



Alexithymia, Experiential Avoidance, and Fear of Intimacy among Young Adults

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<p>Keywords: Alexithymia, Experiential Avoidance, Fear of Intimacy, Young adults</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ABSTRACT</p> <p><i>The present study was carried out to investigate the relationship between experiential avoidance, alexithymia, and fear of intimacy among young adults. It was hypothesized that there is likely to be a relationship among experiential avoidance, alexithymia, and fear of intimacy among young adults. To study the assumed relationship correlational research design was used. The sample consisted of young adults N (245) (female=124 & male=121) (M=.49, SD= .50), and was selected through purposive sampling, recruited from Private and Government Universities, with age range from 18-30. Scales that were used were the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (AAQ; Hayes et al., 2004), the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (Bagby, Parker, et al., 1994; Bagby, Taylor, et al., 1994), Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS; Descutner & Thelen, 1991). For finding results we used Pearson product-moment correlation and hierarchical multiple regression. The result showed that fear of intimacy has a significant and positive correlation with alexithymia and experiential avoidance. The result of multiple hierarchical regression analysis came out significant, which means the hypothesis was proved right: experiential avoidance and fear of intimacy in young adults predicted fear of intimacy. Results of the t-test showed there was no significant gender difference in experiential avoidance, alexithymia, and fear of intimacy. The present study implies psychotherapies to deal with alexithymia and experiential avoidance. It involves therapies and techniques that can help individuals analyze their emotions and be able to use a better way to express their emotions.</i></p>
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1 Introduction

In a romantic relationship, the most important part is intimacy. Some individuals have more intimate relationships because they are more likely to open up with each other and show more understanding and empathy. Early adulthood is a very important period when most of the young adults develops their relationships. They are also worried about whether they will succeed in their relationship or not. So young adults experience fear of intimacy for many reasons including bad relationships between parents and they are anticipated they will also end up like their parents. If the individual cannot express their emotions and feelings and cannot communicate well with their partner then the differences among intimate partners lead to fear of intimacy. The current research was intended to study the relationship among alexithymia, experiential avoidance, and fear of intimacy among young adults.

In literature, alexithymia is defined as the individual inability to express their emotions in words (Sifneos, 1973). Alexithymia and his main aspect which is difficulty in identifying feelings may be considered as learned behavior for avoiding aversive emotions. So alexithymia not only involves difficulty in identifying feelings but also involves difficulty with managing and expressing emotions that lead to experiential avoidance (Panayiotou et al., 2015). Literature showed that alexithymia individual may have experienced more difficulties with intimate relationships because alexithymia is related to difficulty with identifying and properly expressing their emotions verbally and non-verbally also related to lesser emotional empathy (Prkachin, Casey, & Prkachin, 2009). Alexithymia may start with early emotional neglect that can cause disturbance in recognition and interpretation of feeling and it is too mild to cause psychological disorder. Aust, Härtwig, Heuser, and Bajbouj (2013) studied the role of childhood attachment and emotional management in the cause of alexithymia. They analyzed that the development of alexithymia occurs if emotional neglect occurs in childhood. Alexithymia individuals could be mentally and physically strong with having emotional neglect history. Emotional trauma is caused by sexual mishandling, disregard, perversion, and being at risk of physical misery associated with wounds or perpetual affliction (Petrova, 2008). Alexithymia is positively linked with fear of intimacy (emotional type). The emotional type of fear of intimacy is the inability to share your innermost feelings with another. Alexithymia individuals struggle with recognizing and managing their emotions. So those results increase their fear about not properly sharing their emotions and in return fear of intimacy increases (Fritscher, 2024)

