
Rejection Sensitivity and Anuptaphobia in Unmarried Women: The Moderating Role of Social Support

Sajjal Ammara¹, Rabia Jameel²**Abstract**

The current study was conducted to explore the relationship of rejection sensitivity and anuptaphobia in unmarried women. Furthermore, how does perceived social support affect the relationship between rejection sensitivity and anuptaphobia? A sample of 300 unmarried women within the age range of 25–35 years ($M = 27.30$, $SD = 2.49$) were recruited through purposive sampling from different hostels, organizations, and universities in Lahore and Sialkot. A correlational research design was used for the study. The Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (Downey et al., 2006), the Fear of Being Single Scale (Spielmann et al., 2013), and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988) were all used. The results of the correlational analysis showed that there is a non-significant positive relationship between rejection sensitivity and anuptaphobia. However, anuptaphobia has a positive significant relationship with age. Furthermore, findings of the regression analysis revealed that rejection sensitivity was not significant predictor of anuptaphobia and demographic variables (age, family system and socio-economic status) significantly predicted anuptaphobia. Although the findings of moderation analysis showed that there is no moderating role of social support on rejection sensitivity and anuptaphobia, the findings of this study will help mental health professionals in devising strategies to deal with rejection sensitivity, which can result in anuptaphobia.

Keywords: Anuptaphobia, Rejection Sensitivity, Social Support, Unmarried Women

Received: 01 January 2022; Revised
Received: 10 June 2022; Accepted: 15 June
2022

¹MS Scholar, Riphah Institute of Clinical & Professional Psychology, Riphah International University, Lahore Campus, Pakistan.

²Lecturer, Riphah Institute of Clinical & Professional Psychology, Riphah International University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Corresponding Author Email:

sajjalammara@gmail.com

Introduction

The word single is related to those individuals who have not been in a loving relationship in the long term, regardless of marital status (Pepping et al., 2018). The ratio of unmarried women is increasing day by day

(Sultana et al., 2021), and the average marriage age has also increased, which has also resulted in an increase in the number of unmarried women (Sultan et al., 2018). As the women grow older, they feel distressed. Most women struggle with the definition of "self as an unmarried woman" because of insecurities, self-doubt, and family pressure (Spielmann, 2013). The ideal marriage age ranges between 18 and 25 years (Hafeez, 2015). A woman who is 25 or younger is perceived as a more desirable marriage prospect than a woman who is older or above 30, as age increases, the chances of meeting a partner decrease (Slonim et al., 2015). In Pakistan, 30 is a dreadful age for a woman. Furthermore, women of different ethnicities face a complicated marriage process in their lives at some points and have encountered difficult people on this journey. Women's

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial 4.0 License (<http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) which permits non-Commercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed as specified.

© Copyright: The Authors (2022)

age becomes a topic of discussion on dinner tables, and people advise them to get married before the age of 30, and some highlight the importance of sex and having children at a later age (Dar, 2018).

Once a girl reaches marital age, she must go through frequent displays in front of potential suitors and often faces rejection by them and their families. This rejection shakes her confidence and shatters her personality (Hafeez, 2015). In Pakistan, it is not just about the pressure on single women to get married but also the negative impact on their self-esteem when it seems like there are no suitors available for them. It can make women feel unwanted as lesser beings and they face auptaphobia (the fear of being single) for the rest of their lives (Moazzam, 2016).

The act of not considering, believing, or accepting is called rejection, or the state of being rejected (Webster, 2021). Because of rejection, the person may develop a critical spirit towards those who rejected them and towards herself (Hulsey, 2014). Rejection may result in interpersonal, psychological, and emotional consequences, such as fear of being single (auptaphobia) and loneliness. When people perceive that they have been rejected by others, they are motivated by the desire to avoid rejection, and this reaction causes specific emotions such as embarrassment, social anxiety, guilt, shame, loneliness, jealousy, and hurt feelings (Leary, 2015). Rejection sensitivity is defined as the inclination to "anxiously expect, readily perceive, and overreact" to social rejection (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Meaningfully, rejection sensitivity has a negative effect on an individual's social cognitions, feelings, and interpersonal behaviors (Downey et al., 2004). People who have rejection sensitivity are unable to accept rejection from others. Moreover, self-fulfilling prophecy can impact rejection sensitivity (Hall et al., 2013). Rejected people expect people to

