

# RELATIONAL DYNAMICS AND FRIENDSHIP STORIES OF YOUNG ADULTS (PART – II)

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## Abstract

This paper summarizes findings of a 2-step study assessing the friendship experiences among the undergraduate students between 18-22 years of age. Additionally, the study looked at the correlation of relational assessment outcomes with the subscales of Passionate Friendship Survey scores. Through triangulation approach data of a sample of 40 participants (21 females and 19 males) was collected, out of which 21 were interviews were analyzed and the self-report questionnaires were also used. It identified 7 major themes in the same- and cross- sex friendship experiences of the young adults: exclusivity, emotionality, intimacy, problems, benefits, jealousy and family influence. The quantitative analysis reveals that there are significant differences in committed and single participants on affection/preoccupation in friendships. The same-sex friendships are significantly passionate as compared to cross-sex friendships. There is a significant linear correlation between relational outcomes and PF Survey subscales, also showing significant difference between same- and cross- sex friendships on relational esteem.

Keywords: Passionate friendships, same-sex friendships, cross-sex friendships, relational depression, relational preoccupation, relational esteem.

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## INTRODUCTION

“The glory of friendship is not the outstretched hand, nor the kindly smile nor the joy of companionship; it is the spiritual inspiration that comes to one when he discovers that someone else believes in him and is willing to trust him.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Friendship is a form of interpersonal relationship generally considered to be closer than associations. As Anais Nin (retrieved 2012) has said, “Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.” Though some natural loners are happy without them; most of us depend generally on the company of true friends.

The search through the past literature has been a slight confirmation of the intuitive observations about the nature of friendships among adolescents and young adults. However, most of the studies have focused on the gender differences and quality of

friendships. It is felt that there existed tremendous difference across gender on the quality, expectations, satisfaction and expression of friendships. It is reflected that what we need is the understanding of both same- and cross- sex friendship experiences across gender in emerging adulthood.

## Present Study

The present study is a two-phase study with the preliminary goal of quantitative analysis of friendship quality and its nature in the light of relational assessment of the University students. The other goal was to obtain a narrative account of the students about their friendship experiences, to add meaning to the quantitative analysis. In order to know the friendship experiences in depth, narratives were used as a source to answer the following questions, while the phase – 1 was mere screening for the in-depth interviewing through consent of the participants:

1. What are the individual functions and importance of passionate friendships as subjectively experienced by both males and females?

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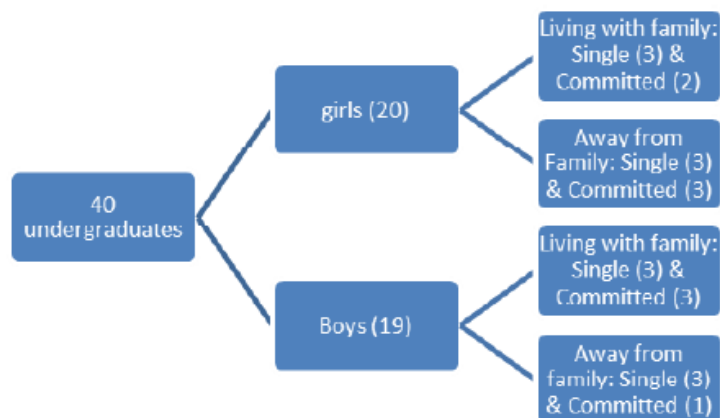
2. Will different qualitative themes emerge between male and female reports of their passionate friendship experience?
3. Will difference be seen in both cross-sex and same-sex friendships among males and females?
4. Is there a romantic undertone or sexual attraction in cross-sex friendships?
5. What is the influence of family on the friendship experiences?

The present undertaking is an attempt to explore the feelings that these individuals seek in their different friendship experiences.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

For the present study, a sample of 40 participants within 18-22 years of age was chosen. The sample includes 21 (52.5%) females, and 19 (47.5%) males. In the sample of 40 participants, categorised into the groups, namely 21 (52.5%) were living alone, and 19 (47.5%) were living with the family, also, 27 (67.5%) participants were single, whereas 13 (32.5%) participants were committed in a heterosexual relationship. These factors of categorisation were chosen to separate the changes that occur in narratives.