Experiential Avoidance is a functional process in which individuals tend to alter, control, or avoid their private experiences when they do not either accept them or not want to remain in contact with them, they are related to specific internal states (e.g. thoughts, feelings, memories, images, physical sensations, etc.) (Hayes, Wilson, Gifford, Follette, & Strosahl, 1996). Experiential avoidance occurs when individuals try to change the frequency and duration of negatively evaluated private experiences that include thoughts, emotions, and memories that threaten them (Hayes et al., 1996). Individuals who have a high level of psychological acceptance are more likely to experience their negative event without judgment and resistance (Hayes et al., 1996). As Hayes analyzed the individual ability to accept and endure their unwanted private events is called experiential acceptance and it involves remaining in contact with the stimulus functions of events (Hayes et al., 2004). According to Hayes et al. (1996), experiential avoidance is defined as a process that involves control, altering, or escaping from aversive stimuli that are causing distress. Rejection sensitivity is increased in an individual by experiential avoidance. Rejective sensitivity is the dysfunctional ability of people to misinterpret others' behaviors considered as an indicator of rejection rather than their true intentions as a result they anticipated rejection (Downey & Feldman, 1996). So, they are less likely to be involved with others which raises interpersonal problems that lead to fear of intimacy among adults

Intimacy is described as closeness and the level of connection in interpersonal relationships. It involves the individual ability to share his true self with others. Fear of intimacy refers to the fear of close relations that is usually subconscious and has a bad effect on their relationships. In most meaningful and close relationships people are more likely to experience physical and emotional intimacy (Hayes et al., 2004). There are following four types of fear of intimacy. Intellectual that describes an individual having fear that they cannot properly share their thought and ideas with another. Emotional fear of intimacy involves fear that they cannot share their innermost feelings with another. In sexual fear of intimacy, individuals have a fear that they cannot share sexually with another. The experiential fear of intimacy involves the fear of sharing experiences with another (Descutner & Thelen, 1991). Through the above-given content, it tends to be summed up that alexithymia is an attribute where an individual has issues in distinguishing his feelings. The most advantageous term to portray alexithymia is no word to depict feelings. On the off chance that an individual has an issue in recognizing his/her feelings that leads to avoidance of negative events and experiences in person (Venta, Sharp, & Hart, 2012). Thus, people intentionally try to control or escape from negative experiences and aversive life situations. An individual having alexithymia and experiential avoidance may have more difficulties in their interpersonal problems because show resistance to their aversive life experiences and want to escape from them and even can't show their emotions properly because they cannot recognize their emotions which in return decreases the communication power badly. So, fear of intimacy increases in people (Grynberg, Vermeulen, & Luminet, 2014).

1.1 Theoretical Framework

According to the Attachment theory, many interpersonal problems are raised by insecure attachment during childhood (Bowlby, Ainsworth, & Bretherton, 1992). Attachment theory focuses on the significance of a good child-parent relationship for a capacity to frame better future attachment. When a secure attachment is not present particularly if a child experiences any type of abuse or traumas then they may regulate their relations, emotions, and self-esteem negatively. According to attachment theory, the advancement of working models of self and other people is affected by) the relative consistency with which the parental figure reacts to the necessities of little youngsters (Bowlby et al., 1992). Moderately consistent reacting prompts a positive model of self as well as other people and advances secure connection and a healthy ability of intimacy in young adults. Insecure childhood attachment prompts connection evasion or tension in grown-ups and to a shortfall in social capabilities (Lopez & Brennan, 2000).

1.2 Rationale

The main purpose of this study was to find out the relationship between experiential avoidance, alexithymia, and fear of intimacy among young adults. Fear of intimacy is a potential cause of psychopathology in adults which causes anxiety, depression, and loneliness in adults. So, the factors that lead to anxiety, depression, and loneliness need to be studied. Fear of intimacy was previously studied with attachment style, emotional regulation, and alexithymia and studies show a significant positive relationship with these constructs. There are scarce researches that show the indirect relationship between experiential avoidance and fear of intimacy and consider it an important factor for fear of intimacy. Particularly, it is sensible to assume that people who cannot talk around their feelings (alexithymia) moreover have trouble encountering their inside states, so they avoid their private experiences (experiential avoidance) which results in communication problems between intimate partners which in return responsible for causing difference that may lead to fear of intimacy in young adults. Young adults have been chosen as the sample of this study because this age group experiences more difficulties in identifying their emotions. This fear led them to stay indifferent to their emotions which in return may then enhance the fear of intimacy. They feel

more anxiety than other age groups so they prefer to avoid most of these private events. This study sought to evaluate the relationship between alexithymia, experiential avoidance, and fear of intimacy.