reject them at any time and believe that no one wants to be with or wants them, which leads to feelings of loneliness and fear of being alone (Morin, 2021). In addition, their fear of rejection and effort to find assurance from others can lead them to depression (Sharma, 2015). The experience of social rejection affects women's self-esteem and self-regulation, which results in the fear of being single and social withdrawal, which creates impacted social behavior (De Rubeis et al., 2017). Because of rejection sensitivity, individuals are unable to maintain a satisfying relationship. Therefore, they avoid any situation in which rejection could take place (Kelliher, 2013). Because of this, women develop the fear that they will remain single and develop auptaphobia. The social linkage quality is mostly related to loneliness, which shows that women rely more on friends in comparison to family members for social support (Pinquart & Sorenson, 2001). Individuals must have at least one important relationship to obtain support from others. Social support is the support system on which individuals rely for psychological support or to manage their stress (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). According to Hyde (2020), strong perceptions of social support moderate the relationship between negative psychosocial outcomes such as loneliness and rejection sensitivity. The presence of friendship and parental support affects the relationship with loneliness and a high level of rejection sensitivity. As compared to men, women seek more social support from their parents, especially to cope with anxiety (Taylor et al., 2004).

Literature Review

Previous studies have demonstrated that rejection sensitivity and loneliness can result in low self-esteem and depression in adolescence (Zhou et al., 2018). Furthermore, Watson and Nesdaal (2012) also proved that rejection sensitivity is positively linked with avoidance and social suffering in adults,

which can cause loneliness. According to Cheryl Bonica (1999), angry expectations from rejection can increase the feelings of loneliness with the passage of time, and these feelings are higher in girls as compared to boys. Further, social withdrawal and social anxiety also increase due to the anxious prospect of rejection (Nowland et al., 2021). Adamczyk (2016) investigated that those women who perceived more social support stated a lower level of social loneliness. He also concluded that medium-term support from family and others has a negative impact on loneliness and being single. A study by Stanculescu (2016) concluded that there is a significant association between loneliness and social support. Additionally, results of the mediation model showed an effect of self-esteem through perceived social support and self-efficacy. Furthermore, Wang et al. (2018) demonstrated that people with depression who have poor penalties for symptoms, recovery, and social functioning perceive their social provision to be worse. In addition, Fernandez et al. (2019) investigated feelings of loneliness grow stronger with age and social relationships can be a protective factor related to loneliness. Moreover, literature also showed that care of friend's acts as a moderator among 1) angry rejection sensitivity and social nervousness. 2) Anxiety about rejection and depressive symptoms. Another research revealed that adolescents who report low care from parents, family, and peers were related to social concern (McDonald et al., 2010). According to Wang et al. (2018), social anxiety can be reduced by reducing rejection sensitivity and by improving self-esteem, and social support can help to improve psychological well-being (Li & Yang, 2008). Likewise, Kellihar (2013) also found that perceived life worries, and social provision have a significant impact on depressive symptoms and rejection sensitivity. Previous indigenous research showed that in

adolescents, there is a significant positive association in anxious expectancy of rejection sensitivity and parents' support and affection. Control of parents is negatively related to the anger domain of rejection sensitivity (Arshad et al., 2018).

Rationale

In Pakistan, a recent demographic analysis from the 2017 census concluded that in recent years, the number of unmarried women has increased by up to 30%. According to the national findings obtained from the Pakistan, Demographic and Health Survey (2012-2013), the age of marriage is rising among women as the median age of marriage has increased from 19.1 years in 2006-2007 to 19.5 years in 2012-2013 (Sultana et al., 2021). Some women face rejection while waiting for a proposal, and it can be a risk factor for auptaphobia (the fear of being single). Auptaphobia is a topic with little research, especially in the South Asian region, including Pakistan. The topic is considered taboo in Pakistan and the study aimed to shed light on the experiences of women with auptaphobia in this region. The purpose of the research was to find out the relationship between rejection sensitivity and auptaphobia. It also aimed to investigate how social support acts as a moderator in the relationship between rejection sensitivity and auptaphobia.

Objectives

- To determine the relationship between rejection sensitivity and auptaphobia in unmarried women.
- To find out the predictors of auptaphobia in unmarried women.
- To investigate the moderating role of social support on rejection sensitivity and auptaphobia in unmarried women.

