleviating these feelings. (Reis H. T., 2015). Studies have shown that greater perceived responsiveness is associated with increased emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction (Jolink, 2022), while a lack of emotional availability may lead to emotional disconnection regardless of relationship status (Reis H. T., 1988). Therefore, relational satisfaction and emotional connection cannot be assumed purely based on the presence of a partner but must be evaluated through the depth and quality of interpersonal interactions.

Relationship Satisfaction

A notable difference was found in relationship satisfaction, with individuals in romantic relationships reporting significantly higher levels of satisfaction than those who are single. This finding aligns with existing literature, which suggests that romantic partnerships can improve subjective well-being and relational contentment. For instance, (Dush, 2005) concluded that individuals in romantic relationships usually experience greater happiness, life satisfaction, and emotional support compared to their single counterparts.

The emotional intimacy, sense of security, and social validation that often come with romantic relationships can lead to higher levels of satisfaction. In contrast, single individuals may report lower relationship satisfaction, not necessarily because they are dissatisfied, but due to a lack of a romantic reference point to meet their relational needs. This observation aligns with a broader range of research that connects romantic involvement to psychological benefits, such as reduced feelings of loneliness and increased positive emotions.

It is important to recognize that although being in a romantic relationship is associated with higher levels of satisfaction, the quality of the relationship is a more significant predictor of well-being than status alone. Research by (Dush, 2005) supports this, indicating that individuals in romantic relationships tend to report greater satisfaction compared to their single peers. The emotional and social support that comes from being romantically involved likely plays a substantial role in enhancing overall life satisfaction.

Hypotheses

The study's hypotheses were evaluated in light of the findings. The results confirmed significant negative relationships between perceived burdensomeness and relationship satisfaction for both single individuals and those in romantic relationships, thus it accepts the first two hypotheses. Similarly, the analyses revealed significant associations between thwarted belongingness and relationship satisfaction in both groups, leading to the acceptance of the third and fourth hypotheses.

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There were no significant differences in Perceived Burdensomeness and Thwarted Belongingness between singles and individuals in relationships, leading to the rejection of the fifth and sixth hypotheses. However, a significant difference was observed in relationship satisfaction between the two groups; individuals in relationships reported higher satisfaction. This finding supports the seventh hypothesis.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness relate to relationship satisfaction in young adults, using the INQ and RAS. It also explored whether these needs predict relationship satisfaction and how relationship status influences these experiences, interpreting findings in light of existing research.

Major Findings

- A significant negative correlation was observed between perceived burdensomeness and relationship satisfaction among singles ($r = -0.206$, $p = .024$), supporting H1.
- A significant negative correlation was observed between perceived burdensomeness and relationship satisfaction among individuals in relationships ($r = -0.248$, $p = .036$), supporting H2.
- A strong negative correlation was found between thwarted belongingness and relationship satisfaction among singles ($r = -0.649$, $p < .001$), supporting H3.
- A strong negative correlation was found between thwarted belongingness and relationship satisfaction among individuals in relationships ($r = -0.551$, $p < .001$), supporting H4.
- Independent samples t-test revealed no significant difference in perceived burdensomeness between singles and individuals in relationships ($p = .106$), rejecting H5.
- No significant difference was found in thwarted belongingness between singles and individuals in relationships ($p = .258$), rejecting H6.
- A significant difference was found in relationship satisfaction, with individuals in relationships scoring higher than singles ($U = 1162.500$, $p = .015$), supporting H7.

Limitations of the Study

While this study offers valuable insights into the relationship between interpersonal needs and relationship satisfaction among Young Adults, several limitations should be noted. **First**, the study sample was confined to a specific age group, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations, such as adolescents or older adults. **Second**, the reliance on self-report questionnaires may have led to response biases, including social desirability and subjective interpretations of the questions, potentially affecting the accuracy of the data. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design of the study prevents any causal inferences, making it challenging to determine the directionality of the observed relationships. Additionally, the study did not consider potentially influential factors such as relationship duration, type (e.g., long-distance versus cohabiting), or individual differences in personality and emotional regulation, which could moderate the associations examined. **Lastly**, the cultural homogeneity within the sample may further limit the broader applicability of the results.

Future Recommendations

To build on the findings of this research, future studies should adopt a longitudinal design that examines how perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness evolve over time

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and influence relationship satisfaction across various stages of romantic development. Expanding the demographic scope to include a more diverse population in terms of age, culture, and socioeconomic background would enhance the external validity of the results. Researchers should also consider integrating mixed-method approaches, combining quantitative analysis with in-depth qualitative interviews to capture the nuanced and subjective nature of interpersonal experiences. Further investigations could explore additional variables, such as attachment styles, partner communication dynamics, emotional intelligence, and psychological resilience, which may provide a more comprehensive understanding of relationship satisfaction. Additionally, interventions designed to strengthen social inclusion and reduce feelings of burdensomeness could be empirically tested for their effectiveness in enhancing relational well-being.

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