

The relationship between low self-esteem, happiness and jealousy in romantic relationships.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Abstract	5
Introduction	6
Literature review	8
<i>Jealousy occurrence in romantic relationships</i>	8
<i>.Social networking a cause of jealousy in romantic relationships</i>	10
<i>Gender differences in jealousy in romantic relationships</i>	12
<i>Low self- esteem and unhappiness linked to jealousy</i>	14
<i>Different stages and age effecting jealousy</i>	18
Conclusion of literature	22
Aims and objectives	24
Methodology	25

		3
Results	30
Discussion	37
Conclusion	44
References	45
Appendices	48

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Abstract:

This study looked at low self-esteem, happiness, age and jealousy in romantic relationships, to see if these variables are factors of jealousy in relationships. There was 162 participants used altogether, 80 males and 82 females, all of whom were college students in Dublin. Their age ranged from 18-51 with the average age being 24. The questionnaire booklet consisted of three questionnaires Subjective Happiness scale (Lyubomirsky, 1994), Rosenberg Self - Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and Pines and Aronson's (1983) 8-item jealousy scale. Participants were also asked for their age and gender. In this study the predictor variables (PV) include self -esteem, happiness and age and the criterion variable (CV) is jealousy. The level of significance for this study carried out is 0.05. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data collected. Correlational analysis carried out indicated for males and females that the lower their self-esteem the higher their levels of jealousy is in romantic relationships. This analysis showed the same result for age and jealousy amongst male and female participants, the older the participant gets their levels of jealousy decrease. For the third hypothesis carried out, correlational analysis indicated a significant correlation between happiness and jealousy for men, their levels of jealousy are higher when they are unhappy, and for women the analysis was not significant between happiness and jealousy with the correlation being 0.6.

Introduction

According to Malakh –Pines (1998) the roots to jealousy go back to

Sigmund Freud he believed everybody was jealous from bad childhood experiences and that nobody can escape this feeling of jealousy. It is when people realise we can't have everything we want, even if they try very hard for it. It is a feeling of pain and grief of losing something or someone who they love and it's a feeling of anger and envy toward a rival who wins and gets what that person wants.

Jealousy is a common emotion in human life, it is due to threats, competition and protection, when a person feels what they have can be taken away from them due to something better.

They get protective and jealous if threats arise. Jealousy is defined as an emotional response to social rejection. Afraid to be rejected and lose what they have so they protect it as much as they can, and if they feel they can't protect it or do anything about the threats it causes a big strain on the persons self-esteem and happiness and this can cause damage for the persons future relationships romantically or any relationships they may have (DeSteno, Valdesolo & Bartlett, 2006).

Nadler & Dotan (1992) State romantic jealousy has been linked to two different threats one being a threat on the present relationship and the thoughts of losing what they have and the other threat on esteem by the partner choosing somebody better in their place, making them feel no good and unhappy and unwanted .Giving them the feeling of jealousy in their relationship or future relationships they may have. Some people may have a feeling of

jealousy in their relationship even if there is no sign of danger in their relationship this is due to the person having low self-esteem and always feeling that they are not good enough for the person they are with, so they are always thinking that when their partner is not with them that they will find somebody better than them, which can put a big strain on the relationship.

This previous study (Nadler & Dotan, 1992) shows that the two main threats people face in relationships that bring on jealousy are the rival being attractive and good looking .This could cause the other party in the relationship to lose their partner to somebody who is better looking than them, this would be a bigger threat than if their partner was spending time and talking to somebody of the opposite sex who was unattractive. The second threat was commitment from their partner to another person, if they were spending a lot more time out with an opposite sex and putting a lot more commitment this was a big threat for many peoples relationship. This caused a lot of jealousy amongst women in this previous study carried out. Over the years in many studies there hasn't been a finding of which sex is more jealous, but it has shown different ways in which the sexes act and what the different causes are. This study showed a difference in how males and females act to jealousy. Women get more jealous when it comes to their partner investing a lot more time with somebody else and not committing to their own relationship. Women are afraid of losing the relationship that they have due to their boyfriend or husband having more interest in spending time with somebody else other than them. Men would be afraid to lose their partner to somebody more attractive, this would lower their ego and bring their self -esteem down making them unhappy about themselves due to them losing out to somebody more attractive than they are.

Literature Review:

Jealousy occurrence in romantic relationships.

A study carried out in an American High school wanted to examine jealousy in romantic relationships amongst the female college students. The results in this study found that the female students who were in a long steady relationship were not as jealous as those who were only in the beginning stages of a relationship starting out. This showed that women who are in a long steady relationship may feel a sense of security and stableness which will reduce the feeling of jealousy in the relationship. Also in this study it found that women who are happier and have a higher self- esteem showed lower signs of jealousy in their romantic relationships than those who showed worry and unhappiness in their relationships ,which led them to show a lot more jealous feelings in their relationships (Khanchandani & Durham ,2009).

Overall this study took place in a high school in America which was only one small college so gave only a small range of understanding to the topic and only focused on women's side to jealousy in relationship , so a limitation to this study was they didn't include men so it didn't get a proper view or understanding by leaving out men, its results showed that the jealousy reduces as the relationship lasts longer the feeling goes because the people in the

relationship feel they are in a stable place and secure and that nothing has happened this far into their relationship (Khanchandani & Durham, 2009).

