

**EFFECT OF REJECTION SENSITIVITY AND EMOTIONAL
INTIMACY ON RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION- MEDIATING
ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTIMACY**

A thesis submitted in the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY

SUBMITTED BY

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, ‘**Effect of Rejection Sensitivity and Emotional Intimacy on Relationship Satisfaction- Mediating role of Emotional Intimacy**’ is being submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the award the of the degree of **Master of Arts in Psychology**, presented in the **Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala** is a bonafide work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Ipshita Chowdhury, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala and that no part of this project has been submitted for the award of any other degree.

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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis entitled, '**Effect of Rejection Sensitivity and Emotional Intimacy on Relationship Satisfaction- Mediating role of Emotional Intimacy,**' submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the award the of the degree of **Master of Arts in Psychology**, presented in the **Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala**, is an authentic record of my work carried out under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Ipshita Chowdhury, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala and refers other researchers' work which are duly listed in the reference section.

The matter embodied in this thesis has not formed the basis for awarding any other degree at this or any other university.

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ABSTRACT

Romantic relationships are a fundamental aspect of human experience. They are some of the most significant and complex social ties. The aim was to study the effect of rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy on relationship satisfaction with emotional intimacy as a mediator. Emotional intimacy encourages feelings of trust, understanding, and closeness between partners, which in turn creates a sense of security and stability in the relationship, therefore, it made intuitive sense to take emotional intimacy as a mediator. For this data was collected from 201 individuals with 50 each belonging to four different groups namely; dating for a minimum of 2 years, married for 1-5 years, married for 10-15 years, and married for 20-25 years. Rejection Sensitivity was measured using Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire, Emotional Intimacy was measured using Emotional Intimacy Scale and Relationship Satisfaction was measured using Relationship Assessment Scale. The data was analyzed using correlation, independent t-test, ANOVA, post-hoc, regression and mediating analysis. It was found that rejection sensitivity has a significant negative relationship with relationship satisfaction for dating a minimum of two years group and married for 10-15 years group whereas emotional intimacy has a significant positive relationship with relationship satisfaction across all four durations. Rejection sensitivity also differed across all four groups whereas emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction were consistent across all four durations. There were no gender differences but there was difference between parents and non-parents across rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. Also, the effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is partially mediated by emotional intimacy.

Key words: *Relationship Satisfaction, Rejection Sensitivity, Emotional Intimacy, Dating, Married*

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The aim was to study the effect of rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. Rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction are three key factors that play a crucial role in the success and stability of romantic relationships (example, Downey & Feldman, 1996; Neff & Karney, 2002) and have been discussed briefly below.

1.1 Relationship Satisfaction

An inherent urge for belonging defines humans. This urge is believed to have arisen because it aids in reproduction and survival, driving people to maintain various kinds of close relationships throughout their lives, such as friendships, relationships with family, and relationships with their offspring (Leary and Baumeister 2000). Romantic relationships are a fundamental aspect of human experience. Relationships with romantic partners rank highly among these intimate relationships (Bowlby, 1988; Cassidy, 2001; Loubser, 2007). Finding a love partner takes a lot of time and effort, but once a satisfying relationship is established, it appears to improve both physical and emotional health (Hammond & Fletcher, 1991). Marriage and other romantic partnerships have the potential to provide demands for commitment, sexual fulfilment, and lifelong friendship. But a high proportion of couples see these favorable traits deteriorate over time, and for others, relationship satisfaction even reaches the point of breaking up (Fincham et al., 2018). Numerous theories (example, Sternberg Triangular theory of love & John Bowlby Attachment Theory) have been proposed regarding the distinctive characteristics that result in relationship satisfaction. However, it is possible that the degree to which partners' expectations for the relationship are met by their actual experiences also plays a role in determining satisfaction (Meeks et al., 1998). An interpersonal assessment of one's partner's positive feelings and attraction to the relationship is what is meant by relationship satisfaction (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). Relationships will be satisfying for those individuals whose expectations are met, whereas people whose relationships are incongruent with their expectations will feel unsatisfied (Miller & Tedder, 2011), for example, one partner values communication and quality time spent together, while the other prioritizes independence and personal space. If the first partner's expectations are met and the other partner regularly communicates with him and spends time together, then the first partner is likely to feel satisfied with the relationship. Relationship satisfaction is a subjective emotion and viewpoint, not a characteristic of a relationship. Because of this, opinions on how satisfied a couple is with their

union may vary among its members. This subjectivity is very much defined by culture. Cross-cultural psychologists have identified various ways that people from the East and the West perceive the world (Masuda and Nisbett 2001). Cultural differences in values and thought processes may have an impact on how people interact with one another. For example, it has been discovered that Hong Kong Chinese hold a stronger conviction in the concept of yuan than British do (Godwin and Findlay 1997). Yuan is derived from a Buddhist belief in the importance of fate and predestination in the development of relationships. According to Godwin and Findlay (1997), belief in yuan was negatively connected with sensual forms of love and positively associated with pragmatic and agapic ones. Due to these cultural differences, people may understand and react to their partners' behavior differently, which could have an impact on how strong their romantic relationships are and how satisfied they are with their relationship (Yee Ho et al., 2011).

1.1.1 Relationship Satisfaction in Indian Context

The context of how people derive relationship satisfaction considerably differs from one culture to another, Indians frequently stress interdependence and loyalty because they live in a collectivistic culture. It is important to understand the Indian perspective of relationship satisfaction as it is the core element of this research. In Asian culture, marriage is seen more as a bond between two families than two people. Collectivism prioritizes the needs, beliefs, feelings, cohesion, and allegiance of the in-group as opposed to individuality. Such values must be considered as promoters of marital health in the context of a relationship (Georgas et al, 2006). Young adults are expected to get married in order to fulfill cultural and familial obligations, marriage serves to strengthen family obligations in Eastern, collectivistic societies (Zhang and Kline, 2009). Families are frequently involved in the partner selecting process right from the start (MacDonald et al., 2012). Parents and children screen potential spouses and choose a compatible match who will make the family feel comfortable (Batabyal, 2001). Importantly, India continues to have a high level of parental participation in matchmaking (Netting, 2010). Parents encourage their children to take a practical approach to marriage, emphasizing traits that are in line with social, familial, and cultural norms (Levine et al., 1995). Deference to elderly family members is also encouraged by collectivistic family norms, with young couples frequently residing with their in-laws as part of extended family arrangements (Georgas et al., 2001). While this may be advantageous in some ways, allowing for more assistance with everyday tasks and household chores, it may also increase pressure

on young couples to adhere to collectivist cultural standards and customs (Singh, 2008). In India, younger married couples who express a desire for intimacy and closeness in their marriage are sometimes met with resistance and criticism by the in-laws they share a home with (Sandhya, 2009). The couple may also disagree as a result of this conflict, especially if one partner sides with the in-laws (MacDonald et al., 2012). We cannot talk about marriages in an Indian context without using the terms “arranged marriage” and “love marriage.” Arranged marriages are still prevalent in India, especially in rural areas and among conservative families, although there has been a gradual shift towards more love marriages, particularly in urban areas (Yelsma & Kuriakose, 1988). The criteria for selecting a suitable partner in arranged marriages typically include factors such as caste, sub-caste, religion, economic status, education, family background, and horoscope compatibility. The role of parents and extended family members in the arranged marriage process is significant, and they often act as matchmakers, helping to identify potential partners and negotiate the terms of the marriage. In some cases, families may also seek the advice of an astrologer to ensure that the marriage is auspicious and will be successful (Madathil & Benschhoff, 2008). While love and romance are not considered essential prerequisites for arranged marriages in India, there is still an expectation that the couple will develop a strong emotional bond over time and work towards building a harmonious and fulfilling relationship (Sandhya, 2009). In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of consent and mutual compatibility in arranged marriages, and many families now involve the prospective bride and groom in the decision-making process. For example, the parents of the future bride and groom traditionally organize arranged weddings in India without the participation of the intended partners. Involving the prospective bride and groom in the decision-making process, however, has become more popular recently. Families might, for example, permit the potential couple to meet and get to know one another before making a decision. By using this strategy, the couple can evaluate their compatibility and decide whether they feel at ease together before getting married. This change in favor of including the potential pair in the decision-making process demonstrates the rising awareness of the significance of mutual compatibility and consent in arranged marriages (Shah & Gnanasekaran, 2016). Expectations and attitudes towards relationships and marriage in India are greatly influenced by cultural and social norms. The cultural emphasis on family values and the concept of joint family living can influence relationship satisfaction, as it involves navigating complex familial dynamics and maintaining harmonious relationships with in-laws and extended family members. Meeting the demands and carrying out the responsibilities of these familial roles could be one source of satisfaction.

One could feel satisfied and fulfilled by, for example, treating one's in-laws with respect, being considerate of their extended family, and completing one's commitments to them. A common commitment to preserving a peaceful and secure family environment could be another source of potential satisfaction. This could be putting the needs and overall welfare of the family first, seeking help from family members when facing difficulties, and cooperating to settle disagreements (Bhardwaj & Tiwari, 2019; Pande & Chopra, 2014).

1.2 Rejection Sensitivity

Rejection sensitivity is a cognitive-affective processing tendency to fear rejection. It is influenced by cognitive-social learning history and is activated in circumstances where rejection or acceptance may occur (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Fears of rejection may be a major factor in how social interactions are started and maintained. Recent rejections may also have an impact on how one interacts with strangers in the future. Different people react differently to social rejection. According to many theorists, including Erikson (1959), Horney (1937), and Bowlby (1988), rejection sensitivity is mostly brought on by parental rejection during childhood, which makes it difficult to communicate with others (Downey and Feldman 1996). According to the rejection sensitivity theory, early experiences of care giver rejection, such as parental neglect and exposure to family violence, lead to increased anticipatory anxiety and the expectation of further rejection by significant others in subsequent interpersonal relationships (Downey et al., 1997; Feldman and Downey, 1994). The resultant hypervigilance to rejection causes misinterpretation of negative or ambiguous signals from significant persons and an exaggerated response to usually harmless circumstances. Rejection-sensitive people, for instance, may become hostile in circumstances that cause them to feel anxious or anticipate being rejected (Ayduk et al., 1999). According to research (Lesnick & Mendle, 2021; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002), people with high rejection sensitivity often exhibit high arousal in interpersonal relationships in an effort to find rejection stimuli. This can ultimately result in a heightened experience of interpersonal distress. Additionally, they frequently act in ways that alienate other people as they frantically search for indications that someone does not want to be with them. It might be challenging to interrupt the painful cycle that is created by this behavior. High rejection sensitivity people are continuously on the lookout for warning signals that they are about to be rejected. Any indication that someone does not want to be with them tends to be met with dramatic responses from them (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Downey et al., 1998). Although they are not exactly the same, rejection sensitivity and rejection sensitivity

dysphoria (RSD) are two conditions that can arise from rejection sensitivity. There is no official diagnosis for rejection sensitive dysphoria. It's a term used to describe a strong sense of dissatisfaction and emotional exhaustion brought on by rejection and criticism. It's been connected to ADHD (Faraone et al., 2018). Both RSD and rejection sensitivity have emotional dysregulation. As opposed to dysphoria. People who are sensitive to rejection may do any of the following: experience intense anxiety or other negative feelings before receiving a rejection (Dodson, 2016).

Collectivism and social hierarchy are highly valued in Indian culture, which can make rejection sensitivity pervasive. A cultural principle known as collectivism gives the group a high priority over the individual. This indicates that people in those cultures may place a higher priority on blending in and adhering to social standards and may view rejection as a threat to their sense of social identity and belonging (Singh et al., 2016). Another feature of Indian culture that may increase sensitivity to rejection is social hierarchy. People are required to adhere to the standards and values of their separate social groups in this type of culture where there is a clear division between the various social classes. Failure to do so could result in rejection or exclusion from their community, which could be seen as a serious threat to their social standing and identity (Mendoza- Denton et al., 2001).

1.2.1 Rejection Sensitivity and Relationship Satisfaction

Those who have trouble with rejection sensitivity may see rejection as evidence that they are in some way unworthy. Rejection represents a judgment on their value as a person and this belief system can be devastating in relationships. It is challenging to feel secure in relationships when one anticipates rejection. Even if they are not being rejected right now, they are constantly on the lookout for it and anticipate it to happen at any moment. Therefore, even one mistake is interpreted as a complete lack of concern or as harsh evaluations of their character (Downey et al., 1998, 1999; Purdie and Downey, 2000). The rejection-sensitive individual may become upset and angry the moment they sense a prospective rejection. Adults who are sensitive to rejection and are in romantic relationships are likely to have continuous relationship issues. Because they are constantly on the lookout for rejection, they frequently misread situations and emotions. Due to the person's fear of abandonment or rejection, these actions may cause irrational jealousy (Nowland et al., 2018). They might also view certain actions, like a partner being preoccupied with work, as evidence that they are no longer in love with each other. Being in a committed relationship may benefit males with rejection sensitivity more than

it does women. According to (Nowland et al, 2018), males who are not in a romantic relationship feel more alone and are more sensitive to rejection. However, women who score highly in rejection sensitivity are unlikely to find satisfaction in a relationship. Even when they are in a relationship, they could still experience the same levels of loneliness and fear of rejection as when they are alone (Nowland et al, 2018).

