# A Review of Romantic Jealousy in Married People in Terms of Family Education

## Una revisión de los celos románticos en las personas casadas en términos de educación familiar

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ABSTRACT

Family is an institution, a social group or even a social subsystem, and marriage is a contract for women and men to share life. Marriage is an essential step in human life. It is a universally accepted social institution and one of the oldest institutions in human history. When the issue of jealousy in marriages is evaluated, it is recently one of the primary reasons for dissonance and discontent in marriage. It can be said that feelings such as fear, anger, insecurity or emotional coldness may negatively affect the quality of the relationship in romantic relationships. Unlike situations such as distrust, fear, apathy and worthlessness; a healthy relationship includes emotions such as trust, relevance, feeling valuable. Therefore, it is expected that the romantic jealousy of the individuals who have a healthy attachment in the relationship will be at lower levels. The issue of romantic jealousy is critical and topical in married individuals. Studies on unity and solidarity in the family and sharing the responsibilities in the family can be done. The crucial main goal in family education is to prevent arising of problems in the family. Families can be provided with training on the fundamental issues that can cause problems in family life so that families have the knowledge and skills to help them overcome these problems.

RESUMEN

La familia es una institución, un grupo social o incluso un subsistema social, y el matrimonio es un contrato para que mujeres y hombres compartan la vida. El matrimonio es un paso esencial en la vida humana. Es una institución social universalmente aceptada y una de las instituciones más antiguas de la historia de la humanidad. Cuando se analiza el sentimiento de los celos en el matrimonio, se halla que es una de las principales razones de la disonancia y el descontento de los miembros de la pareja. Se puede decir que sentimientos tales como el miedo, la ira, la inseguridad o la frialdad emocional pueden afectar negativamente a la calidad de la relación. A diferencia de situaciones como la desconfianza, el miedo, la apatía y la inutilidad, una relación sana incluye emociones como la confianza, la relevancia y el sentimiento de valor. Por tanto, se espera que los celos de los individuos que tienen un apego saludable en la relación estén en niveles bajos. El tema de los celos 'románticos' es crítico y de actualidad en los individuos casados. Se pueden realizar estudios sobre la unidad y la solidaridad en la familia y sobre el reparto de las responsabilidades en la familia. El objetivo principal de la educación familiar es evitar que surjan problemas. Las familias pueden recibir capacitación sobre los temas fundamentales que pueden causar problemas en la vida familiar, de modo que tengan el conocimiento y las habilidades para ayudarlas a superar estos problemas.

## 1. Introduction

Family is an institution, a social group or even a social subsystem, and marriage is a contract for women and men to share life. The family is the association formed by living of two or more people connected to each other, biologically or psychologically by birth, marriage or adoption under the same roof (Altuntek, 2001).

Family is the smallest building block of society. Problems in the family are reflected in the society and problems in the society are reflected in the family. Healthy families form healthy societies. The sociocultural status of the family determines the sociocultural status of the society. Society and family are always in good or bad interaction. The place and value of the family in the society is determined by the responsibilities it undertakes and the functions it fulfills (Maigari, 2018; Ergin, 2012).

Marriage is defined as the unity formed by two different sexes in different societies based on a contract in order to give a common struggle in life. Although marriage seems to be a dual contract of a man and a woman to share life, they are regulated and controlled by laws, moral norms, religious rules and social structures. Marriage as the starting point of the "family" institution, also regulates many social and individual responsibilities (Altuntek, 2001).

Marriage is an important step in human life and a universally accepted social institution. It is also one of the oldest institutions in human history. Human beings naturally needs the opposite sex. Man and woman are like two parts of a whole. In the absence of one, the other does not make much sense. In this context, for the continuation of the generation and the continuity of humanity, both sexes must be related to each other (Özgüven, 2009).

Jealousy, in addition to the internal components that contain certain emotions, certain cognitions, certain physical symptoms, includes external components that are more visible from outside by actions and interpersonal communication than those internal ones (Mathes & Severa, 1981).