1.3 Hypotheses

Following are the hypotheses of the current study

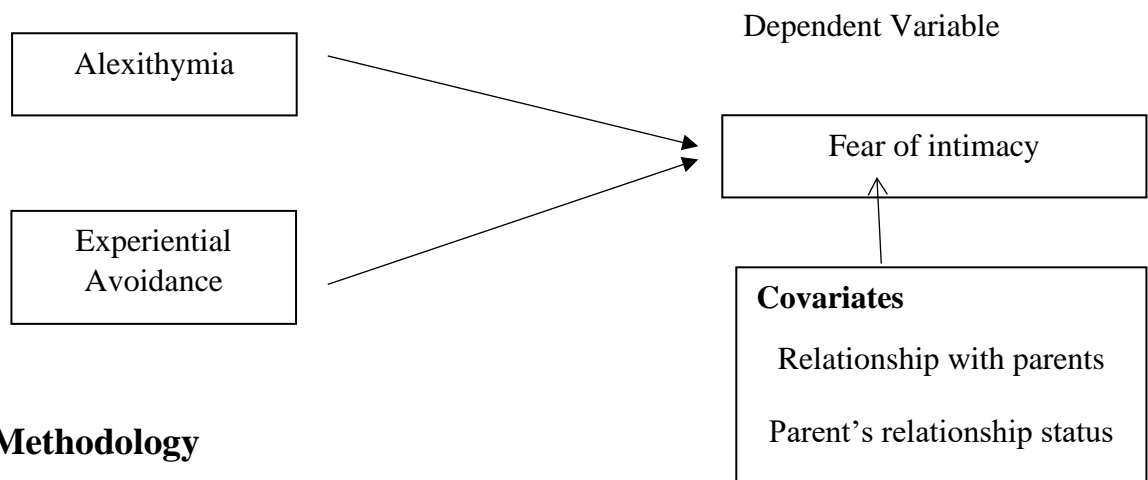
There is likely to be a relationship between experiential avoidance, alexithymia, and fear of intimacy among young adults.

Fear of intimacy will likely be predicted by alexithymia and experiential avoidance.

There will be a significant gender difference in experiential avoidance, alexithymia, and fear of intimacy among young adults.

Figure: 1 Proposed Research Model

Independent Variables



3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In this research correlational research design was used to investigate the relationship between experiential avoidance, alexithymia, and fear of intimacy among adults.

3.2 Sample and Sampling Strategy

The sample of the study consisted of young adults (N=245) with, an age range of 18-30. The sample was calculated by G-power analysis of young adults (N=245) which includes females (N=124) and Males (N=121). Data was taken from different universities. The sample was selected through a non-probability purposive sampling strategy that depended upon some specific characteristics of the participant. Participants having the age range of 18-30, having at least one romantic relationship, or having a history of one previous relationship were included.

3.3 Measuring Tools

3.3.1 Demographics Questionnaire

The demographic sheet was established that gives important information about participants which includes age, gender, occupation, socioeconomic status, religion, monthly income, Relationship status (1. Dating, 2. breakup, 3. Engage), Relation with parents (very unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, neutral, satisfactory, very satisfaction) and parents relationship status (1. Living relationship, 2. Divorced, 3. Separated).