Rejection sensitivity is frequently associated with cultural norms surrounding arranged marriages in the Indian setting, where people may worry about rejection from potential spouses or disapproval from their families. This fear of rejection can lead to anxiety and tension, which can influence relationship satisfaction. People may experience pressure in arranged marriages to fulfill cultural and familial expectations, which can heighten their fear of being rejected (Singh & Lal, 2014). Building emotional intimacy and trust in a relationship, which are essential elements of relationship satisfaction, can be difficult due to this fear of rejection.

1.3 Emotional Intimacy

Intimacy is a unique, subjective (and frequently fleeting) feeling of connection that results from an interpersonal, transactional process that includes self-disclosure and partner responsiveness (Laurenceau, Rivera, Schaffer, & Pietromonaco, 2004; Prager, 1995). According to Erickson's psychosocial theory from 1959, developing intimacy is a key objective for young adults. The life stage known as emerging adulthood, which typically occurs between the ages of 18 and 25, marks the passage from adolescence to adulthood. It is characterized by identity exploration, instability, self-focus, and a sense of being "in-between," and is frequently referred to as an age of possibilities (Arnett, 2018). Depending on the context in which it appears, this phrase is understood differently in the literature (Hook et al., 2003). When intimacy is discussed in the context of sexuality, it is frequently seen as a sexual link. However, intimacy may also be seen more generally as the propensity to learn more about oneself through relationships with others (Konsiska-Dec et al., 1999; Van Lankveld, 2018). However, it frequently manifests as a dyadic relationship property (Kosiska-Dec et al., 1999). The interpersonal dimension of intimacy and individual differences in ability and motivation to intimacy are highlighted by Plopa (2007), who links it to a disposition to care for each other, to open oneself to the other person, to appreciate the closeness, as well as to empathy. There are five types of intimacy namely; emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational (Schaefer & Olson, 1981). Among these sexual and emotional intimacy are very crucial concepts (Yoo, 2003). Reis and Shaver (1988) implied that maintaining a fulfilling relationship might require more than just sexual intimacy.

Even though sexual intimacy might be significant, it seems that emotional intimacy is more crucial in romantic relationships. Intimacy was described by Clinebell and Clinebell (1970) as the degree to which two people's needs were met in a relationship, with targeted emotional intimacy serving as the foundation for all other sorts of intimacy. The potential for sexual satisfaction substantially declines when fundamental intimate requirements are not met successfully (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970). For instance, when a disagreement in a relationship is mutually handled, the parties involved feel more genuinely fond of one another. For a healthy long-term sexual functioning, emotional intimacy and the settlement of constructive conflicts are therefore crucial (Metz & Epstein, 2002).

Emotional intimacy is described as "a perception of closeness to another that is conducive to the sharing of personal feelings, accompanied by expectations of understanding, affirmation, and demonstrations of caring" (Sinclair and Dowdy, 2005). Sharing one's deepest emotions, ideas, and vulnerabilities with someone else and receiving their understanding, acceptance, and support in return is what it entails. Open and honest communication, attentive listening, empathy, and respect between partners are necessary for the development of emotional intimacy. Building intimacy might take time and work, but the benefits can be huge, such as increased relationship satisfaction, deeper emotional ties, and a higher sense of trust and security (Laurenceau et al., 1998). Emotional intimacy is a dimension of interpersonal interactions that varies over time and among relationships in terms of both intensity and frequency (Montpetit et al., 2014). An individual must feel emotionally close to another in order to share their feelings with them and receive personal validation. The openness and acceptance among people are the source of emotional intimacy. As people reveal their most vulnerable selves without worrying about criticism, this occurs. People need to show certain characteristics for genuine emotional intimate connections to happen. This entails self-disclosing actions, constructive spousal participation, and indications of comprehension (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Guerrero & Andersen, 1998).

Due to the cultural focus on privacy and modesty, emotional intimacy is frequently seen in the Indian context as a taboo or even disregarded. Talking about one's feelings or personal life with others, particularly those outside the family, is frequently frowned upon in Indian households. This can make it difficult for people to develop strong emotional intimacy with others, which can cause feelings of loneliness and alienation (Gaiha et al., 2020; Chentsova-Dutton & Tsai, 2010). Traditional gender roles can also affect the emotional intimacy of partners in India. Men

are frequently expected to be emotionless and stoic, while women are frequently expected to be nurturing and compassionate. In especially between men and women, this can produce a power dynamic that discourages emotional openness and intimacy. However, there is an increasing trend in Indian relationships towards greater emotional intimacy. Open communication, confidence, and vulnerability are becoming increasingly important in relationships in order to promote emotional intimacy (Samanta, 2019). Additionally, the popularity of social media and online dating has made it simpler for people to establish stronger emotional connections with others. The anonymity offered by the internet can occasionally make it simpler for people to connect with one another and express their feelings without the pressure or social stigma of in-person interactions (Rosen et al., 2008). A tradition in India that fosters emotional intimacy is the practice of sharing food with others as a way of expressing love and kinship (Visen, 2019). The chance to emotionally connect with others is also provided by family reunions, festivals, and religious ceremonies.

1.3.1 Emotional Intimacy, Relationship Satisfaction and Rejection Sensitivity

According to Jankowiak and Fisher (1992), emotional intimacy is seen as a crucial element of romantic relationships. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that empirical research has linked intimacy to a variety of positive personal and relationship outcomes, such as psychological well-being (Frost, 2013; Frost & Forrester, 2013), physical health (Pietromonaco, Uchino, & Schetter, 2013; Stadler, Snyder, Horn, Shrout, & Bolger, 2012), and a higher level of marital and relationship satisfaction (Greeff & Malherbe, 2001; Hassebrauck & Fehr, 2002; Patrick, Sells, Giordano, & Tollerud, 2007). When couples experience feelings of intimacy, they frequently express high levels of relationship satisfaction (e.g., Greeff & Malherbe, 2001; Schaefer & Olson, 1981). Couples frequently seek counseling due to a lack of intimacy (Doss, Simpson, & Christensen, 2004; Geiss & O'Leary, 1981; Veroff, Kulka, & Douvan, 1981), which is frequently linked to other relationship problems like insecurity and jealousy (e.g., Crowe, 1997). In addition, it has been demonstrated that a lack of intimacy in romantic relationships predicts negative relationship outcomes, such as relationship breakup (e.g., Waring, 1988). According to Greeff and Malherbe (2001), proximity and feelings of intimacy are important indicators of a couple's satisfaction with their relationship. Couples that are emotionally connected and content with each other frequently express high levels of overall satisfaction. This validates the notion that connection and intimacy are crucial elements of a happy and successful romantic relationship.

Emotional intimacy and rejection sensitivity are two psychological ideas that are interrelated and have substantial effects on one another. Rejection sensitivity refers to a heightened sensitivity to the possibility of rejection or social exclusion, which can lead to anxiety and fear in social situations. Emotional intimacy, on the other hand, is the ability to connect with others on a deep emotional level, to communicate one's deepest thoughts and feelings, and to feel understood and welcomed by another person. Individuals with high levels of rejection sensitivity may struggle to develop emotional intimacy in their relationships. According to Akhtar & Fatima (2018), establishing emotional intimacy within a relationship may be an effective way to reduce rejection sensitivity and improve relationship quality. Couples may feel more confident in their relationships and be better equipped to handle difficult situations by fostering emotional intimacy. Understanding the connection between these two principles can help individuals establish more meaningful and fulfilling relationships with others around them. Regardless of the length of the relationship, emotional intimacy is an essential factor in relationship satisfaction, but rejection sensitivity may become more important as relationships progress. The strength of the relationship between emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction varies based on the stage of the relationship (Carpenter & Wyman, 2016). In the early phases of a relationship (less than six months), emotional intimacy is found to be more significantly connected to relationship satisfaction than in the middle or long-term stages. Emotional intimacy is crucial in the early phases of a relationship while partners are still getting to know one another and developing rapport because at this stage, building a solid foundation for the relationship and creating a sense of closeness and connection with one's partner may depend heavily on emotional intimacy. However, as the relationship develops and solidifies, other elements like common interests, dedication, and communication abilities might start to play a bigger role in preserving relationship satisfaction (Carpenter & Wyman, 2016). Individuals must work on decreasing rejection sensitivity and building emotional resilience in order to cultivate healthy and fulfilling relationships. Therapy, communication, and a willingness to be vulnerable and open with one's partner can help accomplish this. Individuals can establish strong and satisfying connections in their relationships by reducing rejection sensitivity and increasing emotional intimacy (Akhtar & Fatima, 2008). Couples with greater emotional intimacy were more likely to participate in effective communication and problem-solving behaviors. Also, rejection sensitivity was associated with less effective communication and problem-solving behaviors, implying that rejection sensitivity can impede effective relationship communication (Impett et al., 2005).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Rejection Sensitivity and Relationship Satisfaction

In a study by Norona & Colleagues (2016), a sample of emerging adults who were dating (N = 217; 77.7% female) was examined to determine the relationships between rejection sensitivity, self-differentiation, and relationship satisfaction. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 25, with 77.7% of them being female. Using a correlational research methodology, the study measured the important factors and looked at how they related to one another. Rejection sensitivity, self-differentiation, and relationship satisfaction were the three key factors that were investigated. Rejection Sensitivity Scale (RSS), Differentiation of Self Inventory-2 (DSI-2) and Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) were used to collect data. The findings indicated that relationship satisfaction correlated negatively with rejection sensitivity. Additionally, the link between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction was mediated by total self-differentiation. In addition, one subcomponent, emotional cut off, mediated this relationship when the possible mediating effects of the four subcomponents of self-differentiation were examined. According to Norona et al., (2016), rejection sensitivity may cause people to distance themselves emotionally and physically from their romantic partners, decreasing opportunities for both rejecting and accepting experiences and decreasing relationship satisfaction.

Marston, Hare, and Allen (2010) aimed to investigate the association between relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships and rejection sensitivity and reassurance-seeking behavior. To assess their levels of rejection sensitivity, reassurance-seeking behavior, and relationship satisfaction, a total of 191 participants (130 females and 61 males), aged between 18 and 50 years who were already in romantic relationships filled out Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ), Reassurance Seeking Questionnaire (RSQ) and Relationship Adjustment Scale (RAS). The correlational analysis between rejection sensitivity, reassurance-seeking behavior, and relationship satisfaction was investigated. In order to better understand how rejection sensitivity and reassurance-seeking behavior contribute to relationship satisfaction, they also performed a hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The results of the research indicated that people with higher degrees of rejection sensitivity were more inclined to seek reassurance from their love relationships. This behavior included persistently seeking relationship assurance, validation of their partner's emotions and intentions, and assurance of

their partner's dedication. These actions might be seen as a means of coping with rejection anxiety and safeguarding oneself against undesirable effects. According to Marston et al. (2010), people who are afraid of being rejected could behave in a way that is not healthy for their relationships. It also emphasizes how crucial it is to deal with underlying insecurities and worries in order to avoid negative romantic results. Marston et al. (2010) also implied that rather than merely focusing on reassurance-seeking behavior, therapies aiming at improving relationship satisfaction should address the underlying problems of rejection sensitivity.

Galliher and Bentley (2010) aimed to investigate the relationship between rejection sensitivity, aggression, relationship satisfaction, and communication behaviors during a conflictual interaction. There were 70 romantic couples in the study (35 females and 35 males) aged between 18-24 years. Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ), Conflict Interaction Coding System (CICS), Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) and Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) were used. To investigate the relationships between rejection sensitivity, aggression, relationship satisfaction, and communication behaviors during the conflictual interaction, the researchers used a correlational analysis. They also carried out a regression analysis to examine how rejection sensitivity and aggression contributed differently to communication behaviors throughout the conflictual interaction. According to Galliher and Bentley (2010), relationship satisfaction was strongly and negatively correlated with rejection sensitivity. Higher degrees of rejection sensitivity were found to be associated with poorer levels of relationship satisfaction in couples. Additionally, there was a significant and positive correlation between aggression and rejection sensitivity, suggesting that people who were more sensitive to rejection were also more likely to act aggressively during the conflictual interaction. Galliher and Bentley (2010) highlight the importance of recognizing rejection sensitivity as a potential barrier to relationship satisfaction and understanding the communication behaviors that may contribute to this dynamic.

Worley and Samp (2018) wanted to investigate the connections between relational satisfaction in intimate relationships, communication about complaints, and rejection sensitivity. 163 females and 67 males between the ages of 18 and 57 who were currently in a romantic relationship made up the sample of 230 individuals. Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ), Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI) and Communication About Complaints Scale (CAC) were used for assessment. To investigate the relationships between rejection sensitivity, relational satisfaction, and communication regarding complaints, the researchers used a correlational analysis. Additionally, they performed a regression analysis to examine the

specific roles that rejection sensitivity and communication about complaints play in relational satisfaction. Relational satisfaction and rejection sensitivity were indirectly related, with some of the relationships being somewhat mediated by complaint avoidance and politeness. The findings imply that freely sharing complaints with one's partner along with positive politeness (i.e., affirming the partner while sharing complaints) may assist in operating as a protective barrier against the relationship dissatisfaction brought on by rejection sensitivity.

