

Emotional Regulation and Intimate Relationship in Newly Married Couple

Anosha Ahmed^{1*}, Ruqia Safdar Bajwa², Adeena Rasheed¹**Abstract**

Perhaps the most significant relationships that people form in their adult life are intimate ones. Intimate relationship quality directly affects one's physical and mental well-being as well as emotional regulation in general. The aim of the present study was to examine the relationship between emotional regulation and intimate relationship in newly married couples. Data was collected from 344 respondents of married couples by using quantitative and survey research method. For this study, purposive sampling technique was used. The age ranges from 18-40 ($SD=0.76$). The questionnaires used in the study were Emotional Regulation Questionnaire and Relationship Assessment Scale. Results revealed that there was a significant impact of emotional regulation on intimate relationship among newly married couples. To conclude, results illustrated that emotional regulation positively correlated with intimate relationship and the emotional regulation plays important role to develop relationship in newly married couple. Strong emotional control abilities are indicative of secure attachment styles, which are associated with more stable and satisfying relationships and later on marital success.

Keywords: Emotional Regulation, Intimate Relationship, Newly Married Couples

¹MPhil Scholar, Department of Applied Psychology, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Psychology, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan.

***Corresponding Author Email:**

anoshaahmed98@gmail.com

Introduction

Human interpersonal functioning and general well-being greatly depend on the ability to modulate emotions. According to Amstadter (2008), emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and effectively manage one's emotions in a variety of situations. An essential component of human behavior, emotional regulation affects people's well-being and interpersonal connections, among other areas of their lives. It is the capacity to recognize, communicate, and control feelings in a positive, social manner. Positive outcomes including psychological well-being, less stress and better relationships are associated with effective emotional regulation, whereas emotional dysregulation, maladaptive coping

mechanisms and relationship problems are linked to ineffective emotional regulation (Favero et al., 2021).

The Attachment theory, give better insight and understanding in the relationship of emotional regulation and intimate relationships. An individual's ability to relate to others and control their emotions throughout their lives is greatly influenced by their level of attachment. Anxious or avoidant attachment types are examples of insecure attachment styles and they are associated with problems controlling emotions and upholding positive interpersonal interactions. While insecure attachment styles, such anxious or avoidant attachment, are linked to these issues, secure attachment is associated with effective emotion regulation (Mikulincer et al., 2003).

The significance of emotional regulation in the context of close relationships has been highlighted by numerous studies. Effective emotion regulation is essential for people to successfully navigate the many roadblocks and conflicts that emerge in interpersonal relationships. By using this technique, couples can build closeness and connection

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in their relationship while also efficiently addressing and resolving conflicts and expressing their unique needs. On the other hand, difficulties controlling one's emotions can lead to heightened emotional reactivity, the repression of emotions, and poor interpersonal communication, which can strain a relationship and promote feelings of unhappiness and disagreement (Mazzuca et al., 2019).

Numerous studies have emphasized the significance of emotional regulation in fostering stability and pleasure in relationships. An example of this can be seen in studies showing that people with strong emotional control or regulation abilities are better at handling conflicts and resolving problems in relationships without engaging in negative behaviors (Calkins & Hill, 2007). Butler, 2011 argues that improved emotional compatibility, increased empathy, and improved problem-solving skills are all results of successful emotional control in close relationships. Conversely, difficulties related to emotion regulation may have a negative impact on interpersonal interactions. People who struggle with controlling their emotions may exhibit traits like impulsivity, emotional disengagement, and emotional volatility, which could upset the dynamics of interactions with others (Gottman & Declaire, 2002).

Additionally, intimate relationships can serve as a catalyst for self-discovery and personal development. Partnerships give people opportunities to practice self-analysis, develop self-awareness, and promote self-improvement (Duca et al., 2023). According to Aron, et al., 2001, intimate interpersonal relationships help people learn about their own advantages, disadvantages, and areas for personal growth.

Partnerships can force people to step beyond of their comfort zones, interact with other perspectives, and support one another in achieving personal goals and developing personally. Furthermore, close relationships are crucial in raising people's

general levels of pleasure and life satisfaction. Countless research continually shows that those who are in fulfilling and encouraging romantic relationships experience higher levels of subjective well-being and life satisfaction. The development of emotional closeness, shared goals, and mutual support in intimate relationships creates a strong foundation for people to thrive and achieve a higher quality of life (Kardum et al., 2021).