*Figure 1: Sample description*

Besides the differences in their living status, and relationship status, these differ not individuals shared a common experience of both same-sex and cross-sex friendships presently.

### **Method of Enquiry**

The method of data collection was based on mixing of quantitative and qualitative measures, which is generally known as 'triangulation' (Webb et al, 1966). Thus, phase 1 of the study involved filling of the questionnaires by the participants, which was followed by Phase 2 which was interview method based on the consent given by the participants.

Phase 1 included a set of questionnaires namely Passionate Friendship Survey (Glover, 2009) and Relational Assessment Questionnaire (Snell & Finney, 1993) and a demographic table with the letter of consent.

**Passionate Friendship Survey (Glover, 2009)** is a 28-item self-report questionnaire that assesses the nature of friendships. It is divided into three parts initial four questions are demographic open-ended questions, rest all questions are 4-point Likert type with last eight questions giving a choice based on the frequency. Through the principal axis factor analysis three different subs ales of the questionnaire were introduced: attachment/secure base reflect the individual's perception of the friend as supportive, available and consistent, as well as the level of satisfaction with the friendship. The six-item factor labelled as affection/preoccupation captures a range of affection all behaviours (eg Handholding, cuddling, eye gazing), as well as preoccupation or fascination with the friend. The four-item factor of intensity/exclusivity captures the level of importance and intensity experienced in the friendship. However, jealousy has been identified as an important construct within passionate friendships, and despite the exclusion from the parallel analysis, these were retained because of the theoretical relevance. Glover calculated Cronbach's alpha for attachment/secure base, affection/preoccupation, intensity/exclusivity, jealousy and total scores as .90, .85, .77, .75, and .90 respectively.

**Relational Assessment Questionnaire (Snell & Finney, 1993)** is a 30-item self-report questionnaire that assesses different areas of relationship

functioning. The items are answered on 5-point Likert scale (A=not at all characteristic of me, E=very characteristic of me). Three different components of relational functioning are assessed: relational esteem, relational depression, and relational preoccupation. Relational esteem is defined as the tendency to positively evaluate one's capacity to relate to intimately to another person. Relational depression is the tendency to feel depressed about the status of one's intimate relationships. Finally relational preoccupation is the tendency to be highly obsessed with thoughts about intimate relationships. Assessment of convergent and discrimination validity of RAQ suggests that the three relational indices were related in predictable ways to relationship involvement and attraction. Snell & Finney observed Cronbach's alpha for relational esteem, depression and preoccupation of .81, .88 and .85 respectively, with 8-week test-retest reliabilities of .71, .73 and .70 respectively. Cronbach's alpha for the three sub scales were .85, .89 and .89 respectively.

The use of quantitative research has been done for its capacity to provide meaningful analysis of a large data and its analysis that the research question demands. To a qualitative researcher, it is imperative to locate the subjectivities to explore the distinctiveness of individual cases.

For the present study, narrative analysis was used as the qualitative method to look at the nature of same-sex and cross-sex friendships among males and females studying in the University of Delhi. Technically, "narratives" become the root metaphor for psychology to replace the mechanistic and organic metaphors which shaped so much theory and discipline over the past century (Sarbin, 1986). Human activities and experiences are filled with 'meaning' and that stories, rather than logical arguments or lawful formulations, are the vehicle by which that meaning is communicated. Life stories are the best way to deal with the need to belong and love, as described in the Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (1943). The need for belonging can overcome the physiological and security needs, depending on the strength of the peer pressure. A recent study by Glover (2009) has also used a mixed approach to study the nature of friendships among young adult women, where she used semi-structured interviews to assess the friendship experiences.