Ayduk & Kross (2008) conducted a study to explore the relationship between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction among both dating and married partners. It involved 92 couples who completed Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ), Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI), Trust Scale (TS) and Emotional Support Scale (ESS). To investigate the relationships between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction a correlational analysis was performed. The unique contribution of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction was further investigated using regression analysis. In order to determine if trust and emotional support from a spouse mediated the association between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction, the researchers also conducted mediation analysis. It was found that rejection sensitivity was negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction in both dating and married partners. Ayduk & Kross (2008) suggest that individuals with high rejection sensitivity may have greater difficulties in maintaining satisfying relationships. Ayduk & Kross (2008) also discovered that trust and emotional support from a partner mediated this connection.

2.2 Emotional Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction

Ubando (2016) aimed to investigate if gender, intimacy, and relationship satisfaction are related to one another. The study examined how gender disparities may affect people's sense of intimacy and satisfaction in romantic relationships. 202 participants—101 men and 101 women—completed Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR) and Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI) as part of the study to measure their level of intimacy and relationship satisfaction. To investigate gender variations in intimacy and relationship satisfaction an independent t-test was conducted. Additionally, they performed a regression analysis that examined how gender contributes differently to intimacy and relationship satisfaction. The research results indicated that, compared to women, men had a more favorable perception of their own intimacy. According to Ubando (2016), men can regard themselves as more comfortable and open to communicating their innermost thoughts and feelings with their partners than women.

Greeff and Malherbe (2001) aimed to understand how intimacy within a couple relates to overall relationship satisfaction. The aim of the study was to determine whether strong levels of relationship satisfaction among couples are predicted by emotions of intimacy and closeness. 109 adults in serious romantic relationships participated in the study. Couples Closeness Questionnaire (CCQ) and Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) were filled out by participants to measure their level of relationship satisfaction and couple intimacy. For statistical analysis correlation, independent t-test and regression analysis were conducted. It was found that relationship satisfaction and couple closeness are strongly positively correlated. High levels of intimacy and closeness were also associated with high levels of relationship satisfaction in couples. Couples who expressed low degrees of closeness and intimacy, on the other hand, expressed lower levels of relationship satisfaction. According to Greeff and Malherbe (2001), proximity and feelings of intimacy are important indicators of a couple's satisfaction with their relationship. Couples that are emotionally connected and content with each other frequently express high levels of overall satisfaction. This validates the notion that connection and intimacy are crucial elements of a happy and successful romantic relationship.

Niekerk et al. (2020) explored the relationship between emotional intimacy, empathy, and relationship satisfaction in couples where one partner had endometriosis. The study involved 58 couples where the woman had endometriosis. The Emotional Intimacy Scale, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index, and the Couples Satisfaction Index were the questionnaires used. For each variable, descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were computed. The correlations between emotional intimacy, empathy, and relationship satisfaction were examined using Pearson's correlation coefficients. The predictors of relationship satisfaction were also identified using multiple linear regression analysis. In the analysis, the researchers controlled for the participants' ages and the duration of the relationship. The research results demonstrated that emotional intimacy was significantly associated with relationship satisfaction in relationships where the woman had endometriosis. Individuals who reported higher levels of emotional intimacy tended to be more satisfied with their relationships. More specifically, emotional intimacy was linked to one's own relationship satisfaction. Additionally, it was found that a woman's relationship satisfaction was correlated with her partner's emotional intimacy, suggesting that women who reported having greater emotional intimacy with their partners had more satisfying relationships.

Viet et al. (2016) studied the association between use of sexually explicit media (SEM) and relationship satisfaction. They examined the relationship between the usage of sexually explicit

media (SEM) and relationship satisfaction using a cross-sectional questionnaire design and a sample of 2284 married Croatian individuals. Further, the impact of possible emotional intimacy moderation on the connection between SEM use and relationship satisfaction was investigated. No statistically significant correlation between SEM use and relationship satisfaction was discovered after adjusting for sociodemographic, psychosexual, and relationship factors. However, it was shown that emotional intimacy had a moderating influence on men. Therefore, it was discovered that more SEM use was only substantially associated with poorer levels of relationship satisfaction in men who reported having less emotional intimacy with their romantic partner.

Reis and Shaver (1988) aimed to investigate the relationship between emotional intimacy, physical intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. 164 couples participated in the research. The Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR), which measured both emotional and physical intimacy, and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), which measured relationship satisfaction, were the questionnaires utilized in the study. To determine the connection between emotional intimacy, physical intimacy, and relationship satisfaction, the survey data were analysed using correlation and regression analysis. It was found that emotional intimacy was associated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction, implying that couples who reported higher levels of emotional intimacy also reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction. Physical intimacy, on the other hand, was not shown to be significantly related to relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, emotional intimacy was a higher predictor of relationship satisfaction than physical intimacy. In other words, emotional intimacy was more essential than physical intimacy in predicting relationship satisfaction. According to Reis and Shaver (1988), couples who prioritize emotional intimacy and actively seek to foster it are more likely to report feeling more satisfied in their relationships. Reis and Shaver (1988) also implied that maintaining a fulfilling relationship might require more than just physical connection. Even though physical intimacy might be significant, it seems that emotional intimacy is more crucial in romantic relationships. This emphasizes how crucial it is to promote emotional intimacy in romantic partnerships, especially for partners experiencing relationship dissatisfaction.

Lawson and Bodenmann (2017) aimed to explore the relationship between emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction in newlywed and established couples. 63 newlywed couples who had been married for less than two years and 63 couples with long-term marriages who had been together for more than ten years each participated in the study. The participants filled out Emotional Intimacy Scale (EIS) and Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) to assess their emotional

intimacy and satisfaction in their relationships. The characteristics of the participants and their questionnaire responses were summarized using descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations. The association between emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction was investigated using inferential statistics, including t-tests and regression analysis. The results demonstrated a significant correlation between emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction in both newlywed and long-term relationships. This shows that, at all relationship phases, emotional intimacy plays a significant role in promoting relationship satisfaction. But the study also found that there was a stronger connection between emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction for newlywed couples, suggesting that emotional intimacy may be especially important in establishing relationship satisfaction early in a relationship. According to Lawson and Bodenmann (2017), there could be several explanations for the stronger connection between emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction in newlywed couples. For example, newlywed couples could be more inclined to engage in actions that promote emotional intimacy, such as discussing their emotions and experiences and offering emotional support. Additionally, newlywed couples might still be developing their emotional intimacy, making it more relevant and crucial to their efforts to establish relationship satisfaction.

2.3 Rejection Sensitivity and Emotional Intimacy

Akhtar & Fatima (2018) aimed to investigate the link between emotional intimacy and rejection sensitivity in young adult relationships. 146 couples between the ages of 20 and 30 who were in serious romantic relationships served as the research's sample. The study found that emotional intimacy and rejection sensitivity are negatively correlated. In other words, rejection sensitivity was less prevalent in relationships between couples who reported higher levels of emotional intimacy. According to Akhtar & Fatima (2018), establishing emotional intimacy within a relationship may be an effective way to reduce rejection sensitivity and improve relationship quality. Couples may feel more confident in their relationships and be better equipped to handle difficult situations by fostering emotional intimacy. The findings also emphasize the importance of addressing rejection sensitivity in relationship counseling and therapies, especially with young adults who may be more susceptible to these problems.

Ayduk et al. (2012) examined the relationship between emotional intimacy, rejection sensitivity, and self-esteem in romantic relationships. 190 couples dating or married for at least six months participated in the survey. Participants answered Emotional Intimacy Scale (EIS), Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). For

statistical analysis correlation, regression and mediation were conducted. The findings showed a negative correlation between emotional intimacy and rejection sensitivity, which meant that relationships with higher levels of emotional intimacy had a lower level of rejection sensitivity. Additionally, it was found that self-esteem served as a partial mediator in the relationship between emotional intimacy and rejection sensitivity. This implies that emotionally intimate couples may have higher self-esteem, which in turn makes them less vulnerable to rejection.

Milyavskaya & Nadolny (2015) aimed to investigate the relationship between emotional intimacy and rejection sensitivity in dating relationships. 126 participants (65 women and 61 men) in dating relationships with an average duration of 10.3 months were interviewed. Measures of emotional intimacy, rejection sensitivity, and perceived social support were obtained using the Emotional Closeness and Disclosure Questionnaire, the Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire, and the Perceived Social Support Questionnaire, respectively. The associations between emotional intimacy, rejection sensitivity, and perceived social support were investigated using correlation analysis. They also performed mediation analyses that examined whether perceived social support mediated the relationship between emotional intimacy and rejection sensitivity. The findings revealed a negative correlation between emotional intimacy and rejection sensitivity, indicating that people who reported more emotional intimacy in their relationships were less likely to be sensitive to rejection. The association between emotional intimacy and rejection sensitivity was also found to be somewhat mediated by perceived social support. This shows that those who experience higher levels of emotional intimacy in their romantic relationships have less sensitivity to rejection due to perceived social support.

Davila et al. (2016) aimed to examine the role of emotional intimacy in the relationship between attachment and rejection sensitivity in couples. 150 couples were selected for the study from the neighbourhood, and they filled Adult Attachment Scale (AAS), Emotional Intimacy Scale (EIS) and Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ). The association between attachment anxiety, rejection sensitivity, and emotional intimacy was investigated using correlation analysis. The hypothesized mediation model, which proposed that emotional intimacy mediates the relationship between attachment anxiety and rejection sensitivity, was put to the test using structural equation modeling (SEM). To assess the importance of the indirect effects in the mediation model, the researchers also ran bootstrapping analyses. According to the findings, higher levels of rejection sensitivity were correlated with higher levels of attachment anxiety. Furthermore, it was found that emotional intimacy mediates the link between attachment

anxiety and rejection sensitivity. Particularly, even when they had higher levels of attachment anxiety, couples who reported higher levels of emotional intimacy were less likely to experience rejection sensitivity. These findings suggest that emotional intimacy plays an important role in buffering against the negative effects of attachment anxiety on rejection sensitivity in couples.

Edwards et al. (2019) conducted a study to explore the relationship between emotional intimacy, attachment style, and rejection sensitivity in couples. The research involved 332 participants who were in romantic relationships and ranged in age from 18 to 58 years old. Couples who reported higher levels of emotional intimacy were less likely to have rejection sensitivity, which indicated that emotional intimacy was negatively associated with rejection sensitivity. Additionally, attachment style played a role in the association between emotional intimacy and rejection sensitivity. Particularly, those who reported higher levels of emotional intimacy were more likely to have a more secure attachment style, which in turn was associated negatively with rejection sensitivity.

2.4 Rejection Sensitivity, Emotional Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction

Downey & Feldman (1996) conducted a study to examine the relationship between rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships. 82 undergraduate students participated in the study and completed self-report questionnaires on relationship satisfaction, emotional intimacy, and rejection sensitivity. The results showed that people with high rejection sensitivity had lower levels of relationship satisfaction. This was explained by the fact that they had the propensity to feel unhappy in response to their partner's unhappy behavior. Relationship satisfaction fell as a result of negative feelings. However, Downey & Feldman (1996) also found that emotional intimacy acted as a buffer against the negative impact of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction. Particularly, it was found that emotional intimacy mediates the link between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction. In other words, people who reported having more emotional intimacy in their relationships were less likely to have their relationship satisfaction negatively impacted by rejection sensitivity.

Lemay et al. (2007) aimed to investigate the relationship between rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. They sought the assistance of 160 couples who were either married or in a committed relationship. The Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire, the Emotional Intimacy Scale, and the Relationship Assessment Scale were

used to measure rejection sensitivity, emotional closeness, and relationship satisfaction. Correlation and regression analysis were then used to examine the data that had been obtained. The results showed that individuals with high rejection sensitivity reported lower levels of emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction. Emotional intimacy also regulated the association between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction. Overall, this study's findings indicate that emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction have a negative correlation with rejection sensitivity. Rejection sensitivity can negatively impact relationship satisfaction, but emotional intimacy can counteract this. These results underline the value of emotional intimacy in developing fulfilling romantic relationships, especially for those who are sensitive to rejection.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH GAP, OBJECTIVES, CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

3.1 Research Gap

The aim of this research is to study the mediating role of emotional intimacy on rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction. Most of the research on relationship satisfaction has been carried out in weird countries. The context of how people derive satisfaction considerably differs from one culture to another, Indians frequently stress interdependence and loyalty because they live in a collectivistic culture (Chadda & Deb, 2013). This is discussed in detail in preceding chapters. Indians derive relationship satisfaction from fulfilling their duties toward their partner and partners family (Sandhaya, 2009). Emotional intimacy in relationships have also steadily changed from pre-modern to post-modern society. Exploring how emotional intimacy might influence relationship satisfaction between people who have been dating and married couples, that is to explore what these constructs mean for different generations. Norona et al. (2016) has investigated relationship satisfaction and rejection sensitivity together on young adults and found a significant negative association between these variables. This study will attempt to uncover this relationship with emotional intimacy as a mediator. Emotional intimacy is described as "a perception of closeness to another that is conducive to the sharing of personal feelings, accompanied by expectations of understanding, affirmation, and demonstrations of caring" (Sinclair and Dowdy, 2005). Emotional intimacy encourages feelings of trust, understanding, and closeness between partners, which in turn creates a sense of security and stability in the relationship (example; Leavitt & Willoughby, 2015; Hadden & Smith, 2021), therefore, it made intuitive sense to take emotional intimacy as a mediator to see whether the effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is reduced or eliminated in presence of emotional intimacy. Previous literature has examined the relationship between these variables only with one relationship stage whereas this study explores the relationship between aforementioned variables across dating and marital relations. A meta-analysis by Twenge et al. (2003) found that parents were significantly less satisfied with their relationship than non-parents. This study also explores if parenthood plays a role in affecting aforementioned variables in Indian context.