Another study carried out talked about the effect of relationship length and they went on to say that couples starting off early in relationships are unlikely to go through jealousy due to two reasons (Aune, & Comstock, 1997). One reason is that jealousy occurs in an existing relationship where time, investment and experience have been put into. At the start of relationships there is no big experience shared amongst the couple that could leave the other person feeling jealous and afraid to lose compared to someone who has invested a lot of time in a relationship and would really lose out on a part of their life if some threat was to arise. The second reason according to why jealousy doesn't normally occur early on in relationships is that it would be seen as strange and unacceptable that early on to express feelings of jealousy or to confront the partner about rivals or jealousy. As the relationship progresses communication becomes more open and smooth compared to at the start. This research hypothesis was supported that feelings of jealousy rises as the relationships develop, due to people being afraid of losing all the experience and times shared that they have (Aune, & Comstock, 1997).

.Social networking a cause of jealousy in romantic relationships:

Research has found that Facebook can cause a lot of jealousy and anxiety on a romantic relationship if one of the partners is constantly checking the other partner's page daily because of anxiety or lack of trust it can cause a lot of jealousy in the relationship. If pictures of the opposite sex are posted and messages are sent this can make the other person very paranoid with their partner, this study has shown that Facebook is linked to high levels of anxiety and paranoia which make people very jealous in relationships (Marshall, Bejanyan, DI Castro, Lee, 2013).

Facebook and social networking sites are giving couples a lot more access to jealousy in their romantic relationships (Elphinston & Noller, 2011). They can intrude on their partner's page and see who they are talking to and whose pictures they are liking. Today people have access to social networking 24/7 via their mobile phones or laptops meaning they can see every move their partner makes when they are online, making them insecure and paranoid that every member of the opposite sex that their partner is interacting with is going to steal them away or win them over. Previous research carried out aimed to explore young people's involvement in Facebook in relation to their romantic relationships and if it has led to relationship dissatisfaction and jealousy (Elphinston & Noller, 2011). 342 undergraduate students in Australia were the participants of this study most of them were in relationships and on Facebook. They were asked to complete a survey online and asked to report how long they spent on Facebook during a week and asked questions about intrusion and jealousy in romantic relationships. The results from this study found that participants who spend more time intruding on their partner's Facebook page and online were going to experience jealousy and relationship dissatisfaction, it can have a negative impact on their romantic relationships.

It can cause arguments and a strain on the relationship every time one of the partners finds something online involving their boyfriend or girlfriend.

There has been a few previous studies done on Facebook leading to jealousy and attachment , with couples having access to every move that their partner makes online , their history of what they have shared or liked or had conversations. Facebook gives people access to pictures of people out and checking in to places they may be and tagging the people in these posts who they are sharing this moment with. It gives people a form of attachment always wanting to check up on what their partners are doing and talking to (Fox & Warber, 2014). This particular study carried out explored why people spend so long online checking up on their partners every move. College students from a Midwestern university were the participants of this study. 183 female and 145 male from 18-48 .All of these participants used Facebook regularly .In the sample 127 were in a relationship in the last year and 201 were currently in a romantic relationship. Results from this research found that individuals with anxiety and who are fearful spend a lot more time monitoring their partner's page which can cause extreme jealousy and arguments in the romantic relationship. This research also found that people who are no longer in a relationship still spend a lot of time monitoring their ex's Facebook or social network page. This can cause many problems for the individual, anxiety and over thinking as to why the break up happened and they still have access to every move their ex is making, this can have an effect on their future relationships as they will relate the situation to their previous relationships (Fox & Warber, 2014).

Social networking is very popular in today's world and it is given couples constant access to each other's lives and no privacy, leading to jealousy, fear, unhappiness and anxiety in relationships as some couples monitor their partners every move on social networking sites. This is a big strain on relationships (Elphinston & Noller, 2011).

Gender differences in jealousy in romantic relationships.

Previous research carried out around jealousy in relationships showed that men are a lot more jealous and upset when it comes to sexual attachment or infidelity, whereas women get more upset and angry over emotional attachment. One such study found out that there was no difference in the results between the genders, both males and females both found sexual infidelity hurtful and a big cause of jealousy when they thought about it. This study focused on 64 male and 64 female participants who were currently in a long steady relationship, they tested the participants in a lab giving them vivid images and scenarios in there for them to picture in their head which was about their partner committing sexual infidelity, there was no gender divide shown in the results, it did show though that men picture the scenarios a lot more vivid than women, this was the finding from this research and that when the participants did picture the scenarios this made them realise they would be jealous if this occurred in their relationship (Kato, 2014).

A limitation to this study is that these people were well into committed relationships so they felt secure and happy with their partners so they did not really show too much signs of jealousy until they had to picture some scenarios. This then made them realise if this happened then they wouldn't be happy. This study also was on young adults ages 18-29 which limited answers from the older people to see if some older people in relationships still would get jealous if they had to imagine their partner committing sexual infidelity, so in this study they left out older people and only experimented on 128 young people altogether which is a small sample size. It was just focusing on getting a better understanding to see if there is a difference in gender results when it comes to jealousy and sexual and emotional infidelity,

it did find in this research that there was no big difference when it came to emotional or sexual, both genders were strongly upset about sexual infidelity, the only small difference found was men visualised it in a lot more detail (Kato, 2014). More recent research now shows that there isn't a big gender difference in jealousy linked with sexual or emotional infidelity.

Research done on jealousy in relationships showed that men become a lot more aggressive and angry when they are jealous in relationships and have a long term feeling of revenge and violence and women become a lot more sad and depressed when it comes to jealousy. This was according to one hundred and fifty nine members of the American Association for marriage and family therapy, they filled out questionnaires about their clients according to jealousy in relationships it showed that jealousy in the relationships was a big issue amongst one third of their clients who attend therapy and most of these are under the age of 45. These psychotherapists were answering about different techniques and goals they use to help these clients overcome jealousy which is a big issue for these people, the limitations of this study is that these feelings of jealousy are not coming directly from the client themselves, they are coming from second hand information which could not be accurate or true so this limits the proper understanding of why these people feel jealous themselves so this could change their understanding if it was directly from the person who has these jealous feelings (White, 2008).