Individuals while narrating their life stories feel the linkages between self, culture and their relationships with others. Thus, analysis of the narratives is a means for untwining these experiential linkages and comprehending the ‘why the movement’ to the ‘where’. Narrative ways of working with people are based on the idea that people’s lives and relationships are shaped by the stories which individuals and communities of people develop in order to give meaning to their experiences. The idea is that these “narratives” of meaning not just reflect or represent our lives, they actually shape and make up our lives. In reality, the quantitative approaches are not mutually exclusive and can be used in combination. Qualitative analysis, as suggested by Smith (1975), deals with the forms and antecedent-consequent patterns of form, while quantitative analysis with duration and frequency of form.

### **Research Settings**

After the consent of the participant for interview, a location which was comfortably convenient for both the participant as well as the researcher was preferred. In most cases, it was either the institutional areas or outdoor spaces. It was ensured that there are least distractions, so that participant feels comfortable in talking about himself/herself.

### **Procedure**

Participants were recruited using snowball technique of sampling from the colleges of Delhi-NCR. Verbal announcements regarding the study and instructions for the participants were given in large size groups in various colleges. Interested students were given the hard copies of the information form and the survey to be filled on the spot. After completing the form, they were asked to indicate if they would be interested in receiving summary of results, or being contacted for the follow-up interview. Names, and contact information were kept in separate files, not connected with the responses.

Semi-structured interviews lasting from 30 minutes to 1 hour were conducted with interested students. Upon arrival, participants were given informed consent which was explained by the researcher. Interviews recorded were transcribed and coded according to the consistent themes emerging during the interview.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

The results have been presented in two major ways:

- **Analysis of Group comparisons:** This section includes the differences between groups based on types of friendships, gender, living status, and relationship status with respect to the variables: attachment/ secure base, affection/preoccupation, intensity/exclusivity, jealousy, total score and relational assessment outcomes.
- **Analysis of Inter-correlations:** This section presents the inter-correlation between the variables of Relational Assessment Outcomes, attachment/secure base, affection/preoccupation, intensity/exclusivity, jealousy and total score.

The narrative analysis of all the interviews showed following themes majorly in their cross- and same-sex friendships:

### **Perceived Uniqueness of the Friend**

It was found that most of the participants focused on the personality factors of their friends, especially for the initial friendship formation. When asked about his friendship with his female friend, Preet<sup>1</sup> (single male living alone) says, “She’s like a totally different person, a completely out of this world kind of personality. It’s not that she’s physically so attractive, but yes it’s her nature, there is something different in her – totally out of this world I would say.” This shows the importance of the nature and behaviour of a person in the formation of friendships. Tanuja, living with her family, says “hum judge nahi kart eek dusre ko, to vo sabse bada factor hai humari friendship ka.” (We don’t judge each other, which is the best part of our friendship). A similar pattern of such responses showing how non-judgmental and understanding nature as well as overall personality factors play an important role in friendship formation. In fact, various social psychology theories like matching hypothesis by Erving Goffman (1981) suggests that people are more likely to form long term relationships with those who equally matched in social attributes, as they are. Another view by Byrne (1971) also known as ‘the law of attraction’, suggests

that attraction towards a person is positively related to the proportion of attitudes similarly associated with that person. Considering the same-sex friendship experiences of the participants, the findings suggests the similar patterns of responses as far as friend selection and friendship maintenance is concerned, although the intensity and attachment is higher than cross-sex friendships (refer table 1).

*Table 1: Dependent samples t-test comparing same-sex and cross-sex friendships on the PF Survey Scales, Jealousy items and total score (n=40;  $\alpha=0.05$ )*

Survey Scales	t-score	Df	P
Attachment/Secure Base	2.443*	39	.019
Affection/preoccupation	1.057	39	.297
Intensity/exclusivity	1.664*	39	.104
Jealousy	-2.679	39	.011
Total Score	1.019*	39	.314

\*significance at .05 level

Understanding nature, non-judgmental attitude, and security in relationship are some factors which are predominant in the same-sex friendships as well. Mukul tells about how exclusive and different his friendship with his male friend is, whereas Aakash gave a perfect example of how personality of a friend matters more for initiation of a relationship.

