
INDIVIDUAL, FAMILIAL, AND SOCIAL FACTORS EFFECTIVE ON THE EXPERIENCE OF LOVE FAILURE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The present research was aimed to identify the factors effective on love failure. To this end, the systematic review method was used. The study population included all the national and international written references (printed/electronic) on love failure that were accessible and retrievable through national and international informational databases. After determining the inclusion criteria (published from 2000 up to now; researches published in full text format and in reliable publications; empirical and review studies) and doing the screening and evaluation of the papers, 29 articles were selected. By a systematic review of the research literature and based on the conducted systematic review, personality characteristics, attachment styles, and maladaptive schemas as three important individual factors, parenting styles as an important family factor, and perceived social support as an important social factor, were selected as the factors effecting love failure. The impact process and the role of each one of these variables on love failure were discussed.

Keywords Love Trauma, Love Failure, Systematic Review

Introduction

Love is one the basic needs of man that leads to increases social interest and avoidance from self-centeredness and supremacy (Sailor, 2013). The start of a romantic relationship is accompanied by an unconscious emotion, intense love and desire, altruism, attempt to being a better lover, happiness and acceptance. In contrast, the end of a relationship also may be accompanied by feelings of rejection, loss, and emotions such as anger, sorrow, jealousy, hopelessness, and loneliness (Erber and Erber, 2017). In other words, while romantic relationships are considered as challenging efforts to reach desirable and main goals of life, their termination can be harmful and undesirable (Shimek and Bello, 2014); as it can, in the form of a stressful event, create feelings of inability to control and predict the event in the individual (Schmitt et al., 2009). No matter which party terminates the relationship, both sides will

have an unpleasant experience as a result (Fisher, 2014). Such that the experience of the collapse of a romantic relationship is accompanied by symptoms and problems such as depression, anger, feelings of insecurity, helplessness, guilt, hopelessness, pessimism, restlessness, vulnerability, lack of focus, hopefulness, motivation, physical symptoms (such as headache and sleep disorders, anorexia, bulimia, decreased sexual desire), boredom, verbal-motor slowness (Kweon and Lee, 2013). When romantic relationships don't go well, the individual has to make decision regarding the termination of the relationship which is a very exhaustive challenge and can lead to love failure (Zarb, 2007). Love failure refers to the cases in which the romantic relationship of a couple breaks apart and separation is ended (Amiri PichaKolaei et al., 2012).

For many people, failed or broken romantic relationships just lead to "relationship blues". But

this failed relationship can sometimes lead to deep emotional pains. In other words, failure in romantic relationships leads to deeper emotional problems in some individuals; an experience that can be called “love trauma syndrome” (Rosse, 1999). Rosse (1999) introduced love trauma syndrome for the first time. Love trauma includes a set of symptoms that emerge in an individual after the end of a romantic relationship and negatively impact the individual’s function in different areas such as academic, social and occupational areas, lead to irrational reactions, and these symptoms last for a long time (Rosse, 1999). Love trauma syndrome is experienced as an event with severe stress and to some degree traumatic (Field, 2011).

Among the fundamental characteristics of love trauma is the development of symptoms after the experience of love trauma (Tavasoli, Agh Mohammadian-Sherbaf, Sepehri Shamloo, and Shahsavari, 2018). Love trauma syndrome is referred to as a set of severe symptoms and signs which emerge after the collapse of a romantic relationship, disrupt the individual’s function in different domains of life, leads to irrational reactions, is long-term (Field, 2011), and includes avoidance, automatic reminiscence, and emotional indifference (Gilbert and Sifers, 2011). The coping strategy of each individual with love failure highly depends on their developmental, personality, social, and cultural underlying factors (Kweon and Lee, 2013); Hence, according to the prevalent symptoms of love failure especially in the mental health domain and interpersonal relationships, one of the methods for prevention of and coping with mental problems is to identify its related factors.