3.2 Objectives

1. To study the effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction.

2. To study the effect of emotional intimacy on relationship satisfaction.
3. To determine if there is a change in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction with duration of relationship.
4. To determine if there is a change in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction across gender.
5. To determine if there is a change in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction between individuals with no children and individuals with children.
6. To study the effect of emotional intimacy on rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction.

3.3 Conceptual Framework

The path model shows the relationship between Rejection Sensitivity, Independent Variables, with Relationship Satisfaction, the Dependent Variable mediated by Emotional Intimacy.

In this study, the proposed model posits that Emotional Intimacy could be mediating the association between Rejection Sensitivity and Relationship Satisfaction.

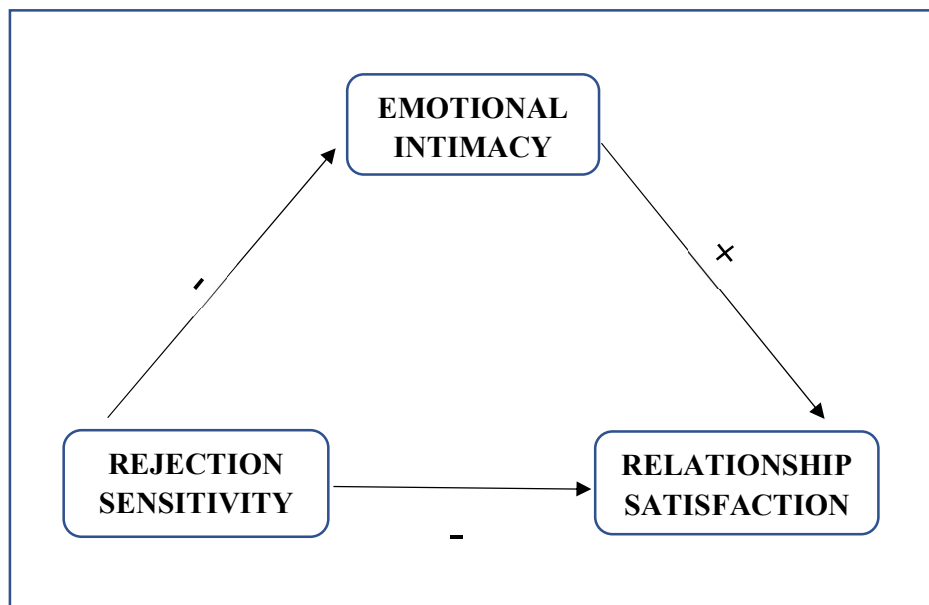


Figure No. 1- Path Model

Emotional intimacy encourages feelings of trust, understanding, and closeness between partners, which in turn creates a sense of security and stability in the relationship (example;

Leavitt & Willoughby, 2015; Hadden & Smith, 2021), therefore, it made intuitive sense to take emotional intimacy as a mediator to see whether the effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is reduced or eliminated in presence of emotional intimacy. According to Erikson's Psychosocial Theory (1959) Intimacy needs are said to be the primary driver for starting a romantic relationship, they also seem to be one of the causes that lead to its end when they are not met. Intimacy, therefore is pivotal in relationship satisfaction. A tendency to withdraw from social environments that are important for social development, like the intimacy process, is also linked to rejection sensitivity. Montgomery (2005) asserts that young people who avoid intimacy are attempting to shield themselves from potential rejection. Considering this, we assume that rejection sensitivity may contribute to a rise in fear of intimacy.

3.4 Hypothesis

H1: There will be a negative relationship between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction across all four durations of relationship.

H2: There will be a positive relationship between emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction across all four durations of relationship.

H3: There will be difference in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction across different duration of relationship.

H4: There will be difference in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction across gender.

H5: There will be difference in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction between parents and non-parents.

H6: Rejection sensitivity will predict relationship satisfaction with emotional intimacy as a mediator.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sample

This study explores rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction in individuals who have been in romantic relationships across different durations. The sample was selected on the basis that at different durations a relationship might look different. For example, today, dating is often seen as a relationship with a beginning, middle, and end rather than as a path to marriage by many young adults (Freeman et al., 2023). Also, Marriage and having a kid are two major relationship transitions that have a significant impact on individuals and their relationships (e.g., Bramlett & Mosher, 2001; Morris & Carter, 1999; Rholes et al., 2001; van Scheppingen et al., 2018). Thus, the sample consisted of four groups; namely: dating for a minimum of two years or more, married for 1-5 years, married for 10-15 years, married for 20-25 years. Sample was collected using non-random quota sampling.

4.1.1 Inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria for participation is Males and Females who belong to one of the groups below:

Group 1: N=50 (dating for a minimum of 2 years or more)

Group 2: N=50 (married for 1-15 years)

Group 3: N= 50 (married for 10-15 years)

Group 4: N= 51 (married for 20-25 years).

4.1.2 Sampling Characteristics

The age for 201 participants ranged from 20-60 years and the average age was 37.29 (S.D) years. The sample consisted of 61.7% females and 38.3% males. Further, 47.8% of individuals did not have any children whereas 52.2% of individuals have children.

Group 1, that is, dating for a minimum of 2 years or more consisted of 50 participants belonging to the age group 20-25 years and the average age was 22.58 (S.D) years. It consisted of 64% females and 36% males. Further, 100% of individuals did not have any children.

Group 2, that is, married for 1-5 years consisted of 50 participants belonging to the age group 23-38 years and the average age was 30.18 (S.D) years. It consisted of 64% females and 36%

males. Further, 76% of individuals did not have any children whereas 24% of individuals have children.

Group 3, that is, married for 10-15 years consisted of 50 participants belonging to the age group 32-45 years and the average age was 37.68 (S.D) years. It consisted of 64% females and 36% males. Further, 14% of individuals did not have any children whereas 86% of individuals have children.

Group 4, that is, married for 20-25 years consisted of 51 participants belonging to the age group 44-60 years and the average age was 51.14 (S.D) years. It consisted of 54.9% females and 45.1% males. Further, 2% of individuals did not have any children whereas 98% of individuals have children.

4.2 Research Design

Correlational Design is used. In this correlational study, Rejection Sensitivity is the Independent Variables (IV), and Relationship Satisfaction is the Dependent Variable (DV), whereas Emotional Intimacy is the Mediating variable (MV). Emotional intimacy encourages feelings of trust, understanding, and closeness between partners, which in turn creates a sense of security and stability in the relationship (example; Leavitt & Willoughby, 2015; Hadden & Smith, 2021), therefore, it looked logical to take emotional intimacy as a mediator to see whether the effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is reduced or eliminated in presence of emotional intimacy.

4.3 Tools Used

In Total, 3 Scales were administered through Google forms via an online medium to collect the required data from dating and married individuals. The standardized questionnaires used are as follows:

4.3.1 Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire, Adult version (A-RSQ):

It was developed by Berenson et al. (2011). The Rejection Sensitivity-Adult questionnaire (A-RSQ) has been adapted from RSQ (Downey & Feldman, 1996) for assessing rejection sensitivity in adults. Rejection sensitivity (RS) is a cognitive-affective processing tendency to fear rejection. It is influenced by cognitive-social learning history and is activated in circumstances where rejection or acceptance may occur. This scale measures how sensitive an individual is to rejection and has 9 items which describe situations in which people sometimes

ask things of others, for example, “You ask your parents or another family member for a loan to help you through a difficult financial time” based on this situation you have to answer “How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your family would want to help you?” and “I would expect that they would agree to help as much as they can.” For each item, the respondent must imagine that they are in the situation, and then answer the questions that follow it. A-RSQ was developed in a North American cultural context. Cultural differences can have an impact on how people experience and react to rejection, which may have an impact on the RSQ's validity in different cultural contexts (Berenson et al., 2011). Lee et al. (2013) compared participant responses from American and Japanese participants to test the RSQ's cross-cultural validity. The RSQ demonstrated good internal consistency and convergent validity for both ethnic groups, although the Japanese participants' overall scores were significantly higher. Lee et al. (2013) suggested that cultural variations in interpersonal sensitivity and collectivism may have influenced these results.

Scoring: Multiply the level of rejection concern (the response to question a) by the level of rejection expectancy (the reverse of the level of acceptance expectancy reported in response to question b) to arrive at a rejection sensitivity score for each situation. The mean of the rejection sensitivity scores for the 9 situations is the overall rejection sensitivity score. Additionally, the total score will range from 1 to 36. A low would mean that the person is less sensitive to rejection whereas a high score would mean that a person is very sensitive to rejection.

Reliability & Validity: The Cronbach alpha of this scale is .87, for the Indian sample (201 participants) the Cronbach alpha is 0.71. Berenson et al. (2011) examined the ARSQ's discriminant and predictive validity. They found a significant correlation between the ARSQ and measures for anxiety, sadness, and self-esteem, indicating that it evaluates a different construct from these tests.

4.3.2 Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS):

It was developed by Hendrick S.S. (1998). It is a 7-item scale designed to measure general relationship satisfaction. The subjective assessment of the relationship is known as relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction is a subjective emotion and perspective, not a characteristic of a relationship. The RAS can be used with anyone who is in an intimate relationship, including married individuals, individuals who live together, individuals who are engaged, as well as individuals who are dating. Respondents answer each item, for example, “How well does your partner meet your needs?”, using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (low

satisfaction) to 5 (high satisfaction). RAS was created within the cultural setting of North America. Since its creation, the RAS has been used in a wide range of cultural settings, including those in Europe, Asia, and Africa. For use in cross-cultural study, the scale has also been translated into a number of languages, including Chinese, Korean, and Spanish. The RAS exhibits consistent measurement features across samples of ethnically and age-diverse couples, as well as spouses seeking marital and family therapy. It also exhibits moderate to high correlations with measures of marital satisfaction. In a wide range of study settings, the RAS is a relevant, practical, and condensed measure for partnered love relationships (Hendrick et al., 1998).

Scoring: Items 4 and 7 are reverse-scored. Continuous scoring is maintained. The respondent's level of relationship satisfaction is indicated by a higher score, which means a score above 25 indicates high relationship satisfaction and a score below 15 indicates low relationship satisfaction.

Reliability & Validity: Cronbach Alpha was .91 and Split-half reliability was .93. Reliability for the Indian sample (201 participants) was Cronbach alpha 0.88. Hendrick et al. (1998) found that the RAS has high predictive validity, which indicates that it can precisely forecast the results of future romantic relationships. Hendrick et al. (1998) found, in particular, that people with higher RAS scores were more likely to report long-term stability and relationship satisfaction. RAS also has criterion-related validity, which indicates that it is closely related to other measures of relationship quality and satisfaction. For example, they found a strong correlation between the RAS and other relationship satisfaction scales, such as the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS).

4.3.3 Emotional Intimacy Scale (EIS):

It was developed by Sinclair & Dowdy (2006). It is a 5-item scale designed to measure the emotional intimacy component in one's close relationship. Emotional intimacy is the perception of being close enough to another person, to be able to share personal emotions, which is followed by expectations of comprehension, affirmation, and caring behaviors. The EIS was developed in a North American cultural context. The cross-cultural validity of the Sinclair and Dowdy (2006) created Emotional Intimacy Scale (EIS) has received little research. But in a study published by Martinez-Matsuda et al. (2019), the factor structure and measurement invariance of the EIS were investigated in a sample of Japanese people. They found that the EIS's factor structure was largely compatible with the original scale, indicating

that the measure would be appropriate for the setting of Japanese culture. However, they also discovered evidence of some cultural variations in how people responded to the scale's items, which raises the possibility that the measure's cross-cultural validity may have some limitations.

Scoring: Continuous scoring is maintained. The respondent's level of emotional intimacy is indicated by a higher score, which means if a respondent scores above 20 then they have high emotional intimacy and a score below 10 indicates low emotional intimacy.

Reliability & Validity: For a 6-week period, internal consistency and test-retest reliability were .88 and .85, respectively. For the Indian sample (201 participants) the Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.89. Significant, positive correlations between the EIS and measures of social support, self-efficacy, perceived health competence, reappraisal coping strategies, life satisfaction, and positive affect were found in order to evaluate construct validity. The EIS was found to have significant negative correlations with perceived stress levels, helplessness, unhealthy pain coping mechanisms, pain, and fatigue. The EIS anticipated the results of an intervention program, supporting criterion-related validity. Scores on the EIS and helplessness were used to predict scores on two measures of psychological well-being that assessed positive affect and life satisfaction in order to further evaluate criterion-related validity.

4.4 Procedure

Informed consent was obtained from the participant. Demographic details were obtained regarding gender, duration of relationship and whether they have children or not. Instructions were given regarding questionnaires.

Instructions for Rejection Sensitivity scale were as follows, “The items below describe situations in which people sometimes ask things of others. For each item, imagine that you are in the situation, and then answer the questions that follow it.”

Instructions for Relationship Satisfaction scale were as follows, “Kindly read each statement carefully and rate the response according to how you feel. There are no right or wrong answers. If you are not sure then rate the response with a rating which seems to describe your present feelings best. Please answer honestly and make ratings based on how you actually feel rather than how you would like to feel. The rating ranges from low satisfaction to high satisfaction.”