### **From Friend to Lover**

It has been observed in the sample population that committed girls and boys tend to report their current closest friend as their intimate partners as well. This shows how the boundaries of close friendships and intimate relationships may be overlapping. Anvi (committed, living with family) tells about her friendship, "Isse mein committed hun. Aur bhi mere guy friends hain, par mein unke itne close nahi hun." She later adds, "Humne ghar shift kia tha to Raghav bhi vahin rehte the. Baatein bhi start ho gayi kyunki vo bhi vahin pass mein hi rehte the." Romantic inclination can be seen either mutually or one-sided among cross-sex friends, Just as Emma states, "I know what I want and I'm not romantically into him. But he is. I do have other male friendships also. Sometimes he tends to get little jealous about that. But it's nothing you can do about it." Guerrero & Chavez (2005) when talking about the cross-sex friendship maintenance revealed that individuals with mutual romance generally reported the most

maintenance behaviour, whereas those uncertain about the status were less likely to report using some type of relational maintenance.

Another participant shared, "The problem only is what kind of relationship we are in, are we friends? Are we more than friends? Are we girlfriend or boyfriend? Or whatever it is." This confused state about their relationship status, after being in a close cross-sex friendship can be associated with the age of the respondents, as during these years when as an individual is going through the shift from identity formation to relationship building, the confusion is bound to happen.

### **Emotional Attachment**

Though the analysis of the self-report questionnaires it was found that attachment/secure base was significantly lower in cross-sex friends as compared to same-sex friends (refer table 1). The interviews of the participants showed that the emotional attachment was more in terms of sharing secrets, talking about their feelings, the content of conversation, the emotional or moral support and, changes in each other's personality as a result of attachment. Emotional attachment is not only about sharing feelings, but also being able to trust the other person so much that you feel comfortable in talking about any and everything you feel like, that's how Shreya tells about her friendship with Tuhin, "It's more of an understanding relation that we share. We understand each other, and we are close... as close as in he tells me things which he doesn't tell anybody else. He confides in me." This shows the feeling of being heard in a friendship relationship is more important than anything else. Self-disclosure in a friendship strengthens the emotional bonds between two people. Similar findings have been noticed in a study done by Ross (2002) focuses very well on the levels of self-disclosure girls and boys have in their friendships, and how higher self-disclosure leads to more emotional attachment and better adjustment.

Although it has been seen that the boys are not generally that emotionally expressive, still as Mukul (single, living with the family) tells, "Issa kuch strong itna nahi hai. But I know a girl jiske saath meri itni friendship hai vo yehi hai." For boys it's more important for the friend to be emotional support, a back-up, rather than the emotional secret keeper.

Girls frequently get together to “just talk” and their exchanges contain more self-disclosure (sharing of innermost thoughts and feelings) and mutually supportive statements (Brendgen et al, 2001). Aakash (single, living alone) told, “I was little lonely till she came in my life. I used to think that there’s no requirement of girls to be friends with; boys-boys can be friends and stay better.” Another aspect of emotional attachment is the amount of attention that the friends receive and reciprocate. Emma says, “I get a lot of attention, and also a lot of attention from this friend. I don’t think I reciprocate as much as he does and puts in a lot in the friendship, and if I think the attention stops coming. I’ll start to miss it.”

