

Alice A. Shulzhevskaya

Student at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Communicative Studies

Kuban State University

Russia, Krasnodar

Elizabeth A. Vasilenko

Student at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Communicative Studies

Kuban State University

Russia, Krasnodar

Tatiana V. Volkodav

Ph.D., MA in Pedagogy and Psychology, associate professor in the Department

of Pedagogy and Psychology

Kuban State University

Russia, Krasnodar

TO BE JEALOUS, OR NOT TO BE... THAT IS THE QUESTION!

***Abstract:** this research attempts to study jealousy as a factor of influence on love relationships. The paper covers such aspects as the notion of jealousy, types of jealousy, factors affecting romantic jealousy, gender features, sexual orientation, social environment, possible negative consequences of jealousy as well as the features of jealousy in the 21st century.*

***Key words:** jealousy, love relationship, partnership relation, trust, love, partner.*

Introduction

It is in the youth environment that the leading activity is building relationships with the opposite sex. But one has only to imagine that his beloved does not meet with him, but with someone else, as he begins to experience

unbearable mental pain. At such moments, a person is permeated by the idea that he has lost something very valuable forever, that he was abandoned, betrayed, that he is not needed, and his love was meaningless.

The theme of feelings has been quite relevant in the field of psychology for many decades. The article is aimed at studying the influence of jealousy on young people's relationships. How does jealousy affect relationships? Is it necessary? Does its absence mean indifference or trust?

Notion of jealousy

There are different opinions about jealousy in the relationship between a man and a woman, where the emphasis is on both the positive and negative sides of this phenomenon. M. Weller noted that jealousy is “the fear of losing, and the lost pride, and fear that the other is better, and a sense of impossibility to fully control the situation, diminishing its significance, infringement of its self-assertion” [21]. Therefore, we can conclude that a stronger jealousy occurs in people with low self-esteem and many complexes. Those who are self-confident seem to be less jealous.

Peter Van Summers once said, that jealousy has been variously seen as the expression of “a biological instinct protecting reproductive rights, an acquired set of feelings resulting from socialization, a psychodynamic echo of feelings of inadequacy and a product of an antiquated monogamous, patriarchal society” [19, C. 155].

According to Easton and Schipper, jealousy is a ubiquitous and intensely painful emotion, triggered by the threatened loss of exclusivity in an intimate relationship [9]. Marazziti, Sbrana and Rucci, conclude, that jealousy is a heterogeneous and common condition ranging from normality to pathology, with different degrees of intensity, persistence, and degrees of insight. Several studies, carried out in different countries, have underlined that jealousy is present everywhere, and what differs from one society to another is the level of jealousy considered as “normal”. [13, C. 19-24]

Types of jealousy

Rydell, Bringle and Parrott stated that there are several types of jealousy: delusional, reactive, suspicious [15, C. 3-30].

Reactive jealousy is caused by a real misbehavior a sexual affair. It is generated by external phenomena. *Suspicious jealousy* occurs without betrayal or other significant event, and it is caused by minor or non-specific signals. Suspicious jealousy is generated by internal factors. *Reactive jealousy* is more closely related to the characteristics of the relationship, while suspicious jealousy is more related to the characteristics of individuals who experience jealous feelings, such as uncertainty or low self-esteem [17, C. 1099-1114]. Reactive jealousy is characterized by anger, fear, despondency, whereas suspicious jealousy is characterized by a high level of anxiety, doubt and uncertainty. Delusional jealousy is characterized by thoughts focused on a partner's sexual infidelity based on unsubstantiated evidence that can lead to extremely aggressive behavior such as stalking, suicide, and even murder [7, C. 477-478].

There are three components of jealousy, i.e., emotional, cognitive and behavioral. The reactive type is the emotional component, and the suspicious type includes both cognitive and behavioral elements [3, C. 183-198]. However, Pfeiffer and Wong believe that it is necessary to distinguish between the normal and the abnormal types of jealousy. By normal jealousy they understand a long-term response to a real threat to the relationship with a loved one by another person, while the abnormal type is generated by an illusory perception or imagination of such a threat [16, C. 181-196]. The views include the interrelation of such reactive types of jealousy as normal and suspicious abnormal.