Methodology

The present research was a secondary study that was conducted by systematic review. Systematic reviews summarize the results of studies conducted on a special subject in a concise and precise way and contrary to the traditional approach for reviewing papers such as early researches, they follow exact and strict principles and rules. Systematic reviews use a completely systematic approach and a pre-designed method

(RajabZadehm Shirvani, and Khazanehdari, 2006).

Population, sample and the sampling method:

The population in this step included all the national and international written resources (printed/electronic) on the love failure domain that were accessible and retrievable through national (such as the national publications information bank, University Jihad scientific information database, Noormagz, electronic archives of publications) and international (e.g. ScienceDirect, Springer, Francis & Taylor, SAGE, Wiley, ProQuest) informational databases.

The present research was conducted in five stages (adapted from Gough, Oliver, and Thomas, 2013): Stage 1; determining the inclusion criteria: for a study to become qualified to be used in a systematic review, it should possess some properties. These properties that are determined based on the goal or question, are called inclusion (eligibility) criteria. The inclusion criteria in the present research were as follows: geographical area: all over the world; the language of research reports: English and Persian; publish year: from 2000 up to now. The document type: the studies published in a credible publication and in full text; methodology: empirical and review studies. Stage 2; searching: in this stage, keywords were first determined and defined. Then, the required studies and resources were retrieved through national (such as the national publications information bank, University Jihad scientific information database, Noormagz, electronic archives of publications) and international (e.g. ScienceDirect, Springer, Francis & Taylor, SAGE, Wiley, ProQuest) informational databases.

Stage 3; screening: to make sure that the studies identified and selected in the searching stage possess the inclusion criteria (stage 1), they were evaluated and selected in a two-stage screening process. Such that, first the abstract report of the studies were examined and, then, among the remaining researches, the full text of the studies were examined for the sake of having a deeper and more precise evaluation.

Stage 4; coding and mapping: in this stage, the screened studies were organized and arranged based on their characteristics like design and method, questions and dependent variables, the

type of intervention, population and sample, data and findings' gathering and analysis methods. The obtained information in this stage were used for evaluating documents and studies based on the criteria of quality of relevance (stage 5). Moreover, according to the nature of the question of the present research, the number of studies and the heterogeneity between them were high. Therefore, the obtained data in this stage were used for categorizing and identifying the sub-items (stage 6).

Stage 5; evaluation: in this stage, the studies underwent analysis and critical exploration based on two general criteria of quality and relevance (fitness for purpose; Gaf, 2007). That is, the studies were judged based on the following questions: is the considered study consistent with the purpose of the current synthesis research? According to the properties of the research (including sample characteristics, the nature of intervention, the type of the scale used), can it be considered as relevant to the present synthetic research question? Is the method selected for answering the questions, relevant? Was the research conducted well? Is the data analyzed or interpreted well? Finally, the studies were assessed and, finally, the most valid and relevant ones, that is, 29 studies were selected.

Findings

By a systematic investigation of the research literature and based on the conducted systematic review, it was shown that the following components play their roles in the experience of love failure: personality characteristics, attachment style, and maladaptive schemas as three important individual factors; parenting styles as an Important family factor; and perceived social support as an important social factor. In table 1, each variable and factor has been reported with their relevant researches.

Table 1. Studies conducted on factors effective on love failure

No	Factors	Variables	Studies
1	Individual	Personality characteristics	Mesbahi, Amiri Majd, Ghomri, and Bazazian

			(2019); Thimm (2010); Schmitt et al. (2009); Lotfi and AbuTalib Saadati (2016); Karkhaneh, Bahrami Ehsan, and Manteghi (2016); Caralis and Haslam (2004); Heaven, Da Silva, Carey and Holen (2004); Gonzaga, Campos and Bradbury (2007)
		Attachment styles	Yousefi, Amani, Asgari, and Soleimani (2017); Askari (2016); Olderbak and Figueredo (2009); Aman Allahi, Tardast, and Aslani (2016); Charania and Ickes (2007); McDonald et al. (2016)
		Maladaptive schemas	Ghazi Nezhad et al. (2021); Eken (2017); McDermott (2008); Messman-Moore and Coates (2007); Sedaghat, Rafi'e Poor, and Samavi (2016); Eivani, Noori, and Hatami (2014)
2	Familial	Parenting styles	Akbari et al. (2012);