In the same-sex friendships, although the emotional attachment also concerns the similar expectations, still the difference lies in the ability to associate more to them, only because of the gender. There is greater sense of belonging and affiliation, as Emma while talking about the suggestive nature of her friend says, “She encourages me to think more responsibly, and to see things before I do something, you know... sometimes I think if I do something, what would she say, she’s not judgmental as I said, she’s not.” A lot of other narratives also reveal that two girls can be best secret keepers for each other, and support emotionally whenever required by being a listener. Thus, there exists a dependability on the friend, because of the trust, just as Amvi told, “Aur aap isse hi kisi par bhi depend nahi ho sakte, jise jante ho usi par depend ho sakte ho kyunki mujhe lagta hai ki uski bahut importance hai meri life mein.” Whereas, among boys, there’s not overly expressive emotionality, as the focus of their conversations revolves mostly around their activities, and academics. About emotional sharing among boys, Vipul says, “In chemistry language I should say that we’ve a covalent bond.” It was also noticed that participants felt more comfortable sharing their intimate things with their same-sex friends over cross-sex friends, just because they can understand that better, but it actually leads to greater emotional attachment. Nardi & Sherrod (1994) have also said that same-sex friendships are more confiding, more intimate and more emotionally expressive.

### Physical Intimacy

This has been found that physical intimacy is not important at all for the friendship maintenance. Moreover, the committed participants have been found more physically intimate in cross-sex friendships. One major reason behind this finding can be the fact that most of them have their boyfriends/girlfriends as their closest friends, any other cross-sex friendships apart from that have been overshadowed. Additionally, through the descriptive analysis of the self-report questionnaires (refer table below), it has been found that committed participants are significantly higher on the levels of affection/preoccupation in cross-sex friendship. Vipul tells, “Intimacy level is up to normally hugs and kisses, like cuddling and all.” There are some cases where the current closest friend is not the romantic partner, although in the past there has been found a romantic inclination, but there is not much physical intimacy involved. Among singles it is limited to handshakes, and hugs.

*Table 2: Independent samples t-test comparing single and committed participants on the cross-sex scores of the passionate friendships survey subscales, jealousy items and total score (n=40)*

Relationship status	Single mean (SD)	Committed mean (SD)	t-score
Attachment/secure base	18.44(3.055)	19.46 (1.808)	-1.106
Affection/preoccupation	10.74 (3.665)	14.77 (4.711)	-2.965*
Intensity/exclusivity	11.00 (3.113)	11.46 (2.145)	-0.481
Jealousy	3.96 (1.870)	5.08 (2.060)	-1.708
Total score	58.56 (9.553)	67.00 (7.059)	-2.829

A study done by Monsour (1992) reveals that five of the seven most frequently mentioned definitions of intimacy were specified by both cross- and same-sex friends: self-disclosures, emotional expressiveness, unconditional support, physical contact and trust. One of the remaining two meanings of intimacy i.e. sexual contact was mentioned by cross-sex but not same-sex friends. The findings of this study are similar, but it’s not significantly different on the basis of gender. Among the same-sex friendships, the idea of being physically intimate with the same-sex friends was

like a surprising event altogether, especially for men. Through the statistical analysis of the self-report questionnaires (refer table 3), the evidences show that females are generally higher on the affection/preoccupation among same-sex friendships as compared to males, but there is no significance of the results for larger generalization. Similarly, it has also revealed that affection/preoccupation is higher among committed participants (refer table 4) and those living alone (refer table 5) for the same sex friendships, but generalizations are not possibly applicable.

*Table 3: Independent sample t-test comparing females and males on same-sex scores of passionate friendship survey subscales, jealousy items and total score (n=40)*

Sex	Females mean (SD)	Males mean (SD)	t-score
Attachment/secure base	20.33 (3.006)	19.58 (2.775)	.822
Affection/preoccupation	13.86 (5.808)	11.84 (3.548)	1.307
Intensity/exclusivity	12.24 (2.300)	11.47 (1.837)	1.153
Jealousy	3.67 (1.713)	3.26 (1.522)	.784
Total score	64.67 (11.200)	61.32 (6.799)	1.129

*Table 4: Independent samples t-test comparing singles and committed participants of same-sex passionate friendships*

