

2023

Young Adults' Romantic Relationships: The Relation Between Perceived Pressure to Disclose and Disclosure to Romantic Partners

Jessica Truscott
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Social Psychology Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Jessica Michelle Truscott

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Amanda Rose, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Leann Stadlander, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost

Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2023

Abstract

Young Adults' Romantic Relationships: The Relation Between Perceived Pressure to

Disclose and Disclosure to Romantic Partners

by

Jessica Michelle Truscott

MS, Walden University, 2016

MEd, Texas A&M University, 2006

BA, Sam Houston State University, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Social Psychology

Walden University

August 2023

Abstract

The most personal level of communication is intentional self-disclosure of one's feelings or thoughts with another individual. Within the context of romantic relationships, disclosure between partners has implications for the relationships and individual well-being. However, less is known about whether perceived pressure to disclose is related to young adults' amount of disclosure to partners. The theoretical frameworks applied to this study included social penetration theory, self-disclosure theory, and Reis and Shaver's intimacy process model. The primary purpose of this quantitative secondary analysis of previously collected data by Rose, was to test whether young adults' perceived pressure from their partners to disclose is related to their self-reported disclosure to their partner. Whether there is a gender difference in perceived pressure and whether the relation between perceived pressure and disclosure differs for women and men also were tested. Participants consisted of 189 undergraduate students (95 female) from a Midwestern university in the United States. The study first tested the psychometric properties of items developed to assess perceived pressure to disclose to ensure that the items form an internally reliable single scale. Factor analyses confirmed that all items strongly loaded to one factor with a high internal reliability. Analysis of variance and *t* tests determined that the effects of gender, perceived pressure, and gender by perceived pressure interaction were not significant. However, descriptive analysis indicated significant gender difference. Findings address an important gap in the literature and may be used by psychologists for positive social change by assisting couples in developing healthy and happy relationships.

Young Adults' Romantic Relationships: The Relation Between Perceived Pressure to

Disclose and Disclosure to Romantic Partners

by

Jessica Michelle Truscott

MS, Walden University, 2016

MEd, Texas A&M University, 2006

BA, Sam Houston State University, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Social Psychology

Walden University

August 2023

Dedication

I'd like to first express my gratitude and thanks to my committee chair, Dr. Amanda Rose, for her patience, feedback, and guidance. I was truly blessed to have you as my chair, you are an amazing mentor. When I look back at early chapter drafts, I see just how far you helped me grow. You've helped me become someone I hoped to be and taught me this process can be fun too.

Thanks should also be given to my second committee member, Dr. Lee Stadlander. I am thankful for your feedback, which helped strengthen this dissertation. I appreciate your willingness to always provide support and help. You pushed me in a big way, and for that, I'm grateful.

I'd like to also acknowledge my URR, Dr. Stephen Rice, for providing speedy, clear, and constructive feedback. Your contributions positively contributed to this dissertation.

Lastly, I'd also like to recognize colleagues and friends, Dr. La Toya Johnson and Dr. Bridgette Malchow. Thank you for the support and encouragement, and for checking in on me through this process!

Acknowledgments

This dissertation is dedicated to my chosen family.

To my mother, Elsa—Thank you for being my biggest cheerleader, for supporting me as a “career student,” for always listening, and mostly for encouraging me through this process. You never doubted I could do this. For all of that, and your love, I dedicate this to you.

To my late Dad, Alan (aka “Paw”)—Although you are not here physically, your spirit has been with me, pushing me forward. In one of our last “life talks,” you encouraged me to go back to complete my PhD because I was so close to finishing. You said, “just go do the thing.” Any time I wavered on my ability to write this dissertation, I used your words. Writing this helped me cope with losing you. And now, finally, I **did** do the thing. I wish you were here to see me walk across the stage and hear your last name called. I know you are proud, me2u2.

To my Bestie Carla, thanks for checking on me, cheering me on, and reminding me to slay the day.

To my partner, Jack, thank you for helping me sharpen my keyword searches, taking care of me during long hours of writing, showing your patience, freely giving up “us” time, and just being awesomely supportive.

To my fur babies, my puppy PhDs, who never left my side and gave me lots of love.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	3
Problem Statement.....	4
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Research Questions and Hypotheses	5
Theoretical Framework for the Study.....	6
Nature of the Study	7
Definitions.....	8
Assumptions.....	8
Scope and Delimitations	9
Limitations	10
Significance.....	11
Summary.....	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	13
Introduction.....	13
Literature Search Strategy.....	13
Theoretical Foundation.....	14
Jourard’s Self-Disclosure Theory	14

Altman and Taylor’s Social Penetration Theory	15
Reis and Shaver’s (1988) Intimacy Process Model	17
Literature Review.....	19
Self-Disclosure.....	19
Romantic Relationships in Young Adulthood	22
Disclosure in Romantic Relationships	25
Gender and Disclosure	26
Perceived Pressure to Disclose	28
The Current Study.....	30
Summary	31
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	32
Introduction.....	32
Research Design and Rationale	32
Methodology	33
Population	33
Sampling and Sampling Procedure.....	33
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection	35
Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs	35
Data Analysis Plan.....	37
Threats to Validity	38
Ethical Procedures	39
Summary.....	39

Chapter 4: Results	41
Introduction.....	41
Data Collection	41
Results.....	42
Summary	46
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	47
Introduction.....	47
Interpretation of the Findings.....	47
Limitations of the Study.....	51
Recommendations.....	52
Implications.....	52
Conclusion	53
References.....	55
Appendix A: Collaborative Institute Training Initiative Training Through the University of Missouri	66
Appendix B: Approval From Amanda Rose to Use Data Set for Dissertation.....	67

List of Tables

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Range of Variables by Gender..... 42

List of Figures

Figure 1. Visual Representation of Intimacy Process Model 18

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Communicating with others is a crucial function between humans that allows for the disclosure of information, thoughts, and feelings. At the most personal level of communication is self-disclosure, defined as the process in which an individual provides information about themselves to another (Atman & Taylor, 1973). Disclosure within relationships communicates information about the relationship too, such as the level of trust, approval or disapproval, and support (Willems et al., 2020). Within the context of romantic relationships, these factors have implications for personal well-being and relationship satisfaction.

Although considerable research has considered disclosure between romantic partners, less is known about social cognitions that underlie the degree to which individuals disclose. Such social cognitions would include individuals' perceptions of their partners. For example, some individuals likely feel pressured to disclose. Given that behavior may be influenced by the actual or perceived influence of others (Allport, 1998), individuals who perceive pressure to disclose from their partner may be more likely to disclose to the partner to meet their needs and/or to keep the peace. Accordingly, one major goal of this research was to examine the association between perceived pressure that young adults feel from their romantic partner to disclose and the degree of their self-reported disclosure to the partner.

The role of gender also was examined. In childhood and adolescence, girls engage in more disclosure with relationship partners (e.g., parents, friends) than boys. Therefore,

women may have higher expectations for disclosure in heterosexual romantic relationships than men. As a result, women are expected to be more likely than men to pressure their partner to disclose, presumably resulting in men reporting greater perceived pressure to disclose than women. Whether the relation between perceived pressure to disclose and reported disclosure to the romantic partner differs for men and women also was considered.

These goals were examined using data collected with young adults in 2011 (limitations of and justifications for testing these questions with data from 2011 are discussed later in this chapter). These data had not been previously analyzed. For this research, young adults reported on their gender and completed a well-validated questionnaire assessing disclosure. They also responded to new items developed to assess perceived pressure from the partner to disclose. Psychometric properties of these items were tested to ensure that they form a single, internally reliable score for perceived pressure to disclose.

Research in this area has implications for social change in the context of facilitating positive relationships in romantic couples, specifically in terms of working towards healthy and safe communication spaces within romantic relationships. Chapter 1 will address the background, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, and hypotheses and will present the theoretical framework. Further, this chapter will address definitions and assumptions, scope and limitations, and the significance of this study.

Background

An important aspect of close relationships is the sharing of personal information, referred to as disclosure. Although the literature on disclosure is extensive, the vast majority of studies have focused only on the behavior of disclosure. Less is known about the social cognitions that underlie individuals' choice to disclose or not to disclose. The present study extended the literature by considering the degree to which young adults perceive pressure from their romantic partners to disclose. Perceiving greater pressure to disclose was expected to be related to engaging in disclosure. Four new items assessing perceived pressure to disclosure were developed for this study. Before testing the association between perceived pressure from the partner to disclose and self-reported disclosure to the partner, psychometric properties of the items were examined to ensure a single score could be computed based on the items.

An additional goal was to examine gender differences. Because girls are socialized to engage in disclosure in relationships (Reese et al., 2019), females likely develop higher expectations for disclosure than males. As a result, females are likely to pressure male partners to disclose more than males pressure female partners to disclose. Accordingly, male partners are expected to report greater perceived pressure to disclose than female partners. Whether there are gender differences in the relation between pressure to disclose and engaging in disclosure was tested too. Past research indicates that females are especially responsive to social feedback (Moreau et al., 2019). Therefore, women may be more likely than men to disclose when feeling pressure from the partner

to disclose. If this is the case, then the association between felt pressure to disclose and engaging in disclosure would be stronger for females than males.

Problem Statement

Better understanding interpersonal communication between romantic partners is important as communication between romantic partners has been shown to have a significant impact on an individual's physical and mental health and to relationship satisfaction (Herzberg, 2013; Yamaguchi et al., 1985, 2015). Toward this aim, the present study examined a social cognition that was expected to be related to young adults' disclosure. Namely, perceived pressure from the partner to disclose was expected to be related to greater disclosure. Whether men and women differ in how much pressure they feel to disclose and whether the relation between perceived pressure to disclose and self-reported disclosure to the partner differs for men and women were examined too. Better understanding individual differences in disclosure in romantic relationships is important for promoting relationship satisfaction and personal well-being for men and women.

Purpose of the Study

In order to examine the primary research questions, the psychometric properties of the four items developed to assess perceived pressure to disclose were tested to ensure that a single score can be computed based on the items. Additional research questions were proposed based on the assumption that perceived pressure can be assessed with a single score. In terms of the primary research questions, first, whether perceived pressure from the partner to disclose is related to self-reported disclosure to the partner was tested. Whether there is a gender difference in perceived pressure to disclose also was examined,

and whether the relation between perceived pressure from the partner to disclose and disclosure to the partner differs by gender was examined as well.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Do the psychometric properties of the four items developed to assess perceived pressure to disclose to a romantic partner support computing a single score based on the four items?

H1₀: Computing a single score will not be supported.