It is highlighted that in the inner dimension of romantic jealousy, certain emotions, cognitions and physical symptoms; in the external dimension, the behaviors that can be noticed more easily from the outside world exist. The common situation in the definitions of romantic jealousy is that it involves the complex emotions, thoughts and behaviors of the other person about the fear of the loss of the loved one. On the other hand, romantic jealousy is a multidimensional and comprehensive psychological structure (Harris, 2004).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Family

The family is known as the place where a child grows up and becomes a member of the society; people find trust, respect and compassion; the foundation and the future of society are shaped (Ulu, 2003). In traditional culture, family ties are regarded as the most important factor that holds people together (Hojat et al., 2000).

The family is the smallest unit of society, and it is the basic institution that best reflects society. Because it is the social structure where the value judgments of the society, normative rules and socialization have been lived in the most serious and intense form (Baglı & Sever, 2005).

Humanity has continued in the family institution which has begun with the marriage contract and was considered as indispensable by all societies throughout human history; and adopted as a common value. Family is the first and most lasting social life experience of people. Family which is the center of reproductive function and a biological unit ensuring the continuation of the generation also provides a natural social and cultural environment in society (Farmer, 1979).

The family is a group of individuals having a connection of blood, marriage or adoption, living under the same roof and forming a social, economic unit. The structure of family relations varies considerably. In urban societies, for example, it is observed as a nuclear family consisting of mothers, fathers and children, while in other societies it is observed as a traditional or extended family, which encompasses a larger series of relatives such as grandparents, uncles, brides, and their children (Budak, 2009).

### 2.2. Marriage

The concept of 'marriage' is more evident than the concept of 'family'. 'Family' is a group or organization, and marriage is an institution where two people of the opposite sex live together, and their lives take the form of a 'contract'. Marriage is an institutionalized way, a system of relations, and a legal relationship that connects man and woman as 'husband and wife', gives a certain status to the children, and the 'state' has the claim of control, right and authority over in terms of social aspect (Ozden, 2017; Yavuzer, 2010).

Marriage is a kind of legal relationship that is defined in society by two people of different sexes to meet each other, to get used to living together, to help each other (Atabek, 1989). In other words, it is a system of relations consisting of both individual, social and legal regulations. Marriage is an institution that aims to ensure the continuity of the human race. It is seen as an institution that forces individuals living regularly and as a result of this complying with social rules (Özuğurlu, 1990).

The concept of marriage is defined as a double-sided act that the man and woman have done in front of the competent legal authority according to the Regulation on the Marriage of the Turkish Civil Code (T.M.K, 1985).

The increased unhappiness in marriage, especially in recent times, and the subsequent negative consequences make it necessary to examine the reasons of failed marriages (Larson & Holman, 1994). The term, which is generally referred to as marriage phase, corresponds to the period of youth. The university period also includes peer and job selection processes for many individuals. Young people face many different opportunities during their university life. Young adulthood, by its nature, is a period in which romantic relations and making couple comes to the fore (Stover, 2008).

Couples in the family which is formed as a result of marriage, within the framework the loyalty of the marriage contract and the promise of supporting each other, share the difficult and enjoyable sides of life and produce new generations (Türküm, 2000). In marriage, spouses have the opportunity to satisfy the support, protection and living needs of individuals, such as being safe, protecting, feeling to be in solidarity, looking at the future with confidence, having a place in society, being able to honor each other (Türküm, 2000).

There are many psychological needs in marriage. Both men and women want to be loved, acclaimed; love, which is one of the most important requirements for human beings reaches saturation especially in marital relationships, the parties dedicate themselves to their spouses, can share their bitter and sweet lives and feel the pleasure of being together (Özgüven, 2009).

The fact that marriage problems, the divorce rates and attached to these the number of ones seeking psychological help are increasingly widespread in Turkey as well as all over the world, creates the need to examine the different dimensions of the marriage relationship (Turkey Statistical Institute, 2013).