Relationship status	Single mean (SD)	Committed mean (SD)	t-score
Attachment/secure base	20.04 (3.082)	19.85 (2.544)	.193
Affection/preoccupation	12.30 (5.150)	14.15 (4.298)	-1.124
Intensity/exclusivity	11.93 (2.269)	11.77 (1.787)	.218
Jealousy	3.41 (1.600)	3.62 (1.710)	-.377
Total score	62.41 (9.997)	64.46 (8.252)	-.642

*Table 5: Independent samples t-test comparing participants based on their living conditions*

Living status	Living alone mean (SD)	Living with family mean (SD)	t-score
Attachment/secure base	19.76 (3.113)	20.21 (2.679)	-.486
Affection/preoccupation	13.48 (5.409)	12.26 (4.357)	.776
Intensity/exclusivity	11.81 (2.136)	11.95 (2.121)	-.205
Jealousy	3.48 (1.504)	3.47 (1.775)	.005
Total score	62.67 (9.467)	63.53 (9.582)	-.285

### Similarity

Interpersonal similarity and attraction are multidimensional constructs (Lydon, Jamieson & Zanna) in which people are attracted to others who are similar to them in demographics, physical appearance, attitudes, interpersonal style, social and cultural background, personality, interests and activities preferences, and communication and social skills. As Tanuja says, "I don't give advice, I just listen to him, and football is like a major connecting factor. Because he and I like the same club, we are interested in football." Same-sex friendships have also shown evidence of greater dependence on the liking and similar interests and attitudes for the formation of friendship and greater self-disclosure.

### Long-distance friendships

In a study by Igarashi et al (2005) it was revealed that females tended to expand their MTPM (Mobile Phone Text Message) social networks than males. This focused on the self-expression in long-distance friendship, where it is shown that females are more inclined to expressing themselves through words more than the physical self, whereas men believe in the face-to-face communication. This could also be seen among the participants' verbal reports, as Preet says, "As I said, she's abroad, so there's no such closeness. It's just that we meet through video chats and all." Whereas Anna (single, living with parents) says, "...we still are in constant touch with each other, through Facebook & Skype and all. On Skype through video conferencing we see each other a lot, but we've not met each other for a long time." Thus

physical proximity for males becomes important when expression of intimacy is concerned.

### Problems

The participants report that problems in friendships arise mainly due to ego conflicts, temperamental clashes, or long distances. Emma tells about her problem she faced with her male friend, when there were conflicting opinions of both of them, “See, I’ve told him that romantically he can’t hope for it, because I’m not ready for a relationship. And even if I was I don’t think we would be compatible, but maybe I don’t think I can date him, because I’m not in love with him. So when I explain him, he doesn’t really get it.” Tanuja tells about how the temperamental differences create a problem with her male friend, as she says, “Major disagreements have been like the usual gal-guy thing, you know, that you should share your problems more and he’s like nahi I don’t want to share my problems.” Especially at this age, the problem in understanding the nature and intensity of the intimacy may also create a problem. Also, for those who are staying with their families, another reason of conflicts can be family restrictions, Mukul tells, “...problems are only because of her parents, because they don’t allow us to meet at times. Because there are somethings you can’t talk on phone...”

Friends tend to be more caring and possessive towards each other, but at times they don’t realize how their caring can become over-possessiveness for the other, which creates problems in the friendship maintenance. Four different reasons specified by O’Meera (1989) for the problems in cross-sex friendships include: (1) determining the type of emotional bond experienced in the relationship, (2) confronting the issue of sexuality, (3) dealing with the issue of relationship equality within a cultural context of gender inequality, and (4) the challenge of public relationships, were also visible in the life stories of the participants in this study. Problems like over-possessiveness, temperamental difficulties, ego clashes are also quite common among same-sex friendships.