H1_a: Computing a single score will be supported.

Research Question 2: Is perceived pressure from partner to disclose related to greater disclosure to the romantic partner?

H2₀: Perceived pressure to disclose is not related to greater disclosure to the partner.

H2_a: Perceived pressure to disclose is related to disclosure to the romantic partner.

Research Question 3: Is there a gender difference in perceived pressure from a romantic partner to disclose?

H3₀: There is not a gender difference in perceived pressure from a romantic partner to disclose.

H3_a: There is a gender difference in perceived pressure from a romantic partner to disclose.

Research Question 4: Is the relation between perceived pressure to disclose and self-reported disclosure to a romantic partner moderated by gender?

H4₀: The relation between perceived pressure to disclose and self-reported disclosure to a romantic partner is not moderated by gender.

H4_a: The relation between perceived pressure to disclose and self-reported disclosure to a romantic partner is moderated by gender.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The theoretical frameworks used in this study were Altman and Taylor's social penetration theory (1973), Jourard's self-disclosure theory (1971), and Reis and Shaver's (1988) intimacy process model (IPM). These theories will be further detailed and applied to the study in Chapter 2.

SPT was developed by social psychologist Altman along with Taylor in 1973. The focus of this theory is self-disclosure and, according to the theory, as individuals become closer and receive positive reinforcement through their interactions, intimacy will deepen between the individuals. The theory suggests that relationship development is predictable and follows a standard trajectory, and, therefore, individuals' level of disclosure will move from superficial and nonintimate to deep and more personal. This theory addressed other possible areas of interest for the study, including disclosure reciprocity, depenetration (a withdrawal process leading to reduced disclosure and intimacy), and consideration of factors such as gender, sexual orientation, personality, and race, which can impact self-disclosure patterns.

Jourard's (1971) seminal work on disclosure resulted in Jourard's self-disclosure theory, which is viewed as one of the most significant theoretical frameworks regarding

disclosure. According to Jourard, the phenomenon of disclosure is a process of reciprocity in which an individual discloses to a target individual, which encourages the target to share in return, thus leading the initial person to disclose more deeply. This open sharing creates trust and a dynamic of mutual and reciprocal disclosure. However, when the disclosure is no longer perceived as reciprocal, the degree to which disclosure continues is impacted.

Reis et al.'s (1988) transactional IPM is a commonly used framework asserting that intimacy development is dependent on positively received disclosures between partners. Additionally, according to the theory, disclosure will be impacted by personal motivators or fears, along with perceptions of the partner's response. Therefore, an individual's willingness to disclose may be equally impacted by internally and externally motivated factors and will dictate if the disclosing individual is likely to continue or retreat. The motives are most generally categorized as avoidance or approach motives.

Nature of the Study

A nonexperimental, correlational quantitative study with one point of data collection in which young adults responded to questionnaire measures was used to answer the research questions. Quantitative methodology was appropriate for this study as it is well suited for survey methods and useful for testing relationships between variables and identifying potential patterns (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative approaches also are appropriate when there are a priori hypotheses. The quantitative analyses will provide information about the relationship between variables and how strong of a relationship exists.

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS. An exploratory factor analysis was used to test whether the pressure to disclose items forms a single coherent score. Cronbach's also tested the internal reliability of the four items. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) with disclosure as the dependent variable (DV) and pressure to disclose and gender as independent variables (IVs) was used to test the relation between perceived pressure to disclose and disclosure and whether the relation between perceived pressure to disclose and disclosure differs by gender. An additional *t* test was conducted to test whether men and women differ in terms of their perceived pressure from romantic partners to disclose. The data used for this study were collected by Rose in 2011 (University of Missouri IRB Project Number 1195560) but had not been analyzed. In the following sections, a rationale for using data from 2011 is provided and limitations of the approach are discussed.

Definitions

Heterosexual refers to a person who is sexually or romantically attracted to people of the opposite sex (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Gender refers to a social construct of characteristics classified as masculine or feminine (McRaney et al., 2021).

Self-disclosure is the process in which an individual provides personal information about themselves to another (Atman & Taylor, 1973).

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made regarding the secondary data study:

- Participants fully understood each question and provided a response that was honest and accurate.
- The sample population was representative of the larger associated population.
- Participants self-identified their gender as male or female, which was reflective of their identity, not only their biological sex at birth.
- The study design would meet the assumptions for use of ANOVAs (Herzog, et al., 2019). First, there is the assumption of independence of observation; in this case, this means that there were not interpersonal interactions or relationships among the participants. Second, there is an assumption that the data are normally distributed. The assumption of normality was tested by the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality. Third, there is an assumption of homogeneity of variance between groups. In this case, the assumption applies to gender and means that men and women are similar in terms of the variance of the variables. This assumption was tested using Levene's test of equality.

Scope and Delimitations

This study examined felt pressure to disclose and disclosure among young adults (age 18 to 24). Therefore, findings from this study are not applicable to younger adolescent or older adult romantic relationships. In addition, although there are many important behaviors in romantic relationships, the current study provides information only about disclosure. Additionally, the study focused on a construct conceptualized as a predictor of disclosure, but possible outcomes of disclosure (e.g., relationship satisfaction and well-being) were not assessed in the current study.

Limitations

The most serious concern is that data were collected over 10 years ago. Therefore, the degree to which the findings will generalize beyond the current sample to today's young adults is not known. The main concern would be that associations among gender, felt pressure to disclose, and self-reported disclosure may have changed over time. There also are mitigating factors in terms of this concern. One mitigating factor is that social cognitions (e.g., perceived pressure to disclose) have been known to be related to behavior (e.g., disclosure) for many decades, with no known historical change in the relations (Green et al., 2019). A second concern involves potential changes in relationship processes. These concerns would be especially problematic if the study focused on behaviors known to change over time (e.g., the role of social media over the past decades) or social norms known to change over time (e.g., acceptance of sexual behavior outside of marriages). However, the behavior of interest is disclosure in intimate relationships.

Disclosure in close relationships has long been conceptualized as an integral component of healthy relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Jourard, 1971); no known theory or research suggests that the significance of disclosure has changed over time. The construct considered for which there has been the most change is gender, with gender now known not to be a dichotomous variable. Given greater acceptance of gender fluidity, differences between men and women identified in this research may not be as strong today. These limitations, including potential implications for the results, will be considered in Chapter 5, with an especially strong focus on gender.

There are additional limitations of the study as well. First, the study provides information about relations between variables; however, the findings will not provide information about causation (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). In addition, because data were collected only at one time point, the study does not provide information about the temporal ordering of the relations between variables. Further, as with all self-report data, the data are dependent on the honesty of participant responses. Because the procedure involved an online survey, the data may be impacted by participants not being able to ask clarifying questions regarding the items (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The number of non-White participants also was low, so considering race as a variable was not viable. Finally, because the data had been collected and coded, the study was limited to measures available and additional measures could not be added.

Significance

Although considerable research is available regarding disclosure within relationships, there are less data on social cognitions related to disclosure, including perceived pressure to disclose. This study addressed this gap by examining whether perceived pressure from a romantic partner to disclose is related to self-reported disclosure to the partner. The role of gender was examined as well in terms of whether there is a gender difference in perceived pressure to disclose and whether the relation between perceived pressure to disclose and self-reported disclosure differs by gender. The findings are expected to deepen the understanding of how men and women communicate with romantic partners. In addition, as noted, research indicates that communication between romantic partners impacts both relationship adjustment and

mental health (Kapsaridi & Charvoz, 2021; Rauer et al., 2020). Therefore, findings from this study may be of interest to mental health care providers, especially in the field of couples and family counseling.

Summary

To conclude Chapter 1, the primary goal of this study was to explore whether young adults' perceptions of pressure from romantic partners to disclose is related to self-reported disclosure to romantic partners. Findings from this study may prove helpful in terms of guiding counseling professionals who work with couples in terms of promoting healthy communication, romantic relationship satisfaction, and personal well-being.

Chapter 2 will include a review of seminal and current literature related to the study, along with an application of theoretical frameworks. Chapter 3 will present a description of and justification for the study's methodology, including the procedure and the variables assessed. Chapter 4 will present the findings of the research, and in Chapter 5, I will discuss the results of the study as related to the hypotheses and how they fit within the broader literature and will conclude with suggestions for future study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

One of the foremost researchers of self-disclosure, Jourard, defined self-disclosure as a process of making the self known to another person (Jourard & Lasakow, 1958). The act of self-disclosure is conscious and purposeful (Satiadarma & Wati, 2021). Self-disclosing in relationships is considered a critical task of development (Satiadarma & Wati, 2021), is related to relationship satisfaction (Çağ & Yıldırım, 2018), and is a predictor of psychological resilience and self-compassion (Harvey & Boynton, 2021). Furthermore, the ability to accurately represent oneself to another is an indicator of a healthy personality (Jourard & Lasakow, 1958).

The current study contributes to research on disclosure by exploring relations among gender, perceived pressure from a romantic partner to disclose, and disclosure to a romantic partner. Gender differences in perceived pressure to disclose and whether the association between perceived pressure to disclose and self-reported disclosure were examined. Toward this aim, the study evaluated the psychometric properties of items developed to assess perceived pressure from a partner to disclose. Chapter 2 describes the literature search strategy, the theoretical frameworks applied, and important literature related to the study.

Literature Search Strategy

To locate relevant literature, I utilized multiple databases to find peer-reviewed journals, books, and measurements. Searches were limited to peer-reviewed scholarly journals in databases such EBSCO, PsycINFO, Academic Search Complete, and SAGE

Journals. Within these databases, searches were conducted using search terms including *disclosure*, *self-disclosure*, *co-rumination*, *problem talk*, *romantic relationships*, *social penetration theory*, and *dyadic coping*. These initial searches were too broad; therefore, terms were combined for searches (e.g., *self-disclosure AND romantic relationships*, *dyadic coping AND disclosure AND romantic relationships*). Authors contributing to seminal works relating to this dissertation, including Charvoz, Gómez-López, Jourard, Kapsaridi, Ortega-Ruiz, Rose, and Viejo, were included in searches as well. Once related articles were found, a focus was placed on papers with publication dates after 2019.

Theoretical Foundation

Three theories were used as a basis for the development of this study's hypotheses. These theories focus on disclosure between individuals. Jourard's self-disclosure theory (1971), Altman and Taylor's social penetration theory (1973), and Reis and Shavers's (1988) IPM are considered.