Both of these previous studies show a difference in how men and women react to jealousy, men become a lot more annoyed and aggressive and seek revenge, whereas women become sad, emotional and depressed, Studies carried out have not found one sex to be more jealous but they have found these different reactions (Kato, 2014).

Low self- esteem and unhappiness linked to jealousy:

Low self- esteem is the feeling of anxiety unhappiness and inferiority. Most people with low self -esteem feel they don't measure up to the standards some people meet, so therefor they act out in a jealous way as they feel they are not good enough for the person they are with .They believe that their partner will find someone better than them so they become very jealous of anybody their partner shows some interest in, in fear of losing them .People with high self- esteem and happiness have good responsibility and are forgiving and genuine and have trust and are positive, so low self- esteem is a contributor to jealousy in romantic relationships according to this previous study , they feel they are failures and not good enough so they become very anxious and nervous of losing their partner all the time (Frank, 2014).

Jealousy is common in a lot of relationships and some research has shown that most of this is caused by the person who is acting out jealous, suffering from low self- esteem. Jealousy is defined as feelings, thoughts and actions that can cause hurt and strain on a romantic relationship due to the partner feeling threatened by a rival for their lover's attention and heart. Those who have low self- esteem are likely to imagine scenarios of their partner loving someone else and this is a reflection of those not feeling happy with whom they are. They imagine that their partner will not be happy enough with them and find somebody they feel is better than them. It is a fear of rejection and paranoia and not feeling good about themselves, its feelings of possessiveness and control and it can hurt the person and those close to them, due to unhappiness and anger and it's a feeling most people can't control (Firestone, 2011).

Melamed (1991) Says people who are very jealous are very anxious and unhappy with everything. They are insecure and very dependent on people. One study showed the jealousy

depends on the type of relationship these people are in, they depend on each other a lot, this can cause a lot more jealousy, if they see each other all the time and don't have any children, they are very much attached to each other. Which could make one of the partners jealous when the other one goes and spends time with somebody else or shows interest and gives time to another person, because they are used to having that person all to themselves and being very dependent on them .

According to Melamed (1991) jealousy normally doesn't occur in stable relationships because people are secure and they are confident because they are with their partner for a good amount of time and nothing has happened so far , they feel happy and safe in their relationship, but most jealousy occurs at the start of relationships when there is place for suspicion as they are not secure and not going out for a long time .They will not trust the person yet, but those who have low self-esteem from a young age bring their negativity and anxious thoughts of losing the person they love to the relationship which causes a great strain on the health of the relationship They can get hurt or upset and angry over small things like their partner talking to someone they feel they cannot win against.

White (1981) states that the definition of jealousy is when people have mixed feelings , thoughts, threats and behaviours which come from their self-esteem that they carry over and express when they are in romantic relationships. A previous study carried out by White (1981) aimed to find different correlates of jealousy in romantic relationships. The sample size used in this previous study was 300 participants which was 150 couples, the study asked for participants in a romantic relationship, there was no requirement for length of relationship and majority of the participants were students in a university in Los Angeles .The average age for the male participants was 22 and for females it was 21 .50 % of the participants rated

themselves as seriously dating, 16% were engaged or married and 13% of the participants lived together. Each participant was given a 35 page relationship questionnaire which took on average 75 minutes to complete. The booklet in this previous study consisted of 9 separate questionnaires each one measuring different factors of jealousy, the questionnaires measured, self-esteem, self-esteem dependence, dependence, perceived dependence, exclusivity, inadequacy, romanticism, sex role traditionalism and jealousy. The results of these questionnaires showed that both men and women had a negative correlation with the feeling of inadequacy, the feeling of being no good in their romantic relationships and they picture threats and scenarios in their head of their partner off with somebody better than them. Jealousy for men and women was also related to exclusivity according to this research, this is a form of protecting ones 'sexual property rights'. It is a form of protection of what they own and in this case it is a form of protecting one's relationship and esteem and if there is any threat or risk of losing what they own these people act out very jealous which causes a lot of arguments and strains on the relationship.

White (1981) Results from the study also showed gender differences when it comes to jealousy and self-esteem and inadequacy. Males with low self-esteem are more likely to be jealous when it comes to their partner finding someone more attractive and sexually better than them, they fear they will be perceived as sexually powerless as their partner went for somebody better looking than them, it gives them a feeling of defeat and it effects their self-esteem. If men feel they will be faced by this threat they will act very jealous in their relationship and very protective of their partner. Women showed a difference when it came to their self-esteem and jealousy, her self-esteem is more affected if her partner forms an intimate relationship with a member of the opposite sex. Female participants have a fear of losing their social status. If their partner leaves then for somebody else, and forms an intimate

loving bond. It makes her feel no good and fearful of what others will think. Females are fearful of losing their memories and experiences shared with the person they love, whereas men are more fearful of losing out to somebody better looking and more sexually powerful.

This research shows that low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy are big factors of jealousy in romantic relationships. It differs for men and women but it still is one of the main reasons as to why people act jealous. It is the fear of losing out what they have at the moment to somebody they feel is better, this will have a big effect on how the person feels if they lose what they have. This study had a limitation of some participants who weren't in their relationships that long to fear losing experiences and memories that the women participants fear to lose. Overall this study focused on jealousy different correlates that lead to jealousy which gave a good understanding and showed the differences of why people act out this way in their relationships (White, 1981).