Hypotheses

- Rejection sensitivity is likely to have a positive relationship with

anuptaphobia and demographic variable (age) in unmarried women.

- Anuptaphobia is likely to have a positive relationship with a demographic variable (age) in unmarried women.
- Rejection sensitivity and demographic variables (age, socioeconomic status, and family system) are likely to predict anuptaphobia.
- Social support is likely to moderate the relationship between rejection sensitivity and anuptaphobia.

Method

Research Design

A correlational research design was used as the objective of the study was to investigate the relationship among study variables.

Sample

By employing a purposive sampling technique, 300 women with an age range of 25–35 years ($M = 27.30$, $SD = 2.49$) were approached. Data was collected from different hostels, organizations, and universities in Lahore and Sialkot. The sample size was calculated through G power analysis, which indicated that with 80% power, a sample size of 84 respondents would be large enough to detect a medium effect size (0.3). Data was collected from unmarried and educated women only and also from both nonworking and working women. Further, women with any diagnosed psychological problems (depression, anxiety, and other psychological disorders) were excluded from the study.

Instruments

Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (ARSQ). It is used to extend understanding of a person related to the perceived or actual rejection. It is a bipolar scale. At one pole, the scale measures the intensity of rejection from very unconcerned to very concerned, and at the other pole, it measures the intensity of rejection from very unlikely to very likely. It

is a 6-point Likert scale. High scores on this scale demonstrate that an individual is more sensitive to rejection than a low score indicates that an individual is less sensitive to rejection from others. The internal consistency of this scale is 0.81, and test-retest reliability is 0.83 (Downey & Feldmann, 1996). This questionnaire had already been translated into Urdu (Arshad & Malik, 2013) and permission was taken from them to use this scale in this study.

Fear of Being Single Scale. It is used to assess the fear of being single. There are 6 items on this scale, and it is a 5-point Likert scale, which ranges from (not at all true to very true). The reliability of the test is 0.88 (Speilmann et al, 2013). High scores indicated that single women have a greater desire to get married and are afraid to remain single, while low scores indicated that women have no fear of remaining single.

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)

This questionnaire is developed by Zimet et al in 1988 and used to check the social provision and insight of people according to the social support they get from family, friends, and others. This scale is a self-reporting measure and consists of 12 items. It is a 7-point Likert scale. That ranges from very strongly disagreeing to very strongly agreeing. High scores indicated that individuals perceived more social support from others, while low scores indicated individuals did not perceive it from others. The reliability of this scale is 0.93. The Urdu version (Zafar & Kausar, 2013) of this scale was used after taking formal permission.

Tool Translation (MAPI Guidelines)

Fear of Being Single Scale was translated into the Urdu language to make it more understandable for the participants. Firstly, permission was taken from the original author in order to translate the scale. By using the MAPI Guidelines (UK), the scale was translated by following the four steps. In first

step (forward translation), five field related experts were approached and asked to independently translate the questionnaire after giving instructions that statements should be clear, simple and emphasis should be on conceptual equivalence rather than word to word translation. In second step (reviewing the forward translation), the objective was to identify and assess the translation regarding the expert's conceptual equivalence, comprehension, similarity to the original questionnaire, and speech clarity. Items that were closer in meaning and concept to the original items were selected thus providing a final forward translated version of scale. In third step (backward translation), the translated scale was then given to the five other bilingual experts for the translation of the Urdu scale into English.

The same instructions were given to them independently as in forward translation. In the fourth step (reviewing the backward translation), all back translations were reviewed by experts and supervisor to obtain final backward translated scale. Item-by-item comparison of all the backward translations with original English scale was done to attain conceptually equivalent and concise final backward translated scale. The process was carried out to identify inconsistencies and discrepancies between original scale and the final forward translated scale, thus obtaining a final translated Urdu version. After that, pilot study was conducted to find the reliability of the translated scale and Cronbach's alpha of the translated scale is 0.82.