Jourard's Self-Disclosure Theory

Jourard (1971), an early researcher of self-disclosure, suggested that disclosure served several critical roles, including promoting better knowledge of self and improved personal and relational health, while also acting as a means of understanding other individuals, thus removing mystery or fear, and allowing further relational development. Jourard asserted that people are most open to sharing when mutual disclosure exists. Therefore, mutual disclosure is common within "meaningful marriages and friendships" (Jourard, 1971, p. 17). Jourard believed that the identity of the person receiving the disclosure and the purpose of the relationship between the individuals are significant

determinants of whether individuals disclose. Jourard also highlighted the idea that individuals need privacy and “private places” as well to maintain holistic well-being, heal, and grow.

Further, Jourard (1971) proposed that individuals expect disclosure to be reciprocated at a similar rate to which it is given, stating that his “research in self-disclosure was showing that disclosure invites or begets disclosure” (p. 14). This means that individuals cannot be forced into disclosing, only invited, which is often best accomplished through sharing one’s own thoughts, feelings opinions, and so forth to establish a connection. Interestingly, Jourard spoke to the notion that if an individual does not wish to be known or is not trusting of the other, their inclination is to lie or withhold.

Altman and Taylor’s Social Penetration Theory

Altman and Taylor’s (1973) social penetration theory was developed through research conducted initially within social psychology and expanding into other areas to address the process of relationship development and deterioration. Altman and Taylor proposed that the social penetration process involves all parts of interpersonal interaction that lead to the development of relationships. These can be viewed as behavioral (that is, the behaviors taking place during the interaction) or as the internal processes that occur before, during, and after the interaction.

Specifically mentioned were verbal and nonverbal communication, environmental factors, and interpersonal perceptions. Additionally, this theory indicates that there are three factors that impact the growth of a relationship: personal characteristics, outcomes of exchange, and situational contexts. These factors are responsible for the subjective

perception one individual holds toward another leading to an assessment of the likeability and predictability of responding behaviors.

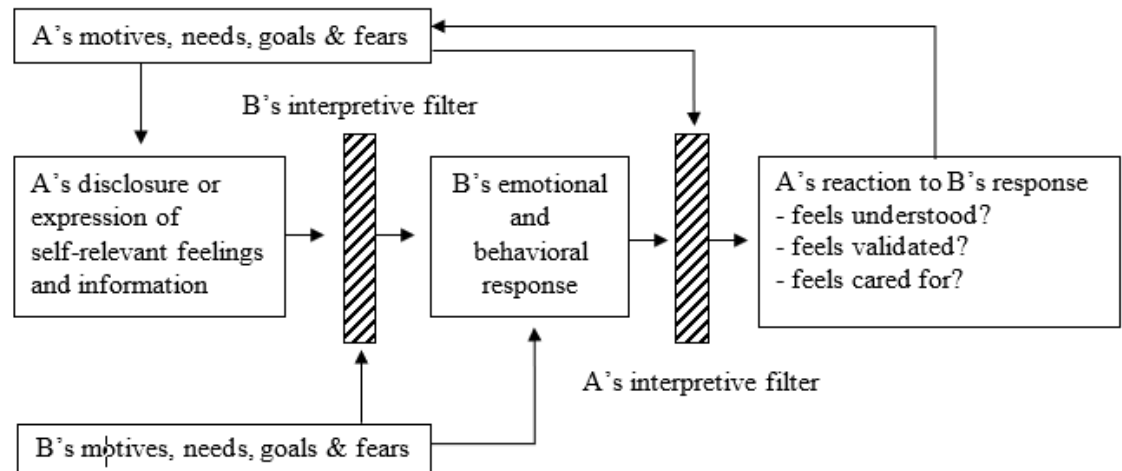
The theory focuses on a few basic themes. First, social penetration is an orderly process that moves through stages over time, progressing from more superficial to deeply intimate levels (Altman & Taylor, 1973). In other words, individuals will reveal less personal information initially before sharing more intimate thoughts, feelings, and so on. Additionally, interactions hold either an interpersonal reward or cost, which determines how the relationship will advance. If an individual perceives an interaction as favorable and predicts future favorable interactions, it is believed that further exchanges will broaden in scope and deepen.

Social penetration theory also highlights that personal characteristics may impact the social penetration process (Altman & Taylor, 1973). For example, some people may be more likely to disclose about themselves than others. Interestingly, it is noted that in situations where an individual feels forced to engage with another or in situations where they are unable to disengage from the relationship, the interaction will be negative. Inversely, if someone has a predisposition to disclose, they will likely engage freely even with strangers. Therefore, this suggests that time may not always predict the level of disclosure between individuals. Finally, the theory suggests that relationship deterioration will follow same the path as social penetration but in reverse. Therefore, individuals will move from higher levels of disclosure and intimacy to less as the relationship between reward and cost shifts.

Reis and Shaver's (1988) Intimacy Process Model

Reis and Shaver's (1988) IPM was based on previously established theories, including Jourard's theory on self-disclosure, research, and personal observations. Reis and Shaver asserted that within social sciences, "intimacy" can be broadly defined as feelings, behaviors, thoughts, activities, communication, and so on. However, Reis and Shaver defined intimacy as "an interpersonal, transactional process" (p. 368) that is part of an exchange of emotional communication. This too aligns with Jourard's self-disclosure theory.

To understand disclosure within the IPM, it is first important to acknowledge that when using Reis and Shaver's definition, disclosure through the intimacy process leads to an outcome. For example, an individual may engage in intimacy with another to fulfill a need or express an emotion, desire, or thought (Reis & Shaver, 1988). Coming with that desire are also fears about the response from the other individuals, thus potentially impacting the nature of further intimate interactions. In addition, according to the IPM, other factors may impact the process, such as personality traits, self-esteem, and situational, cultural, or environmental factors. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the IPM.

Figure 1*Visual Representation of Intimacy Process Model*

Note. Adapted from “Intimacy as an Interpersonal Process,” by H. T. Reis and P. Shaver, in S. Duck, D. F. Hay, S. E. Hobfoll, W. Ickes, and B. M. Montgomery (Eds.), *Handbook of Personal Relationships: Theory, Research and Interventions* (p. 375), 1988, John Wiley & Sons. Copyright 1988 by John Wiley & Sons.

The process begins with Person A disclosing some aspect of themselves. In response, Person B processes the disclosure through their own interpretive filter, consisting of their needs, motives, goals, and fear, before responding. It is important to note that the response may be verbal or nonverbal, which may impact how Person A interprets the interaction and responds. According to the IPM, an interaction achieves intimacy only when the disclosing individual feels understood, validated, and cared for.

Literature Review

Research supports the notion that relationship partners disclosing personal information to one another is related to relationship satisfaction (Willems et al., 2020) and personal well-being (Esi, 2019; Jourard, 1971). The current study focused on disclosure between romantic partners in young adulthood. The study considered relations among gender, felt pressure from the partner to disclose, and disclosure.

Self-Disclosure

Definitions

Jourard, author of the seminal works on self-disclosure, including a book titled *The Transparent Self* (1964) and the Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (1958), characterized disclosure as the purposeful act of “making yourself manifest, showing yourself so others can perceive you” (Jourard, 1971, p. 19). Interestingly, Jourard was not referring to being seen as a physical form, but instead to making oneself transparent enough to be apparent. When describing disclosure, Jourard pointed out that unwitting disclosure is not the same as purposeful and intended disclosure to another. To further clarify, purposeful disclosure is the result of an individual’s wish to be fully transparent with feelings, experiences, and so forth, while unwitting disclosure is that which results in the sharing of things that are unintended. Therefore, a lack of disclosure can be viewed as a means to conceal information deemed private. It should also be noted that self-disclosure, while usually verbal, can also be nonverbal and can be communicated through other means such as choices in physical appearance or body language (Greene et al., 2006).

Jourard suggested that for disclosure to be received, it must be perceived by another. A primary determinant of self-disclosure is the identity of the individual and their relationship to the person disclosing. Jourard asserted that disclosure will more likely occur with another who is perceived as trustworthy and/or who will be willing to return the disclosure with a similar level of sharing. Therefore, in Jourard's definition, disclosure is a process of reciprocation.

Building on Jourard's notion of disclosure, there is literature defining disclosure within the context of romantic relationships, Candel and Turliuc (2021) described disclosure as a verbal communication between two individuals that relays information about personal thoughts, emotions, needs, experiences, beliefs, and future plans. In addition, disclosure is often described as a progressive process (Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004) existing on continuums, such as the level or depth of disclosure or type of disclosure (Harvey & Boynton, 2021).

Assessments of disclosure

To measure disclosure, researchers commonly utilize observation or self-report methods. Observation methods offer researchers the ability to observe and describe behaviors or interactions and have been used in studies, including studies conducted by Ross et al. (2019) and Khalifian and Berry (2021). Ross et al. used video-recorded behavioral observation to examine how couples interacted for three 7-minute discussions in which one partner disclosed a personal goal while the other partner responded in any way they desired. Similarly, Khalifian and Berry used observation to examine disclosure specificity in relation perceived partner responsiveness. In that study, researchers

observed couples during 10-minute conversations about vulnerabilities experienced by one of the partners. Each 10-minute conversation was divided into segments, and each segment was assigned a score related to the specificity of the disclosure.

Self-report assessments are the most common means of evaluating disclosure, with multiple instruments available to assess disclosure (Çağ & Yıldırım, 2018; McCarthy et al., 2017; Miller et al., 1983). For example, Çağ and Yıldırım (2018) designed a tool that measured the level of spousal disclosure known as the Scale of Self-Disclosure to Spouse. This instrument consists of 29 items measuring three factors: nature of relationship, awareness, and openness (Çağ & Yıldırım, 2018). Also measuring adult romantic partner disclosure is the Emotional Disclosure with Romantic Partners Measure (McCarthy et al., 2017). This six-item measure focuses on emotional disclosure with a romantic partner, asking respondents to rate statements such as the degree to which they fully share their feelings with a partner or they share details about their day. As another example, Miller et al. (1983) developed the Opener Scale. The scale focuses on three content areas: perceiving reactions of others, interest in listening to others, and interpersonal skills. These assessments often have subscales and assess a range of behaviors and feelings broader than disclosure specifically (e.g., feeling close to one another).

In contrast, other studies have used more streamlined, focused assessments of disclosure, using a small number of items assessing the degree of disclosure with a relationship partner. For example, a three-item measure based on the intimate exchange subscale of the Friendship Quality Questionnaire (FQQ; see Parker & Asher, 1993; Rose,

2002) has been used to assess disclosure in friendships and romantic relationships (Rose, 2002). As another example, the Network of Relationship Inventory developed by Furman and Buhrmester (1985) and modified versions, such as the Network of Relationships Inventory—Modified Version (Guan & Fuligni, 2016), assess the degree of disclosure with family members, friends, and romantic partners using three items to assess disclosure with each relationship partner.