The family has an important role in the marriage process, since "helping to homemake" of the child is perceived as both the material and the spiritual duty of the parents in the traditional family structure. For this reason, parents want to have a say with whom the child will marry (Tarhan, 2012).

*2.3. Jealousy*

Jealousy is considered to be one of the strongest, most common and weary feelings in close relationships (Aune & Comstock, 1991). Jealousy is an overemphasized problems in marriage research (Buunk & Bringle, 1987).

Jealousy evokes many different words, meanings and images (Demirtaş, 2004). Jealousy is a complex response as a result of the perception of a danger that could lead to loss or destruction of a relationship that is considered important (Pines, 1998). Jealousy is an unpleasant emotional reaction that arises from the relationship of a third person with his/her husband/wife with whom the individual has an ongoing or pre-existing relationship. (Buunk & Bringle, 1987).

Many areas, for example, philosophy, literature, sociology, anthropology, especially clinical psychology and social psychology offer rich examples of jealousy (Guerrero & Eloy, 1992). After Lewin's (1948) first theoretical studies on jealousy, it has not been much emphasized until the 1980s (Pines & Aronson, 1983).

According to some research results on the relationship between jealousy and age, some say there is a positive relationship between them and some say there is a negative one. It supports the conclusion that there is no significant relationship between jealousy and age. Relational variables such as type and duration of relationship, relational satisfaction, and situational variables such as physical attractiveness of the spouse and culture can also affect jealousy (Pines, 1998).

Buunk (1982) found a negative relationship between jealousy and duration of relationship, while Aune and Comstock (1991) found a positive relationship. Many studies indicate that jealousy decreases with the increase in relational satisfaction (Andersen and Eloy, 1995).

They conclude that unmarried individuals present more intense emotional and cognitive responses to jealousy compared to married people (Guerrerove & Eloy, 1992). In the same study, it was concluded that unmarried people resort to more destructive coping methods than married people. The study figured out that unmarried women have revealed jealousy more than married women (Buunk, 1982).

### 2.3.1. Jealousy According to Freud

Freud argues that jealousy is inevitable and therefore universal. He asserts that no one can get out of jealousy, because the roots of jealousy are hidden in the painful childhood experiences of everyone, and he considers jealousy in adulthood as a revival of childhood traumas (Pines, 1992).

Freud describes jealousy as one of the emotions that can be treated as "normal", such as "sadness, since it is inevitable and experienced by all. According to him, if an individual claims that he did not experience jealousy, this situation can be explained by a violent repression and as a result, it can be said that he lived it mostly unconsciously (Yates, 2000).

Most unconscious childhood memories, traumas and heresies have a very strong impact on people's experiences and viewpoints of the world. Such childhood experiences may have implications for the choice of spouses. This choice is not a random choice. People choose the people who are able to overcome their unsettled emotional needs in childhood (Pines & Aronson, 1983).

When the individual finds such a person, he reflects the inner image of him that was structured during his childhood. A man who has witnessed his mother's cheating on his father may turn the cheating wife image, which he has internalized in his childhood, to his loyal and reliable wife. Spouses have "complementary" requirements. (Mathes, 1992).

Childhood experiences about jealousy give clues about adult jealousy. In adulthood, feelings of jealousy revive under conditions similar to those experienced in childhood (Mathes, 1992). According to Freud, the aim of therapy is to raise the awareness of childhood experiences and subconscious. A therapist can help a person who complains of jealousy ensuring him to see the connection between their past experiences and their present problems and thus discover the real reasons for their jealousy. Individuals, after discovering the origin of their jealousy, have taken the most important step in dealing with it (Pines, 1998).