Different stages and age effecting jealousy:

(Melamed, 1991) One study carried out about jealousy was focused on individual differences in romantic jealousy, and the effects it has on relationships, questionnaires were handed out in a hospital in England to staff and students, and 101 questionnaires were returned, 59 female and 41 male answered between the ages of 19 to 61

and the participants were either married, living together or dating, 46 of those who answered were married, 22 were living together and 32 were dating, so all of those participants that answered were in romantic relationships, but these varied some of the participants were married for up to 37 years and some of them had only been dating for less than a month .Questions were asked about jealousy in the past of these participants which was divided into two questions and jealousy as a whole topic was divided into 8 different questions about when they would experience jealousy ,different scenarios and how often they would be jealous or annoyed with their partner .The status of the relationship was measured, how long they were together, were they living together or just recently dating. These questions were divided into three segments and then with results put under one heading relationship closeness. Their self- esteem was measured on a thirty five item questionnaire and neuroticism was measured on part of a personality questionnaire. The results of this study showed that jealousy now present doesn't link back to jealousy in previous relationships or the past .It also showed jealousy affected those who were only dating more so than those who lived together and were married, so again this showed that people who are in secure long relationships are not as jealous as those who are in short term relationships .This showed across many studies, that the status of the relationship was an influence on the answers across the participant's .When they were not in a stable relationship there was a correlation between self -esteem and jealousy , because when people are only dating for a short amount of time

they aren't as attached and committed to that one person so they have more opportunity to go off and get close to other people or commit sexual or emotional infidelity, which can cause huge suspicion amongst one of the partners. (Melamed, 1991).

This study was a good way of research as it covered both genders and people who had different relationship statuses and were of different age groups so it was a broad variety of participants which gave a better understanding of jealousy in all different types of relationships and ages , one limitation is that it didn't have as much questionnaires handed back as it would of hoped for and that slightly more women gave back feedback , but it still covered both genders views on jealousy in romantic relationship and it looked at self-esteem and how this factors in with jealousy in these relationships. This research took place in 1991 so it is not very recent compared to a few others reviewed (Melamed, 1991).

Shackleford et al (2004) Previous study carried out explored jealousy in early adulthood and later in life to see if there was a difference in how men and women act in relationships as they get older compared to younger adults, to see if the jealousy still remains the same or if it eases off as the participants get older .The sample used for this study was divided into undergraduate students of a gender mix of 117 females and 117 males in the United States. The average age in the younger sample was 20 years old. The second sample used in this previous study was what was called the older group, this sample contained 69 males and 113 females from a few different retirement communities around the area where this study took part. The average age of the participants in the older sample was 67 for males and 66 for the

females. All of the participants in this study were then asked to picture scenarios in their head of their partners being unfaithful to them .The scenarios consisted of sexual infidelity and emotional infidelity. The participants were then asked which one of these scenarios would they feel most upset about, picturing there partner being sexual with a person of the opposite sex or if they fell in love with somebody else. Results showed a difference in answers between the younger women and the older women .Younger women showed that they would be more stressed and upset when picturing their partner falling in love with somebody else and forming an emotional attachment with somebody rather than them, making them feel no good. The older women showed they would be more upset if their partner or husband had sexual relations with somebody of the opposite sex. Shackelford et al (2004) suggests that these differences could be due to younger women having a lot more commitments than older women , older women have brought up their children and they do not have younger children dependent on their every move, whereas the younger women have to bring up a family and hold a job and hold a house together and many of these need a man by their side to get through all of this , they need to feel loved and they would be very upset if their partner or husband was off giving another person all of his time and love compared to herself.

Men in this study showed no real difference in how they would react if their partner was involved sexually or emotionally with somebody else over the ages. Younger men and older men both would be more upset if their partner had a sexual attachment with somebody else. This could be the difference in hormones between men and women , also another reason as to why older women get more upset when they picture their partner having sexual relations with somebody else ,could be due to their hormones changing over the years , as the years go on women's hormones change a lot. The difference also could be that sex was a form of commitment to your partner you only had sex with the person you married in previous

generations so this could be why older women would be more upset by this rather than emotional attachment. As it is the way they grew up and they see it a lot worse and hurtful than emotional attachment.

This study had a good sample size which was able to get a better understanding and difference between age and gender and it was divided into big numbers of gender divides, this helped show the significant differences amongst the older and younger sample (Shackleford et al, 2004).

Conclusion of literature reviewed:

A lot of research found that people who are in short term relationships just at the beginning are more likely to be jealous than those who are in stable committed relationships, due to them not feeling safe and secure at the start because they don't know their partner that well at the beginning and they are more likely to leave them and find someone else at the start of relationships rather than in long term committed relationships (Khanchandani & Durham, 2009).

Other research contradicted these findings by saying that at the start of relationships people don't have enough experience and time invested into their relationship to be afraid to lose out on compared to people who have invested a lot of time and shared a lot of experience in their romantic relationship (Aune, & Comstock, 1997). Early on in relationships it is seen as unacceptable and strange to act out jealous so a lot of people would hide their feelings of jealousy and not express them as it wouldn't be a topic of conversation in early stage relationships.

Therapists found in America that one third of all their clients suffered from some jealous feelings in their relationships and most of these were under the ages of 45 (White, 2008), so a lot of relationships suffer from jealousy and this causes strains on the relationships and sometimes then leads to break down and arguing which is hurtful on the relationship. When some people become attached and see their partner every day and they are dependent on them, this can cause jealous feelings when someone else grabs their partner's attention (Melamed, 1991).