Romantic Relationships in Young Adulthood

Developmental Significance

Most typically, the emergence of romantic behavior and relationships begins in adolescence or early adulthood (Furman & Rose, 2015). Earlier relationships with family members typically play an important developmental role by laying the foundation for future relationships as adolescents explore their needs for emotional security, intimacy, and companionship (Gómez-López et al., 2019b). Importantly, having positive experiences in romantic relationships in adolescence and young adulthood lays the groundwork for positive later relationships. For example, there is a long-term effect of adolescent romantic relationships in that those who have been in a steady relationship are more likely to enter marriage by 25 years (Furman & Rose, 2015).

The vast majority of studies on romantic relationships in adolescence and young adulthood focus on heterosexual relationships between two cisgender individuals. This is unfortunate as it is increasingly known that romantic relationships can serve similar positive functions regardless of individuals' sex/gender (Gómez-López et al., 2019b). Therefore, although this dissertation is based on previously collected data that focused on

heterosexual relationships, it is acknowledged that this is only a subset of possible romantic relationships.

Prevalence

The formation and maintenance of romantic relationships is a critical developmental task in young adulthood. Engaging in romantic relationships is viewed as an accepted practice by adolescents as they mature into adults. In fact, youth as young as 10 to 14 years of age perceived that it was acceptable to be in a relationship with someone of the opposite sex (Moreau et al., 2019). By mid-adolescence, most boys and girls report having experienced at least one romantic relationship (Gómez-López, 2019b). For example, based on responses from approximately 600 adolescents between the age of 14 and 17, found that 55.8% had experienced a romantic activity defined either as engaging in a romantic relationship or participating in a one-on-one date or group date (Beckmeyer et al., 2020).

By young adulthood, individuals typically desire to be in a romantic relationship. For example, in one study, 32.9% of young adults reported that they really wanted to be in a romantic relationship at that time, 49% reported they wanted to be in a romantic relationship, but it was not that important, while only 17.6% reported they did not care about being in romantic relationship (Watkins & Beckmeyer, 2020). Additionally, young adults are more likely to engage in multiple romantic relationships rather than a single relationship during this point of development (Boisvert & Poulin, 2016).

Associations With Personal Well-Being

Research supported the idea that relationships play an essential role in a person's well-being. When considering romantic relationships specifically, a systematic review of thirty years of data ranging from 1990 to 2017 found that romantic relationships play a critical role in well-being in adolescence and during the transition to adulthood (Gómez-López et al., 2019b). Specifically, being in a romantic relationship was linked to higher self-esteem and overall mental and physical health. Additionally, the feeling of being in love was associated with increased happiness, life satisfaction, and goal achievement.

Among adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17, romantic relationship status also had a significant impact on self-acceptance, autonomy, positive interpersonal relationships, and life development (Gómez-López, 2019a). For example, those having had a past relationship or in a current relationship were found to have the highest levels of psychological well-being and positive interpersonal relationships, as compared to those who report no romantic relationships who showed increased levels of self-acceptance and autonomy. Further, adolescents having experience with romantic relationships showed higher levels of overall well-being while moving into adulthood, over those who reported never being in a romantic relationship. Although romantic involvements also can be associated with anxiety or depression, behavioral issues, and certain types of violence, especially after breakups or in low quality relationships (Gómez-López et al., 2019b), having high-quality romantic relationships is generally associated with greater adjustment benefits than risks (Karan et al., 2019).

Disclosure in Romantic Relationships

Disclosure in Romantic Relationships and Relationship Outcomes

Disclosure is an important feature of romantic relationships. In fact, disclosure is an important aspect of the development and maintenance of relationships (Willems et al., 2020). As relationships develop and interactions become more predictable, disclosure typically deepens and broadens, this idea serves as a basic principle of the social penetration theory. Within relationships, disclosure communicates information about the relationship such as approval/disapproval, level of trust, and support (Willems et al., 2020). Therefore, it is not surprising that disclosure in romantic relationships is related to positive relationship outcomes.

For example, one study of disclosure between married couples (Çağ & Yıldırım, 2018) found that disclosure was related to both spousal support and marital satisfaction. The researchers assert that mutual self-disclosure allows for a dynamic in which the degree to which social support is needed and appropriate is more easily perceived and accepted. Another study of young adults found a positive relation between perceived partner disclosure and perceived partner responsiveness (Candel & Turliuc, 2021). Couples who perceived higher levels of partner responsiveness, in turn, also reported greater couple satisfaction. In contrast, a perceived decrease in disclosure from a partner has been found to contribute to the decline of romantic relationships as it is viewed as an indication of relationship disengagement (Willems et al., 2020).

Disclosure in romantic relationships and personal well-being.

Disclosure in romantic relationships has not only been found to impact the relationships; research also finds that disclosure in romantic relationships is related to individuals' personal well-being (Willems et al., 2020). For example, in a study of adults (Harvey & Boynton, 2021), disclosure to a romantic partner was a predictor of psychological resilience, defined as an individual's ability to adapt to upsetting instances through intentionally preventing negative thoughts to adversely affect one's mental state. Those who were psychologically resilient, in turn, reported lower stress levels and had a more positive outlook. Additionally, disclosure with a romantic partner has been found to help individuals cope with negative thoughts, promotes connection and support, reduces tension throughout the body (Willems et al., 2020), and reduces psychological stress (Harvey & Boynton, 2021).

Gender and Disclosure***Development of Gender Differences in Disclosure***

Gender plays a role in interactions related to disclosure throughout childhood and adolescence (Lani & Demina, 2022; Maccoby, 1990; Rose & Rudolph, 2006). Research with young children has considered how gender impacts the way in which parents socialize their children's expression of thoughts and emotions (Chang, 2017). Research with older children and adolescents has considered gender differences in relationships with friends in addition to parents (Maccoby, 1990; Rose & Rudolph, 2006).

In terms of parents, research with young children has considered the sharing of personal memories between parent and child (Reese et al., 2019). In this study, both

mothers and fathers emphasized reminiscing, a form of disclosure, more so in conversations with girls than boys. For example, parents used elaborations with daughters more than sons, with elaborations defined as questions or statements that elicited the child's sharing previously unmentioned parts of the narrative. Gender differences in disclosure with parents also are present in childhood and adolescence. For example, in a meta-analysis including 10 to 18-year-olds, girls were found to disclose to parents more than boys (Liu et al., 2020).

As youth move through adolescence, however, they spend less time with parents and increasing amounts of time with friends (Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Consistent with findings for parent-child relationships, reviews of the literature (Rose & Asher, 2017; Rose & Rudolph, 2006) indicate that girls also disclose to friends more than boys in childhood and adolescence. This gender difference is found among young adults as well (Leaper, 2019). In addition to young women engaging in more disclosure with friends than boys, young women also disclose about more topics with friends as compared to young men (Jaradat, 2020).

Importantly, individuals' future behavior is influenced by internalized social norms learned through social situations. Therefore, earlier experiences with parents and friends lay the foundation for future relationships and reinforce particular behaviors within relationships, including disclosure (Chang, 2017). This foundation establishes perceived normalcy in relationships, including by establishing comfort levels, expectations, and boundaries for communication between partners.

Disclosure in Cross-Sex Relationships

As described, previous research indicated that girls' relationships with parents and friends typically involve greater disclosure than boys' relationships with parents and friends. Given that women and men likely approach relationships with different expectations for disclosure, it is not surprising that disclosure is related to conflicts within romantic relationship. In fact, research indicates that many women report communication differences as a serious relational issue with their romantic partner (Lani & Demina, 2022, Rauer et al., 2020).

Building on studies indicating strong and consistent gender differences in same-sex relationships (e.g., same-sex friendships; Rose, 2021), the expectation would be that women disclose to romantic partners more than men. In fact, some studies do find that women disclose to male partners more than men to disclose to female partners (Candel & Turliuc, 2021; Ogba et al., 2019). However, such findings are not consistent as several studies do not find gender differences in disclosure to cross-sex romantic partners (Çag & Yıldırım, 2018; Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004). Taken together, the research suggests that the potential gender difference in disclosure to romantic partners is not as strong as might be suggested.

Perceived Pressure to Disclose

The Relation Between Perceived Pressure to Disclose and Disclosure

Despite the large number of studies examining behavior in romantic relationships, including disclosure (Jaradat, 2020; Willems et. al., 2020), considerably less is known about factors that predict disclosure. As noted, demographic variables, including gender

and age, are associated with disclosure (Lantagne & Furman, 2017). A few other emotional or social-cognitive processes also have been found to be associated with disclosure. Among adults, self-concept clarity and self-esteem have been found to be related to more disclosure (Tajmirriyahi & Ickes, 2020), whereas social anxiety is associated with less disclosure (Barnett, et. al., 2021). Among middle adolescents, being sympathetic is related to more disclosure (Bechtiger et. al., 2021).

These studies indicated that individuals' characteristics are related to the degree to which they disclose; however, how perceptions of the *partner* are related to disclosure is understudied. Specifically, no studies were identified that considered the degree to which individuals felt pressured by their romantic partners to disclose. In general, social pressure often elicits specific behaviors. In close relationships, perceived pressure to disclose may be especially likely to elicit disclosure if the partners want to please their partner or avoid conflict.

Gender and Perceived Pressure to Disclose

Because women experience greater disclosure in relationships than men (e.g., relationships with parents, relationships with same-sex friends; Candel & Turliuc, 2021; Ogba et al., 2019), it is reasonable to suspect that women would expect and desire greater disclosure in their romantic relationships. In addition, research regarding relational entitlement indicates that women report clearer expectations of their partner and confidence in their ability to express them (Candel & Turliuc, 2021). Taken together, the research supports the hypothesis that men will report greater perceived pressure to disclose to their romantic partner than women.

The strength of the relationship between perceived pressure for disclosure and the degree to which individuals disclose also might differ for men and women. In other words, men and women who are the same in their perceived pressure to disclose may differ in how much they do disclose. Because women are more sensitive to social cues than men (Rose et al., 2022) and likely have a stronger skill set for disclosure than men given their greater experience with disclosure (Chang, 2017), when women perceive pressure to disclose, they may disclose more than men. If so, this would mean that gender moderates the relation between perceived pressure to disclose such that the relations between perceived pressure to disclose and disclosure to the partners may be stronger for women than men.

