

Intimacy, Communication Quality, And Relationship Satisfaction in Urban India Adults: A Correlational Study

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Abstract—Relationship Satisfaction is an important element for the quality and stability of romantic relationships with profound implications for psychological well-being. Among the various elements that ensures and contributes to relationship satisfaction, intimacy and communication quality have been consistently been recognized as the crucial elements of a healthy relationship. The present study aimed to examine relationship between intimacy, communication quality and relationship satisfaction among adults engaged in romantic relationships. More precisely, the research examined the extent to which intimacy and communication quality are associated with relationship satisfaction. A quantitative correlational research design was used for this study. The sample consisted of 60 adults between 20-50 years of age currently engaged in romantic relationships. They participants are from major metropolitan cities of India such as Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Noida, and participated voluntarily in the study. The hypothesis stated that there is significant relationship between intimacy and relationship satisfaction. Also, it was hypothesized that there is significant relationship between communication quality and relationship satisfaction. Data were collected using the Miller Social Intimacy Scale (MSIS), the Communication Patterns Questionnaire–Short Form (CPQ), and the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). Descriptive statistics and Spearman’s rank-order correlation analyses were conducted to examine the correlations among the study variables.

Index Terms—boarding, day-scholars, attachment, intimacy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Romantic relationships are one of the most important parts of an individual life, it influences all the aspects

of one's life, person's emotional wellbeing, mental wellbeing and overall quality of life. The quality of romantic relationship is often linked to one's mental health, its outcomes, social and personal well-being. There are many other factors that contribute to the stability and success of romantic relationship, but communication and intimacy are considered most important factors and always get considerable attention in mental health research as these are most important factors for having a satisfying and healthy relationship. Understanding how these two factors changes one's relationship satisfaction is particularly most important thing in today's society, where relationship challenges, issues, and separations have become more common problem than anything else.

Relationship satisfaction is considered how much happy and satisfied a person feel in their relationship. It includes feelings of happiness, emotional stable, fulfillment, commitment, and success with their partner. According to Hendrick (1988), relationship satisfaction includes emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of a relationship. Studies has shown that individuals who have higher levels of relationship satisfaction mostly experience greater and peaceful mental well-being, reduced stress, and improved emotional health. On other hand, dissatisfaction in relationships has been linked with increased amount of mental distress, tiredness, frequent conflict, and a greater chance of separation (Dush & Amato, 2005).

Intimacy is one of the most important factors that affects relationship quality and stability. It is sense of emotional connection, closeness, and mutual understanding between partners. It also means

openness, trust, acceptance, sharing thoughts, views, feelings, and experiences with each another. Intimate relationships provide individual emotional security, clarity and a sense of belonging, which are important for maintaining healthy relationship. Studies have shown that couples who shares higher level of intimacy have higher levels of trust, commitment, and satisfaction in their relationships (Schaefer & Olson, 1981). Intimacy develops through regular and effective communication in which partners share their personal feelings, thoughts, views and respond to each other with care and understanding. However, when intimacy lack, individuals often experience emotional distance, loneliness, and dissatisfaction with each other (Prager, 1995).

Another major factor affecting relationship satisfaction is quality of communication. Communication is the main way through which partners express their feelings, thoughts, issue, discuss their needs, solve their problems and maintain emotional connections. Effective communication involves openness, active listening, understanding, clear expression of thoughts, and responsiveness. Good communication helps couples to discuss agreements and disagreements peacefully that strengthen their emotional and psychological bond and help them to maintain a healthy relationship. On the other hand, poor communication such as criticism, no active listings, defensiveness, contempt, and emotional withdrawal can create emotional distress and instability and create issues in relationship (Gottman & Levenson, 1992). Studies suggests that couples who communicate well experience higher levels of relationship satisfaction, happiness and long-term relationship stability than those who struggle in their relationship.