Table 1
Descriptive of Demographic variables (N=245)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Age	2.06	.83		
19-21			64	26.1
22-24			117	47.8
25-27			50	20.4
28-30			14	5.7
Gender				
Female			124	50.6
Male			121	49.4
Socioeconomic status	1.92	.50		
lower			41	16.7
middle			182	74.3
higher			22	9.0
Religion				
Occupation	.60	.68		
working			124	50.6
non-working			94	38.4
full time			27	11.0
monthly income	3.12	1.15		
20000-50000			27	11.0
50,000-80,000			43	17.6
80,000-110,000			74	30.2
110,000-130,000			76	31.0
130,000-160,000			25	10.2
Relationship status	2.03	.83		
Dating			80	32.7
Breakup			78	31.8
Engage			87	35.5
Relationship with parents	3.65	.99		
Very Unsatisfactory			7	2.9
Unsatisfactory			31	12.7
Neutral			41	16.7
Satisfactory			127	51.8
Very satisfactory			39	15.9
Parents relationship status	1.43	.71		
Living relationship			172	70.2
Divorced			41	16.7
Separated			32	13.1

Note. M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation; f= frequency; %= percentage

3.3.2 The Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (AAQ; Hayes et al., 2004)

Dysfunctional self-management measured experiential avoidance. AAQ is a 1-7 Linkert scale (from 1. Never to 7. Always true) and consists of 9 items that measure experiential avoidance. The psychometric properties of the scale were developed for both clinical and non-clinical samples (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Hayes et al., 2004). The total score will be calculated. There are reverse scores for items 1, 4, 5, and 6, and $\alpha = .87$.

3.3.3 The Toronto Alexithymia Scale (R. Bagby & Taylor, 1997; R. M. Bagby, Parker, & Taylor, 1994)

The TAS-20 was used to identify alexithymia and it is a self-report questionnaire. It is a 5-point Likert (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) and has 20-items. A higher score on the TAS-20 scale shows the presence of alexithymia and if the total score is equal to or greater than 61 shows the presence of alexithymia. TAS-20 has three subscales, difficulty identifying feelings, difficulty describing feelings, and externally oriented thinking. The difficulty describing Feeling's subscale has 5 items, the difficulty Identifying Feeling subscale has 7 items and the externally-Oriented Thinking subscale has 8 items. The Cronbach's alpha of scale was .89

3.3.4 Fear of intimacy scale (Descutner & Thelen, 1991)

The Fear of Intimacy Scale assesses individual distress and anxiety about intimate relationships and it has one single 35-item factor. It has two parts (A and B). Part A has questions about currently being in an intimate and dating relationship and part B has questions about past relationships. Fear of intimacy is a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores showing high fear of intimacy. The scale has 15 items for reverse scoring and the total score is obtained by the sum up of all the items. Descutner and Thelen (1991) described that the fear of intimacy scale has good internal consistency ($\alpha=.92$).

3.4 Procedure

Formal permission was sought from the author of the scales. The consent letter made sure of the researcher's identity and the research topic. The authority letter was shown to adults for the data collection. The participants were ensured of the confidentiality of all obtained information and the consent of the participants will be sought. They were told that their participation was voluntary and no monetary assistance was given as a reward. The purpose and nature of the research was explained to them. The questionnaires were administered after a brief description. Respondents complete the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher. After collecting the data, a series of analyses was carried out to examine the effect of study variables on each other. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 21.0. The analytical strategy used for data analysis involves descriptive analysis to examine the mean, percentage, and frequencies of demographics and variables. Association among experiential avoidance, alexithymia, and fear of intimacy among adult variables was found by conducting a Pearson correlation. To test the prediction hypothesis, multiple linear regressions were carried out. Addition analysis like, a t-test was carried out to know the difference between variables. Information obtained from the outcome of the analysis was reported accurately and discussed in detail.

4 Result and Discussion

The study analyzed the relationship between Alexithymia, Experiential avoidance and Fear of intimacy among young adults. The results of the current research are presented. The data was analyzed in four steps. In the first step, reliability and descriptive statistics were run for each scale and subscale, and Cronbach's alpha was also reported. In the second step, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was implemented to analyze the relationship between Alexithymia, experiential avoidance, and fear of intimacy among young adults. In the third step, Linear regression was employed to evaluate whether Alexithymia or Experiential Avoidance predicts fear of intimacy among young adults. In the final step, a t-test analysis was run to check the gender differences among Alexithymia, Experiential avoidance, and fear of intimacy.