The Current Study

To extend the literature, the current study will assess perceived pressure to disclose and consider relations among gender, perceived pressure, and the degree of disclosure. Data for the study are drawn from a previously collected data set (University of Missouri IRB #1195560, 2011, Amanda J. Rose, PI). The first goal of the current study is to evaluate the psychometric properties of items assessing pressure to disclose that were developed for the previous data collection but never analyzed. The items are expected to load on a single factor indicating that they can be represented by a single score. The second goal of this study will be to test the hypotheses that perceived pressure to disclosure is related to self-reported disclosure. Third, the role of gender will be considered. The gender difference in perceived pressure to disclose will be tested and

whether the relation between perceived pressure and self-reported disclosure differs by gender will be tested as well.

Importantly, findings from this study are expected to have implications for social change. Specifically, insights gained could impact how mental health care providers, specifically couples' therapists, approach therapy. Supporting healthy romantic relationships has positive effects outside the context of the romantic relationship as well, in that well-functioning romantic relationships are related to positive overall well-being.

Summary

Three theoretical frameworks were outlined to lay a foundation on the importance of disclosure research. The literature shows that the desire to be in a relationship is part of the human development process and those relationships can play vital roles in an individual's holistic well-being. Although the importance of disclosure is evident, gaps remain in the literature. How individuals' perceptions of pressure to disclose from a romantic partner has not been examined. Despite the positive implications of disclosure for relationships and individual well-being, disclosure that is driven by pressure from a romantic partner may not be as strong of an indicator of a healthy relationship as voluntary disclosure. Therefore, knowing whether some young adults do report perceiving pressure to disclose from romantic partners, and whether perceived pressure is related to disclosing to romantic partners, is important. The role of gender is expected to be important in this context as well. Chapter 3 will introduce the methodology utilized for this study and include variables, testing methods, rationales, and ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to further understand disclosure in heterosexual romantic relationships. Specifically, relations among perceived pressure to disclose, self-reported disclosure, and gender were examined. Preexisting data obtained from Rose (2011) were analyzed using quantitative methods. To extend past research, this study tested if perceived pressure to disclose was related to disclosure to a romantic partner. Whether the relation differed for men and women was also examined. Gender differences in perceived pressure to disclose were also tested. To test these questions, the psychometric properties of items developed to assess perceived pressure to disclose were first examined to ensure the items form a coherent, internally reliable scale.

This chapter will describe the research design and methodology used for this dissertation. Specifically covered are the rationale for the methodology, description of the population, sampling and recruitment procedures, description of the measures, plan for analysis, and threats to validity.

Research Design and Rationale

To address the research questions, this study used quantitative methods. A quantitative design was appropriate for this study because it is suited for testing stated hypotheses and examining relationships between variables (Keenan, 2020). The study used a nonexperimental, correlational design (Price & Jhangiani, 2018). In experiments, the independent variable is manipulated (e.g., by assigning participants to treatment groups). However, in this study, no variables were manipulated. Instead, participants

reported on their pressure to disclose, degree of disclosure, and gender. The relationships among these variables were examined. Because this study utilized a previously collected data set, the most significant resource and time constraints required were the time needed to become familiar with the data collection process and time to fully understand the dataset.

As stated, the variables to be examined in this study were disclosure, perceived pressure to disclose, and gender. Analyses included an ANOVA with self-reported disclosure to the romantic partner as the DV and perceived pressure to disclose and gender as IVs. This analysis tested the relation between perceived pressure to disclose and self-reported disclosure and whether the relation differed by gender. To examine whether there was a gender difference in perceived pressure to disclose, a *t* test was conducted with perceived pressure to disclose as the DV and gender as the IV.

Methodology

Population

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020), there are approximately 30,053,000 young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. The target population for this study was young adults attending college at a major Midwestern University in the United States who were in or had been in a heterosexual romantic relationship at the time of data collection in 2011.

Sampling and Sampling Procedure

To identify participants, this study utilized convenience sampling, which is commonly used in psychology research (Rooney & Evans, 2019). The sampling frame

consisted of Introduction to Psychology students attending a Midwestern university in the United States. Participants could be male or female; however, they were required to be between the ages of 18 and 24 years old. They also were required to be in a romantic relationship or to have previously been in a romantic relationship.

To determine whether the number of participants in the dataset was sufficient for detecting expected effects, power analyses were conducted (Hedberg, 2018). The sample collected included 189 participants. Power analyses were conducted using G*Power version 3.1.9.4 (Faul et al., 2019). Because effects in the social sciences often are not large, the goal was to have sufficient power (power = .80) to detect medium-sized effects. Results indicated that to achieve sufficient power for detecting a medium effect for a *t* test, 128 participants were needed.

An additional power analysis was conducted to determine the sample necessary for the ANOVA. The first test was computed to determine the sample needed to test the main effects, being gender and perceived pressure to disclose. That analysis indicated that a medium main effect can be detected with 107 participants. A second power analysis was conducted to determine the sample needed to detect the interaction between gender and pressure to disclosure while controlling for the two main effects. Results from this power analysis indicated that to detect a medium effect for the interaction, 132 participants are required. Therefore, the available sample ($N = 189$) was adequate to test the hypothesis.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Participants were 189 undergraduate students (95 female) from a Midwestern university in the United States. The students were enrolled in Introduction to Psychology. Students were informed of the opportunity to participate in a study on disclosure in relationships as one of their choices for earning course credit. Recruitment continued until the goal of obtaining 100 males and 100 females was met; however, 11 participants were not included in analyses because they had never had a romantic relationship. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 24 years. The median age was 19 ($M = 19.00$, $SD = 1.19$). The racial composition of the sample was 79.9% White/European American, 10.6% Black/African American, 6.3% Asian, 2.6% unknown race(s), and .5% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.

Participants completed the study online using the Qualtrics platform. Informed consent was achieved through electronic written consent before the items for the study were presented. Participants were not required to answer all questions and could exit the questionnaire at any time. Although the dataset used for this dissertation was previously collected by Dr. Amanda Rose in 2011, with IRB approval obtained from the University of Missouri, the data had not been previously analyzed. The data were used with expressed permission by Dr. Rose. Data were provided after IRB approval for the dissertation was obtained (see Appendix A).

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

Measures included in the dissertation assessed gender, disclosure to a romantic partner, and felt pressure to disclose to a romantic partner.

Gender

Participants self-identified their gender. The options they were provided were male or female. All participants chose one of the two options. Limitations due to the dichotomous nature of the assessment are further considered in Chapter 5.

Disclosure to Romantic Partner

Disclosure to the romantic partner was assessed with a revised version of the Intimate Exchange subscale of the Friendship Quality Questionnaire (FQQ; see Parker & Asher, 1993; Rose, 2002). Each of the three items assessed disclosure to a romantic partner. In previous research, internal reliability was high ($\alpha = .85$; Rose, 2002). Although this instrument was first used in child and adolescent research, the items were constructed to be appropriate for use with adult populations. The three items include “I talk to my romantic partner about my problems”; “When I am mad about something that happened to me, I talk to my romantic partner about it”; and “I talk to my romantic partner about the things that make me sad.” Participants rated each item using a 5-point Likert scale with the following response options: 1 (*not at all true*), 2 (*a little true*), 3 (*somewhat true*), 4 (*pretty true*), and 5 (*really true*). Scores are the mean across the items.

Perceived Pressure to Disclose

Four items were developed by Rose (2011) to assess pressure to disclose. The items included the following: “My romantic partner pressures me to talk about my problems.” “My romantic partner pushes me to talk about my problems more than I want to.” “My romantic partner tries to get me to analyze my problems more than I would on my own.” “My romantic partner acts like I should talk more about my problems than I

am.” Participants answered four questions using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 5 (*very true*). The items were written with the goal of assessing a single construct. Analyses tested the psychometric properties of the items, and scores were created based on the results.

Data Analysis Plan

Deidentified data and a key were provided by Rose as an IBM SPSS file. The identities of participants were not identifiable as participation was anonymous. Data were analyzed using IBS SPSS Statistics 27.

Research Question 1 involved testing whether a single factor can be identified from the items developed to assess pressure to disclose. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to examine the factor structure (Hadd & Radgers, 2021). To determine how many factors were extracted, the eigenvalues were reviewed. The previously accepted approach for deciding how many factors to extract is referred to as the *eigenvalue greater than 1 rule* (Finch, 2020). With this method, all factors with an eigenvalue of 1 or higher are retained because each of the factors accounted for more variance than single variables. However, this approach can result in retaining factors that account for a negligible amount of variance and/or factors for which there are not meaningful item loadings.

To choose the number of factors to retain, the currently recommended method is to retain the number of identified factors before a drop in eigenvalues and for which there are conceptually meaningful factor loadings. For the current study, the factor analysis was expected to indicate one strong factor on which all four items load. The data analytic

plan for the remaining questions was described based on the expectation that a single score can be computed based on the four items.

An ANOVA was conducted with self-reported disclosure as the DV and perceived pressure to disclose and gender as the IVs. This analysis tested Research Question 2 (concerning the relation between perceived pressure and self-reported disclosure) and Research Question 4 (concerning whether the relation differs by gender).

Research Question 3, concerning whether there was a gender difference in perceived pressure to disclose, was tested with a *t* test. Perceived pressure to disclose was the DV, and gender was the IV.

Threats to Validity

To interpret the results of the study, it was necessary to consider possible threats to internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to the degree to which the methodology and execution of the study assess the variables as intended (Frey, 2018). One threat to the internal reliability was whether the survey measures were appropriate to measure the intended variables. One way that this issue is addressed is by assessing internal reliability. The instrument used to assess disclosure has been shown to have good internal validity in previous studies (Rose, 2002; Rose et al., 2007). Analyses were expected to reveal a single, internally reliable score for the felt pressure to disclose items. In addition, if the hypothesized associations with gender and disclosure were found, this would support the internal validity of the new pressure to disclose measure.

A primary threat to external validity involved whether the findings can be generalized to other populations. For research to be externally valid, participants used in

the study need to be equitable to nonparticipants (Coleman, 2019). According to Fry (2018), individuals who choose to participate in research studies could differ from the larger population in areas such as attitudes, values, and motivations. The findings were expected to be generalizable at least to other young adults attending public Midwestern universities. However, because external validity cannot be proven, it will be necessary to be cautious not to overgeneralize the results.