### Jealousy

There have been different reasons for jealousy for both committed and single participants, but males in general have reported similarity in the feeling of jealousy when the friend interacted with some other male. “Yes, I get bit jealous when she tried to share her views with other or sit a side with other ones, naturally I think!!” says Baahir. While Vipul also reports something similar, “Matlab agar ye bolti hai ki mein uss ladke ke saath ja rahi hun, to fir hui hai jealousy mujhe.” At times, jealousy feeling also comes in when the friend is better in something which they don’t possess, like Adarsh talks about being jealous of her artistic skills, and says, “I was always jealous of her artistic skills because she’s a good artist.” Through the statistical analysis of the self-report of the participants it has been revealed that male participants, especially those living alone, and are committed feel more jealous of their friends, though the difference are not significantly different (refer 6, 2 & 7).

*Table 6: Independent samples t-test comparing participants living with parents or alone on the cross sex scores of the passionate friendships survey subscales, jealousy and total scores (n=40)*

Living Status	Living alone Mean (SD)	Living with family Mean (SD)	t-score
Attachment/ Secure Base	18.48 (2.839)	19.11 (2.644)	-.723
Affection/ Preoccupation	12.19 (4.226)	11.89 (4.713)	.209
Intensity/ Exclusivity	10.76 (3.129)	11.58 (2.434)	-.915
Jealousy	4.43 (1.886)	4.21 (2.123)	.344
Total Score	59.76 (9.622)	63.00 (9.545)	-1.067



Table 7: Independent samples t-test comparing t-test males and females on the cross-sex scores of the passionate friendships survey subscales, jealousy and total scores (n=40)

Sex	Females Mean (SD)	Males Mean (SD)	t-score
Attachment/secure base	19.00 (2.510)	18.53 (3.007)	.543
Affection/preoccupation	11.62 (4.500)	12.53 (4.376)	-.645
Intensity/Exclusivity	11.24 (3.270)	11.05 (2.297)	.205
Jealousy	4.19 (1.887)	4.47 (2.118)	-.447
Total Score	60.48 (10.968)	62.21 (10.968)	-.565

With same-sex friends, the reasons of jealousy have been majorly their excellence, and achievement, and their relationship indulgence. Most of the participants told how awkward and jealous they felt when they saw their closest friends doing much better than them on academics or any other field. For instance, Arnav said, “Jealousy tab aata hai jab marks zada aate hain aapne hi dost ke (laughing). Or when he dates with someone whom I’ve crush on. And he has the same reasons for jealousy.” Through the statistical analysis (refer 3, 4 & 5), it’s shown that jealousy is higher among females, committed, and participants living alone, but generalization is not significantly appropriate.

### Benefits

Werking (1997a) suggests that cross-sex friendships offer comfort during difficult times, as an outlet for the expression of fears, feelings, and fantasies, companionship, acceptance and greater self-knowledge. Similar findings have emerged among the participants of this study, where Emma tells about her friend being the source of expression of feelings, “It gives me someone to talk to, it gives me who’s there for me. He’s there for me, no matter what.” This kind of experiences also influences self-esteem and relational esteem of an individual. Through table 8, it is revealed that passionate cross-sex friendship have higher relational esteem as compared to non-passionate cross-sex friendships.

Table 8: Independent samples t-test comparing passionate and non-passionate friendships on relational outcomes (n=40)

	Passionate Mean (SD)	Non-passionate Mean (SD)	t-score
<i>Same-sex friendships:</i>			
Relational esteem	23.89 (5.290)	19.67 (4.589)	2.591
Relational depression	17.47 (8.092)	19.94 (8.447)	-.909
Relational preoccupation	36.84 (7.676)	31.83 (7.733)	1.977
<i>Cross-sex friendships:</i>			
Relational esteem	23.70 (3.813)	19.60 (6.557)	2.417
Relational depression	17.25 (6.382)	20.55 (9.950)	-1.249
Relational preoccupation	35.00 (7.726)	33.45 (8.023)	.622

Emotional support is another major advantage participants have talked about. Tanuja tells about her friend as someone to rely upon. Emotional support and dependability not only brings a sense of belongingness and affiliation, but also a sense of security. Evidences show that same-sex friends have proved a great emotional support, academic help and have given a sense of security.