Instructions for Emotional Intimacy scale were as follows, “Please read each of the following statements and rate the extent to which it describes your feelings about your current romantic relationship. Please think about your present relationship and respond in terms of how you generally feel in this relationship. Please use the scale below by selecting a number between 1 and 5 which best represents your feelings against each statement: 1- Completely Disagree, 2- Somewhat Disagree, 3- Neither agree nor disagree, 4- Somewhat Agree and 5- Completely Agree.”

Participants usually take 20 minutes to fill the questionnaire. In case of any confusion, the participants were free to get in touch to get any kind of clarification. All the responses were recorded in excel sheet.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 23) was used to calculate Descriptive and Inferential statistics. PROCESS Macro by Andrew Hayes (2015) was used for mediational analysis among the three variables.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rejection Sensitivity	201	1.56	13.89	8.5019	2.82019
Relationship Satisfaction	201	12	35	27.84	5.577
Emotional Intimacy	201	5	25	21.05	4.046
Valid N (listwise)	201				

Table 1 indicates descriptive statistics for 201 participants who completed measures of rejection sensitivity, relationship satisfaction, and emotional intimacy. These 201 participants have 50 people from each group, namely: dating for at least two years or more, married for 1-5 years, married for 10-15 years, married for 20-25 years. Rejection sensitivity scores ranged from 1.56 to 13.89, with a mean of 8.50 (SD= 2.82). Relationship satisfaction scores ranged from 12 to 35, with a mean of 27.84 (SD = 5.58). Emotional intimacy scores ranged from 5 to 25, with a mean of 21.05 (SD = 4.05).

5.2 Inferential Statistics

Table 2: Correlation results for Dating a minimum of two years or more

		Emotional Intimacy	Rejection Sensitivity	Relationship Satisfaction
Emotional Intimacy	Pearson Correlation	1	-.385**	.416**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006	.003
	N	50	50	50
Rejection Sensitivity	Pearson Correlation	-.385**	1	-.404**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006		.004
	N	50	50	50
Relationship Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.416**	-.404**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.004	
	N	50	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 indicates correlation analysis of the variables for dating for a minimum of two years or more group. Table 2 depicts that Rejection Sensitivity and Relationship Satisfaction are negatively correlated ($r = -.404$, $p < 0.01$) which is statistically significant. Emotional Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction are positively correlated ($r = .416$, $p < 0.01$) which is statistically significant. Rejection Sensitivity and Emotional Intimacy are negatively correlated ($r = -.385$, $p < 0.01$) which is statistically significant.

Table 3: Correlation results for 1-5 years married

		Rejection Sensitivity	Relationship Satisfaction	Emotional Intimacy
Rejection Sensitivity	Pearson Correlation	1	-.192	-.191
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.183	.184
	N	50	50	50
Relationship Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-.192	1	.387**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.183		.005
	N	50	50	50
Emotional Intimacy	Pearson Correlation	-.191	.387**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.184	.005	
	N	50	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 indicates correlation analysis of the variables for the 1-5 years married group. Table 3 depicts that Rejection Sensitivity and Relationship Satisfaction are negatively correlated ($r = -.192$, $p > 0.01$) which is statistically non-significant. Emotional Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction are positively correlated ($r = .387$, $p < 0.01$) which is statistically significant. Rejection Sensitivity and Emotional Intimacy are negatively correlated ($r = -.191$, $p > 0.01$) which is statistically non-significant.

Table 4: Correlation results for 10-15 years married

		Rejection Sensitivity	Relationship Satisfaction	Emotional Intimacy
Rejection Sensitivity	Pearson Correlation	1	-.613**	-.435**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.002
	N	50	50	50
Relationship Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-.613**	1	.885**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	50	50	50
Emotional Intimacy	Pearson Correlation	-.435**	.885**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	
	N	50	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 indicates correlation analysis of the variables for dating for the 10-15 years married group. Table 4 depicts that Rejection Sensitivity and Relationship Satisfaction are negatively correlated ($r = -.613$, $p < 0.01$) which is statistically significant. Emotional Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction are positively correlated ($r = .885$, $p < 0.01$) which is statistically significant. Rejection Sensitivity and Emotional Intimacy are negatively correlated ($r = -.435$, $p < 0.01$) which is statistically significant.

Table 5: Correlation results for 20-25 years married

		Rejection Sensitivity	Relationship Satisfaction	Emotional Intimacy
Rejection Sensitivity	Pearson Correlation	1	-.265	-.288*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.060	.040
	N	51	51	51
Relationship Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-.265	1	.633**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.060		.000
	N	51	51	51
Emotional Intimacy	Pearson Correlation	-.288*	.633**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.000	
	N	51	51	51

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 indicates correlation analysis of the variables for the 20-25 years married group. Table 5 depicts that Rejection Sensitivity and Relationship Satisfaction are negatively correlated ($r = -.265$, $p > 0.01$) which is statistically non-significant. Emotional Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction are positively correlated ($r = .633$, $p < 0.01$) which is statistically significant. Rejection Sensitivity and Emotional Intimacy are negatively correlated ($r = -.288$, $p < 0.05$) which is statistically significant.

Table 6: Correlation results across all durations of relationship

		Rejection Sensitivity	Relationship Satisfaction	Emotional Intimacy
Rejection Sensitivity	Pearson Correlation	1	-.364**	-.327**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	201	201	201
Relationship Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-.364**	1	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	201	201	201
Emotional Intimacy	Pearson Correlation	-.327**	.642**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	201	201	201

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 indicates correlation analysis of the variables across all durations of relationship. Table 6 depicts that Rejection Sensitivity and Relationship Satisfaction are negatively correlated ($r = -.364$, $p < 0.01$) which is statistically significant. Emotional Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction are positively correlated ($r = .642$, $p < 0.01$) which is statistically significant. Rejection Sensitivity and Emotional Intimacy are negatively correlated ($r = -.327$, $p < 0.01$) which is statistically significant.

Table 7: Independent t-test for Gender Difference

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2 tailed)
Rejection Sensitivity	Females	124	8.4982	2.76601	-.024	.981
	Males	77	8.5079	2.92368		
Relationship Satisfaction	Females	124	27.85	5.867	.019	.985
	Males	77	27.83	5.113		
Emotional Intimacy	Females	124	21.19	3.762	.557	.578
	Males	77	20.84	4.484		

Table 7 indicates gender difference across variables. Table 7 depicts that Rejection Sensitivity in Females (M= 8.49, SD= 2.76) is slightly less than Males (M=8.50, SD= 2.92). Independent t-test suggests that there is no significant gender difference in Rejection Sensitivity ($t = -.024$, $p > 0.05$). Relationship satisfaction is slightly more in Females (M= 27.85, SD= 5.867) than Males (M= 27.83, SD= 5.113). Independent t-test suggests that there is no significant gender difference in Relationship Satisfaction ($t = .019$, $p > 0.05$). Emotional Intimacy in Females is (M= 21.19, SD= 3.762) and Males is (M= 20.84, SD= 4.484). Independent t-test suggests that there is no significant gender difference in Emotional Intimacy ($t = .557$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 8: Independent t-test for individuals with children & without children

	Children	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. (2- tailed)
Rejection Sensitivity	No Children	96	8.0417	3.03457	-2.234	.027
	Children	105	8.9228	2.55128		
Relationship Satisfaction	No Children	96	28.66	4.877	1.997	.047
	Children	105	27.10	6.076		
Emotional Intimacy	No Children	96	21.80	2.763	2.538	.012
	Children	105	20.37	4.850		

Table 8 indicates difference with and without children across variables. Table 8 depicts that Rejection Sensitivity in Females is (M= 8.041, SD= 3.034) and Males is (M= 8.922, SD= 2.551). Independent t-test suggests that there is significant difference in Rejection Sensitivity with and without children (t= -2.234, p<0.05). Relationship Satisfaction in Females is (M= 28.66, SD= 4.877) and Males is (M= 27.10 SD= 6.076). Independent t-test suggests that there is significant difference in Rejection sensitivity with and without children (t= 1.997, p<0.05). Emotional Intimacy in Females is (M= 21.80, SD= 2.763) and Males is (M= 20.37, SD= 4.850). Independent t-test suggests that there is significant difference in Emotional Intimacy with and without children (t= 2.538, p<0.05).

Table 9: ANOVA between Dating for minimum 2 years, 1-5 years married, 10-15 years married and 20-25 years married

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Rejection Sensitivity	Between Groups	65.074	3	21.691	2.801	.041
	Within Groups	1525.620	197	7.744		
	Total	1590.694	200			
Relationship Satisfaction	Between Groups	40.406	3	13.469	.429	.732
	Within Groups	6180.499	197	31.373		
	Total	6220.905	200			
Emotional Intimacy	Between Groups	101.999	3	34.000	2.111	.100
	Within Groups	3172.399	197	16.104		
	Total	3274.398	200			

Table 9 indicates the ANOVA scores of variables across different groups, where for rejection sensitivity Sum of Squares =1590.694, df of between groups is 3, while that of within group is 197. $F(3, 197) = 2.801$, $p = .041 < 0.05$ which is significant. For relationship satisfaction, Sum of Squares =6220.905, df of between groups is 3, while that of within group is 197. $F(3, 197) = .429$, $p = .732 > 0.05$ which is non-significant. For emotional intimacy, Sum of Squares =3274.398, df of between groups is 3, while that of within group is 197. $F(3, 197) = 2.111$, $p = .100 > 0.05$ which is non-significant.

Table 10: Tukey's (HSD) post-hoc

(I) Duration	(J) Duration	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Dating	1-5 years	.40889	.55657	.883	-1.0332	1.8510
	10-15 years	.42222	.55657	.873	-1.0199	1.8643
	20-25 years	-.97133	.55384	.299	-2.4064	.4637
1-5 years	Dating	-.40889	.55657	.883	-1.8510	1.0332
	10-15 years	.01333	.55657	1.000	-1.4288	1.4555
	20-25 years	-1.38022	.55384	.064	-2.8153	.0548
10-15 years	Dating	-.42222	.55657	.873	-1.8643	1.0199
	1-5 years	-.01333	.55657	1.000	-1.4555	1.4288
	20-25 years	-1.39355	.55384	.061	-2.8286	.0415
20-25 years	Dating	.97133	.55384	.299	-.4637	2.4064
	1-5 years	1.38022	.55384	.064	-.0548	2.8153
	10-15 years	1.39355	.55384	.061	-.0415	2.8286

Table 10 shows Tukey's (HSD) post-hoc test which was conducted to examine the pairwise differences among four groups in rejection sensitivity. Table 10 depicts that there is no significant difference, that is, no pairwise comparisons reached statistical significance at the .05 level.

Table 11: Regression Analysis for Dating for minimum 2 years or more

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.	Adjusted R
		Coefficients		Coefficients			
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	21.660	6.035		3.589	.001	
	Rejection Sensitivity	-.510	.245	-.287	-2.084	.043	.163
	Emotional Intimacy	.512	.231	.306	2.222	.031	.243

Dependent Variable: Relationship Satisfaction

Table 11 indicates regression analysis for the variables for the dating for a minimum of two years or more group. Table 10 depicts that rejection sensitivity has an adjusted R value of “.163” which means 16.3% variance in relationship satisfaction can be attributed to rejection sensitivity. Also, rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy have an Adjusted R value of “.243”. This means 24.3% variance in relationship satisfaction can be attributed to rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy. Rejection sensitivity has a B value of -.510 which means one unit increase in rejection sensitivity causes .510 decrease in relationship satisfaction. Emotional intimacy on the other hand has a B value of .512 which means one unit increase in emotional intimacy causes .512 increase in relationship satisfaction. Above table also depicts that both rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy have a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) with relationship satisfaction.

Table 12: Regression Analysis for 1-5 years married

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.	Adjusted R
		Coefficients		Coefficients			
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	14.936	6.066		2.462	.018	
	Rejection Sensitivity	-.184	.205	-.122	-.899	.373	.037
	Emotional Intimacy	.666	.249	.364	2.677	.010	.164

Dependent Variable: Relationship Satisfaction

Table 12 indicates regression analysis for the variables for the 1-5 years married group. Table 12 depicts that rejection sensitivity has an Adjusted R value of “.037” which means 3.7% variance in relationship satisfaction can be attributed to rejection sensitivity. Also, rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy have an Adjusted R value of “.164” this means 16.4% variance in relationship satisfaction can be attributed to rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy. Rejection sensitivity has a B value of -.184 which means one unit increase in rejection sensitivity causes .184 decrease in relationship satisfaction. Emotional intimacy on the other hand has a B value of .666 which means one unit increase in emotional intimacy causes .666 increase in relationship satisfaction. Above table also depicts that emotional intimacy has a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) with relationship satisfaction whereas rejection sensitivity does not have a significant relationship ($p > 0.05$) with relationship satisfaction.