Ethical Procedures

The study utilized preexisting data and thus did not require recruitment of participants. The data were collected with IRB approval by Rose (Appendix B) and were provided for use in this project after IRB approval from Walden University was obtained. Participants were over the age of 18 years old therefore able to provide consent. They participated voluntarily and could choose to not participate or to not answer specific questions if desired. Although course credit was given to participants, students were not required to participate in the research and could choose to participate in an alternative assignment if preferred. The data were anonymous, meaning that they were collected without participants providing names or any other identifying information. The dataset and working documents related to this study were stored on a password-protected computer.

Summary

To understand relations among gender, pressure to disclose, and disclosure, a preexisting dataset was used, and quantitative analyses were performed. The data collection process and information about the data set were presented in this chapter. In

this chapter, the analyses used were also described. Finally, validity threats and ethical procedures were reviewed. Chapter 4 will summarize the results of the statistical analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to test the relationships among perceived pressure to disclose, self-disclosure, and gender. To test Research Question 1, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to test whether a single factor can be identified from the items developed to assess pressure to disclose. To test Research Questions 2–4, an ANOVA was conducted. The DV was disclosure, and the IVs were perceived pressure, gender, and the interaction between perceived pressure to disclose and gender. In addition, Chapter 4 will summarize data collection and provide demographic data describing characteristics of the participants, tests of hypotheses, and descriptive analysis. It will conclude with a summary of this chapter and introduction to Chapter 5.

Data Collection

The secondary data used for this study were collected by Rose in 2011 at a university in the Midwest of the United States. Students enrolled in an Introduction to Psychology course were informed of the option to participate in a study on the topic of disclosure in relationships for course credit. As reflected in Table 1, the final sample was 50.8% female ($N = 95$) and 49.2% male ($N = 92$). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 24 years, with a mean age of 19 ($M = 19.00$, $SD = 1.19$). The racial composition of the sample was 79.9% White/European American, 10.6% Black/African American, 6.3% Asian, 2.6% unknown race(s), and .5% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.

Results

In Table 1, the means, range, minimum scores, and maximum scores are presented for disclosure and pressure to disclose for the full sample.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Range of Variables by Gender

Variable		Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Disclosure	Female	3.00	2.00	5.00	4.19	.86
	Male	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.85	.97
	Combined	4.00	1.00	5.00	4.01	.94
Pressure to disclose	Female	4.00	1.00	5.00	1.94	.97
	Male	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.65	1.15
	Combined	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.28	1.12

Also presented are the descriptive statistics separately for men and women. As reflected in Table 1, the mean score for both men and women for disclosure was above the midpoint of the 5-point scale; however, the mean for women ($N = 95$, $M = 4.19$, $SD = .86$) was higher than the mean for males ($N = 93$, $M = 3.85$, $SD = .97$). This signifies that woman reported more disclosure than men. In terms of pressure to disclose, the mean scores for both men and women were above the midpoint. However, women reported a lower mean ($N = 95$, $M = 1.94$, $SD = .96$) than men ($N = 93$, $M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.15$). Therefore, this indicates that women feel less pressure to disclose than men.

For descriptive purposes, independent-samples t tests were conducted to examine whether men and women differed significantly in their reports of their disclosure and pressure to disclose. Independent-sample t tests assume that there is a continuous dependent variable, categorical independent variables with two groups, and independence of observation. For disclosure, disclosure was the dependent variable and gender was the independent variable. Further, the data must not have significant outliers, must be normally distributed, tested for normality by the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, and there must be homogeneity of variance as tested by Levene's test for equality of variances. The Shapiro-Wilk test of normality was used to ensure that the data met the assumption of normal distribution. Additionally, to ensure equal variance in each of the independent variables, Levene's test of equality was used. Women's disclosure scores were significantly higher than men's scores, $t(186) = 2.53, p = .01$. Therefore, these data show that women report more disclosure than men. For the second t test, pressure to disclose was the dependent variable and gender was the independent variable. The t test was significant, $t(186) = 4.60, p < .001$, signifying that men reported significantly more pressure to disclose than women.

Finally, in terms of descriptive statistics, a Pearson correlation was conducted to test the correlation between pressure to disclose and disclosure by gender. The correlation was $r = -.09, p = .22$. The direction of the correlation indicated that, as perceived pressure to disclose increased, disclosure actually decreased; however, the nonsignificant p value indicated that the magnitude of this relation was not significant. A Pearson correlation was appropriate because the required assumptions were met. Specifically, there were two

continuous variables that were paired, the relationship between the two variables was linear, and there are no significant outliers, as viewed on graphs.

For Research Question 1, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine if a single factor could be identified that assesses perceived pressure to disclose personal problems to a romantic partner. An exploratory factor analysis was appropriate because sample size was adequate, as confirmed by a power analysis, and the relationship between variables was shown to be linear and normally distributed by a Pearson correlation test. With these assumptions met, maximum likelihood extraction was appropriate to test the fit of the psychometric properties of the instrument. An oblique rotation, specifically Promax, was utilized as it is most able to identify underlying relationships and high factor loadings.

To first determine how many factors to extract, I reviewed the eigenvalues. To choose the number of factors to retain, it was necessary to locate the point in which the eigenvalue dropped. The previously accepted approach, referred to as the eigenvalue greater than 1 rule, retained all factors with an eigenvalue of 1 or higher because the factors accounted for more variance than single variables (Finch, 2020). This approach could result in retained factors that account for a small amount of variance and/or for factors that are not meaningful item loadings.

Therefore, the currently recommended method of retaining the number of identified factors before there was a drop in eigenvalues and where there were conceptually meaningful factor loadings was used. There was a drop between the first

eigenvalue, $\lambda = 3.06$, and the remaining eigenvalues of $\lambda = .44$, $\lambda = .31$, and $\lambda = .20$, thus indicating one factor.

Further, all items loaded strongly on one factor, with loadings ranging from .89 to .91. The three items, measured by a 5-point Likert scale, included “I talk to my romantic partner about my problems”; “When I am mad about something that happened to me, I talk to my romantic partner about it”; and “I talk to my romantic partner about the things that make me sad.” To test the internal reliability of the items, Cronbach’s alpha was tested. This resulted in $\alpha = .90$, thus indicating high internal reliability, and supported computing a single score across the four items.

To test Research Questions 2–4, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. A one-way ANOVA was an appropriate test as it met the assumptions needed for use (Herzog et al., 2019). First, a one-way ANOVA requires a dependent variable that is continuous and a categorical independent variable with at least two independent groups. Here, disclosure was the dependent variable, and perceived pressure to disclose, gender, and the interaction between perceived pressure to disclose and gender were the categorical independent variables. The Shapiro-Wilk test of normality was used to ensure the data met the assumption of normal distribution. Additionally, to ensure equal variance in each of the independent variables, Levene’s test of equality was used. The full model did not achieve statistical significance, $F(1, 156) = .53, p = .47$. In addition, the effect of sex on disclosure was not significant, $F(1, 184) = 2.78, p = .10$, and the effect of perceived pressure to disclose was not significant, $F(1, 184) = .74, p = .39$, leading to the conclusion that the differences were not significant. Finally, the interaction between sex

and perceived pressure was not significant, $F(1, 184) = .57, p = .45$, therefore indicating that the relationship between perceived pressure to disclose and disclosure did not differ for men and women.

Summary

The first goal of this study was to test the psychometric properties of four items developed to assess perceived pressure to disclose to ensure that a single score could be computed based on the items. The results of this study confirmed that all items strongly loaded to one factor with a high internal reliability. However, contrary to hypotheses, tests of the other research questions indicated that the effects of sex, perceived pressure, and sex by perceived pressure interaction were not significant,

Still, although the correlation between perceived pressure and disclosure was not significant, the descriptive analyses did indicate significant gender differences. Whereas women reported significantly higher disclosure than males, men reported significantly more pressure to disclose than women.

The following final chapter includes a discussion of these findings as compared with the literature reviewed in this dissertation. In addition, limitations of this study, recommendations for future study, and implications for social change will be addressed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This study consisted of participants between the ages 18 and 24 who were enrolled at a Midwestern university and who were or had been in a heterosexual romantic relationship. A nonexperimental, correlational quantitative study was conducted with two primary goals. The first goal was to test the psychometric properties of items developed to assess perceived pressure to disclose to a romantic partner. Second, I sought to understand the relationship among gender, pressure to disclose, and disclosure. Specifically, whether the perception of pressure from a romantic partner to disclose was related to the degree of disclosure was tested. Finally, this study tested if gender moderated the relationship between perceived pressure and disclosure.

Findings from this study indicated that the pressure to disclose items all loaded on one factor and formed a single score with high internal reliability. Contrary to hypotheses, results also indicated that sex, perceived pressure to disclose, or the interaction between sex and perceived pressure were not significantly associated with disclosure. However, the descriptive analyses indicated a gender difference in disclosure as women reported higher disclosure than males. Additionally, males reported significantly more pressure to disclose than women.

Interpretation of the Findings

The goal of Research Question 1 was to determine if the psychometric properties of the items developed to assess perceived pressure to disclose to a romantic partner could be computed as a single score. It was hypothesized that a single score would be

supported. The data were found to support the hypothesis. As noted in the previous chapter, all four items loaded strongly on one factor. Further, Cronbach's alpha was tested to test the internal reliability of the items, which indicated that there was high internal reliability.

Research Question 2 addressed whether perceived pressure from a partner to disclose is related to greater disclosure to the romantic partner. It was hypothesized that perceived pressure to disclose would be related to greater disclosure to the romantic partner. This hypothesis was informed by Jourard's (1971) self-disclosure theory. Jourard proposed that individuals expect equally reciprocated disclosure. Further, Jourard proposed that the identity of the person receiving the disclosure and the nature of the relationship would determine disclosure. Additionally, Allport (1998) believed that behavior may be influenced by the actual or perceived influence of others. Therefore, it was expected that perceived pressure to disclose would result in increased disclosure.

The direction of the correlation indicated that as perceived pressure to disclose increased, disclosure decreased. This correlation, however, was not significant. This is consistent with the results of the ANOVA, which also indicated that the effect of pressure on disclosure was not significant. This may be explained by Altman and Taylor's (1973) assertion that in situations where an individual feels forced, in this case pressured, to engage but are also not able to disengage from the other individual, the interaction is considered negative and could result in detachment.

Research Question 3 addressed whether there are gender differences in perceived pressure from a romantic partner to disclose. Women were expected to be more likely to

disclose to their partner, and men were expected to experience greater pressure from their partner to disclose. The data supported both ideas. First, women reported greater disclosure. Because women disclose more, as confirmed by the descriptive data from this study and studies identified in Chapter 2 (e.g., Ogba et. al., 2019), it was anticipated that women would expect similar disclosure from their partner. Accordingly, men were expected to report greater perceived pressure. In fact, men did report more pressure to disclose than women.