People who have intimate relationships feel emotionally stable and secure. A dependable friend can provide people with a sense of comfort and security when they are facing life's challenges. A caring person who is willing to help and encourage others and shows a great commitment to their well-being creates a sense of emotional balance. When people are emotionally stable, they can deal with life's uncertainties more skillfully, which makes them more resilient and self-assured. Intimate relationships also help people grow personally by promoting mutual learning and development. People in a mutually beneficial alliance have the opportunity to learn from one other's strengths, perspectives, and experiences (Bowlby, 1988).

People who are in satisfying personal relationships have better results for their mental and physical health. Additionally, they express greater levels of general well-being and life satisfaction. Emotional closeness, good communication, and common objectives are examples of positive relationship dynamics that greatly add to the satisfaction and longevity of intimate partnerships. With the help of their spouse, these interactions foster a sense of safety and connectivity that enables people to face life's obstacles (Pietromonaco & Collins, 2017).

Method

Research Design

It was the cross-sectional study.

Participants

The study's researchers are especially interested in participants who have recently married. Purposive sampling technique was used. A total of 344 participants in the study. There were 170 females and 174 males in the sample, and their ages ranged from 18 to 40. Participants ranged widely in terms of age, gender, and length of relationship.

Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

Individuals who recently married and willing to participants were included in the study. More than 3 years of marriage and unwilling participants were excluded in the study.

Instruments

A data collection form was developed and all demographics data was collected on it. The Socio-demographic information including age, gender, family type and duration of marriage were collected. The study participants also completed the standardized tools to assess emotional regulation and intimate relationship in newly married couple

Emotional Regulation Scale (ERQ)

Emotional expressivity is measured by the 10-item, 7 Likert scale, Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) (Gross & John, 2003). The scale measures the impulse's force, positive, and negative aspects. Participants use the 7 Likert scale to indicate how much they agree or disagree with each statement, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Minimum score is 10 and maximum score is 70. The EEQ is widely used in research on interpersonal interaction and emotional regulation, and it was designed to assess a wide range of different aspects of an individual's ability to express emotions. It clarifies how emotions are expressed and how they impact close relationships. The scale has been verified in multiple studies and is psychometrically sound. Test-retest reliability and internal consistency are indicators of stability ($\alpha = 0.80$). By establishing associations with other emotional expressivity measures and

related constructs, the EEQ has additionally demonstrated construct validity.

Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) (Hendrick et al., 1988) 7 items, 5 Likert point scale also measures overall satisfaction with relationships. Each item on this scale has a range between 1 (very low satisfaction) and 5 (very high satisfaction). Minimum score is 07 and maximum score is 35. Intimate relationship research uses the RAS, a well-liked relationship satisfaction metric. It encapsulates the delight of romantic relationships. Numerous studies have found the scale to be valid and reliable, with strong psychometric properties. Its stability over time is indicated by the high test-retest reliability and internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.86$). Convergent validity is demonstrated by the RAS's favorable correlations with other relationship satisfaction and related dimensions.

Procedure

Data was gathered using a Google Forms survey. Upon providing informed consent, participants were directed to the online questionnaire, which consisted of several sections. The questionnaire began with demographic questions, including gender, age, relationship duration, and relationship status. In 15 to 20 minutes, the participants filled questionnaires. Participants also completed standardized scales to measure emotional regulation and the quality of intimate relationships.

Statistical Analysis

To analyze the data, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 was used. Tables were used to show the results in the form of frequencies and percentages. For statistical analysis, descriptive statistic was used to compute percentages, mean and standard deviation. Correlation matrix also used to know of Emotional Regulation and Intimate Relationship in newly married couples.

Ethical Considerations

The current study followed the ethics. The participants were aware of the purpose of

the study. They also discovered that the information was private and was being used for studies. They were not paid and had

right to withdrawn from the study at any stage.

Results

Table I

Demographic Details (N=344)

Demographics	M	SD	Frequency	Percentage
Age	1.97	.76		
18-25			90	30.4%
26-35			125	42.2%
Above 35			81	27.4%
Gender	1.60	.49		
Male			118	39.9%
Female			178	60.1%
Education	3.37	1.21		
Matric			25	8.4%
Intermediate			46	15.5%
Undergraduate			80	27.0%
Graduate			83	28.0%
Postgraduate			62	20.9%
Family type	1.56	.49		
Extent			129	43.6%
Nuclear			167	56.4%
Duration of Marriage	2.57	1.64		
Less than 1 year			134	45.3%
More than 1 year			27	9.1%
2-3 years			26	8.8%

Table I shows the demographic detail. Age distribution shows that most people (42.2%) are in the 26-35 age range, followed by people in the 18-25 age range (30.4%) and people over 35 (27.4%). The sample's gender mix is slightly biased toward women, who account for 60.1% of the total. In terms of education, participants

are diverse, with the largest group having completed undergraduate degrees (28.0%), followed closely by postgraduates (20.9%). Nuclear families 56.4%, extended families 43.6% and the length of relationships varies, with the majority (45.3%) lasting less than a year.