### Family Influences

For those who are living in hostel or away from the family, their family influence is not significant at all, since their families are not involved or aware of their social interactions. In fact, for the cross-sex friendships, staying away from the family has increased the scope of proximity with their friends. Baahir also tells us about his feelings towards his friend-cum-lover’s parental influence on his relationship with her, and says, “A family constraints on her (to be on time back home) and keep fetching her like watch dogs!! Really I get feels like that! Her father really totally Hitler with owl eyes.” Various studies have also revealed that women were subjected to more constraints and lesser opportunities for the formation of cross-sex friendships than men (Booth & Hess, 1974).

As far as same-sex friendships are concerned, there’s not much family interference seen on the development or maintenance of friendships.

Additionally, families have been very supportive of their friendships with the same gender. For those who are staying in hostel/paying guest accommodation away from family, their family is not much involved in their close friend circle because of the distance. In fact, they consider themselves fortunate to be living away from home and making such strong friendships. The participants staying alone also report that once they are with family, it becomes difficult for them to communicate with their friends freely.

### Relational assessment and friendship experiences

Independent samples t-test was conducted on the raw scores of the participants on the self-report questionnaires. Through table 8, the results have been

found that there exists a significant difference between passionate and non-passionate same-sex and cross-sex friendships on relational esteem. Although relational depression is higher among non-passionate same- and cross-sex friendships and relational preoccupation is higher among passionate same- and cross-sex friendships, yet the results can't be significantly generalized. Relational esteem is represented by various themes discussed above, like emotional attachment, from friends to lover, and benefits of the same- and cross-sex friendships. Through this it is revealed that more the passionate friendship, higher will be the relational esteem.

Table 9: Correlations for same-and cross-sex friends reports on the passionate friendship surveys, and relational outcomes (n=40)

Psychological outcomes		Attachment/ secure base	Affection/ preoccupation	Intensity/ exclusivity	Jealousy	Total score
Same-sex friendships	Relational esteem	.290	.402*	.288	.127	.472**
	Relational depression	-.003	-.078	-.051	-.141	-.091
	Relational preoccupation	.001	.459**	.202	.204	.361*
Cross-sex friendships	Relational esteem	.272	.211	.218	.124	.319*
	Relational depression	-.206	-.207	-.092	-.247	-.321*
	Relational preoccupation	.011	.145	.081	-.048	.027

\*p<0.05 level; \*\*p<0.01 level

Through the correlation matrix of relational outcomes and PF Survey subscales, in table 9, it was found that there is a significant positive linear correlation between relational esteem and total score of the PF score (r=.319; p=.045) and a significant negative linear correlation between relational depression and total PF score (r=-.321; p=.043) of the cross-sex friendships. Whereas, it was found that there is a significant positive linear correlation between relational esteem and attachment/ secure base (r=.402; p=.010), relational esteem and total score (r=.472; p=.002), relational preoccupation and attachment/secure base (r=.456; p=.003) and relational preoccupation and total score (r=.361; p=.022) of same-sex friendships.

### CONCLUSION

This study was a completely new journey to the minds of participants. From beginning till the end, there were several challenges. The major difficulty faced by the researcher was to have consent from the committed participants for the personal interviews. It was noticed that even in the present broad-minded society, majority of university students hesitated to openly confess about their relationships, and most of the males told about their least bothered attitude for the importance of friendships, and how they never even thought about all these issues. Through the knowledge of the stories of various students, a need to investigate more into the personalities and the friendship experiences was desired for future research

purposes. Explorations into their experiences of friendships opened a whole new aspect of researching in the areas of personalities and maladjustments in friendships or any other relationships in general.

With the initial contact with the participants, their curiosity to know the reasons behind the researcher's interests and also a joy of sharing their unforgettable moments was quite evident. Also, most of them expressed their confusions, anxieties and worries regarding their friendships, and found that through the process of interview their ideas about the relationships they share with their friends had somewhat clear ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> Names of all the participants were changed in order to maintain confidentiality of their identities.