Mary V. Seeman in her article “*Pathological Jealousy – an Interactive Condition*” writes about pathological jealousy. Pathological jealousy can be ‘triggered by the behavior of the partner and maintained by reasoning biases and by the psychological benefits that it initially bestows on the relationship. In the long run, however, it poses dangerous risks to the patient, the partner, and the

imagined rival so that involuntary hospitalization is sometimes required'. It persists in the absence of any objective basis for suspicion. The delusion of a jealous person engages in repeated verbal accusations, repeated demands for reassurance, intermittent harassment of the partner (demanding to know inner thoughts and fantasies), and in attempts to control the partner's freedom of movement. He or she also makes use of various forms of deception and spying, including searching pockets, listening in on the telephone extension, screening emails and posts on social media, stalking, documenting 'evidence,' threatening violence [18].

Factors affecting romantic jealousy

There are many factors that affect the manifestation of jealousy. We believe that the main ones include *gender features, sexual orientation* and *social environment*. Sexual differences play an important role in the reasons for jealousy. Dijkstra P., et al. and Yarab P., et al. argued that women are most jealous in the presence of a more physically attractive rival [6, C. 335-341], while men exhibit greater jealousy in the presence of a more socially prestigious opponent [20, C. 171-175].

Christine R. Harris and Nicholas Christenfeld in the paper "*Gender, Jealousy and Reason*" found out that the woman is more concerned about the emotional contact of her partner with someone, while the man is more concerned about sexual contact [8]. Research conducted by Klara Bartova in 2018, showed that sexual jealousy in homosexual women was higher than in heterosexual and bisexual. It also revealed that emotional jealousy prevailed in homosexual men, while sexual jealousy prevailed in homosexual women [4].

Social norms are patterns of acceptable beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Therefore, individuals are influenced by dominant social norms and tend to seek out peers who share similar norms and engage in similar behaviors [2].

Possible negative consequences of jealousy

As mentioned above, jealousy has both positive and negative sides. Writing about jealousy and its negative side, Carroll Izard pointed out that jealousy

awakens such fundamental emotions as fear and anger. The possibility to lose love and everything connected with it generates fear in a person. Love, among other things, means a sense of security and safety. The emotion of anger, also represented in the phenomenon of jealousy, 'occurs when a person feels that all his attempts to maintain a position in a relationship with a loved one, to return his attention, love, a sense of security, fruitless' [12].

Unfortunately, jealousy can generate not only emotions, but also indirect, and even physical aggression. In a large study by Parker J., Campbell C., and Lucas A., girls were particularly likely to use indirect aggression in response to jealousy, while boys used physical aggression more frequently than girls [14].

Other studies, using older participants, that studied jealousy within romantic relationships, have confirmed the findings that females prefer indirect aggression over males [1, C. 290-303]. Furthermore, aggression can turn into violence. Katrina Poetzl Blomquist argued that domestic violence victims report jealousy as a key instigator in their partner's violence. Cross-cultural research consistently finds jealousy as the third or fourth most common motive for inattention to murder behind no accidental homicides [5].

According to Aronson and Pines, a wide range of distressing events such as wife-battering, depression, suicide attempts and marital problems, are associated with jealousy. Buunk and Bringle characterize jealousy as one of the most prevalent and potentially destructive emotions within love relationships [16, C. 181-196]. Romantic relationships may be uniquely at risk for poor relational outcomes following a jealousy experience. Jealousy as the cause of the murder was also considered by Nicolas Evzonas [10].

Features of jealousy in the 21st century

In our age, where social networks are almost on a par with live communication, the manifestation of jealousy in a romantic relationship can't do without their influence. Specialists of the St. Petersburg Psychoanalytic Center published the results of their research on the impact of social networks on the

number of divorces. According to their findings, 15% of marriages in Russia broke up because of the social media. Furthermore, psychologists predict that the number of divorces will grow, as social networks dipped more and more people, often looking for protection from loneliness in marriage [11].

Researchers from the University of Guelph in Canada interviewed 300 Facebook users aged 17-24 years, to find out whether they are jealous when their partner adds a stranger of the opposite sex to their friends list. The survey showed that more than 70% of the respondents reported that they are jealous, and the number of females significantly exceeded the number of males.