The two factors intimacy and communication quality are closely related to each other. Meaningful communication helps partner to have better emotional closeness, satisfaction and a better understanding of each other, while greater intimacy encourages open and effective communication which helps to maintain a successful and more stable relation. Reis and Shaver (1988) suggest that intimacy develops when one partner's personal disclosures are met with understanding, support, and responsiveness from the other partner. This perspective shows us the connection between nature of intimacy and

communication, and how these two factors help in shaping relationship experiences and satisfaction.

While a large number of studies have examined these two factors all over the world, but there are few studies that focused on their combined influence on relationship in India. In India Cultural values, family expectations, and social norms influence these factors how intimacy and communication are expressed and experienced in relationships. Therefore, studding these factors among adults who are in romantic relationships can help in giving valuable insights, to the developing field of relationship and psychological research.

This study aims to examine how intimacy and communication quality can affect relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships. It examines the individual and combined contributions of these two factors, the study aims to understand relationship dynamics, aspects and provide useful information for counselors, therapists, and researchers working in the field of relationship and mental health studies.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research has consistently showed intimacy as a key factor for satisfaction in a relationship. Schaefer and Olson (1981) said that intimacy is a construct involving emotional, social, intellectual, sexual, and recreational closeness, which they found strongly correlated to relationship quality and intimacy. Prager (1995) also argued that when people share and express emotions, self-disclosure, feel acceptance and understanding by their partner, intimacy grows. Laurenceau, Barrett, and Pietromonaco (1998) also supported that acts of self-disclosure and partner responsiveness significantly impact feelings of intimacy and relationship quality. Similarly, Reis and Shaver's (1988) interpersonal process model suggested that when acts of self-disclosures are met with validation and responsiveness from the partner, intimacy emerges. Besides the intimacy literature, communication quality has also been focused a lot, as it also indicates the quality of the relationships. Gottman and Levenson (1992) stated that communication patterns like criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling makes the relationship toxic and dissatisfaction in relationship. Christensen and Shenk (1991) pointed out that toxic communication habits such as demand-withdrawal patterns negatively impact relationships, while

Markman, Stanley, and Blumberg (1994) showed that communication-skills training involving enhanced and active listening, empathy, and conflict resolutions improves relationship satisfaction. Noller and Fitzpatrick (1990) also stated that accurate communication and understanding messages are positively linked to marital satisfaction.

Relationship satisfaction has been widely seen as a sign of a healthy relationship. Hendrick (1988) defined it as a global evaluation of one's romantic relationship and created the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) to measure it. Research by Dush and Amato (2005) revealed that higher relationship satisfaction is directly linked with greater subjective well-being and less psychological distress.

III. METHODOLOGY

Objectives. 1.

To assess the levels of intimacy, communication quality, and relationship satisfaction among the study participants. 2. To examine the relationship between intimacy and relationship satisfaction among men and women. 3. To examine the relationship between communication quality and relationship satisfaction among men and women.

Hypothesis. H1:

There is significant relationship between intimacy and relationship satisfaction. H2: There is significant relationship between communication quality and relationship satisfaction.

Sample.

The sample size of the study was N = 60 which included adults between 20-50 years of age.

Data.

For this study, primary data has been collected in metropolitan cities such as Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru and Noida to approximately represent the urban population.

Tools.

In this study the tools which are used as The Miller Social Intimacy Scale (MSIS), Communication Patterns Questionnaire-Short (CPQ), and Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). These tools are included in

the study's primary continuous variables. The sample consists of 60 adults (N=60).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A short summary is provided as follows (Table-1), for the descriptive indices, including standard deviations, means, medians, skewness and kurtosis:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	SD
MSIS	126.98	137.50	27.51
CPQ	43.72	42.00	13.13
RAS	25.88	26.50	5.72

Note: SD = Standard Deviation; SE = Standard Error. Since, the scores of MSIS and RAS shows negative skewness, non-parametric analyses is considered to ensure statistical validity. To assess how 'Intimacy' and 'Communication' is related to 'Relationship Satisfaction', Spearman's rank order correlation is conducted. As given in the following table (Table-2).