Most of the studies reviewed found that there was no big difference in gender on which sex is more jealous, but it shows a difference in what ways jealousy occurs for both sexes. Women being more jealous when it comes to emotional attachment or commitment of their partner to another person, and they fear that they will lose all the memories and experiences shared due to their partner finding somebody better than them. This affects their self-esteem making them feel no good at all. Men are more jealous when it comes to attraction and sexual jealousy which lowers their self-esteem and ego they feel powerless sexually and get jealous if they see a threat in front of them which can cause this feeling (White, 1981). Previous studies also found that older women are more upset when it comes to sexual infidelity this could be due to hormone change or the different generations they lived in causing changes in results. Older men resulted in the same way for jealousy as younger men. The only difference was older men were not as jealous or threatened as much as the younger men (Shackleford, 2004).

Social networking sites today gives couples a lot more access to what their partner is doing every day and who they are interacting with. It can cause anxiety and paranoia and extreme jealousy for some people to see their partner interacting with somebody of the opposite sex as it can cause fear and competition and it is hard to escape this as people interact every minute of every day due to easy access from laptops and mobile phones (Elphinston & Noller, 2011). This review of previous studies also found that older people are not as jealous as younger people. Due to it being more common for younger participants to be involved in infidelity and the older people have been together for several years leaving little room for fear or jealousy. (Shackleford, 2004).

Aims and objectives.

The aims of this current research is to find out if low self –esteem, happiness and age are main contributors why people act jealous in romantic relationships amongst college students in Dublin of mixed gender and age group. To find out if people who have low self-esteem are more likely to be jealous in their romantic relationships compared to those who have high self-esteem, also to see if when people are generally happy does this decrease their levels of jealousy compared to people are not happy at all, and finally to see if age has effect on jealousy levels amongst participants, do jealousy levels change as people get older.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis one predicts that participants with low self-esteem will be more jealous in romantic relationships.

Hypothesis two predicts that those who are unhappy will have higher levels of jealousy in romantic relationships

Hypothesis three predicts that age will have an effect on jealousy the older one gets the less jealous the participant becomes in their romantic relationships.

Methodology:

Design:

The present research study used a non-experimental correlation design. The predictor variables (PV) include self –esteem, happiness and age and the criterion variable (CV) is jealousy. The design of the current study was quantitative.

Materials

The questionnaire booklet consisted of three questionnaires Subjective Happiness scale (Lyubomirsky, 1994), Rosenberg Self - Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and Pines and Aronson's (1983) 8-item jealousy scale. This questionnaire booklet was then processed and put online through survey monkey and posted on Facebook and send around to college students online to complete. The questionnaire also contained two demographic questions at the start asking the age of the participant and the gender.

Subjective happiness scale.

The subjective happiness scale (Lyubomirsky,1994) is a 4 item scale measuring how happy in general people are , it uses a numerical scale for each question 1-7 with different answers to each , to statements such as question 1 ‘In general, I consider myself’ 1=Not a very happy person and 7 = a very happy person .The closer number to the number 1 would mean not a very happy person and closer to seven would be nearer to being a very happy person .Each of the 4 questions has a different response but is measured on the same numerical scale of 1-7 .See appendix 1 for a copy of this questionnaire.

Self -Esteem Scale:

The self -esteem questionnaire used was ‘The Self –Esteem Scale’ (Rosenberg , 1965) , this scale measures self-acceptance and worth .This is an 10 item scale with 4 responses , 1 =Strongly agree , 2 =Agree , 3=Disagree and 4=Strongly disagree , on questions such as ‘I take a positive attitude towards myself’ . The higher scores answered indicate the person has higher self –esteem and self-acceptance. See appendix 2 for a copy of this questionnaire.

Jealousy measure:

Jealousy in Romantic relationships was measured by an 8 -item scale by Pines and Aronson (1983). These questions were about jealousy in the participants current or past romantic relationships .The items in this questionnaire were measured on a 7 point scale with ranging from number 1 =Never to 7= Always .Some of the items were as follows ‘How often do you experience mild jealousy in your relationship’, How often are you troubled by jealous thoughts’, ‘Would you consider yourself a jealous person’. The higher the number in this scale indicates the participant is more jealous. See appendix 3 for a copy of this questionnaire.

Participants:

In this study a total of 162 people were used all of whom were above the legal age of 18. There were 80 men and 82 women who answered this questionnaire booklet online through survey monkey .The ages ranged from 18 being the youngest participant and 51 being the oldest which gave an average age of 25 for males and 24 for the female participants. These participants were studying and in college so the age range varied. The participants were either currently in a romantic relationship or had one in the past; this was the inclusion criteria required to answer the jealousy questionnaire.

Procedure: Every participant completed the survey online through survey monkey at the introduction of the survey every participant was told that all of their information will be completely anonymous and the average time it took for each participant to complete the questionnaire booklet was five minutes. At the start of the questionnaire there was two demographic questions asked the first was 'what is your gender', and the second was 'what is your age' The participants gained access to this survey online on Facebook and filled it out if they were a student and 18 years or older. Every participant who took the questionnaire was currently in a relationship or had previous relationships, this was instructed in writing on the jealousy questionnaire before each participant took part in this section .Once the questionnaire was completed on the last page was addresses and phone numbers to organisations should the participant seek additional information on the topic of this research it was provided also the email of the researcher was provided.