4.1 Reliability Analysis and Descriptive Statistics

Reliability coefficients and descriptive of the study variables which are used in the present study are shown in Table. Table 2 shows the results of the reliability analysis which is conducted for each assessment measure using Cronbach's alpha. Toronto alexithymia scale has a reliability of .83. The Acceptance and Action questionnaire has a reliability of .73. The Fear of Intimacy scale has a reliability of .78. The Toronto alexithymia subscale difficulty in identifying emotion has a reliability of .69, difficulty in describing feeling has the reliability of .66, externally oriented thinking has the reliability of .48. The reliability values are good enough to carry out further analysis.

Table 2
Reliabilities and Descriptive statistics of the scales (N=245)

Variables	<i>A</i>	<i>K</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	
					Potential	Actual
Toronto Alexithymia Scale	.83	20	81.94	4.8	20-100	62-82
Acceptance and action questionnaire	.73	09	41.58	2.85	9-63	36-48
Fear of intimacy scale	.78	35	130.02	7.39	35-175	108-145
Difficult identity feeling	.69	07	28.67	2.03	7-35	22-34
Difficulty describing feeling	.66	05	20.83	1.43	5-25	16-25
Externally orientated feeling	.48	08	32.43	1.92	8-40	26-38

Note: α = Cronbach's alpha, k = No. of items, M = Mean, SD = Standard deviation

4.2 Correlation analysis of study variables

Correlational analysis was used to find out the relationship between Alexithymia, Experiential Avoidance, and fear of intimacy among young adults. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was implemented and the results are shown below in the table 3.

Table 3

Pearson Product Moment Correlation for the relationship among advertising avoidance, advertising intrusiveness, and perceived value of advertisement (N=245).

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Age	2.05	.83	-	-.009	.089	.076	.027	.021	.019	.035	-.023	.018	-.067	-.031	-.061	.023
Gender	.49	.50	-	-	-.09	.107	-.159*	-.034	.066	.151*	-.100	-.013	-.046	-.065	-.102	-.011
SES	1.92	.50	-	-	-	.090	-.349**	.035	.078	-.124	.068	.074	.064	.076	.160*	.016
Occupation	.60	.68	-	-	-	-	-.066	.006	.002	.073	.061	.077	-.052	.028	.228**	.107
MI	3.11	1.15	-	-	-	-	-	.276**	-.068	-.067	-.040	-.090	.042	-.027	.205**	.134*
RS	2.02	.82	-	-	-	-	-	-	.027	.000	-.060	-.048	-.052	-.060	.071	.142
RWP	3.65	.99	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.027	.054	.070	.033	.057	-.046	-.016
PRS	1.43	.71	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.053	.045	.081	.068	-.019	1.81**
TDIF	28.67	2.03	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.768**	.657**	.915**	.048	.145*
TDDF	20.83	1.43	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.654**	.885**	-.025	-.007
TEOT	32.42	1.91	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.873**	-.009	1.93**
TA	81.94	4.80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.009	1.37*
TEA	41.58	2.85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.188**
TFI	130.02	7.83	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

-Note= * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; SES= Socioeconomic status, MI= Monthly income, RS= Relationship status, RWP= Relationship with parents, PRS= Parents relationship status, TA= Total Alexithymia, TEA= Total Experiential avoidance, TFI= Total fear of intimacy, TDIF= Total difficulty identifying feeling, TDDF= Total difficulty describing feeling, TEOT= Total Extremely oriented feeling, PWR= Parents relationship status, PRS= Parents relationship status, RS= Relationship status, MI= Monthly income.