Table 1

The Reliability of Fear of Being Single Scale Translated Version (N=20)

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
FOBSS 1	.82	.79
FOBSS 2		.76
FOBSS 3		.86
FOBSS 4		.75
FOBSS 5		.78
FOBSS 6		.81

Note: FBSS=fear of being single scale

Procedure

Firstly, permission was taken from the original authors of measures and the authority figures of the institutes, universities, and hostels for the purpose of data collection. Then, a pilot study was conducted on the sample which was derived from the main study. For this, 20 participants who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were approached. Informed consent was signed by the participants and followed all ethical considerations. The results of the pilot study's Cronbach's Alpha (.82) concluded that the scale was reliable. For the main

study, a sample of 300 women was taken. Individually, participants were informed about the research protocol and instructions regarding confidentiality and ethical considerations were also maintained. After taking the written consent form, scales were provided to the participants individually. The participants were told that they had the right to withdraw from the study. Statistical analyses were calculated by using SPSS (version 22). Descriptive (frequency, mean, standard deviation and reliability) and inferential statistics (correlational, regression and process analysis) were used.

Results**Table 2***Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N=300)*

Demographic Variables	f (%)	M (SD)
Age		27.30 (2.49)
Residency		
Village	40 (13.33)	
City	260 (86.67)	
Education		
ADCP	11 (3.67)	
MS/MPhil/M.COM/MBA	268 (89.33)	
PhD	2 (.67)	
Matric/FA/BA	19 (6.33)	
Job Status		
Government job	23 (7.67)	
Private job	99 (33.00)	
Unemployment	152 (50.67)	
House women	26 (8.67)	
Monthly income		11746.40 (15431.25)
Social economic status		
Stable	274 (91.33)	
Unstable	26 (8.67)	
Family system		
Joint family system	106 (35.33)	
Nuclear family system	194 (64.67)	
Birth order		
1-3	218 (72.67)	
4-6	68 (22.67)	

7-9	14 (4.67)
No of friends	
0-4	127 (42.33)
5-9	79 (26.33)
10-14	24 (8.00)
15 and above	70 (23.33)

Note: *M*=mean, *SD*=standard deviation, *f*=frequency, %=percentage

As shown in Table 2, mostly women lived in city (86.7%) and majority of the participants were doing MS/MPhil (89.3%). Above half of the sample was unemployed (50.7%) and they have stable economic background

(91.3%). Majority of participants belonged to nuclear family system (64%). Most of the women were those who had 1st birth order (72.7%). Most of the participants were not more social they had 3 or 4 friends (42.3%).

Table 3
Psychometric Properties of the Present Study Measures

Scales	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	Cronbach's α
FOBS	15.49	6.29	6-30	.77
ARSQ	82.45	15.49	18-108	.88
MSPSS	58.87	17.19	12-84	.91

Note: *M*=mean, *SD*=standard deviation, α =Reliability Co-efficient, FOBS=Fear of Being Single Scale, ARSQ=Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire, MSPSS=Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

As shown in Table 3, Cronbach's alpha of all the measures is good. Cronbach's alpha for fear of being single scale is .77, which shows it has good reliability. The Cronbach's alpha of the adult rejection sensitivity questionnaire

is .88, which shows that it has high reliability. Cronbach's alpha of the multidimensional scale of perceived social support is .91, which shows it has the highest reliability.

Table 4
Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis between Study Variables (N=300)

Variables	RS	AP	Age	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
RS	-	.09	.02	87.68	12.45
AP	-	-	.25**	22.57	4.81
Age	-	-	-	27.30	2.49

** $p < .01$

Note: *M*=mean, *SD*= standard deviation, AP=Anuptaphobia, RS= Rejection Sensitivity

As shown in Table 4, the results demonstrated that rejection sensitivity has no significant relationship with anuptaphobia and age. However, anuptaphobia has a

positive significant relationship with age, which shows that with the passage of time, as age increases, the fear of being single also increases in women.

Table 5
Hierarchical Regression Results for Anuptaphobia (N=300)

Variables	B	95% CI		SE B	β	R ²	ΔR ²
		LL	UL				
Step 1							
Constant	9.21**	3.37	15.05	2.96		.06	.06**
Age	.49***	.28	.70	.11	.25***		*
Step 2							
Constant	6.95*	.87	13.03	3.09		.08	.08*
Age	.49***	.28	.70	.11	.26***		
Family System	1.34*	.24	2.44	.56	.13*		
Step 3							
Constant	4.98	-1.37	11.34	3.23		.94	.09*
Age	.49***	.28	.70	.11	.26***		
Family System	1.28*	.181	2.37	.56	.13*		
Socio-economic Status	1.88*	.05	3.74	.95	.11*		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