Table 2

Correlation matrix of Emotional Regulation and Intimate Relationship (N=344)

Variables	M	SD	ER	IR
Emotional Regulation	50.15	6.07	1	.58**
Intimate Relationship	26.15	3.36		1

Table 2 shows the association between intimate and emotional regulation. The study's results show that, among recently

married couples, there is a significant positive correlation between intimate relationships and emotional regulation.

Discussion

The present research study focusses to investigate the relationship among the emotional regulation intimate relationships in newly married couples. The findings provide valuable insights into the interplay of these factors and their potential affect intimate partnerships' relationship.

Study results showed a significant connection between emotional regulation and intimate relationships in newly married couples. These findings are in line with previous research that suggests emotional regulation plays a crucial role in fostering healthy and satisfying intimate connections (Smith, 2012; Duca et al., 2023). People with strong emotional regulation abilities are better able to control their emotions, communicate effectively, and navigate conflicts within their relationships. According to attachment theory, individuals with secure attachment styles tend to have better emotional regulation skills and, as a result, enjoy more satisfying and stable intimate connections. On the other hand, those with insecure attachment styles might find it difficult to control their emotions which makes it harder to establish and preserve positive connections (Bowlby, 1988).

The findings of the study revealed the significant impact of emotional regulation on intimate relationship. Several studies have shown that emotional regulation skills are positively correlated with relationship satisfaction and overall relationship quality. Researchers like Aldao et al. (2016) and Niven et al. (2012) have found that individuals who can effectively manage their emotions are more likely to report higher levels of relationship satisfaction.

The findings also highlighted several significant differences in mean scores of emotional regulation and intimate relationships across various demographic variables. For instance, age groups showed significant differences, indicating that individuals in different age brackets may exhibit varying levels of emotional regulation, experience different challenges

in their intimate relationships. Similarly, gender differences were observed, suggesting that men and women may have different emotional regulation strategies and relationship dynamics. Research has suggested that men may be socialized to prioritize assertiveness and autonomy in relationships, which can impact the quality of their intimate connections. Women, on the other hand, may be socialized to emphasize communication and emotional expression, potentially influencing their relationship quality (Duca et al., 2023; Eagly & Wood, 2013; Favero et al., 2013). The study compared emotional regulation and intimate relationships between newly married individuals. The results revealed statistically significant in emotional regulation and intimate relationships in newly married couples.

There are also some limitations of the study. The results, which are based on convenience sampling, could not apply to the general population. Self-report measures can introduce response biases, and the study used them. To improve validity, future research could use longitudinal designs and objective assessments.

Conclusion

This study makes a significant contribution to our understanding of how emotional regulation affects close relationships and lays the foundation for future research in this important area. It concluded that the emotional regulation plays important role to develop relationship in newly married couple. Strong emotional control abilities are indicative of secure attachment styles, which are associated with more stable and satisfying relationships and later on marital success. There was a significant impact of emotional regulation on intimate relationship among newly married couples.

Limitations and Suggestions

The study has some limitations and suggestions. In the study small number of demographic characteristics and ignored other important factors. The capacity to establish causal linkages is limited by the

correlational design. Google form survey raises the risk of inaccurate and biased responses. Online platforms and social media groups may provide convenient sampling, which might lead to bias in the sample and restrict its generalizability. To investigate causality, future studies should use experimental or longitudinal approaches. For a more thorough understanding, further demographic and environmental elements need to be investigated. The validity of results can be improved by using multiple data sources and objective measurements. Intervention also should include in future studies. Also need to examine how cultural and contextual elements influence the dynamics of intimate relationships and the control of emotions while taking into account the wide range of experiences that recently married couples have.

Implications

Intimate relationships, especially those between recently married couples, depend heavily on emotional regulation the capacity to recognize, control, and successfully communicate feelings. Comprehending the consequences of emotional regulation within this framework can provide significant perspectives for partners, counselors, and decision-makers. It enhance intimacy and connection between partners and also promote mental health and well-being that can create positive environment for family and children.

Contribution of Authors

Anosha Ahmed: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft

Ruqia Safdar Bajwa: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - Reviewing & Editing, Supervision

Adeena Rasheed: Investigation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest declared by the authors.

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Data Availability Statement

The datasets of the current study are not available publicly due to ethical reasons but are available from the corresponding author [A.A.] upon the reasonable request.

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