### 2.3.2. Jealousy According to Mead

Mead argues that in the root of jealousy is completely the response to a danger that threatens all self-respect. Enriching his approach to jealousy with his anthropological research, Mead concluded that the fact that a third person was involved in the relationship in other words the individual's partner was together with another individual did not cause jealousy in his investigations on the tradition of exchanging spouses and polygamy. For example, in Eskimos, the male offers his mate to his guest a night in the name of hospitality. This situation does not cause the man to be jealous of his wife, even if the tradition is not met, it leads to uneasiness and his self-respect being injured (Mead, 1977).

In societies where polygamy prevails, women want their husbands to choose their second or third partner because it increases her prestige. Her husband's polygamy leads not the jealousy of woman but, on the contrary, to an increase in her self-esteem. He believes that jealousy is born because of threats to his self-respect; he disagrees with those who regard it as "normal" and calls it as an unfortunate feeling (Mead, 1977).

Regarding gender, she states that women are more jealous when compared to men because they are more insecure. This insecurity is not due to personal shortcomings, but because of their relative weakness in society (Mathes, 1992).

### 2.3.3. Jealousy According to Sullivan

He started with the distinction between jealousy and envy and suggested that feelings of inadequacy were found under the envy which he defined it as "putting an eye on something that belongs to someone else", suggesting that individuals living in this feeling felt that they were not taken into consideration and could not be a person that others expect them to be (Sullivan, 1953). He asserted that in order to overcome this emotion, they believed that they needed everything that is necessary to have a good position in society and existed in others (Mathes, 1992).

Jealousy is an unpleasant feeling. The individual, who feels jealous, feels like pitying himself with deep feelings of inadequacy and believes that any kind of his/her close relationship will end because of another person better than him/her (Mathes, 1992).

### 3. Romantic Jealousy

Romantic jealousy involves competition with a third person outside the dual relationship; it is the result of suspicion that someone else is more preferred in spite of the desire to be preferred in some subjects. The term competition here refers to an individual competition based on the possibility of acquiring something he owns by someone else (Kingham & Gordon, 2004).

Romantic jealousy has a varying spectrum in terms of density, continuity and internal vision ranging from the normal size in terms of being thoughtful, emotional and behavioral to the pathogenic dimension (Kingham & Gordon, 2004).

The factors that trigger romantic jealousy consist of four groups. Accordingly, they experience jealousy when their partners show interest in another person, their spouses communicate with someone they had relationship in the past, someone else shows interest in their husbands and jealousy against the normal behavior of the spouse (Sharpsteen & Kirkpatrick, 1997).

Romantic jealousy is defined as the whole of complex emotions, thoughts and behaviors that involve threats to the self's value of entity or relationship (White, 1981). Romantic jealousy is defined as a complex reaction shaped with a threat to a valued relationship or its nature, and is expressed that romantic jealousy consists of two dimensions, internal and external (Pines, 1992).

Sexual jealousy, which is one of the dimensions of romantic jealousy, is the jealousy experienced as a result of the fact that the spouse knows or suspects that his / her partner is having a sexual relationship with another person (Demirtaş & Madran, 2008).

A behavior in romantic relations outside the normal order leads one of the couples perceiving this situation as a threat, and ultimately experiencing romantic jealousy. In the literature, romantic jealousy is often matched with negative emotions in relationships. Emotional jealousy is associated with feelings such as fear, anger, insecurity, sadness (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1987).

It is argued that there is a strong relationship between decreasing love, rejection, distrust, loss of self-esteem, decreasing of emotional support and feeling of being precious, and fear-based romantic jealousy and aggression (Edalati & Redzuan, 2010). It was found that fearful individuals exhibit a higher level of behavioral jealousy than those with secure attachment; those with obsessive attachment had higher levels of negative and inadequate feelings than those who had secure attachment (Karakurt, 2010).

In the literature, the concept of romantic jealousy does not always indicate an unhealthy situation in the relationship (Kaya, 2017). It is stated that reactive jealousy symbolized by love has a positive characteristic for the relationship. A couple who fall in love with each other can demonstrate the value they give to their relationship with jealousy response; they can keep their relationship alive (Attridge, 2013).