The result from the Pearson product-moment correlation is used to identify the relationship among alexithymia, experiential avoidance, and fear of intimacy among young adults. Fear of intimacy has a significant positive relationship with parent relationship status, and monthly income and has a non-significant relationship with other demographic age, gender, socioeconomic status, occupation, relationship status, and relationship with parents. Alexithymia has a significant positive correlation with fear of intimacy. Fear of intimacy has a significant positive relationship with alexithymia two subscale difficulties in identifying the feeling, externally oriented thinking, and a non-significant relationship with difficulty describing feeling. Experiential avoidance has a significant positive correlation with fear of intimacy. Experiential avoidance also has a significant positive correlation with occupation, monthly income, and socioeconomic status. Both independent variables alexithymia and experiential avoidance have a non-significant correlation with each other.

4.3 Regression Analysis

The hypothesis stated that Fear of intimacy will likely to be predicted by alexithymia and experiential avoidance. The table shows the results obtained through multiple hierarchical regression analysis.

Table 4
Multiple Hierarchical Regression was run to study core alexithymia and experiential avoidance as predictors of fear of intimacy among young adults (N=245).

Variables	Fear of intimacy	
	ΔR^2	β
Step1	.054***	
Monthly income		.12**
Parents relationship status		.18*
Step2	.027**	
Experiential avoidance		.17**
Alexithymia		.13*
Total R ²	.097	
N		245

*Note: F= ANOVA coefficient, R² = R square, CI = Confidence Interval, **p<.01, SS β =standardized regression coefficient, TA= Total Alexithymia, TEA= Total Experiential avoidance, PWR= Parents relationship status, PRS= Parents relationship status, RS= Relationship status.*

Before analysis, the assumption of regression (normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity) was checked. The assumptions were fulfilled then multiple hierarchical regression analysis was run. In multiple hierarchical regressions analysis, demographic monthly income and parents' relationship status were added in the first block which showed significant positive results. In the second block alexithymia and experiential avoidance were added. Model 1 explained a variance of 54% F=8.37, P=0.00. There is no multicollinearity among variables because the value of tolerance was well above 1 and the value of VIF was well below 3 and far away from 10. In this step, both experiential avoidance and alexithymia show positive significant results. So, it is approved that alexithymia and experiential avoidance predict the fear of intimacy.

4.4 Independent sample t-test

It was hypothesized that gender differences are likely to occur among alexithymia, experiential avoidance, and fear of intimacy among young adults.

Table 5

An Independent Sample t-test was run to find gender differences in alexithymia, experiential avoidance, and fear of intimacy among young adults (N=245)

Variable	Men (n=121)		Women (n=124)		t	p	95%CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
Total alexithymia	81.63	5.15	82.25	4.43	1.01	.313	-.589	1.83	0.13
Total experiential avoidance	41.29	2.76	41.87	2.92	1.601	.111	-.134	1.29	0.20
Total fear of intimacy	129.94	7.06	130.10	7.72	.172	.86	-1.69	2.03	0.001

Note: CI= confidence interval, LL= lower limit, UL= upper limit, M = mean, SD = standard Deviation, TA= Total Alexithymia, TEA= Total Experiential avoidance, TFI= Total fear of intimacy,

A T-test was run to find out the gender difference in alexithymia, experiential avoidance, and fear of intimacy among young adults. Whereas, the gender difference in alexithymia, experiential avoidance, and fear of intimacy is non-significant. The Cohen's d value indicates the effect size. The effect size (d= 0.001) is the smallest for fear of intimacy. Effect size shows the difference between the two groups. So that means gender difference for fear of intimacy is much smaller.

4.5 Discussion

In the present study, fear of intimacy is being studied because Intimacy is both a desired and dreaded phenomenon. Individuals frequently invest a lot of energy and exertion in seeking intimacy, scrutinizing web-based dating services, and getting their companions to introduce themselves to their partners. For some, a dysfunctional intimate relationship fortifies their dread for closeness and that has an impact on their future intimate relationship (Cohen and Syme, 1985). This study analyzed the relationship between alexithymia, experiential avoidance, and fear of intimacy among young adults.