Current research

We conducted a survey in Russia, attended by N= 450 (F=300; M=150) young people aged 16-28 years. We offered all the participants to answer the following questions via Instagram:

1) *'Are you jealous when your partner adds a person of the opposite sex as a friend?'*;

2) *'Are you jealous when your partner «likes» posts and pictures of the man of the opposite sex?'*

The first question was answered positively by 62% of the interviewees, with the overwhelming majority of women. 66% of the respondents (mostly women) said that they are jealous when their partners 'like' other men/women's posts. Analyzing the results of this survey, we can conclude that the women are more jealous of their partners' actions and behavior towards the opposite sex in social networks. Positive answers to these questions suggest that, indeed, social networks are increasingly affecting relationships; and jealousy, arising from them, often turns into reality. Therefore, the results of our survey are correlated with the findings of the Guelph university research.

At the second stage of our research we hypothesized that excessive jealousy destroys relationships just like its complete absence. Therefore, the purpose of our study was to investigate the effect of jealousy on love relationships. The survey

was attended by N=186 (F=108; M=78) young people in Russia aged 16-26 years old, with 175 (F=100 and M=75) suitable for the questionnaire (Table 1). 109 respondents were in love relationships at the time of our survey.

The first part of the questionnaire is aimed at diagnosing jealousy in the relationship on the part of one partner or the other. The rest of the questions serve to clarify the respondents' attitude to jealousy and its impact on their love relationships.

Table 1. "Jealousy questionnaire"

№	Question
1	Someone's flirting with your partner. How would you respond to this?
2	Your partner is flirting with someone else. How would you respond to this?
3	Your partner wants to go out, knowing that there will be someone with whom he or she used to be in a romantic relationship. Will this upset you?
4	How would you feel about your partner's smiling at the man of the opposite sex?
5	Do you ever check your partner's mail/phone?
6	How often does your partner get jealous?
7	Do you like it when your partner gets jealous?
8	Have you ever quarreled with a partner because of jealousy?
9	Finish the sentence: jealousy in a relationship is ...
10	Does the absence of jealousy equate to the absence of feelings?
11	If you feel your partner is not jealous of you, will you try to make him jealous?
12	Should jealousy be found in a relationship?
13	Do you consider a relationship worthy if it lacks jealousy?
14	Does the lack of jealousy mean full trust among partners?

Discussion

70% of the respondents, who are in a relationship, quarreled with their partner because of jealousy. Half of them believe that jealousy is bad, which in its turn suggests that jealousy, to some extent, destabilizes the relationships, and the respondents understand this.

The opinion that the lack of jealousy means trust was divided almost equally (46% responded negatively and 54% positively). It is noteworthy that 38% of them believe that jealousy is not important in the relationship. Trusting a person something intimate, you risk that it will be negatively used. No one wants to be deceived, betrayed, therefore, the feeling of jealousy is often perceived as

prevention of infidelity. Almost half of the respondents resorts to jealousy in order to protect themselves from that pain.

According to the results obtained, 80% of the respondents stated that by the lack of jealousy they never understand indifference or lack of feelings. They believe that the lack of jealousy is equal to full trust. 33 respondents are confident that jealousy in a relationship is unnecessary. The results of the survey showed that those who are not jealous (25% of all the respondents), want to be jealous, some of them (40%) would even try to provoke a situation that leads to a feeling of jealousy in partner. 75% of jealous interviewees reported that they demonstrate jealous behavior, but not excessively.

Conclusion

According to the data obtained, people need jealousy in their love relationships. However, it is worth noting that excessive jealousy complicates the romantic relationship. The complete absence of jealousy also has a negative impact on the couple.

The survey revealed a tendency that males, who are not in a relationship, are more annoyed by the phenomenon of jealousy than females. Nevertheless, women who are not in a love relationship, on the contrary, are more in need of jealousy. They are willing to stimulate the partner to show jealousy by deliberately creating the circumstances. This makes them feel that they are not indifferent to their partner. However, they recognize the fact that if a person is not jealous, it does not mean that he or she is indifferent to his or her partner.

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