Individual, social or cultural factors can be effective in the occurrence of romantic jealousy or transformation into behavior. For example, jealousy in romantic relationships are treated as an acceptable normal feeling in Turkey. Therefore, it can be said that this feeling is normalized with the proverb that "loving people are jealous". However, jealousy in the relationship may not always occur in a healthy way or may not turn into behavior (Karakurt, 2010).

Jealousy, which cannot be solved in a healthy way, can turn the positive course of the relationship into negative. It is observed that romantic jealousy that results in different ways such as violence or murder of spouses is one of the reasons for divorce (Pines & Friedman, 1998).

Demirtaş and Madran (2008) evaluated the basic gender differences in terms of emotional and sexual jealousy according to the evolutionary perspective. According to the results of their study on jealousy and marital satisfaction, women who married by flirting, compared to arranged marriage; and men who married in an arranged manner compared to those married by flirting were more jealous (Houser, 2009).

There may be strong feelings of shame, anger and sadness in clashes in romantic relations; the correct perception of these emotions enables the partner's verbal and non-verbal emotional cues to be recognized (Stieger et al., 2012). Individuals who are able to regulate the emotions of one's self and his / her partner contribute to the well-being of themselves and their spouses by using emotions while experiencing conflict (Joshi & Thingujam, 2009). Regulating and restraining emotions help to establish long-term relationships. It is observed that there are concepts of emotion regulation on relationship satisfaction (Schutte et al., 2001).

Emotion regulation is defined as a process that affects what emotions and when individuals will have and how they will experience and express these feelings (Gross, 1998). Hence, emotion regulation is defined as "the ability of recognizing, understanding and acceptance of emotions; controlling impulses when they have negative emotions, acting in line with goals and regulating emotions to meet individual goals and situational demands by using appropriate emotion regulation strategies" (Gratz & Roemer, 2004).

Romantic jealousy can be defined as a negative complex response to a real or perceived threat that could lead to the end of a relationship or damage to its structure (Harris, 2004).

Although the tendency to romantic jealousy is influenced by the living culture, family structure, family sequence, and personal experiences in close relationships, in addition to these characteristics, the individual characteristics of the competitor also play a role in romantic jealousy (Petrocelli et al., 2001).

In the case of jealousy, some fears may occur. The source of fear may be to lose the preferred position of the person to another one and to fall into an inadequate situation (Fleischmann et al., 2005).

Behaviors that spouses follow to make the other side jealous are listed as "setting relational distance" such as putting distance between the spouse and friends, and making plans that do not include the spouse, "seemingly flirting" such as sending flowers as if someone else has sent it to himself/herself, calling himself/herself with false numbers for his/her wife to find it and "relational alternatives" such as talking about the past relationships, others and their current relationships (Barelds & Dijkstra, 2007).

## 4. Effects of Romantic Jealousy

Romantic jealousy often raises many negative emotions in people such as fear, anger, sadness, envy, grief, humiliation, rage, self-blame, embarrassment, bashfulness, hatred, disappointment, insecurity, self-pity, uneasiness, helplessness, comparing himself with the opponent, the feeling of misfortune it (Barelds & Dijkstra, 2007).

On the other hand, six basic emotions linked to romantic jealousy have been mentioned. These feelings were listed as "anger" which includes feelings of hatred, disgust, anger, fury; "fear" which involves anxiety, worry and sadness; "grief" which includes depression and despair; "envy" which includes resentment and jealousy; "sexual stimulation" which involves lust and desire; and "guilt" which includes feelings of regret and shame (Buunk & Dijkstra, 2006).

Romantic jealousy can be characterized as positive or negative depending on the way it emerges and how it is handled. For example, jealousy may sometimes mobilize individuals to deal with situations that threaten their relationship (Harris & Darby, 2010).