Despite the significant gender differences that were obtained from *t* tests, the effect of sex on disclosure was not significant in the ANOVA. This could be due to having less power when using an ANOVA in which multiple independent variables are tested rather than one dependent variable in the case of a *t* test.

Taken together, the findings that men reported greater pressure to disclose than women but also that perceiving pressure to disclose was not related to greater disclosure should be considered. Considering theoretical frameworks was helpful for identifying why men may not disclose as much as women, despite feeling more pressure. Note, though, that these considerations should be interpreted with caution given the different pattern of gender differences that emerged across analyses.

Both Altman and Taylor's (1973) and Jourard's (1971) theories are helpful for interpreting these findings. Altman and Taylor's (1973) social penetration theory indicates that perceived interpersonal rewards and costs ultimately determine how the relationship will advance. If men engaged in disclosure, the relationship would be expected to deepen. This would result in a shift in the reward/cost dynamic. Men

perceiving more pressure to disclose but choosing not to disclose may be due to men not perceiving that increased intimacy would be a friendship benefit. Further, Jourard (1971) proposed that individuals cannot be forced to disclose, only invited. Therefore, pressure to disclose may simply not be an effective strategy for eliciting disclosure. In fact, feeling pressure to disclose may even increase the likelihood of withholding information if individuals do not feel comfortable with intimacy or if the disclosure is expected to elicit a negative response.

This returns to Altman and Taylor's notion of the reward and cost dynamic of disclosure. A lack of disclosure in this case may be a result of the male avoiding a negative reaction from their female partner. Alternatively, an individual may be more likely to disclose if a positive response is anticipated. This notion is also supported by Reis and Shaver's (1988) intimacy process model, which indicates that an individual may engage or disengage from intimacy based on perceived fears about the response from their partner.

Research Question 4 addressed whether the relation between perceived pressure to disclose to a romantic partner and disclosure to that partner was moderated by gender. It was hypothesized that gender would moderate the relationship between perceived pressure to disclose and disclosure to the partner such that the association would be stronger for women than men. This hypothesis was based partially on findings indicating that in childhood and adolescence girls were more likely to disclose than boys (Lani & Demina, 2022, Maccoby, 1990; Rose & Rudolph, 2006). These types of interactions during earlier development establish a framework around disclosure, related to greater

comfort with disclosure among females. If women are more comfortable with disclosure, the prediction was that they would be more likely to disclose if they felt pressure to do so. As reported, though, the interaction between sex and perceived pressure was not significant, which indicated that the relation between perceived pressure to disclose and disclosure did not differ for men and women. Perhaps this is because, as mentioned earlier, pressure is just not an effective strategy for eliciting disclosure. If this is the case, then an association between pressure and disclosure would not be significant for women or men.

Finally, methodology is important to consider when expected effects are not found. This study involved self-reports of perceived pressure and disclosure. There are a few reasons why self-reports may not be accurate. First, self-reports are subject to social desirability biases (Ross & Bibler, 2019). Further, participants may not be able to accurately recall past experiences, resulting in recall biases in their responses.

Limitations of the Study

The most notable limitation of the study was the use of archival data. First, because the data were collected by another researcher, I was not able to participate in the process and/or formulate additional research questions. Second, these data were collected over 10 years ago, therefore creating the possibility that the data were not generalizable to the present day. In addition, the findings should not be overgeneralized and applied to populations not included in the study due to the inclusion criteria of the sample, such as those who are outside the age range, in different geographical demographics, or, most importantly, have different gender identities and sexual orientations.

Therefore, the findings are not generalizable to those individuals who identify as nonbinary or a sexual orientation other than heterosexual. Further, with the greater acceptance of gender fluidity, there is a possibility that differences identified in this study could not be as strong presently. Finally, the findings from this study only identify relationships between variables and do not provide findings on causation.

Recommendations

In the current study, gender was of primary interest as it related to disclosure and pressure to disclose within romantic relationships. Future research could look to expand inclusion criteria to focus on non heterosexual relationships and those individuals who are nonbinary or transgender. Further, because the number of non-White participants was low, another area of study could be to replace gender with race as a variable. Alternatively, race could be included as a variable along with gender to determine if other cultural identifiers produce significant statistical relationships.

Implications

The present study indicated that there was high internal reliability of the items used to measure pressure to disclose. Although a significant relationship was not found between perceived pressure to disclose and disclosure, data did indicate that women disclosed at a higher rate than males. In addition, one analytic approach indicated that men perceived more pressure to disclose than women. Pressure to disclose, however, was not related to greater disclosure.

Still, these findings address a current gap in literature. As noted, there is significant research related to disclosure but less on relevant social cognitions. The

present study did not find that perceived pressure to disclose was related to disclosure. However, the items assessing perceived pressure were found to form an internally reliable scale that should be used in future studies concerning communication in a romantic relationship; for example, the new scale should be considered in contexts beyond most White university students by taking into account factors such as culture, race, sexual orientation, and gender identity. As previous studies indicated, disclosure has a positive impact on relationship adjustment, satisfaction, and individual mental health (Kapsaridi & Charvoz, 202; Rauer et al., 2020).

The findings of this study provide a good starting point for other studies examining predictors of disclosure. In addition, although perceived pressure was not associated with gender as anticipated, the current findings do have implications for relationship and mental health care providers assisting couples in developing healthy and safe relationships. Specifically, some analyses indicated that men perceived greater pressure to disclose. The current findings suggest that perceiving pressure to disclose may not be associated with greater disclosure despite the personal and relationship benefits of disclosure. Considering that pressure to disclose may actually have negative effects, as opposed to positive effects, may be important for practitioners.

Conclusion

Communication is a fundamental function between humans. Within the context of romantic relationships, there are significant implications related to individual and relationship satisfaction, mental health, and personal well-being. Therefore, obtaining a deeper understanding of differences in how and why men and women communicate with

romantic partners expands upon current literature. Moreover, the current findings may be useful to mental health care providers, supporting positive social change through encouraging the development of healthy relationships. Given that pressure to disclose might be expected to be associated with greater disclosure and positive effects on the relationships and individuals involved, knowing that pressuring one's partner may not have positive effects, and perhaps may have negative effects, is important. In concluding this study, important insights were gained regarding the relationship between perceived pressure to disclose, gender, and disclosure. These findings support future opportunities for application and study.

References

- Altman, I., & Taylor, D. A. (1973). *Social penetration: The development of interpersonal relationships*. Holt, Reinhart and Winston.
- Barnett, M. D., Maciel, I. V., Johnson, D. M., & Ciepluch, I. (2021). Social anxiety and perceived social support: Gender differences and the mediating role of communication styles. *Psychological Reports, 124*(1), 70–87.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294119900975>
- Bechtiger, L., Steinhoff, A., Buchmann, M., & Shanahan, L. (2021). Developmental associations between sympathy and mutual disclosure in friendships from mid-adolescence to early adulthood. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 31*(2), 368–383. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12602>
- Beckmeyer, J. J., Herbenick, D., Fu, T. C., Dodge, B., & Fortenberry, J. D. (2020). Prevalence of romantic experiences and competencies among 14- to 17-year-olds: Implications for the primary care setting. *Clinical Pediatrics, 59*(2), 116–126.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0009922819885659>
- Boisvert, S., & Poulin, F. (2016). Romantic relationship patterns from adolescence to emerging adulthood: Associations with family and peer experiences in early adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 45*, 945–958.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-016-0435-0>
- Borowski, S. K., & Rose, A. J. (2021). Boys' and girls' interactions with same-gender friends and other-gender friends: A focus on problem disclosures. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 32*(3), 1194–1209. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12681>

- Borowski, S. K., Spiekerman, A. M., & Rose, A. J. (2021). The role of gender in the friendships of children and adolescents. In B. Halpern-Felsher (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of child and adolescent health* (Vol. 3, pp. 94–103). Elsevier.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-818872-9.00044-3>
- Breitenstein, C. J., Milek, A., Nussbeck, F. W., Davila, J., & Bodenmann, G. (2018). Stress, dyadic coping, and relationship satisfaction in late adolescent couples. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 35*(5), 770–790.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407517698049>
- Çag, P., & Yıldırım, İ. (2018). The mediator role of spousal self-disclosure in the relationship between marital satisfaction and spousal support. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 18*(3), 701–736.
<https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2018.3.0086>
- Candel, O. S., & Turliuc, M. N. (2021). The role of relational entitlement, self-disclosure and perceived partner responsiveness in predicting couple satisfaction: A daily-diary study. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, Article 609232.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.609232>
- Chang, T. F., Farkas, C., Vilca, D., & Vallotton, C. (2017). U.S. and Chilean mothers' use of mental references with infant girls and boys: Comparison of maternal practices in gender socialization via language in two countries. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 48*(8), 1271–1287.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022117720752>

- Charmaraman, L., Grossman, J. M., & Richer, A. M. (2021). Same-sex attraction disclosure and sexual communication topics within families. *Journal of GLBT family studies*, 17(2), 118–134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2020.1820414>
- Coleman, R. (2019). *Designing experiments for the social sciences*. SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878958>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Derlega, V. J., Winstead, B. A., Wong, P. T., & Hunter, S. (1985). Gender effects in an initial encounter: A case where men exceed women in disclosure. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 2(1), 25–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407585021002>
- Esi, N. L. P. (2019). Social and psychological benefits of self-disclosure. *International Journal of Social and Educational Innovation*, 6(12), 25–29.
- Finch, W. H. (2020). Using fit statistic differences to determine the optimal number of factors to retain in an exploratory factor analysis. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 80(2), 217–241. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164419865769>
- Frey, B. (2018). *The SAGE encyclopedia of educational research, measurement, and evaluation* (Vols. 1–4). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506326139>
- Furman, W., & Buhrmester, D. (1985). *Network of relationships inventory*. PsycTESTS. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t06336-00>

- Furman, W., & Rose, A. J. (2015). *Friendships, romantic relationships, and peer relationships*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118963418.childpsy322>
- Gómez-López, M., Viejo, C., & Ortega-Ruiz, R. (2019a). Psychological well-being during adolescence: Stability and association with romantic relationships. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01772>
- Gómez-López, M., Viejo, C., & Ortega-Ruiz, R. (2019b). Well-being and romantic relationships: A systematic review in adolescence and emerging adulthood. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*(13), 2415. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16132415>
- Green, M. F., Horan, W. P., & Lee, J. (2019). Nonsocial and social cognition in schizophrenia: current evidence and future directions. *World Psychiatry, 18*(2), 146-161. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20624>
- Greene, K., Derlega, V. J., & Mathews, A. (2006). Self-disclosure in personal relationships. *The Cambridge handbook of personal relationships*, 409-427. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511606632.023>
- Guan, S.-S. A., & Fuligni, A. J. (2016). Network of Relationships Inventory--Modified Version. *PsycTESTS*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tx58841-000>
- Hadd, A. & Rodgers, J. (2021). Methods for correlation/covariance matrices as the input data. In *Understanding correlation matrices* (pp. 47-62). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878613>

