

Learned Helplessness and Relationship Satisfaction among Long Distance Couples: A Correlation Study

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Abstract: *Satisfaction in relationships is an important aspect of sustaining healthy and stable relationships in romance, particularly in long-distance relationships in which physical distance usually poses emotional and psychological difficulties. The current paper was intended to discuss the correlation between learned helplessness and relationship satisfaction in people who are in long-distance relationship. Learned helplessness is a sense of inability to control the situation, and it may have a detrimental influence on emotional health and relationships. The researchers employed the Learned Helplessness Scale (LHS) and the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) in gauging the variables respectively. The study involved 200 participants aged between 20 and 30 years and are in the long-distance relationship. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis were used as methods of analyzing data to determine the relationship between the variables. The findings revealed that there was statistically significant positive relationship between learned helplessness and relationship satisfaction ($r = 0.173, p < 0.05$). The implications of these findings are that factors that are cognitive and emotional in nature, especially feelings of helplessness are significant in affecting relationship satisfaction. The research states the necessity of psychological interventions to decrease the learned helplessness in order to increase the satisfaction and quality of relationships.*

Keywords: Learned Helplessness, Relationship Satisfaction, Long Distance Relationships, Couples

1. Introduction

Long distance romantic relationships (LDRs) pose special psychological issues as a result of distance, lack of face-to-face interaction and communication barriers. Such relationship maintenance necessitates emotional stability, trust, communication and coping in maintaining satisfaction in such relationships. Learned helplessness is one of the psychological factors that might cause dissatisfaction in relationships. Learned helplessness is the situation when people think that they cannot do anything about something they are exposed to every time. Seligman argues that learned helplessness occurs when people are being exposed to uncontrollable adverse incidences and start thinking that their behavior has no power to alter anything. The result of such belief is passivity, low motivation and the feeling of emotional distress. Relationship satisfaction is the general happiness and satisfaction which people get in their love life. It consists of emotional support, communication, trust and understanding between the partners. There is a correlation between high relationship satisfaction and better relationship stability, emotional stability and mental health. Through long distance relationships, people can experience helplessness at times due to the distance, communication problems, missed meetings and the uncertainty about the future. This sense of ineffectiveness can affect how they will be satisfied in the relationship. Thus, the aim of this study is to explore the connection between learned helplessness and relationship satisfying in couples at long distance.

Concept of Learned helplessness and Relationship satisfaction

Definition Learned Helplessness

Martin Seligman et al, 1967, The repeated exposure to uncontrollable aversive events can lead an individual to

accept and endure unpleasant situations, even when they have the power to change them.

Definition Relationship Satisfaction

Hendrick, 1988, An individual's overall assessment of their romantic relationship, reflecting a subjective evaluation of the positive and negative dimensions of the partnership.

2. Review of Literature

Chonody et al. (2016) created the Relationship Quality (RQ) scale to measure the perceptions of people about the existing relationships. On a large scale (8,132) they narrowed down an initial 15-item scale by exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The 9-item scale turned out to be a good reliability scale and strong validity (convergent and known-groups), and it is an effective instrument in the measurement of relationship quality of research and practice.

Christopher R. Pryce et al. (2011) explained learned helplessness as a key concept in research on depression, which has been extensively reported in animal and human models. Learned helplessness can be described as a state of powerlessness over unpleasant situations that people express following uncontrollable stress. It is assumed a valid and objective measure which shows the alteration of emotional, motivational, and thinking processes and particularly depression. The psychological aspects of helplessness include hopelessness, low locus of control, negative causal attributions, which are vital in the case of depression.

Fletcher et al. (2015) performed cross-cultural validation of a Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) and established that emotional clarity, empathy, and low alexithymia levels are related to more relationship satisfaction across cultures. Through TAS-20, TEQ, and the use of RAS, the study

revealed that emotional awareness and empathy are good predictors of healthy relationship. The results demonstrate the significance of emotional competence to sustain romantic relationships as well as provide interventions to enhance emotional comprehension and expression.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Aim:

To identify the relationship among learned helplessness and relationship satisfaction among long-distance couples.

3.2 Objectives:

- To study the level of learned helplessness among individuals in long-distance relationships.
- To assess the level of relationship satisfaction among long-distance couples.
- To explore the relationship between learned helplessness and relationship satisfaction.

3.3 Hypothesis

H₁: There is a significant negative correlation between levels of learned helplessness and relationship satisfaction among individuals in long-distance relationships.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between learned helplessness and relationship satisfaction among individuals in long-distance relationships.

4. Research Design

The research design used in the study is quantitative study which included a correlational study to assess will the relationship between Learned helplessness and Relationship satisfaction among individuals those who are in long distance relationship. The independent variable is learned helplessness; dependent variable is Relationship satisfaction.

4.1 Sampling Technique

The sample consisted of 200 individuals who were currently in long-distance romantic relationships. Participants were selected using convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods. The age range of participants was between 20 and 30 years.