Romantic jealousy is dealt with in three groups, as reactive, possessive and anxious ranging from healthy to troublemaking (Buunk & Dijkstra, 2006). In a study in which the effects of jealousy types on relationship proximity were evaluated, reactive jealousy was considered as good, possessive jealousy as bad in the light of research findings. Reactive jealousy was found to be directly proportional to the relationship proximity(Attridge, 2013).

In another study, although jealousy was found to be in direct proportion to the negative factors associated with the relationship when experienced in an unhealthy dimension; it cannot be denied that it plays an important role among marriage problems and the reasons for divorce (Buunk and Dijkstra, 2006).

## 5. Reactions in the Case of Romantic Jealousy

In the case of jealousy, specific cognitive evaluations are performed, and these cognitive evaluations are also accompanied by various emotional responses (Guerrero, 1998). The handling of the reactions to jealousy is important because characterization of the jealousy as positive or negative depends on the intensity of the reactions and how people deal with the situation (Carson & Cupach, 2000).

When people encounter a stimulus triggering jealousy, they undergo a three-stage cognitive pre-evaluation process. Individuals assess whether there is a potential for a competing relationship to exist; while aim to determine whether the rival relationship really exists, try to predict the size of the threat created by the opponent (Guerro, 1998).

The reactions in the case of jealousy include "aggression" such as throwing objects, pushing, hitting, wall punching, surveillance, threatening, insulting, knocking on the door; "withdrawal" such as less affection, non-verbal communication, being rude, ironising, contemptuous comments, dealing with others, pretending not to be affected, "relational compensation attempt" such as trying to be perfect, showing more attention, more time-consuming behaviors (Feischmann et al., 2005).

There are many reasons to think that experiencing and expressing jealousy are related to the categories and dimensions of attachment style. Jealousy, which can be conceptualized as a special situation in which the threat of separation and relational change exists, creates a situation which causes regret, anxiety and activates the attachment system (Guerro, 1998).

The reactions in the case of romantic jealousy also vary for the purpose. According to this, the reactions of the person experiencing jealousy vary depending on the goals and the intensity of the emotions, such as maintaining the relationship, maintaining self-confidence, eliminating the ambiguity about the relationship between the partner and the opponent, reviewing the relationship, providing equality through revenge (Guerro, 1998).

Sometimes couples compare their reactions in the case of jealousy with the responses of their spouses in the past and implicitly impose rules on how to react when a relationship outside marriage is experienced (Barelds & Dijkstra, 2007).

## 6. Recommendations

The following suggestions can be made for couples to show positive attitudes towards marriage and family life and to develop exemplary behaviors for younger generations to be grown; seminars, panels, symposiums and training programs can be organized in order to raise the awareness of young people about "marriage and family life" by the universities and the institutions and organizations that work to strengthen the family.

Studies highlighting unity and solidarity in the family and the sharing of responsibilities in the family can be done. It will be useful to prepare educational programs for marriage and family life and to convey these programs to young individuals in various ways.

Family education is an educational effort to support family members and family life for family development and empowerment. Family education is to provide education and other application opportunities for family members to gain the necessary knowledge and skills in order to increase the quality of life of families.

The main goal in family education is to prevent arising of problems in the family. Families can be provided with training on the basic issues that can cause problems in family life, so that families have the knowledge and skills to help them overcome these problems. Thus, the emergence of problems in the family is largely prevented, and an awareness level can be created where problems can be solved without growth.

For example, studies aimed at improving the marital relationship; seminar and training activities that prepare young people to coupling based on strong relationships, counseling services with the group that prepare young people to marital relationship, to be a family, or the couple and family counseling services can be done. In addition, coupled and single practices can be done for married individuals.

Informative seminars and training activities for married individuals, marital adjustment, problem solving skills in marriages, group counseling services on subjects such as effective parenting, as well as couple and family counseling services are the works that are made after marriage aiming to improve the marital relationship.

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