The result of the study showed fear of intimacy showed a positive and significant correlation with alexithymia and experiential avoidance. A similar correlation between alexithymia and fear of intimacy is present in literature which showed positive relationships between TAS-20 alexithymia with fear of intimacy (Besharat, Naghshineh, Ganji, & Tavalaeayan, 2014). No published research studied the direct relationship between fear of intimacy and experiential avoidance. Previous research measured the relationship between fear of intimacy with rejection sensitivity. Literature shows that people who anticipate rejection while entering an intimate relationship have dissatisfied relationships as a result they experience a fear of intimacy (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Another research conducted by Marcella showed that experiential avoidance might be triggered if the individual has the perception of being rejected and becomes an automatic reaction in an attempt to avoid the rejection phenomenon and showed a relationship between rejection sensitivity and experiential avoidance (Sintos, 2017). In the present, the relationship between experiential avoidance and fear of intimacy is being studied. The present study showed that there is a significant positive relationship between fear of intimacy and experiential avoidance.

Another study hypothesis was that fear of intimacy would be predicted by experiential avoidance and alexithymia. The result of the present study showed that alexithymia and experiential avoidance significantly predict the fear of intimacy. This result is supported by the research conducted by Besharat which showed that alexithymia people showed less empathy towards others. Reduced tendency to show empathy has a bad effect on interpersonal relationships, particularly on intimacy and sociability. Thus it is concluded that interpersonal problems are increased by the reduction in both empathy and sympathy which leads to fear of intimacy (Besharat et al., 2014). So, alexithymia significantly predicts the fear of intimacy. Fear of intimacy is significantly predicted by experiential avoidance.

Another hypothesis of the study variable was there is likely to be gender difference among experiential avoidance, alexithymia, and fear of intimacy among young adults. The result of this study showed that there is no gender difference among alexithymia, experiential avoidance, and fear of intimacy. This result is inconsistent with the previous research. In the previous research, gender differences are found and alexithymia are more likely to present in women than men (Kokkonen et al., 2001). Previous studies showed no gender difference in experiential avoidance which is consistent with the present study because there is no gender difference in experiential learning. The inconsistent result of the present study from the previous research about gender differences in alexithymia and fear of intimacy is due to different samples. In the present study, the sample is young adults at that level who have the same level of feeling and experienced the same level of fear of intimacy but most of the previous researches have samples of married people so in married people expression of feeling may differ that result in the differences of fear of intimacy. These differences are also due to cultural differences because most of the research is conducted on Western people.

5 Conclusion

The data obtained from young adults having a fear of intimacy provided us with empirical evidence that both Alexithymia and Experiential avoidance predict fear of intimacy. Moreover, findings also revealed that those individuals who have high scores on the alexithymia subscale difficulty in identifying feelings, and externally oriented thinking are more likely to experience fear of intimacy than difficulty describing feelings. It also concluded from the study that individual who tend to avoid their negative experiences have interpersonal communication problems because they don't want to discuss it with their partner but some events are important which further leads to fear of intimacy. Furthermore, it also derived from the study that parent's relationship status has a great impact on individual future relationships. The result of the independent t-test showed that there is no gender difference in experiencing fear of intimacy. The present findings can be very helpful for people like psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, educationalists, counselors, and clinicians who are related to the psychological field. They can form some therapies and techniques that can help the individuals analyze their emotions and can be able to use a better way to express their emotions and feelings that are related to specific situations.

6 Limitations and Future Recommendations

This study used the correlation method to study the relationship between Alexithymia, Experiential avoidance, and Fear of Intimacy but this method does not provide the cause-and-effect relationships so, future studies should focus on experimental study design to find out the cause-and-effect relationship between variables. This study used young adults as a sample so its results cannot be generalized to other populations so this study lacks generalizability. Future studies can explore how cultural context can influence alexithymia, experiential avoidance, and fear of intimacy in young adults. The present findings can be very helpful for people like psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, educationalists, counselors, and clinicians who are related to the psychological field. They can form some therapies and techniques that can

help the individuals analyze their emotions and can be able to use a better way to express their emotions and feelings that are related to specific situations.

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