Table 2: Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation Matrix between Study Variables

Variables	MSIS	CC	SDPW	PDSW	RAS
MSIS	1.000	—	—	—	—
CC	.661	1.000	—	—	—
SDPW	-.194	-.237	1.000	—	—
PDSW	-.188	-.080	.780	1.000	—
RAS	.749	.567	-.248		

Note. MSIS = Miller Social Intimacy Scale
 CC = Constructive Communication
 SDPW = Self-Demand/Partner-Withdraw
 PDSW = Partner-Demand/Self-Withdraw
 RAS = Relationship Assessment Scale

As hypothesized, Relationship Assessment Satisfaction (RAS) strongly and positively correlates with Miller Social Intimacy Scale (MSIS) statistically ($\rho = .749, p < .001$), and moderately positively correlates with Constructive Communication (CC) ($\rho = .567, p < .001$). Whereas, the Communication Patterns, 'Self Demand/Partner Withdraw' (SDPW: $\rho = -.248, p = .056$) and Partner Demand/Self Withdraw (PDSW: $\rho = -.218, p = .094$) shows negative correlation with 'relationship satisfaction', as they did not meet the significant threshold in this sample ($p < .001$).

Importantly, the significant positive correlation between MSIS and Constructive Communication ($\rho = .661, p < .001$) shows strong connection link between relationship satisfaction, closeness and positive interaction styles.

The primary objective of the study was to examine the relationship between ‘intimacy’, ‘communication quality’ and ‘relationship satisfaction’ among adults. As it is a non-normative data, Spearman is used to evaluate the interactions. The findings positively support the framework, stating that intimacy scale (MSIS) and communication quality (CPQ) both correlates well with overall relationship satisfaction (RAS). The highly significant correlation of this study is between MSIS and RAS ($\rho = .749, p < .001$). This perspective completely aligns with the foundational frameworks given by Schaefer and Olson (1981) and Prager (1995), who stated that deep emotional connections, understanding between each other, and judgements of comprehensive evaluations serve as foundations to long term healthy relationships. (Schaefer and Olson,1981; Prager,1995) The data furthermore showed a positively good correlation between MSIS and Constructive Communication (CC) ($\rho = .661, p < .001$). This supports and validates for the *Interpersonal Process Model of Intimacy* proposed by Reis and Shaver (1988).

This model states that intimacy is a result of positive, validating and constructive communication between partners instead of just an occurrence. When adults engage in active listening and clear, emotionally responsive changes, their level of feeling of being understood and satisfied naturally tends to increase. (Reis & Shaver, 1988)

While constructive communication showed good correlation with relationship satisfaction, the CPQ subscales ‘Self-Demand/Partner-Withdraw (SDPW)’ and ‘Partner-Demand/Self-Withdraw (PDSW) both showed negative correlation with relationship satisfaction ($\rho = .248$ and $\rho = -.218$, respectively). This pattern is backed by the behavioral research by Christensen and Shenk (1991), which identified that demand-withdrawal tracks are toxic dynamics that ultimately end up the relationship messed up.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that intimacy and constructive communication are powerful, positive correlates of adult relationship satisfaction, aligning closely with established relational models. The non-parametric analysis reveals that higher levels of emotional closeness and active, validating communication patterns are strongly linked to enhanced relationship quality. Conversely, maladaptive demand-withdrawal dynamics show a distinct negative relationship with satisfaction, reinforcing their role as harmful behavioural patterns. Ultimately, the strong baseline connection found between intimacy and positive interaction styles emphasizes the value of fostering clear, supportive communication. These findings hold practical utility for clinical interventions, highlighting that improving communication quality is a vital pathway to sustaining fulfilling adult partnerships. This study concludes that intimacy and constructive communication are in highly correlation with relationship satisfaction. Whereas, the maladaptive demand-withdrawal dynamics are in negative correlation with relationship satisfaction, indicating it as toxic patterns. Thus, intimacy and positive interaction styles shares a strong baseline connection, underscoring the importance of cultivating clear and supportive communication.

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