

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

## 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. The questionnaire booklet consisted of three questionnaires. ), Rosenberg Self - Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), and Pines and Aronson's (1983) 8-item jealousy scale and Subjective Happiness scale (Lyubomirsky, 1994), at the start of the questionnaire booklet participants were also asked for their gender and age. Analysis carried out showed a negative significant correlation for both men and women for self-esteem and jealousy. This supports the hypothesis that low self-esteem leads to higher levels of jealousy. This analysis showed a negative highly significant correlation for both men and women for age and jealousy, showing as age increases the levels of jealousy in relationships decrease. For the third hypothesis that happiness has an effect on jealousy, analysis indicated a negative significant correlation between happiness and jealousy amongst men, and the correlation for women between happiness and jealousy was not significant.

## Introduction

This research aimed to find a relationship between low self-esteem, happiness and jealousy. It also looked at age as a factor of jealousy. Previous research has shown that low self-esteem is a factor of jealousy, due to the person not feeling like that are good enough for their partner leaving them feel like their partner will find somebody better, this makes them feel threatened leading them to act out jealous (White, 1981). Previous research also showed differences in age groups, it showed jealousy levels are not as high amongst older participants and it showed a significant difference between older women and younger women, younger women being more jealous over emotional infidelity and older women being more stressed over sexual infidelity, this could be due to the different generations they were brought up in. Men stayed the same over the age samples only older men showed less signs of jealousy as they got older (Shackelford et al, 2004). Research has shown that men get a lot angrier and hold a grudge if faced with jealousy while women get sad and upset and try to move on. Men and women have different reasons and ways of dealing with jealousy (Melamed, 1991).

Emma Hand (1725283), Dr. Bernadette Quinn



## Method

The present research study used a non-experimental correlation design. The design of the current study was quantitative. The predictor variables (PV) include self-esteem, happiness and age and the criterion variable (CV) is jealousy. The questionnaire booklet was made up of three questionnaires. Subjective Happiness scale (Lyubomirsky, 1994), Rosenberg Self - Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and Pines and Aronson's (1983) 8-item jealousy scale. 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. Every participant completed the survey online through survey monkey. 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 there were a number of ethical issues that had been taken into account. Confidentiality of each participant was one issue that was important. Also each participant was 18 or above.

## Results

The results of the analysis revealed that hypothesis one for low self-esteem and jealousy was supported showing a negative significant correlation for both men and women. Showing the lower the self-esteem the higher the levels of jealousy. The second hypothesis was partially supported, as it indicated a negative significant correlation between happiness and jealousy amongst men while for women the correlation was not significant leaving the hypothesis partially supported. For the final hypothesis between age and jealousy, the analysis indicated for males and females a negative highly significant correlation, supporting the hypothesis that age has an effect on jealousy.

## Discussion

The first hypothesis was supported relating back to previous studies done around self-esteem as a factor of jealousy, showing the lower one's self-esteem is the higher their levels of jealousy are in romantic relationships. Due to them feeling no good about themselves or no good for their partner (White, 1981). The results of the second hypothesis were partially supported indicating the more unhappy the males are the more jealous they are in romantic relationships. Extending on to previous studies on jealousy and gender differences showing women move on whereas men hold grudges and feel very angry this could be the reason as to why men indicated a significant correlation, between happiness and jealousy (Melamed, 1991). The third hypothesis was supported indicating a highly significant correlation between age and jealousy relating back to Shackelford et al (2004) showing as people get older they are safe and happy in their relationships and it is more common at a younger age for somebody to be unfaithful.

## References

- Melamed, T. (1991). Individual differences in romantic jealousy: The moderating effect of relationship characteristics. *European Journal Of Social Psychology, 21*(5), 455-461
- White, G. L. (1981). Some correlates of romantic jealousy. *Journal Of Personality, 49*(2), 129. doi:10.1111/1467-6494.ep7383249
- Shackelford, T. K., Voracek, M., Schmitt, D. P., Buss, D. M., Weekes-Shackelford, V. A., & Michalski, R. L. (2004). Romantic jealousy in early adulthood and in later life. *Human Nature, 15*(3), 283-300