			Esmali Koorane h and Amirsardari (2015); Zafiropoulou and Avagianou (2014); Nisiani, Mohammadi Fakhrabadi, Mostafaei, and Salehi (2016)
3	Social	Perceived social support	MoghaddamFar and Shah Nazari (2017); Hosseini, Rahmani, and Noori (2016); MoghadamFar and Zakaie Ashtiani (2017); Fahimi, Azimi, Akbari, Amiri Pichakolaei, and PourSharifi (2014); Besharat, Keshavarz, GholamAli Lavasani, and Arabi (2014)

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the present review, personality characteristics, attachment style, and maladaptive schemas are three important factors effective on love failure. Regarding the variable of personality characteristics, it should be mentioned that this variable plays a significant role in the formation and keeping of the intimate relationship, particularly in choosing the spouse and failure in emotional relationships. Such that, important elements forming personality such as motivations, abilities, desires, beliefs, and thoughts are effective on toleration or lack of toleration of love failure (Mozaffari, 2013). In other words, individual differences and different personality characteristics can evoke various reactions by individuals in face of stressful conditions. Rosse

(1999) believes that neurotic individuals react to love trauma with states like anxiety, depression, and pessimism, and they probably consider the end of the relationship as a reflection of their own incompetency; but the notable and thinkable was the relationship between agreeableness and love trauma symptom.

The above factor is characterized by traits such as altruism, empathy, and tendency to cooperation and the most probable explanation of this can be that very high commitment and empathy towards interpersonal relationships, especially in relationships with the opposite gender is a reflection of this underlying factor of personality that any kind of separation is considered to be caused by lack of altruism and empathy. A neurotic person with high sense of responsibility has, possibly, this inappropriate view about romantic relationships that relationship must be maintained at any cost and under any circumstance.

Another variable that was identified in the present research as an individual factor was attachment style. Based on the attachment theory, dependent on accessibility and responsiveness of their primary caregiver, individuals form an attachment style in their childhood and this attachment style is transferred into adulthood and it is associated with the type of love individuals will have (Honari and Saremi, 2015; cited in Aman Allahi et al., 2016). It appears that individuals with insecure attachment style (such as ambivalent), experience more love and emotional failure compared to individuals with secure attachment style. Why is it so? The theoreticians of the attachment theory contend that the quality of the loss experience is a reflection of the quality of the individual's early attachment relationships (Dehghani, 2011). People experience love and loss throughout their entire life. The experience of any loss can be considered as the re-evoking and re-solving of the individualization process. In fact, romantic loss takes affected individuals back to their early years and relieves the important and effective scenario of their early relations with significant others. It seems that the more distant the individual gets from secure attachment style, the more insecurity they will feel in interpersonal relations, particularly in close and intimate relations. There

are various studies confirming that insecure attachment style is associated with problems and issues in romantic relationships (Amiri Pichakolaei et al., 2012).

Early maladaptive schemas was another variable related to individual factors in the present research. As underlying and fundamental beliefs, early maladaptive schemas play an important role in the interpretation and explanation of life event for every individual; In other words, people see the world and their life experiences through the lens of their schemas. In fact, early maladaptive schemas lead to the individual's vulnerability for different kinds of personality and psychological disorders. This issue is a hindrance for satisfaction from life and relationship. Since maladaptive schemas are inefficient, they lead to dissatisfaction from relationships and provide the ground for romantic failure. Individuals with mistrust/abuse schemas, see the world as a very unsafe and bad place because others are always trying to hurt and deceive them, lie to them, play with them, or take advantage of them. The individual with mistrust/abuse schema believes that others will abuse them in one way or another. The most important characteristic of such individuals is that they suppose that others are doing these intentionally and on purpose. Such individuals always feel like a deceived person (Kellogg and Young, 2006). Therefore, it is clear that not only people with these schemas or beliefs have more chance of romantic failure, but they also experience more severe negative emotions because of the collapse of their romantic relationships; And, in fact, the love trauma syndrome will be more severe and outstanding in this group because individuals with such beliefs are hopeless for finding a new romantic partner in future, and due to this negative experience, negative automatic thoughts are more and more intensified in them and they reinforce this negative believe that they can't experience and consistent romantic and love relationship even in future.