Ethical considerations: Throughout this research and there were a number of ethical issues that had been taken into account .Confidentially of each participant was one issue that was important. To ensure this the participant didn't have to put their name on the questionnaire and when it was completed online through survey monkey the setting to turn off the IP address was on, so the computer they completed the survey didn't show up .Age was another main ethical issue, the researcher had to make sure that everybody who completed the questionnaires was 18 years of age or older, or else parent consent would have to be shown for any person aged under 18.The questionnaire results were held safely where only the

researcher could have access to , and before each participant took part in the questionnaire booklet it was instructed that to take part in this research was optional and that they could withdraw from answering or completing the booklet at any time and their data will not be recorded if they wish for this .There were names of organisations that deal with this topic of research if any of the participants were affected.

Data analysis: All the results from survey monkey were then transferred over to SPSS version 22 to calculate the results, all negative answers were recoded and the total scores for each questionnaire were computed and correlated.

Results:

Descriptive statistics.

The aim of this research was to investigate if people who have low self –esteem and who are unhappy act more jealous in romantic relationships also to find out if age had an effect on people acting jealous in their romantic relationships. All of the statistics were computed with SPSS 22 for windows.162 participants were analysed in this study, 80 male and 82 female. Three questionnaires were answered by the participants. Subjective Happiness scale (Lyubomirsky, 1994), Rosenberg Self - Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and Pines and Aronson's (1983) 8-item jealousy scale.

Table one reports the mean and standard deviation for the variables self-esteem and jealousy, for both men and women. Table two reports the mean and standard deviation for the variables jealousy and happiness and table three reports the mean and standard deviation for the variables age and jealousy.

1: Hypothesis one predicted that those who had lower self-esteem would be more jealous in relationships, Results showed there was a negative moderate highly significant correlation between self-esteem and jealousy for men ($r = -.369$, $n = 76$, $p < .01$). For women correlational analysis also showed a negative small significant correlation ($r = -.242$, $n = 79$, $p < .05$).

2: Hypothesis two predicted those who are unhappy would be more jealous in relationships. Results show for males there was a negative small significant correlation between total happiness and jealousy. ($r = -.235$, $n = 80$, $p < .05$). For females showed a negative small non-significant correlation ($r = -.216$, $n = 79$, $p > .05$).

3: Hypothesis three predicted that age would have an effect on jealousy the older you get the less jealous the participant becomes in their romantic relationships. For males the correlation showed a negative moderate highly significant correlation ($r = -.427$, $n = 80$, $p < .01$) and for females results showed a negative moderate highly significant correlation as well, ($r = -.362$, $n = 79$, $p < .01$).

Table 1: Means and Standard deviation for self- esteem and jealousy for both males and females.

Descriptive Statistics

Gender		N	Std. Deviation	Mean
male	Total Jealousy	80	10.52111	27.3000
	Total Happiness	78	2.73493	16.9744
female	Total Jealousy	79	10.65470	21.2025
	Total Happiness	79	3.82750	17.9367

As can be seen from the table above males score higher on both self-esteem and jealousy. (Self-esteem mean=27.50, SD= 5.72), (Jealousy mean =27.30, SD, 10.52). Self-esteem mean for women (Self-esteem mean= 26.97, SD=6.87). Jealousy mean for women (mean=21.20, SD=10.65).

Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation for Happiness and Jealousy.**Descriptive Statistics**

Gender		N	Std. Deviation	Mean
male	Total Jealousy	80	10.52111	27.3000
	Total Happiness	78	2.73493	16.9744
Female	Total Jealousy	79	10.65470	21.2025
	Total Happiness	79	3.82750	17.9367

As shown above the mean score for jealousy was higher for men (Jealousy, mean=27.3 , SD= 10.5) , Jealousy mean for women = (21.2 , SD=10.6) and the mean for happiness was higher for the women (Happiness mean =17.9 , SD=3.8) and for men the mean for happiness was (mean =16.9 ,SD=2.7).

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation for Age and Jealousy.**Descriptive Statistics**

Gender		N	Std. Deviation	Mean
male	Total Jealousy	80	10.52111	27.3000
	Age	80	7.71777	24.6750
Female	Total Jealousy	79	10.65470	21.2025
	Age	82	9.19046	24.2561

The mean score for age was higher for men (Age =24.6, SD, 7.7) and for women the mean age was (mean =24.2, SD= 9.1).

Inferential statistics:

Correlations

Hypothesis one predicted that the participants who have low self-esteem will have higher jealousy in romantic relationships. There was a negative moderate highly significant correlation between self-esteem and jealousy for men, suggesting men with low self-esteem have higher jealousy in romantic relationships. ($r = -.369$, $n = 76$, $p < .01$). For women correlational analysis also showed a negative small significant correlation ($r = -.242$, $n = 79$, $p < .05$). Suggesting women with low self-esteem have higher jealousy in romantic relationships.

Hypothesis two predicted those who are unhappy would be more jealous in relationships. For males there was a negative small significant correlation between total happiness and jealousy. ($r = -.235$, $n = 80$, $p < .05$) this suggests that the more unhappy the male participants are the higher jealousy they experience in their romantic relationships. For women it showed a negative small non-significant correlation ($r = -.216$, $n = 79$, $p > .05$), these findings show that for women happiness and jealousy don't show a correlation, but for men it is significant suggesting the more unhappy the male participants are the higher they experience jealousy in their romantic relationships.

The third hypothesis predicted that age would have an effect on jealousy the older one gets the less jealous they become in their romantic relationships. When age and jealousy was correlated gender comparisons were made .For males the correlation showed a negative moderate highly significant correlation ($r=-.427, n=80, p<.01$) suggesting the higher the age the lower the jealousy in romantic relationships, meaning as males get older they don't experience jealousy as much as men that are younger. For the females the correlation showed a negative moderate highly significant correlation as well meaning it is the same as women get older they don't experience jealousy as much as younger women , ($r=-.362 ,n=79 ,p<.01$) .Here age shows a negative correlation with jealousy , supporting the hypothesis.