Table 13: Regression Analysis for 10-15 years married

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized		t	Sig.	Adjusted R
		Coefficients		Coefficients				
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	10.212	2.814			3.629	.001	
	Rejection Sensitivity	-.751	.169	-.281		-4.434	.000	.376
	Emotional Intimacy	1.108	.092	.762		12.012	.000	.847

Dependent Variable: Relationship Satisfaction

Table 13 indicates regression analysis for the variables for the 10-15 years married group. Table 13 depicts that rejection sensitivity has an Adjusted R value of “.376” which means 37.6% variance in relationship satisfaction can be attributed to rejection sensitivity. Also, rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy have an Adjusted R value of “.847” this means 84.7% variance in relationship satisfaction can be attributed to rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy. Rejection sensitivity has a B value of -.751 which means one unit increase in rejection sensitivity causes .751 decrease in relationship satisfaction. Emotional intimacy on the other hand has a B value of 1.108 which means one unit increase in emotional intimacy causes 1.108 increase in relationship satisfaction. Above table also depicts that both rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy have a significant relationship ($p < 0.01$) with relationship satisfaction.

Table 14: Regression Analysis for 20-25 years married

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Adjusted R
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	16.457	3.924		4.194	.000	
	Rejection Sensitivity	-.191	.245	-.090	-.779	.440	.070
	Emotional Intimacy	.654	.125	.607	5.237	.000	.408

Dependent Variable: Relationship Satisfaction

Table 14 indicates regression analysis for the variables for the 20-25 years married group. Table 14 depicts that rejection sensitivity has an Adjusted R value of “.070” which means 7% variance in relationship satisfaction can be attributed to rejection sensitivity. Also, rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy have an Adjusted R value of “.408” this means 40.8% variance in relationship satisfaction can be attributed to rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy. Rejection sensitivity has a B value of -.191 which means one unit increase in rejection sensitivity causes .191 decrease in relationship satisfaction. Emotional intimacy on the other hand has a B value of .654 which means one unit increase in emotional intimacy causes .654 increase in relationship satisfaction. Above table also depicts that emotional intimacy has a significant relationship ($p < 0.01$) with relationship satisfaction whereas rejection sensitivity does not have a significant relationship ($p > 0.05$) with relationship satisfaction.

Table 15: Regression Analysis across all durations

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Adjusted R
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	13.726	2.162		6.350	.000
	Rejection Sensitivity	-.340	.111	-.172	-3.052	.003
	Emotional Intimacy	.808	.078	.586	10.401	.000

Dependent Variable: Relationship Satisfaction

Table 15 indicates regression analysis for the variables for all the groups. Table 14 depicts that rejection sensitivity has an Adjusted R value of “.132” which means 13.2% variance in relationship satisfaction can be attributed to rejection sensitivity. Also, rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy have an Adjusted R value of “.439” this means 43.9% variance in relationship satisfaction can be attributed to rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy. Rejection sensitivity has a B value of -.340 which means one unit increase in rejection sensitivity causes .340 decrease in relationship satisfaction. Emotional intimacy on the other hand has a B value of .808 which means one unit increase in emotional intimacy causes .808 increase in relationship satisfaction. Above table also depicts that both rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy have a significant relationship ($p < 0.01$) with relationship satisfaction.

5.3 Mediation Analysis

For the mediation analysis, we applied a bootstrap procedure. The bootstrap analyses were performed with 5,000 bootstrap samples, and the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals were computed.

Table 16: Effect of Emotional Intimacy on Rejection Sensitivity

Model	coeff	se	t	p	CI	R-sq
Constant	25.0483	.8606	29.1054	.0000	23.35,26.74	
Rejection Sensitivity	-.4697	.0961	-4.8878	.0000	-.65, -.28	.1072

From Table 16 it can be inferred that the coefficient for rejection sensitivity is -0.4697, which means that as rejection sensitivity increases, emotional intimacy decreases. The standard error of the coefficient is .0961. The t-value = -4.8878, $p < .0001$, which is significant indicates that the effect of rejection sensitivity on emotional intimacy is unlikely to be due to chance. The confidence interval for the rejection sensitivity coefficient is [-0.65, -0.28]. Since the interval does not include zero, it can be concluded that the effect of rejection sensitivity on emotional intimacy is statistically significant. The R-squared value of .1072 indicates that rejection sensitivity explains 10.72% of the variance in emotional intimacy.

Table 17: Effect of Rejection Sensitivity and Emotional Intimacy on Relationship Satisfaction

Model	coeff	se	t	p	CI	R-sq
Constant	13.7262	2.1615	6.3502	.0000	9.46, 17.98	
Rejection Sensitivity	-.3400	.1114	-3.0520	.0026	-.55, -.12	.4389
Emotional Intimacy	.8077	0.777	10.4010	.0000	.65, .96	

From Table 17 it can be inferred that the coefficient for rejection sensitivity is -0.3400, which means as rejection sensitivity increases, relationship satisfaction decreases. The standard error of the coefficient is 0.1114, and the t-value = -3.0520, $p = 0.0026$, which is significant. The 95% confidence interval (CI) is [-0.55, -0.12], which does not include zero, which indicates a significant effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction.

The coefficient for emotional intimacy is 0.8077, which means as emotional intimacy increases, relationship satisfaction also increases. The standard error of the coefficient is 0.777,

and the t-value =10.4010, $p < 0.0001$, which is highly significant. The 95% CI is [0.65, 0.96], which does not include zero, which indicates a significant effect of emotional intimacy on relationship satisfaction.

The R-squared value of .4389 means that the model explains 43.89% of the variance in relationship satisfaction. This means that the model has moderate predictive power. Thus, it can be inferred that both rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy have a significant effect on relationship satisfaction, but their effects may be partially mediated by each other.

Table 18: Total Effect Model

Model	coeff	se	t	p	CI	R-sq
Constant	33.9573	1.1694	29.0385	.0000	31.65, 36.26	
Rejection Sensitivity	-.7194	.1306	-5.5094	.0000	-.97, -.46	.1323

From Table 18 it can be inferred that the coefficient for rejection sensitivity is -0.7194, which means as rejection sensitivity increases, relationship satisfaction decreases. The standard error of the coefficient is 0.1306. The t-value =-5.5094, $p < .0001$, which is significant. The CI is [-0.97, -0.46], the interval does not include zero, thus, the effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is statistically significant. The R-squared value of 0.1323 means that rejection sensitivity explains 13.23% of the variance in relationship satisfaction.

Table 19: Mediation Analysis

	Effect	se	t	p
Total Effect of Rejection Sensitivity on Relationship Satisfaction	-.7194	.1306	-5.5094	.0000
Direct Effect of Rejection Sensitivity on Relationship Satisfaction	-.3400	.1114	-3.0520	.0026
	Effect	BootSe	LLCI	ULCI
Indirect Effect of Rejection Sensitivity on Relationship Satisfaction (Intimacy)	-.3794	.0778	-.5391	-.2380

From Table 19 it can be inferred that the total effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is -0.7194 , which means as rejection sensitivity increases, relationship satisfaction decreases. The standard error of the coefficient is 0.1306 , and the t -value $= -5.5094$, $p < .0001$, which is significant. This suggests that rejection sensitivity has a significant total effect on relationship satisfaction.

The direct effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is -0.3400 , which means that rejection sensitivity has a significant direct effect on relationship satisfaction, even when the mediating variable (emotional intimacy) is not considered. The standard error of the coefficient is 0.1114 , and the t -value $= -3.0520$, $p = .0026$, which is significant.

The indirect effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction through emotional intimacy is -0.3794 , which means that there is a significant indirect effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction through emotional intimacy. The bootstrapped standard error of the coefficient is 0.0778 , and the 95% bootstrap confidence interval $[-0.5391, -0.2380]$ which does not include zero, indicating that the indirect effect is significant.

Mediation Analysis

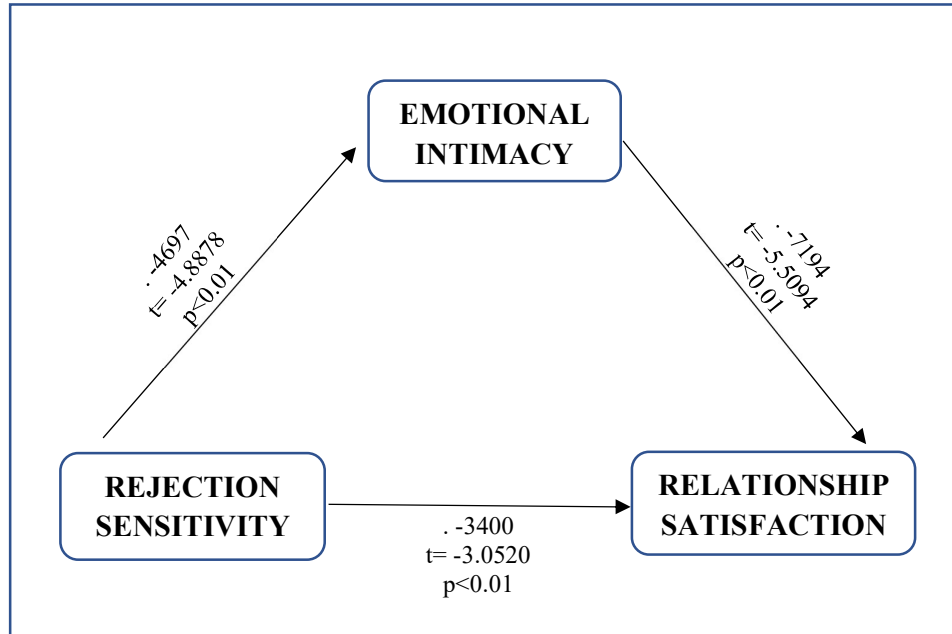


Figure No. 2- Mediation Analysis

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to explore the effect of rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy on relationship satisfaction. A feeling of closeness and connection with someone is known as emotional intimacy. Emotional intimacy encourages feelings of trust, understanding, and closeness between partners, which in turn creates a sense of security and stability in the relationship (example; Leavitt & Willoughby, 2015; Hadden & Smith, 2021), therefore, it made intuitive sense to take emotional intimacy as a mediator to see whether the effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is reduced or eliminated in presence of emotional intimacy. People differ in their rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction, these individual differences make every relationship unique. Four different groups, namely: individuals dating for at least two years, individuals married for 1-5 years, individuals married for 10-15 years and individuals married for 20-25 years, were studied to see whether there is any difference in variables as duration of the relationship progresses. Previous research (example; Ayduk et al., 2008; Schindler & Fehm, 2013) suggests that low rejection sensitivity and high emotional intimacy leads to higher relationship satisfaction. Based on the past literature and theories, few hypotheses were framed and tested for current study.

6.1 Rejection Sensitivity and Relationship Satisfaction

At the beginning of the study, it was hypothesized that “There will be a negative relationship between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction across all four durations of relationship”, it was also hypothesized that “There will be differences in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction across different duration of relationship.” The current study’s findings align with the existing body of literature to some extent. The correlation analysis (Table no. 2, Table no. 3, Table no. 4 & Table no. 5) indicates that rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction have a significant negative relationship for individuals dating for at least two years or more and individuals who have been married for 10-15 years but in case of individuals who have been married for 1-5 years and 20-25 years rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction have a non-significant negative relationship. Rejection sensitivity varies throughout the stages of a romantic relationship. Individuals may be more likely to feel rejection sensitivity in the early stages of a relationship due to uncertainty and nervousness about the relationship. Collins & Read (1990) suggested that because they are still establishing trust and emotional connection with their partner, they may be more sensitive to

apparent rejection or disinterest from them. Rejection sensitivity may diminish as a relationship matures as individuals become more secure and confident in their connection. They may have a greater sense of trust and emotional connection with their partner, which can help to minimize rejection sensitivity. However, rejection sensitivity can resurface in the later phases of a relationship, especially if the couple is having difficulties or is encountering external stressors. For example, if a couple is having difficulty communicating or is having disagreements, this may result in emotions of rejection or isolation, which may enhance rejection sensitivity (Collins & Read, 1990; Overall et al., 2009). Regarding the resurfacing of rejection sensitivity, the age range of 35 to 55 years is commonly referred to as the midlife crisis. Adults at this developmental stage consolidate and coordinate numerous areas of their lives at the same time. They accept responsibility for both the younger and elderly generations (Freund & Nikitin, 2012) and regard their future time as more limited. The midlife crisis may contribute to rejection sensitivity in a variety of ways. Individuals going through a midlife crisis, for example, may feel more vulnerable and insecure, which may lead to a greater sensitivity to rejection. They may also be more likely to compare themselves to others and view themselves to be lacking, which may heighten feelings of rejection sensitivity. Midlife crisis may also be accompanied by changes in personal and social relationships, such as divorce, work changes, or loss of social position. These alterations may result in emotions of rejection or exclusion, which may enhance rejection sensitivity (Morin & Maïano, 2011; Hickey & Fitzpatrick, 2017).