- Hartmann D. P., Wood D. D. (1990) Observational Methods. In: Bellack A. S., Hersen M., Kazdin A. E. (eds) *International Handbook of Behavior Modification and Therapy*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4613-0523-1_6
- Harvey, J., & Boynton, K. (2021). Self-Disclosure and Psychological Resilience: The Mediating Roles of Self-Esteem and Self-Compassion. *Interpersona: An International Journal on Personal Relationships*, 15(1), 90-104.
<https://doi.org/10.5964/ijpr.4533>
- Hedberg, E. (2018). Chapter 8 reasonable assumptions. In *Introduction to power analysis: Two Group studies* (pp. 99-108). SAGE Publications, Inc.,
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506343105>
- Herzog, M. H., Francis, G., Clarke, A. (2019). ANOVA. In: *Understanding Statistics and Experimental Design. Learning Materials in Biosciences*. Springer, Cham.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03499-3_6
- Jaradat, A. M. (2020). An exploratory study of gender differences in self-disclosure: The case of college students in Jordan. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 22(3), 363-372.
- Jourard, S. M., & Lasakow, P. (1958). Some factors in self-disclosure. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 56(1), 91–98. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0043357>
- Jourard, J. M. (1971). *The transparent self* (2nd ed.) New York: Van Nostrand.
- Kapsaridi, A., & Charvoz, L. (2021). Men’s stress expression and perception of partner’s support within the romantic relationships: A systematic review. *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/men0000276.supp>

- Karan, A., Rosenthal, R., & Robbins, M. L. (2019). Meta-analytic evidence that we-talk predicts relationship and personal functioning in romantic couples. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 36(9), 2624-2651.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407518795336>
- Keenan, M. (2020). Research methods. *Salem Press Encyclopedia*.
- Khalifian, C. E., & Barry, R. A. (2021). The Relation Between Mindfulness and Perceived Partner Responsiveness During Couples' Vulnerability Discussions. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 35(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000666>
- Kuhn, R., Bradbury, T. N., Nussbeck, F. W., & Bodenmann, G. (2018). The power of listening: Lending an ear to the partner during dyadic coping conversations. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 32, 762–772. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000421>
- Lani, O. P., & Demina, D. (2022). Communication Style in the Perspective of Masculine and Feminine Culture. *AGENDA: Journal Analysis Gender dan Agama*, 4(1), 32-41.
- Lantagne, A., & Furman, W. (2017). Romantic Relationship Development: The Interplay Between Age and Relationship Length. *Developmental Psychology*, 53(9), 1738–1749. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000363>
- Leaper, C. (2019). Young adults' conversational strategies during negotiation and self-disclosure in same-gender and mixed-gender friendships. *Sex Roles*, 81(9), 561-575. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-019-1014-0>

- Liu, D., Chen, D., & Brown, B. B. (2020). Do parenting practices and child disclosure predict parental knowledge? A meta-analysis. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 49(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-01154-4>
- Lothwell, L. E., Libby, N., & Adelson, S. L. (2020). Mental health care for lgbt youths. *Focus*, 18(3), 268-276. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.focus.20200018>
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Heterosexual. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 15, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/heterosexual>
- McCarthy, M. H., Wood, J. V., & Holmes, J. G. (2017). Emotional Disclosure with Romantic Partners Measure. *PsycTESTS*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t63978-000>
- McRaney, K., Bridley, A., & Daffin Jr, L. W. (2021). The Psychology of Gender.
- Miller, L. C., Berg, J. H., & Archer, R. L. (1983). Openers: Individuals who elicit intimate self-disclosure. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 44(6), 1234. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.44.6.1234>
- Moreau, C., Li, M., De Meyer, S., Manh, L. V., Guiella, G., Acharya, R., ... & Mmari, K. (2019). Measuring gender norms about relationships in early adolescence: results from the global early adolescent study. *SSM-population health*, 7, 100314. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2018.10.014>
- Multon, K. (2022). Test–retest reliability. In B. Frey (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of research design* (Vol. 1, pp. 1692-1693). SAGE Publications, Inc., <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071812082.n629>
- Ross, P. T., & Bibler Zaidi, N. L. (2019). Limited by our limitations. *Perspectives on medical education*, 8, 261-264. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-00530-x>

- Ogba, K. T., Onyishi, I. E., & Chukwuorji, J. C. (2019). Self-disclosure in intimate relationships: Moderating role of online moral foundations. *Current Psychology*, 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00420-9>
- Paraschiv, R. V. (2020, December). Gender Influence Study on Communication Style. In *Proceedings of the 20th International RAIS Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities* (pp. 102-107). Scientia Moralitas Research Institute. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4428774>
- Parker, J. G., & Asher, S. R. (1993). Friendship and friendship quality in middle childhood: Links with peer group acceptance and feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction. *Developmental Psychology*, 29, 611–621. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.29.4.611>
- Price, P.C., & Jhangiani, R. (2018). *Research Methods in Psychology*. Open Textbook Library.
- Rauer, A., Sabey, A. K., Proulx, C. M., & Volling, B. L. (2020). What are the Marital Problems of Happy Couples? A Multimethod, Two-Sample Investigation. *Family process*, 59(3), 1275-1292. <https://doi.org/10.1111/FAMP.12483>
- Reese, E., Haden, C. A., & Fivush, R. (2019). Mothers, fathers, daughters, sons: Gender differences in autobiographical reminiscing. In *Research on Language and social Interaction* (pp. 27-56). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203774953-3>
- Reis, H. T., & Shaver, P. (1988). Intimacy as an interpersonal process. In S. Duck, D. F. Hay, S. E. Hobfoll, W. Ickes, & B. M. Montgomery (Eds.), *Handbook of personal*

relationships: Theory, research and interventions (pp. 367–389). John Wiley & Sons.


- Rooney, B. & Evans, A. (2019). Selecting research participants. In *Methods in psychological research* (pp. 131-146). SAGE Publications, Inc.,
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506384955>
- Rose, A. J. (2002). Co-rumination in the friendships of girls and boys. *Child Development*, 73, 1830–1843. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00509>
- Rose, A. J., & Asher, S. R. (2017). The social tasks of friendship: Do boys and girls excel in different tasks? *Child Development Perspectives*, 11(1), 3–8.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12214>
- Rose, A. J., Borowski, S. K., Spiekerman, A., & Smith, R. L. (2022). Children's friendships. *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Childhood Social Development*, 487-502. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119679028.ch26>
- Ross, J. M., Karney, B. R., Nguyen, T. P., & Bradbury, T. N. (2019). Communication that is maladaptive for middle-class couples is adaptive for socioeconomically disadvantaged couples. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 116(4), 582. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000158>
- Rote, W. M., & Smetana, J. G. (2018). Within-family dyadic patterns of parental monitoring and adolescent information management. *Developmental Psychology*, 54(12), 2302–2315. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000615.supp>
- Rote, W. M., Smetana, J. G., & Feliscar, L. (2020). Longitudinal associations between adolescent information management and mother–teen relationship quality:


- Between- versus within-family differences. *Developmental Psychology*, 56(10), 1935–1947. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000947.supp>
- Satiadarma, M. I. M. M. P., & Wati, L. (2021). Self-Concept Clarity and Self-Disclosure and Their Relationship with Late Adolescents' Conflict Management Modes. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210805.191>
- Smith, R. L., & Rose, A. J. (2011). Friendship Quality Questionnaire-- Revised. *PsycTESTS*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t07310-000>
- Son, D., & Padilla-Walker, L. M. (2021). Whereabouts and secrets: A person-centered approach to emerging adults' routine and self-disclosure to parents. *Emerging Adulthood*, 9(2), 145-157. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696819842718>
- Sprecher, S., & Hendrick, S. S. (2004). Self-disclosure in intimate relationships: Associations with individual and relationship characteristics over time. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 23(6), 857-877. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.23.6.857.54803>
- Stattin, H., & Kerr, M. (2000). Parental monitoring: a reinterpretation. *Child Development*, 71(4), 1072–1085. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00210>
- Tajmirriyahi, M., & Ickes, W. (2020). Self-concept clarity as a predictor of self-disclosure in romantic relationships. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, 37(6), 1873–1891. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407520911131>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). National Demographic Analysis Tables. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/demo/popest/2020-demographic-analysis-tables.html>

- Watkins, N. K., & Beckmeyer, J. J. (2020). Assessing young adults' beliefs regarding the importance of romantic relationships. *Journal of Family Issues, 41*(2), 158-182.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X19871080>
- Wienclaw, R. A. (2021). Sample Survey Design. *Salem Press Encyclopedia*.
- Willems, Y. E., Finkenauer, C., & Kerkhof, P. (2020). The role of disclosure relationships. *Current opinion in psychology, 31*, 33-37.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2019.07.032>
- Yamaguchi, M., Smith, A., & Ohtsubo, Y. (2015). Commitment signals in friendship and romantic relationships. *Evolution and Human Behavior, 36*(6), 467-474.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2015.05.002>

Appendix A: Collaborative Institute Training Initiative Training

Through the University of Missouri





Completion Date **18-Sep-2020**
 Expiration Date **18-Sep-2023**
 Record ID **38515769**

This is to certify that:

Jessica Truscott


Has completed the following CITI Program course:

SBR - Basic (Curriculum Group)
SBR Group (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME. Do not use for TransCelerate mutual recognition (see Completion Report).

Under requirements set by:

University of Missouri-Columbia



Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w294fb813-a2b9-4f90-976f-9a323b1c9eeb-38515769

Appendix B: Approval From Amanda Rose to Use Data Set for Dissertation

From: Rose, Amanda [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, December 20, 2022 3:53 AM
To: Truscott, Jessica [REDACTED]
Subject: approval to use data

Dear Jessica, This email confirms that you have my **permission** to analyze the data from the project Relationships, Career Goals, and Well-Being in Young Adulthood (University of Missouri, IRB Review Number 386444) for your dissertation. These data are completely anonymous. No identifying information was collected when participants responded to the survey measure.

Amanda J Rose
Contributing Faculty