Discussion:

The aim of this current study was to determine possible correlations between low self-esteem, unhappiness and jealousy in romantic relationships amongst college students in Dublin. It also aimed to determine if age had an effect on people being jealous in their relationships, as they get older do they become less jealous in their relationships. The present study extended previous research on the topic of jealousy in romantic relationships (e.g. Khanchandani & Durham, 2009) by examining other possible factors such as happiness, self-esteem and age.

Hypothesis one: Those who have low self-esteem will be more jealous in romantic relationships.

The main hypothesis of this study predicted that there would be a significant negative correlation between low self-esteem and jealousy amongst college students of both genders. Correlational analysis carried out indicated a negative moderate highly significant correlation for men and a negative significant correlation for women. These results support the hypothesis that the lower the self-esteem the higher jealousy amongst these students. This result is similar to a study carried out by White (1981), which shows those who have low self-esteem have a feeling of anxiety and inadequacy which makes them fearful and not good enough and they act out jealous to any threat put in front of them which may cause them the loss of their relationship.

White (1981) suggested that both men and women with low self-esteem are more jealous in their romantic relationships, but his results found that the way in which low self-esteem and jealousy is shown by men and women differs, women are more fearful of losing what they have the moments and experiences, whereas men with low self-esteem are threatened by rivals and losing their partner due to them finding somebody more attractive than them. Self-esteem is a factor of jealousy, as the person has no self-worth, they feel they are no good for the person they are with and are always fearful of losing what they have so this causes them to act out jealous (Firestone, 2011).

Hypothesis two: Those who are unhappy will be more jealous in romantic relationships.

The second hypothesis predicted that those who were unhappy, generally not very happy people would be more jealous in their romantic relationships. It predicted that there would be a significant negative correlation between happiness and jealousy. The Correlational analysis carried out indicated for men a significant negative small correlation and for women it indicated a non-significant negative correlation. This suggests that the lower the male participants happiness is the higher jealousy he has in romantic relationships. The hypothesis wasn't supported for the female participants correlational analysis showed a non-significant correlation between happiness and jealousy amongst the female participants. The correlation was .61 which was approaching significance which could have been a significant correlation if the sample size was bigger as only 82 women were in the sample for this study. For a better

understanding and result to this hypothesis a bigger sample size would be recommended as the result could be due to the amount of female participants in the current research sample size.

Kato (2014) previous study showed that men become a lot more aggressive and annoyed when it comes to sexual attachment or infidelity, he found that men would hold a grudge a lot more if something like this happened, and they would be very annoyed and want revenge Kato (2014). When asked to picture scenarios of their partners committing sexual infidelity men pictured the images a lot more vivid than the female participants of this previous study. This left the men a lot angrier when finishing this study compared to the women who didn't picture it as vivid to avoid upsetting themselves. He found that women would become upset and sad over losing their partner to emotional attachment. As this study showed men hold a grudge a lot more this could be why men resulted in higher jealousy when they are unhappy compared to women, who may not hold a grudge as much.

Hypothesis three: Age effecting jealousy in romantic relationships:

This third hypothesis aimed to determine if age had an effect on people acting jealous in their romantic relationships, to see if when people get older does their jealousy levels decrease in their relationships as the years go on. It was predicted that there would be a significant negative correlation between age and jealousy. The correlational analysis carried out indicated a highly significant negative correlation between age and jealousy for both men and women. With the correlation being .01 for women and .000 for men making it highly significant and supporting the hypothesis that age has an effect on jealousy the older one is the less jealousy they will experience in their romantic relationships. This hypothesis relates to a previous study carried out about jealousy in early adulthood and later in life (Shackleford

et al., 2004). In this previous study the results show that as men get older they are not as jealous as younger men about sexual infidelity, as older men don't have the big risk of cuckoldry like younger men are faced with. Also this previous study showed a difference in the jealousy younger and older women face. According to this study younger women are more jealous when it comes to emotional infidelity rather than sexual infidelity, this previous study suggests that this is due to younger women having children who are dependent on them for nurturing and love so they expect it from their partners as well when they are younger to help them out and keep them feeling wanted. Whereas older women would be more upset and jealous of sexual infidelity as they are older and wouldn't have younger children dependent on them and hormones change as the years go and this could be a reason as to why as women get older they get more jealous about sexual infidelity. Also in the generation they lived in sex was a sign of commitment to one's partner, people only had sex with their partner once they were married, this could be another reason why in this previous study it found as women get older they are more stressed and upset when they imagine their partner having sex with somebody else, rather than sharing an emotional bond together. The results of this previous study show that younger men are more likely to be sexually unfaithful than are older men, meaning women don't have to be as jealous when they are older as research has found when men are younger they are more likely to be unfaithful to their partner. This could be a reason that the hypothesis of this current research is supported. As people get older they feel a lot more secure in their relationships and feel like they have been with their partner for long that there is no room for jealousy or fear at this stage. (Melamed, 1991). The hypothesis of this current study carried out extended on to these previous studies by supporting the hypothesis that age has an effect on jealousy in romantic jealousy and that as people age and get older their levels of jealousy decreases compared to younger participants.