B=un-standardized coefficient, CI=confidence interval, LL=lower limit, UL= upper limit, SE= standard error, β= standardized coefficient, R²=variance, ΔR²=change in variance

Table 5 shows the Hierarchical regression results for anuptaphobia. In step 1, the R² value exposed that age explained 6% variance in anuptaphobia with $F(1,298) = 20.49, p < .001$. In step 2, the R² value showed that family system explained 8% variance in anuptaphobia with $F(1,297) = 5.73, p < .05$. In step 3, the R² value revealed that socio-economic status explained 94% variance in

anuptaphobia with $F(1,296) = 3.94, p < .05$. The findings showed that age ($\beta = .26, p < .001$), family system ($\beta = .13, p < .05$) and socio-economic status ($\beta = .11, p < .05$) positively predicted anuptaphobia. However, the excluded variable was rejection sensitivity because it was not contributing in anuptaphobia.

Table 6
Moderation Analysis of Anuptaphobia, Rejection Sensitivity and Perceived Social Support (N=300)

Variables	R	F	R ²	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
RS total				.09	.08	1.19	.23	-.06	.26
MSPSS				.06	.13	.47	.64	-.19	.31
Mode	.15	2.15	.02						

Note : *B*=Standard Coefficient, *SE*= Standard Error, *p*=Significance value, *LL*=Lower Level, *UL*=Upper Level, *R*²= Adjusted R Square, *t*=*t* test Statistics, *R*=Correlation, *F*=Value of *F* Statistics

Process Analysis (Hayes, 2012) was used to investigate the moderating effect of social support on rejection sensitivity and anuptaphobia. As shown in Table 6, there is

a non-significant effect of social support on rejection sensitivity and anuptaphobia ($p=.23$), which indicated that social support did not act as a moderator on rejection sensitivity and anuptaphobia.

Discussion

The study was conducted with a sample of unmarried women whose ages ranged from 25–35 to investigate how women felt after the proposal rejection and then developed the feelings of anuptaphobia and it also aimed to investigate how they coped with these situations through perceived social support from friends, family, and others.

It was proposed that rejection sensitivity is likely to have a positive relationship with anuptaphobia and age in unmarried women, but the results showed non-significant relationship of rejection sensitivity with anuptaphobia and age. The findings of the study were not in line with earlier studies. Watson and Nesdale (2012) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between loneliness and rejection sensitivity, and the results showed that rejection sensitivity causes young adults to isolate themselves, lowering their social interaction to avoid rejection.

It was hypothesized that anuptaphobia is likely to have a positive relationship with age in unmarried women. The results also showed that anuptaphobia has a positive significant relationship with age. The finding of the current study was in line with previous research conducted by Spielmann et al. (2013), which showed that the increase in the ages of single women also led to an increase in anxiety and distress about being single.

It was also hypothesized that rejection sensitivity and demographic variables (age, family system, and socio-economic status)

are likely to predict anuptaphobia. The findings of the current study revealed that rejection sensitivity is not significant predictor of anuptaphobia. The current study results were inconsistent with previous literature. Bonica (1999) investigated rejection sensitivity involving anxious and angry expectations predict the feelings of loneliness over time. However, results of the present study depicted that age, family system, and socio-economic status are the positive predictors of anuptaphobia. Spielmann et al. (2013) revealed that women felt anxiety and distress due to not having a romantic partner as their age increased and unmarried women over the age of 30 have strong desires to marry. Single women describe themselves as lonely, depressed, and having an incomplete life. Furthermore, research also indicated that economic, social, and demographic factors cause delayed marriage and similar factors cause a large proportion of women to remain unmarried on a national level (Dixon, 1978).

It was hypothesized that social support would act as a moderator on the relationship of rejection sensitivity and anuptaphobia, but the result showed non-significant affect of social support on rejection sensitivity and anuptaphobia. The findings of the current study were not supported by the previous literature. Research by McDonald et al. (2010) showed that social support from friends moderates the effect of loneliness and depressive symptoms of rejection sensitivity. Furthermore, McDonald et al. (2010)

discovered that parent-child relationships and friendship act as a moderator between anxiety and rejection sensitivity in middle adolescents.

Conclusion

Findings from the present study illustrated that rejection sensitivity has no significant relationship with anuptaphobia. However, anuptaphobia has positive significant relationship with age. The findings also showed that age, family system, and socio-economic status are significant predictors of anuptaphobia. Moreover, the outcome of the current study revealed that social support has not act as a moderator on anuptaphobia and rejection sensitivity.