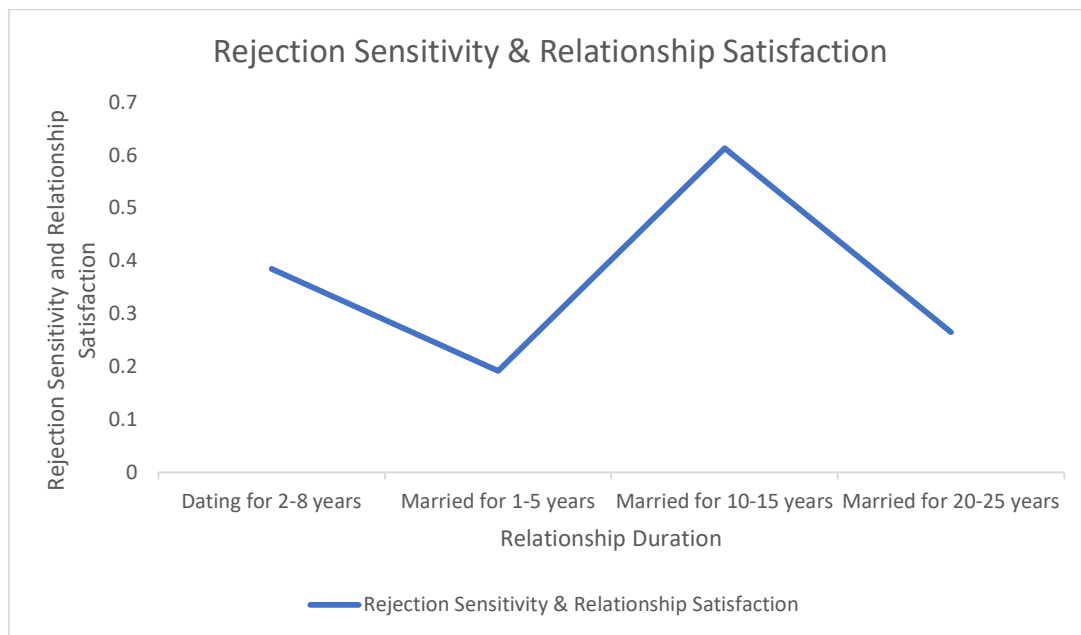


Figure No. 3- Association between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction across duration of relationship

Also, correlation analysis of all the four groups together (Table no. 6) indicates that there is a significant negative relationship between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction, indicating that the first hypothesis is accepted. Murray et al. (2002) investigated the relationship between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction while controlling other elements, including attachment style and duration of the relationship. The study recruited 203 people in committed romantic relationships and evaluated their rejection sensitivity, attachment style, duration, and relationship satisfaction. Even after controlling for attachment style and length of the relationship, they discovered that people with higher levels of rejection sensitivity reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction. Murray et al. (2002) reasoned that those who are sensitive to rejection might be more prone to perceive and respond to relationship dangers, which might result in relationship dissatisfaction.

Downey and Feldman (1996) conducted a longitudinal study where they examined a group of undergraduate couples for a year, examining their rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction several times along the way. Individuals who reported higher levels of rejection sensitivity at the start of the trial were more likely to experience declines in relationship satisfaction over time (Downey & Feldman, 1996). However, this effect was only significant for people who had been in relationships for more than six months. According to Downey & Feldman (1996), this could be because rejection sensitivity is more likely to cause issues in long-term relationships, when partners are more likely to encounter situations that generate feelings of rejection or insecurity. Furthermore, partners may grow less tolerant of behaviors caused by rejection sensitivity over time, such as persistent reassurance-seeking or over-reaction to perceived symptoms of rejection.

Hence, the results were significant, so the first hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, rejection sensitivity has a negative relationship with relationship satisfaction, which means that individuals with lower rejection sensitivity experienced more relationship satisfaction than those who have high rejection sensitivity.

6.2 Emotional Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction

It was hypothesized that “There will be a positive relationship between emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction across all four durations of relationship.” The current study’s findings align with the existing body of literature. The correlation analysis (Table no. 2, Table no. 3, Table no. 4 & Table no. 5) indicates that there exists a significant positive relationship between emotional intimacy and rejection sensitivity across all four durations of relationship. Many

researchers who did research related to the same variable have reported the same, for example, Knobloch and Theiss (2011) wanted to investigate the relationship between emotional intimacy, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction. They collected data from 103 couples who had been married or cohabiting for at least six months and used a quantitative research design. The research results revealed that emotional intimacy was a better predictor of relationship satisfaction than sexual satisfaction. In other words, couples who reported higher degrees of emotional intimacy also reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction, although sexual satisfaction did not predict relationship satisfaction significantly. Knobloch and Theiss (2011) interpreted these findings by suggesting that because emotional intimacy comprises feelings of closeness, trust, and understanding between partners, it plays a more significant role in promoting relationship satisfaction. The sense of attachment and connection between partners can be strengthened by emotional intimacy, increasing overall relationship satisfaction. However, sexual satisfaction, though important, is largely focused on physical pleasure and may not accurately reflect the extent of emotional connection between couples, hence it may not be as crucial to relationship satisfaction.

Another such study by Hadden & Smith, 2021 to explore the relation between emotional intimacy and satisfaction in long-term relationships used a longitudinal methodology, the researchers gathered information from 186 couples over the course of three years at three separate points in time. The average length of marriage for the couples was 16 years. The results of the research revealed that at each of the three time points, emotional intimacy had a positive correlation with relationship satisfaction. Further evidence that emotional intimacy is a reliable predictor of relationship satisfaction in long-term couples comes from the finding that the strength of the association between the two variables remained constant throughout time. Hadden and Smith (2021) suggested that long-term couples may encounter different challenges like the progressive loss of passion and enthusiasm in the relationship over time. As a result, emotional intimacy may be particularly crucial for promoting relationship satisfaction in these couples. By encouraging feelings of closeness, trust, and understanding between partners, emotional intimacy can be helpful in maintaining the relationship.

Leavitt & Willoughby (2015) also explored the relationship between emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction in dating couples. Data from 315 couples was gathered using a longitudinal methodology, data was collected at two different time points apart by a year. The average length of dating for the couples was 26 months. The results of the research indicated a positive correlation between emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction at both time

points. Emotional intimacy, particularly builds a solid foundation for a good relationship, may be especially crucial for promoting relationship satisfaction, according to Leavitt and Willoughby (2015). They argued that emotional intimacy encourages feelings of trust, understanding, and closeness between partners, which in turn creates a sense of security and stability in the relationship. Even in the face of difficulties like arguments or outside stressors, the relationship may be sustained throughout time with the help of this feeling of comfort.

Hence, the results were significant, so the second hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, emotional intimacy has a positive relationship with relationship satisfaction, it suggests that emotional intimacy is an important predictor of relationship satisfaction.

6.3 Rejection Sensitivity, Emotional Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction across duration of relationship

It was hypothesized that “There will be differences in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction across different duration of relationship.” ANOVA analysis (Table no. 9) indicates that there is a difference in rejection sensitivity across different durations of relationship but emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction remain consistent across different duration of relationships. Marshall et al. (2013) examined long-term relationship satisfaction and rejection sensitivity. Marshal et al. (2013) specifically examined whether rejection sensitivity has a stronger negative effect on relationship satisfaction in the early stages of a relationship as opposed to later stages. 120 people who had been in serious romantic relationships for less than three months participated in the study. At the start of the study (Time 1), six months later (Time 2), and a year later (Time 3), the participants took tests to assess their rejection sensitivity, relationship satisfaction, and attachment style. The findings revealed a negative correlation between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction at all time points, suggesting that people with high rejection sensitivity tended to report less relationship satisfaction over time. However, rejection sensitivity's negative impact on relationship satisfaction varied across time in terms of its strength. Marshal et al. (2013) found, in particular, that the negative impact of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction was significantly greater in the early stages of a relationship (i.e., Time 1 and Time 2) than in later stages (i.e., Time 3), suggesting that the early phases of a relationship, when people are still building trust and closeness, may be when the effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is most noticeable.

A 10-year longitudinal study was conducted by Laurenceau et al. (2005) that examined the consistency of emotional intimacy in married couples. 87 couples who had been married for an average of 15 years at the start of the study provided the researchers with data. Over the course of the ten years, the couples answered questions on their marital satisfaction and emotional intimacy. According to Laurenceau et al. (2005), the level of emotional intimacy did not vary much over the course of the 10-year period but instead stayed consistent. Laurenceau et al. (2005) further found that emotional intimacy was a significant predictor of marital satisfaction at each time point, indicating that preserving emotional intimacy is crucial for preserving a happy marriage. It's likely that emotional intimacy is a characteristic or trait of individuals, and it tends to be rather consistent over time, which could account for the persistent nature of emotional intimacy. A sense of closeness, trust, and understanding between partners is necessary for emotional intimacy and maybe a relatively consistent component of a person's personality or relationship style. As a result, emotional closeness may not alter considerably over time since it is a core component of the relationship (Laurenceau et al., 2005).

Lavner & Bradbury (2017) in their meta-analysis gathered data from 68 research studies that examined relationship satisfaction across the length of a romantic relationship at two or more different times. Couples from different cultural backgrounds, same-sex and different-sex couples, married and unmarried couples, were all represented in the meta-analysis. According to Lavner & Bradbury (2017) meta-analysis, relationship satisfaction was generally consistent across the course of the relationship. In other words, couples who initially expressed a high degree of relationship satisfaction tended to hold onto that level of satisfaction over time. This result held true across a diverse spectrum of spouses and cultural settings. Lavner & Bradbury (2017) also investigated whether changes in couples' personalities or circumstances over time were associated with changes in relationship satisfaction. They found that these elements could not account for variations in relationship satisfaction over time. Instead, Lavner & Bradbury (2017) found that couples who were content at the beginning of the relationship tended to maintain positive perceptions of their relationship and their partner throughout time, which may account for the stability of relationship satisfaction.

Hence, the results were partially significant, so the third hypothesis was partially accepted because only rejection sensitivity differed across duration of relationship whereas emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction remained consistent across duration of relationship.

6.4 Rejection Sensitivity, Emotional Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction across Gender

It was hypothesized that “There will be differences in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction across gender,” and the current study’s findings align with the existing body of literature. Independent t-test analysis (Table no. 7) indicates that there is no significant difference in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction across gender. Many studies support these results, for example, Downey and Feldman (1996) examined the link between rejection sensitivity and romantic relationships. They found that people with high rejection sensitivity had more negative emotions and difficulty in establishing romantic relationships. They did not, however, identify any significant gender differences in the relationship between rejection sensitivity and romantic relationships, implying that this relationship is the same for men and women.

Another study by Karney & Bradbury (1995) found that while there were some gender variations in the characteristics that predicted relationship happiness (for example, men's pleasure was more strongly influenced by their wives' physical attractiveness), the authors found that there were no significant gender differences in relationship satisfaction overall.

Hence, the results were non-significant, so the fourth hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is no gender difference in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction.

6.5 Rejection Sensitivity, Emotional Intimacy and Relationship Satisfaction across Parenthood

It was hypothesized that “There will be differences in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction between parents and non-parents.” The current study’s findings align with the existing body of literature. Independent t-test analysis (Table no. 8) indicates that there is a significant difference in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship between parents and non-parents. Many studies support these results, for example, Twenge et al. (2003) carried out a meta-analysis of studies on the relationship between parenthood and relationship satisfaction. The evaluation includes 97 research that examined parent and non-parent relationship satisfaction. According to the meta-analysis findings, parents were significantly less satisfied with their relationship than non-parents. This conclusion was consistent across relationship types, including married and unmarried couples,

as well as between countries and cultures. Twenge et al. (2003) speculated that the obligations and stressors of parenthood might contribute to reduced parental relationship satisfaction. For example, due to the obligations of caring for their children, parents may have less time and energy to dedicate to their relationship. Furthermore, arguments and fights over parenting decisions may damage the relationship. However, Twenge et al. (2003) also pointed out that the relationship between parenthood and relationship satisfaction is complex and can change depending on elements like the age and number of children, the strength of the relationship before and after parenthood, and the extent of support and resources made available to the parents.

In another study by Lawrence et al. (2010), they recruited 156 individuals, half of whom were parents and the other half were not. They used multiple tools to assess the participants' rejection sensitivity, parental stress, and anxiety, including the Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire, the parental Stress Index, and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. The research results revealed that parents had much higher levels of rejection sensitivity than non-parents. Lawrence et al. (2010) speculated that since parents are emotionally and financially committed to their children's well-being, they may be more susceptible to criticism or rejection from others over their parenting abilities. Furthermore, the frequent demands and strains of parenthood can magnify the impact of rejection sensitivity.

Parenthood can put a strain on a couple's intimacy. Doss et al. (2009) observed that parents reported lower levels of emotional intimacy and satisfaction with their relationships than non-parents in a survey of 105 couples. One possible reason for this finding is that non-parents have more time and energy to invest in their relationships, particularly romantic ones, than parents who may be juggling various duties such as job, housework, and childcare. Non-parents may also have greater freedom to engage in leisure activities or pursue personal hobbies, which can improve emotional intimacy in their relationships.

Hence, the results were significant, so the fifth hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there exists a difference between parents and non-parents in terms of rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction.

6.6 Rejection Sensitivity and Relationship Satisfaction with Emotional Intimacy as mediator

It was hypothesized that “Rejection Sensitivity will predict relationship satisfaction with emotional intimacy as a mediator.” The current study’s findings align with the existing body of literature. Mediating analysis (Table no. 16, Table no. 17, Table no. 18 & Table no. 19) indicate that emotional intimacy partially mediates the relationship between rejection sensitivity and relationship satisfaction which means that the direct effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is still significant even after accounting for the indirect effect through intimacy. Other studies done with these variables have reported the same, for example, in one study Pierce and Lydon (1998) sought the participation of 152 undergraduate students who were already involved in romantic relationships. Self-report measures of rejection sensitivity, relationship satisfaction, and intimacy were completed by participants. They also conducted a behavioral exercise in which they got feedback on a hypothetical task from their partners, which was controlled to be either positive or negative. The research results revealed that people with high degrees of rejection sensitivity had a negative attitude towards their spouses and relationships. They reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction and intimacy when compared to those with lesser rejection sensitivity. Furthermore, unpleasant thoughts and emotions in reaction to perceived rejection buffered the negative influence of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction and intimacy. According to Pierce and Lydon (1998), the cognitive and affective processes that are involved in rejection sensitivity can be used to explain the findings of their study. Rejection-sensitive individuals are prone to being overly alert to cues that could indicate rejection or criticism and may misinterpret ambiguous cues as being negative or rejecting. Lower levels of satisfaction and intimacy, as well as negative attitudes and emotions towards their spouse and their relationship, may result from this.