The variable of perceived social support is another variable the role of which was investigated as a social factor in love failure. Based on the stressful nature of love failure due to the loss of the financial, affirmative, emotional and the social

connection of the individual with the closest emotional resource, this loss is to a great extent compensated for by social support from family and friends, that can act like a shield against mental distresses. On the other hand, social support can facilitate the behaviors leading to mental health that is generally perceived as the help received from others in difficult situations of life (Fahimi et al., 2014). Cohen and Wills (1985) talk about two mechanisms that are supposedly the mediators of the shield effect of social support. First, by weakening the appraisal response to stress or hindering it, social support can create a gap or interval between the stressful event and the stress response; therefore, this knowledge that one can have their friends and family's support and they are not necessarily alone in future (e.g. loss appraisal) can lessen the trauma caused by the loss (here the lack of emotional relationship) and work like a shield against the harmful effects of emotional loss. Second, inhibition of maladaptive coping and facilitating adaptive coping. Accordingly, even if social support fails against the effects of loss, providing social supports might facilitate coping with stress and, as a result, accelerate the improvement process (Fahimi et al., 2014). Hence, it can be expected that by increasing the power of this mental shield, emotional relationships will have more stability and, along with that, love and emotional failure will be reduced, and if the individual has experienced a love failure, he will experience weaker and less negative emotions through the supports he receives from others.

In the present research, the role of parenting style as a familial variable in love failure was investigated. Parenting style can be the cause of the formation of unique personality characteristics and lead to the way adulthood relationships are formed and maintained (Naim and Gutman, 2018). In fact, the inappropriate patterns and behaviors of parents which create the desirable experiences with early caretakers (mostly parents), are stored in the internal function models, affect the individual's cognitions and impact their beliefs towards oneself and others; Consequently, they hinder an important mechanism for the regulation of emotions and distress and increase the risk of psychological

traumas (Ghanadi, Abdollahi, and Yar Mohammadi Vasel, 2015).

Based on the obtained results in the present study, it is recommended that:

- the present study showed that early maladaptive schemas exert an important and significant effect on love failure among women and girls. Therefore, it is recommended that the role of this variable will be addressed in therapeutic programs and/or in holding therapeutic courses for individuals with the experience of love failure.
- Although love failure is a common issue among young individuals, individuals with such experience are less likely to refer to specialized counseling services. As a governmental organization that is continuously in direct touch with this group, and also, regarding the fact that the university period coincides with marriage years and the relationships between girls and boys are in their peak according to their needs, university can be beneficial for improving the quality of life of such students by holding family training courses and offering suitable counseling strategies.
- The present study showed that parenting styles and attachment styles have significant impacts on love failure. So, it is recommended that the required trainings on attachment styles will be provided for parents and they will be informed about sensitive periods of their children's lives so that they will be aware that in case they create undesirable interactions with the child and lack of secure attachment style, what risks await the future of their children. Moreover, in adulthood, people with insecure and unhealthy attachment styles must be provided with necessary awareness about their personality's characteristics, functions and interactions so that they would act with cautious in these cases and face less problems.
- Finally, based on the research findings, doubles the importance of creating and expanding counseling centers for pre-

marriage services for young individuals, developing an educational program about preventing the consequences of inappropriate relationships and training of relational and supportive skills for parents as one of the fundamental steps in realization of mental health principles. One of the recommendations for providing relational skills training for all the young people is the identification of individuals who are vulnerable to experiences of emotional failure, providing direct support for young individuals to prevent or minimize the maladaptive consequences of negative symptoms of emotional failure in their lives, enhancing the desirable paths in adulthood, and providing more optimum conditions for healthy marriage.

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