Limitations

Unqualified women had difficulty understanding and reading the questionnaire. In the current study, all the questionnaires were translated into Urdu, so those women who were not fluent in Urdu had difficulty reading and understanding the scale. The data was only gathered from two cities, so the results are restricted in generalizability. There was some difficulty in finding unmarried single women who were over 30. Some women did not want to take part in the study because of rejection sensitivity and found some of the questions difficult to answer because of their past negative experiences.

Suggestions

Qualitative studies should be conducted to find a detailed analysis of rejection and womens' experience of anuptaphobia. Studies involving womens' parents can be conducted to know how parents feel when the marriage age of their daughter is increasing. To obtain a generalizable result, a larger and more diverse sample size could be used. Comparative studies can be conducted among working and non-working women, as well as educated and uneducated women.

Implications

This study would help counselors to identify how rejection influences a person's mental health. The results of this study will also help mental health professionals in devising strategies to deal with rejection sensitivity, which results in anuptaphobia.

Contribution of Authors

Sajjal Ammara: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing - Original draft
 Rabia Jameel: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Writing- Review & Editing

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest declared by authors.

Source of Funding

The authors declared no source of funding.

References

- Adamczyk, K. (2016). An Investigation of Loneliness and Perceived Social Support among Single and Partnered Young Adults. *Current Psychology*, 35(4), 674–689.
- Arshad, A., Khadim, R. A., & Masood, A. (2018). Explaining Rejection Sensitivity among Adolescents as predicted by Perceived Differential Treatment of Parents. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*, 7(3), pp-623.
- Arshad, M., & Malik, F. (2013). *Rejection Sensitivity, Self-Esteem and Depression in Acid Burn Victims*. [An Unpublished manuscript] Clinical Unit, Government College University, Lahore, Pakistan.
- Bonica, C. (1999). Rejection sensitivity, loneliness, social anxiety, and social withdrawal in children. *Masters Theses* (Unpublished). <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/theses/2337>

- Dar, S.A. (2018, October 16). Being a Single Woman in 30s is Trouble. <https://truthtracker.com.pk/2018/10/16/being-a-single-woman-in-30s-is-trouble/>
- De Rubeis, J., Lugo, R. G., Witthöft, M., Sütterlin, S., Pawelzik, M. R., & Vögele, C. (2017). Rejection sensitivity as a vulnerability marker for depressive symptom deterioration in men. *PLoS One*, *12*(10), e0185802.
- Dixon, R. B. (1978). Late marriage and non-marriage as demographic responses: are they similar? *Population Studies*, *32*(3), 449-466.
- Downey, G., Berenson, K. R., & Kang, J. (2006). *Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (A-RSQ)* [Database record]. APAPsycTests. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t20086-000>
- Downey, G., & Feldman, S. I. (1996). Implications of rejection sensitivity for intimate relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *70*(6), 1327.
- Downey, G., Mougios, V., Ayduk, O., London, B. E., & Shoda, Y. (2004). Rejection sensitivity and the defensive motivational system: Insights from the startle response to rejection cues. *Psychological Science*, *15*(10), 668-673.
- Fernández B., Van den Noortgate, W., Goossens, L., & Vanhalst, J. (2019). Loneliness and social anxiety across childhood and adolescence: Multilevel meta-analyses of cross-sectional and longitudinal associations. *Developmental Psychology*, *55*(7), 1548.
- Hafeez, E. (2015, November 14). The Delimma of a Single Woman in Pakistani Society. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/dilemma-single-woman-pakistani-society-erum-hafeez/>
- Hall, C., Juhila, K., Matarese, M., & Van Nijnatten, C. (2013). *Analysing Social Work Communication: Discourse in Practice*. Routledge.
- Hayes, A. F. (2018). *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis A Regression-Based Approach* (2nd ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Hulsey, P. (2014, December 31). Rejection and Abandonment. <https://www.biblicalcounselingdatabase.net/rejection-and-abandonment/>
- Hyde, K. C. (2020). *Rejection Sensitivity and Social Support as Predictors of Peer Victimization Among Youth with Psychiatric Illness*. University of Arkansas.
- Kelliher, J. L. (2013). Personality, rejection sensitivity and perceptions of social support adequacy as predictors of college students' depressive symptoms. Western Carolina University. [Masters of Arts Thesis]. USA.
- Lakey, B., & Cohen, S. (2000). Social support theory and measurement. In S. Cohen, L. G. Underwood, & B. H. Gottlieb (Eds.), *Social support measurement and intervention: A guide for health and social scientists* (pp. 29–52). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/med:psych/9780195126709.003.0002>
- Leary, M. R. (2015). Emotional responses to interpersonal rejection. *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*, *17*(4), 435–441. <https://doi.org/10.31887/DCNS.2015.17.4/mleary>
- Li, Z., & Yang, X., (2008). Social Anxiety of College Students: Survey and Analysis. *Journal of Huhan*