Limitations

There were a number of limitations in this current research. The small size was the first limitation as in total there was only 162 participants, 80 male and 82 female. Also the ages ranged from 18-51, with a lot more younger people than older with the average age of 25 the answers from older participants was limited in this research which could have made a change to any of the hypotheses if there was a bigger sample size. For example in the correlation analysis between jealousy and happiness females results showed a negative non-significant correlation of .61 which is approaching significance the reason for this could be sample size and if the sample size was bigger it could have been a significant result.

Another limitation to this study was that in order to complete the third questionnaire on jealousy it was instructed that the participant was either currently in a romantic relationship or they had experienced one in the past, so any participant who had neither did not proceed to this questionnaire leaving out some numbers for the jealousy questionnaire.

Directions for future research

Further research on this topic should consider the implications listed above. For a better understanding of the effect of age and jealousy further research carried out should get a big age divide of a younger sample and older sample and compare the two samples results for differences in Ireland, this part of the study would be similar to previous study carried out around age only it would be looking at different factors to jealousy not only just focusing on age and jealousy but, using it as only one of the hypotheses also it will be carried in Ireland rather than the United States (Shackleford, Voracek, Schmitt, Buss, Weekes-Shackelford & Michalski, 2004). A lot of the previous research around this area has been carried out in the United States, where looks and status is very important for people and they do not want a bad name, they grow up being told if they do their best they will succeed, so when they are threatened to lose something they have and like, it causes a lot of jealousy, so for future study around this topic it should focus on Ireland to see if most results are similar in a different country.

For clearer results for each hypothesis a bigger sample overall should be taken into consideration with an equal gender divide, to see if happiness is a factor of jealousy for women as well as men and to see if the result in this current study for happiness and jealousy for women was due to the small size or if there is no correlation between the two for female participants.

Another direction for future research on this topic is that the researcher in the future should make sure before the participants take the questionnaire that they have previously been in a relationship or are currently in a romantic relationship, as this left out some numbers in the sample size of this current study as some of the participants left this questionnaire on jealousy blank, leaving the researcher unable to use their answers.

Also for a better understanding about happiness and jealousy in the future the researcher should use a bigger item questionnaire as the one in the current study Subjective Happiness scale (Lyubomirsky, 1994), only had four questions which was a small item questionnaire, for the full understanding to see if it is a factor of jealousy for both men and women, as this current study only found it to be a factor of jealousy for the male participants.

Conclusion

The main findings of this current research are that low self-esteem, happiness and age are all factors of jealousy and they have an effect on people's jealousy levels. Results showed significant correlations for both men and women between self-esteem and jealousy, this result supports the hypothesis that those who had lower self-esteem would be more jealous in relationships. This current research also found that age has an effect on people's jealousy levels, correlational analysis carried out indicated a highly significant correlation for both men and women between age and jealousy. This result was similar to previous study on age and jealousy (Shackleford et al, 2004), stating that as people get older their levels of jealousy decrease, they no longer feel threatened or fearful of losing their partner to anybody better, this is more common amongst younger people. The third hypothesis that this current study looked at was the correlation between happiness and jealousy, the results found that when men are unhappy they are more jealous in their romantic relationships the correlation was significant for men, for women this correlation was not significant this shows a gender difference here for happiness and jealousy.

This current research was carried out in Dublin, a lot of the previous studies around this area were carried out in the United States, and this leaves room for further research on this topic to be carried out in Dublin in the future.

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Appendices

Jealousy in Romantic Relationships

Please answer each section as honestly as you can, do not spend too long thinking about each question as there are no right or wrong answers. Any information that you give will remain anonymous, you are not required to write your name anywhere on this survey. I hope you find this interesting, and I would like to thank you in advance for your time and co-operation

If you require any further information concerning this research, please contact me at the email address below.

1725283@mydbs.ie

Please complete the following demographic information.

What is your age: _____?

What is your gender: Male: _____ Female: _____

Appendix 1

INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the following statements and/or questions, please circle the point on the scale that you feel is most appropriate in describing you.

1. In general, I consider myself:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not a						a very
Very happy						happy
person						person

2. Compared to most of my peers, I consider myself:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Less happy						more happy

3. Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all

a great deal

4. Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all

a great deal

Appendix 2

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read the following statements and indicate how much you agree with them by circling the appropriate number to the right of the statement as follows:

1 = strongly agree

2 = agree

3 = disagree

4 = strongly disagree

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2 | I feel that I have a number of good qualities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3 | All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4 | I am able to do things as well as most other people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | I feel that I do not have much to be proud of | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6 | I take a positive attitude towards myself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7 | On the whole, I am satisfied with myself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | I wish I could have more respect for myself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9 | I certainly feel useless at times | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10 | At times I think I am no good at all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Appendix 3

INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the following statements and/or questions, please circle the point on the scale that you feel is most appropriate in describing you. It consists of a number of questions about jealousy in your past and current romantic relationships.

Never / not at all

Always/ Very much

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1 .How often are you troubled by jealous thoughts?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

2. How often do you experience mild jealousy in your relationship?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

3. Whenever your partner goes out without you, do you worry that he/she will be unfaithful to you?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

4 .How often do you experience extreme jealousy in your relationship?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

5 .How often are arguments with your partner brought on by your jealousy?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

6 .Do people you have been intimate with consider you a jealous person?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

7 .Would you consider yourself a jealous person?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8 .Do people you know consider you a jealous person?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

If you are concerned with or affected by any of the raised issues please do not hesitate to contact the following organisations

Couple counselling and relationship support services

Lo-Call: 1890 380 380

Email: info@relationshipsireland.com

Address: 38 Upper Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2

I would like to thank you for taking part in this study and would remind you that all information given here will remain anonymous. If you would like to know more about this study, please do not hesitate in contacting me at the email address printed on the front of this booklet.

Emma Hand