4.2 Tool Description

- The Learned Helplessness Scale (LHS) was developed by Quinless and Nelson (1988) to assess learned helplessness. This scale consists of 20 items rated in a 5-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate greater levels of learned helplessness; Lower scores suggest better perceived control and resilience. The scale has shown

good construct validity and reliability Cronbach’s alpha of approximately above 0.70.

- Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) was developed by Hendrick (1988) to measure satisfaction within romantic relationship. This scale consists of 7 items rated on a 5-point likert scale. High scores indicate greater interpersonal satisfaction. This scale has shown good construct validity and reliability with a Cronbach’s alpha of approximately 0.86.

4.3 Statistical analysis:

The data collected has been evaluated with assistance of the Statistical Package (SPSS). A covariance analysis was done using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient to provide both strength and direction (i.e., positive or negative) for each variable’s relationship with one another.

4.4 Inclusive Criteria

- The participants in the age range of 20-50 years were selected.
- The sample will involve male and female those who are currently in relationship.
- Couples who voluntarily consent to participate in the study.

4.5 Exclusive Criteria

- The individuals those who have previously been diagnosed with any form of psychiatric/neurological disorder.
- Individuals presently undergoing psychological or couple therapy sessions.
- Participants who provide incomplete responses or withdraw from the study.

5. Results

This chapter discusses the result and interpretation of the analysis done to understand the relationship between Learned helplessness and Relationship satisfaction.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics showing the mean and standard deviation of Learned Helplessness and Relationship Satisfaction among individual in long distance relationship.

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Learned Helplessness	50.38	4.039	200
Relationship Satisfaction	25.71	4.017	200

The above table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the variable learned helplessness has a sample N=200, mean=50.38 and standard deviation=4.039. Relationship satisfaction has a sample N=200, mean=25.71 and standard deviation=4.017.

Table 2

Variables	Pearson correlation r	p value	Hypothesis	Decision
Learned Helplessness & Relationship Satisfaction	0.173	0.015	H1	Rejected
Learned Helplessness & Relationship Satisfaction	0.173	0.015	H2	Accepted

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

The above Table 2 shows the Pearson correlation of the Learned Helplessness with the Relationship Satisfaction. The findings indicate a positive relationship between Learned Helplessness and Satisfaction ($r = .173$, p -value less than 0.015). This is to imply that the more learned helplessness, the slight increase of relationship satisfaction is indicated among the respondents. The strength of the relationship is however low. Referring to the above-presented hypotheses and the received results of the correlation, H1 was rejected, and H2 was accepted. Thus, it could be concluded that the relationship between Learned Helplessness and Relationship Satisfaction has statistically significant positive relationship at the 0.015 level of significance yet the strength of such a relationship is low.

6. Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between learned helplessness and relationship satisfaction among long-distance couples. The population size of the study is 200 participants; most of them are young adults, and there are the largest proportions of 20 and 24-year-olds. The sample mostly consists of women (69.5) and urban (76) and this could affect the generalizability of the results. The majority of the respondents are of the middle socio-economic group (59.5%), and not married (96%), which correlates with the age range. The mean of LH-TOTAL (50.38) and RAS-TOTAL (25.71) have moderate variability, and this implies that the responses were consistent. The skewness values are near zero implying near-normal distributions despite mixed findings of normality tests. One of the major discoveries is the positive but insignificant correlation between LH-TOTAL and RAS-TOTAL ($r = 0.173$, $p = 0.015$). This shows that there is a weak correlation between the variables, although other variables are likely to be of a greater influence. All in all, the sample is quite balanced but somewhat skewed and is weak in terms of relationships between variables.

7. Summary

This study examines the relationship between learned helplessness and relationship satisfaction amongst the participants in long-distance romantic relationships and how psychological variables can determine the outcome of the relationship. The factors such as perceived control are important because of issues such as lack of physical interaction, uncertainty, and reliance on communication. Perceived helplessness, a sense of powerlessness, may influence motivation, feelings and problem solving and relationship satisfaction indicates trust, fulfillment and emotional attachment. The data were collected in 200 participants by using the Learned Helplessness Scale (Quinless and Nelson, 1988) and Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988) with the help of a correlational design. The findings demonstrated that the means of the scores are 50.38 and 25.71 respectively, and significant and weak positive correlation ($r = 0.173$, $p = 0.05$) is observed, which means that the association between these two variables is complicated and depends on a certain number of psychological and situational effects.

8. Conclusion

The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between learned helplessness and relationship satisfaction among long-distance couples. Psychological factors play an important role in maintaining satisfaction in romantic relationships. Reducing learned helplessness through counseling and psychological interventions may help improve relationship satisfaction.

9. Limitations

- This study used non-probability samplings which may limit the generalizability of the findings.
- The study considered only 2 variables while other factors influencing relationship were not included.
- The research only focused on one region alone, meaning results might not apply everywhere.
- Similar research could be done for other population and different ethnic group.

10. Recommendations

- Looking ahead, future work could involve participants drawn from various areas, increasing both size and diversity.
- To deepen insight into relationship studies can include different types of relationships such as family, friendship or workplace relationship.

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