- University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition) 2*, 77–80.
- Mcdonald, K. L., Bowker, J. C., Rubin, K. H., Laursen, B., & Duchene, M. S. (2010). Interactions Between Rejection Sensitivity and Supportive Relationships in the Prediction of Adolescents' Internalizing Difficulties. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39(5), 563–574.
- Moazzam, F. (2016, April 15). Are Pakistan's "Still Unmarried" Women the Leftovers? <https://tribune.com.pk/article/33829/are-pakistans-still-unmarried-women-the-leftovers>
- Morin, A. (2021, August 23). What is Rejection Sensitivity? <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-rejection-sensitivity-4682652>
- Nowland, R., Thomson, G., McNally, L., Smith, T., & Whittaker, K. (2021). Experiencing loneliness in parenthood: a scoping review. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 141(4), 214–225.
- Pepping, C. A., MacDonald, G., & Davis, P. J. (2018). Toward a psychology of singlehood: An Attachment-theory perspective on long-term singlehood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27(5), 324–331.
- Pinquart, M., & Sorensen, S. (2001). Influences on loneliness in older adults: A meta analysis. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 23(4), 245–266.
- Sharma, B. B. (2015). Behavioral ramifications in rejection sensitivity: Revisiting Horney's theory of the neurotic personality. *International Journal of Education and Management Studies*, 5(2), 164.
- Slonim, G., Gur-Yaish, N., & Katz, R. (2015). By choice or by circumstance? Stereotypes of and feelings about single people. *Studia Psychologica*, 57(1), 35–48.
- Spielmann, S. S., MacDonald, G., Maxwell, J. A., Joel, S., Peragine, D., Muise, A., & Impett, E.A. (2013). Settling for less out of fear of being single. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 105(6), 1049.
- Stănculescu, E. (2016). Perceived social support and loneliness in early adolescents—A path analysis. *Revista de psihologie*, 62(2), 109–121.
- Sultan, A., Yousuf, S., Jan, S., Hassan, U., & Jaan, U. (2018). Assessing perceived social support and marital satisfaction among fertile and infertile women. *Age*, 20(30), 55–71.
- Sultana, A., Zeeshan, M., & Ahmed, F. (2021). Dilemmas of Singlehood in Contemporary Pakistani Culture: A Qualitative Study of Unheard Voices. *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies*, 21(1), 1–18.
- Taylor, S. E., Sherman, D. K., Kim, H. S., Jarcho, J., Takagi, K., & Dunagan, M. S. (2004). Culture and social support: Who seeks it and why?. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(3), 354.
- Wang, J., Mann, F., Lloyd-Evans, B., Ma, R., & Johnson, S. (2018). Associations between loneliness and perceived social support and outcomes of mental health problems: a systematic review. *Bio Medical Central Psychiatry*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-018-1736-5>
- Watson, J., & Nesdale, D. (2012). Rejection Sensitivity, Social Withdrawal, and Loneliness in Young Adults. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 42(8), 1984–2005.
- Webster, M. (2021). <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rejection>

Zafar, N., & Kausar R. (2013). *Psychosocial Implications of Early Father Separation in Adolescents and their Mothers*. [An Unpublished Manuscript] University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Zhou, J., Li, X., Tian, L., & Huebner, E. S. (2018). Longitudinal association between low self-esteem and

depression in early adolescents: The role of rejection sensitivity and loneliness. *Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 93(1), 54-71.

Zimet, G. D., Dahlem, N. W., Zimet, S. G., & Farley, G. K. (1988). The multidimensional scale of perceived social support. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 52(1), 30-41.