Another study by Lemay et al. (2010) examined the relationships between rejection sensitivity and relationship conflict, intimacy, and pleasure in romantic partnerships. The study involved 121 couples who completed questionnaires on intimacy, satisfaction, conflict in the relationship, rejection sensitivity, and negative emotional responses to marital problems, such as anger and grief. The results of the research revealed that people with high levels of rejection sensitivity also reported higher levels of relationship conflict, which had a negative impact on their intimacy and satisfaction in their relationships. According to Lemay et al. (2010), individuals with high levels of rejection sensitivity may be more prone to interpersonal conflict because of their hypervigilance to signs of rejection, overreactions to conflict, difficulties resolving disagreements, and a sense of being abandoned. Because people with high rejection sensitivity may feel less emotionally attached to their partners and less satisfied with the quality

of their relationships, these characteristics may lead to lower levels of intimacy and relationship satisfaction.

Luchner et al. (2011) investigated the relationship between rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction in intimate relationships. According to the findings, individuals with higher degrees of rejection sensitivity reported lower levels of emotional intimacy in their romantic relationships. Lower levels of emotional intimacy, in turn, have been associated with lower levels of relationship satisfaction. According to Luchner et al. (2011), rejection sensitivity may cause individuals to be too cautious and avoidant in their relationships, which could hamper the development of strong emotional attachments. Furthermore, those with high levels of rejection sensitivity are more prone to interpret ambiguous behaviors from their partner as rejection, which can lead to feelings of emotional distance and interfere with the development of emotional intimacy.

Hence, the effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is partially mediated by emotional intimacy, so the sixth hypothesis was partially accepted. It means that individuals with higher levels of rejection sensitivity may experience lower levels of emotional intimacy, which in turn leads to lower levels of relationship satisfaction.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

The aim of the study was to explore the effect of rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy on relationship satisfaction. Emotional intimacy is described as "a perception of closeness to another that is conducive to the sharing of personal feelings, accompanied by expectations of understanding, affirmation, and demonstrations of caring" (Sinclair and Dowdy, 2005). Emotional intimacy encourages feelings of trust, understanding, and closeness between partners, which in turn creates a sense of security and stability in the relationship (example; Leavitt & Willoughby, 2015; Hadden & Smith, 2021), therefore, it makes intuitive sense to take emotional intimacy as a mediator. Four different groups, namely: individuals dating for a minimum of two years, individuals married for 1-5 years, individuals married for 10-15 years and individuals married for 20-25 years, were studied and it was found that rejection sensitivity has a significant negative relationship with relationship satisfaction for dating a minimum of two years group and married for 10-15 years group whereas emotional intimacy has a significant positive relationship with relationship satisfaction across all four durations. Rejection sensitivity also differed across all four groups whereas emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction were consistent across all four durations. There were no gender differences but there was a difference between parents and non-parents across rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. Also, the effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is partially mediated by emotional intimacy across all groups combined.

Rejection sensitivity has a significant negative association with relationship satisfaction among dating for a minimum of two years group and married for 10-15 years group. Individuals who have been dating for a minimum of two years are still building their relationship and at this point mismatched expectations can lead to disappointment and dissatisfaction (Baker et al., 2017). Also, past experiences of rejection, such as being rejected by a romantic partner can lead to heightened sensitivity to rejection in future relationships (Donnelan, Larsen-Rife, & Conger, 2005; Neyer & Asendorpf, 2001). This can make it difficult for individuals to fully trust and feel secure in their current relationships and the individual might seek constant reassurance from their partner. Additionally, as young people experience more romantic relationships, their capacity to control their emotions and gain awareness of their needs and

desires may help them change relational schemas like rejection sensitivity (Davila & Lashman, 2016). Individuals who have been married for 10-15 years on the other hand may experience the pressure of parenthood (Lawrence et al., 2010) and adults at this developmental stage consolidate and coordinate numerous areas of their lives at the same time. They accept responsibility for both the younger and elderly generations (Freund & Nikitin, 2012).

Emotional intimacy has a significant positive association with relationship satisfaction across all durations. Emotional Intimacy encourages efficient communication, establishes trust, offers emotional support, validates one's emotions and experiences, and develops shared experiences, thus, emotional intimacy is a key component of relationship satisfaction (Yoo et al., 2018). Individuals who prioritize emotional intimacy in their relationship are more likely to experience greater satisfaction and healthier relationships (Hadden & Smith, 2021).

Rejection Sensitivity differs across duration of relationship whereas emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction remain consistent. Rejection Sensitivity is usually high at the start of the relationship because the individuals are still establishing trust and emotional connection with their partner, they may be more sensitive to apparent rejection or disinterest from them (Collins & Read, 1990). Rejection sensitivity diminishes as a relationship matures and individuals become more secure and confident in their connection which can help minimize rejection sensitivity. However, rejection sensitivity can resurface in the later phases of a relationship, especially if the couple is having difficulties or is encountering external stressors (Collins & Read, 1990; Overall et al., 2009). Emotional intimacy is consistent across the duration of a relationship as partners might prioritize their emotional connection and engage in healthy relationship behaviors (Laurenceau et al., 2005). This may involve trying to have meaningful conversations, spend time together, show each other physical affection, and encourage each other's personal growth and development (Greeff and Malherbe, 2001). Relationship Satisfaction is also consistent across the duration of a relationship as partners engage in effective communication, have a strong emotional connection, and share similar values and goals (Neff & Karney, 2002; Davis & Rusbult, 2001). Fruitful long-term relationships require constant work and maintenance. When a couple prioritizes their relationship, devotes time and effort to it, and works to maintain the romance, they are more likely to be satisfied in the long run (Dainton & Stafford, 1993).

There were no gender differences in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. Parents and non-parents, however, differ in rejection sensitivity, emotional

intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. Due to the demands of childcare, parents frequently have less time and energy to dedicate to their romantic relationships. Couples may spend less time connecting and communicating with one another, which can result in reduced levels of emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction (Doss et al., 2009). Furthermore, parenting stress can affect relationships' emotional intimacy and satisfaction. Due to the physical demands of parenting, such as sleepless nights and financial pressure, parents may feel more stress than usual (McQuillan et al., 2019; Glass et al 2016). Their rejection sensitivity level may increase due to this stress, which may also affect their romantic relationships. Differences between parents and non-parents may also be influenced by changes in identity. A person's priorities and sense of self might undergo a major shift after becoming a parent (Piotrowski, 2021; Fadjukoff et al., 2016). This can occasionally result in a change in values and goals, which can affect a romantic relationship (Auslander et al., 2009).

The effect of rejection sensitivity on relationship satisfaction is partially mediated by emotional intimacy, meaning that individuals with higher levels of rejection sensitivity may experience lower levels of emotional intimacy, which in turn leads to lower levels of relationship satisfaction. Individuals with high levels of rejection sensitivity tend to interpret ambiguous or negative social cues as signs of rejection, leading to increased relationship conflict and decreased satisfaction (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Additionally, lower levels of emotional intimacy are also associated with lower levels of relationship satisfaction (Dandurand & Lafontaine, 2013). People may experience a lack of emotional intimacy in their relationships, leaving them feeling alone and unsatisfied. Couples that lack emotional intimacy may find it difficult to communicate, resulting in misunderstandings, disagreements, and a lack of relationship satisfaction (Yoo et al., 2014).

7.2 Limitations and Future Implications

The current study was designed to examine the effect of rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy on relationship satisfaction with emotional intimacy as a mediator. Despite the results of our findings, there are still some limitations.

Some limitations of the present research include the unequal male to female ratio and collecting data from one single person involved in that relationship. Only 77 men responded in comparison to the 124 women, in future, the collection of data should aim for a balanced number of male and female participants, and it is preferred to have couples participate where both partners provide their responses to allow for accurate data matching. In this study, the

sample's ethnic identity and socioeconomic status both displayed a high degree of homogeneity. The sample consisted of only Urban Indian population. In future research more heterogeneous sample should be taken. Also, demographic details were not collected about whether the marriage was love or arranged. Patel (2015) found that individuals who engaged in love marriages reported greater marital satisfaction in comparison to those who engaged in arranged marriage. Additionally, the current study's use of cross-sectional data suggests limited implications for inferring causal relationships, and it is possible that the results could change if the constructs under investigation were measured at different time points with the same sample. In future, a longitudinal study can be conducted.

So, in future, it can be seen whether being in an arranged or love marriage have different impact on the effect of rejection sensitivity and emotional intimacy on relationship satisfaction. Personality trait can also be studied to see how different personality traits differ in rejection sensitivity, emotional intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. Couples high in Neuroticism experience lower levels of marital satisfaction, and couples high in Conscientiousness are more satisfied with their marital life (Sayehmiri et al., 2020).

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Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT

Participation in this research is voluntary and the participant may withdraw consent at any point of the study without any consequences and without the need to give any explanation for the same. All the details and responses provided by the participants in this study will be kept anonymous and confidential and solely be used for research purpose.

I agree to participate in this study.

DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

Name (optional): _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Your work status: _____

Your partner's work status: _____

Your religion: _____

Your partner's religion: _____

Do you have children, if yes then how many? _____

Appendix B

Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire, Adult Version

The items below describe situations in which people sometimes ask things of others. For each item, imagine that you are in the situation, and then answer the questions that follow it.

1. "You ask your parents or another family member for a loan to help you through a difficult financial time."

(a) How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your family would want to help you?

very unconcerned 1 2 3 4 5 6 very concerned

(b) I would expect that they would agree to help as much as they can.

very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 very likely

2. "You approach a close friend to talk after doing or saying something that seriously upset him/her."

(a) How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your friend would want to talk to you?

very unconcerned 1 2 3 4 5 6 very concerned

(b) I would expect that he/she would want to talk with me to try to work things out.

very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 very likely

3. "You bring up the issue of sexual protection with your significant other and tell him/her how important you think it is."

(a) How concerned or anxious would you be over his/her reaction?

very unconcerned 1 2 3 4 5 6 very concerned

(b) I would expect that he/she would be willing to discuss our possible options without getting defensive.

very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 very likely

4. "You ask your supervisor for help with a problem you have been having at work."

(a) How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not the person would want to help you?

very unconcerned 1 2 3 4 5 6 very concerned

(b) I would expect that he/she would want to try to help me out.

very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 very likely

5. "After a bitter argument, you call or approach your significant other because you want to make up."

(a) How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your significant other would want to make up with you?

very unconcerned 1 2 3 4 5 6 very concerned

(b) I would expect that he/she would be at least as eager to make up as I would be.

very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 very likely

6. "You ask your parents or other family members to come to an occasion important to you."

(a) How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not they would want to come?

very unconcerned 1 2 3 4 5 6 very concerned

(b) I would expect that they would want to come.

very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 very likely

7. "At a party, you notice someone on the other side of the room that you'd like to get to know, and you approach him or her to try to start a conversation."

(a) How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not the person would want to talk with you?

very unconcerned 1 2 3 4 5 6 very concerned

(b) I would expect that he/she would want to talk with me.

very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 very likely

8. "Lately you've been noticing some distance between yourself and your significant other, and you ask him/her if there is something wrong."

(a) How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not he/she still loves you and wants to be with you?

very unconcerned 1 2 3 4 5 6 very concerned

(b) I would expect that he/she will show sincere love and commitment to our very unlikely very likely relationship no matter what else may be going on.

very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 very likely

9. "You call a friend when there is something on your mind that you feel you really need to talk about."

(a) How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your friend would want to listen?

very unconcerned 1 2 3 4 5 6 very concerned

(b) I would expect that he/she would listen and support me.

very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 very likely

Appendix C

Emotional Intimacy Scale

Instructions: Please read each of the following statements and rate the extent to which it describes your feelings about your current romantic relationship. Please think about your present relationship and respond in terms of how you generally feel in this relationship.

Please use the scale below to check a number between 1 and 5 which best represents your feelings against each statement.

- 1- Completely Disagree
- 2- Somewhat Disagree
- 3- Neither agree nor disagree
- 4- Somewhat Agree
- 5- Completely Agree

	1	2	3	4	5
My partner completely accepts me as I am.					
I can openly share my deepest thoughts and feelings with my partner.					
My partner cares deeply for me.					
My partner would willingly help me in any way.					
My thoughts and feelings are understood and affirmed by my partner.					

Appendix D

Relationship Assessment Scale

Instructions: Kindly read each statement carefully and circle/tick the response according to how you feel. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer honestly and make ratings based on how you actually feel rather how you would like to feel. The rating ranges from low satisfaction to high satisfaction.

	Low				High
How well does your partner meet your needs?	1	2	3	4	5
In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
How good is your relationship compared to most?	1	2	3	4	5
How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?	1	2	3	4	5
How much do you love your partner?	1	2	3	4	5
How many problems are there in your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5