

# The Impact of Emotional Intelligence and Fear of Intimacy on Relationship Satisfaction in Men

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## Abstract

This study explores the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) and fear of intimacy (FOI) on relationship satisfaction (RS) in men. Using a quantitative correlational design, the research involved 100 Indian men aged 18 to 40 who were currently in romantic relationships. Standardized tools—Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test, Fear of Intimacy Scale, and Relationship Assessment Scale—were used for data collection. The study draws from Attachment Theory, Gender Role Conflict Theory, and the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence. Results indicated a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction. However, fear of intimacy was not a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction in the sample. The findings emphasize the cultural implications of masculinity norms in India and the necessity of enhancing emotional skills in men to foster fulfilling romantic relationships.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Fear of Intimacy, Relationship Satisfaction, Indian Men, Masculinity Norms

## 1. Introduction

Romantic relationships play an essential role in the emotional and psychological development of individuals. Among Indian men, the quality of romantic partnerships is often affected by internal emotional processes and external cultural expectations. Two variables that are central to understanding relational dynamics are emotional intelligence (EI) and fear of intimacy (FOI). Emotional intelligence encompasses a person's ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions effectively. On the other hand, fear of intimacy pertains to the anxiety individuals experience when faced with emotional closeness or vulnerability in relationships. These constructs are particularly relevant in Indian society where traditional gender roles discourage emotional expressiveness in men, leading to potential emotional suppression and relational dissatisfaction. This study investigates the roles of EI and FOI in predicting relationship satisfaction in Indian men, thereby contributing to culturally grounded psychological research.

## 2. Literature Review

Several studies have explored the roles of EI and FOI in romantic satisfaction. A 2025 Indian study emphasized the significance of EI in promoting conflict resolution and relational harmony, particularly in urban dual-income households. Men with high EI demonstrated greater emotional availability, which resulted in higher relationship satisfaction. Conversely, those with low EI often displayed maladaptive behaviors such as stonewalling and emotional detachment.

A longitudinal 2024 study in South Korea revealed that FOI negatively impacts emotional closeness in long-term relationships. The study linked FOI to childhood trauma and emotionally unavailable parenting, with effects that worsened over time. Similarly, research from Pakistan found that emotionally distant parenting led to persistent intimacy issues in adulthood.

In India, masculinity norms exacerbate the challenges surrounding emotional openness. A 2019 Indian study found that men raised in traditional households often struggle to express emotional vulnerability due to early conditioning that associates emotions with femininity. This results in relational disconnect despite a desire for emotional closeness.

Studies also demonstrate that emotional intelligence acts as a buffer against relational dissatisfaction. It enhances empathy, emotional regulation, and communication—all critical elements for healthy romantic relationships. In contrast, fear of intimacy fosters emotional withdrawal and avoidance, often rooted in insecure attachment styles developed during early childhood experiences.

Integrating the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence, Attachment Theory, and Gender Role Conflict Theory allows a deeper understanding of how these psychological variables operate within specific cultural contexts like India.

### 3. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the effect of emotional intelligence on relationship satisfaction among men.
2. To examine the effect of fear of intimacy on relationship satisfaction among men.

### 4. Hypotheses

H1: There will be a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction among men.

H2: There will be a significant relationship between fear of intimacy and relationship satisfaction among men.

### 5. Methodology

The study employed a quantitative correlational research design. The sample comprised 100 Indian men aged 18 to 40 years who were currently in romantic relationships. Participants were selected using convenience sampling methods through online and offline modes. Inclusion criteria included the ability to read and understand English, and active participation in a romantic relationship.

#### The tools used were:

- Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)
- Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS)
- Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

Data collection involved informed consent, and ethical guidelines were followed. The statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses.

### 6. Results

Descriptive statistics indicated that participants had moderate to high levels of EI and varying levels of FOI. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction ( $r = -0.418$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that higher EI corresponds to greater

satisfaction. The relationship between FOI and RS was not significant ( $r = -0.153$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Multiple regression analysis supported these findings. Emotional intelligence significantly predicted relationship satisfaction, while fear of intimacy did not emerge as a significant predictor.

## **7. Interpretation and Discussion**

The findings of the study confirmed the hypothesis that emotional intelligence has a significant relationship with relationship satisfaction in men. This result aligns with previous research highlighting EI as a key factor in maintaining emotional closeness, empathy, and effective communication. However, the second hypothesis was not supported as fear of intimacy did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction.

These results can be understood within the cultural framework of Indian masculinity, which often suppresses emotional vulnerability in men. While FOI is conceptually significant, its effects may be masked by compensatory behaviors or cultural adaptations. EI appears to serve as a protective factor, enabling emotionally intelligent men to overcome internalized masculinity norms and form more fulfilling romantic connections.

## **8. Conclusion**

This study emphasizes the role of emotional intelligence in enhancing relationship satisfaction among Indian men, while highlighting that fear of intimacy may not independently predict satisfaction. The results offer valuable insights into culturally contextualized emotional development and suggest a need for targeted interventions to improve emotional literacy in Indian males. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts, include partner perspectives, and analyze relational dynamics in greater depth.

## **9. Limitations**

- Cross-sectional design limits causal interpretations.
- Reliance on self-report measures may introduce response biases.
- The sample may not be representative of men in rural or less urbanized settings.
- The study excluded partner perspectives and relationship duration as variables.

## **10. References**

Please refer to the full reference list in the submitted dissertation document.