

## **Pathos of Grief: The Saga of a Broken Heart**

\*Mr. Jasmeet Singh<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Daisy Sharma<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>(Department of Psychology, KeshavMahavidyalaya, University of Delhi, India)

<sup>2</sup>(Department of Psychology, KeshavMahavidyalaya, University of Delhi, India)

Corresponding Author: Dr. Daisy Sharma

---

**Abstract:** Individuals achieve professional success through various ways, for some it is their hard work and determination that provides them with professional success while for some it is their innate talent which leads them to great heights. But, there are also some who achieve success in their career by simply not working hard for it because for them their work is not a means of earning rewards instead it is simply an outlet for expressing their emotions. The aim of this paper was to study what it is like to experience overt professional success after the dissolution of unmarried romantic relationships. For studying this phenomenon, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two participants, selected using purposive sampling. The interviews were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith, 1997). The three superordinate themes which emerged in both the interviews were high need for love and belongingness, voyage of sublimation and perception of success obtained post dissolution. This shows that the achievement in career (after the dissolution of a romantic relationship) as perceived by other is actually reflective of saga of pain a person undergoes.

**Keywords:** Dissolution, love, sublimation, perception of success, interpretative phenomenological analysis

Date of Submission: 04-07-2017

Date of acceptance: 22-07-2017

---

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

“To live is to suffer”, these immortal words capture the essence of this paper. Suffering can be either physical or mental in nature. Although both are distressing, but unlike physical suffering, mental suffering doesn't always have a clear, organic cause. One of the major causes of mental suffering is dissolution of romantic relationships (Sbarra and Emery, 2005). A large body of literature has examined the negative as well as positive consequences of relationship dissolution. After a breakup, an individual may be depressed, have trust issues or difficulty in coping with challenges. But, he or she can also become more resilient, mature or focused on his or her work.

The aim of this paper is to study what it is like to achieve overt professional success after the dissolution of an unmarried romantic relationship? I believe that after the dissolution of a romantic relationship, an individual may become more focused on his or her work due to which he or she may obtain professional success. But, how that person values that success is what I aim to explore through this qualitative study using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

### **II. REVIEW**

Romantic relationships offer a variety of benefits to an individual such as love, companionship, social support, sexual involvement (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994; Waite & Gallagher, 2000), well-being (Kamp et al., 2005) among others. Research has shown that romantic relationships are also beneficial for the mental health of a person (Braithwaite et al., 2010). But terminating a romantic relationship takes a toll on a person's mental health and well-being. Individuals who have recently experienced relationship dissolution are more sad and angry than individuals who have a stable relationship (Sbarra and Emery (2005), experience increased distress and decreased life satisfaction (Rhoades et al., 2011). Monroe and colleagues (1999) found that high-school students who have recently ended a romantic relationship are more prone to Major Depressive Disorder. Although many people experience relationship dissolution as a painful experience but on the other side of the spectrum, there are many people who consider relationship dissolution as an opportunity to find inner strength and renewed meaning in life (Emery, 2004; Marks, 1996; Monroe et al., 1999; Tashiro & Frazier, 2003).

Romantic relationships provide an opportunity to grow because it expands our knowledge about human relationships, provide us novel experiences and permit us to develop our identity (Aron et al., 2001). Herbert and Popadiuk (2008), in their study found that most of the participants reported five positive changes as a part of posttraumatic growth viz. using breakup as a learning experience for future romantic relationships; gaining inner

strength and ability to deal with future stressful events; feeling more independent; becoming more mature and self-aware; and, changing priorities in life. Tashiro et al. (2003) found that post-breakup, a person experiences positive spurt in his or her personal characteristics (such as, self-confidence), relationship-maintenance behaviors (such as, improved communication skills), environment (such as, enhanced focus on work) and expectations of future romantic partners.

### **III. PRESENT STUDY**

The review of literature suggests that ample of studies have examined both the positive as well as negative consequences of dissolution of romantic relationships. But, I did not find any study which examined how the person who has had a breakup perceives his or her professional success obtained post-dissolution. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to understand what it is like to experience overt professional success after dissolution of an unmarried romantic relationship among unmarried young adults between 20-25 years of age.

### **IV. METHOD**

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was the brainchild of Jonathan Smith, Paul Flowers and Mike Osborn (1997). It is a type of phenomenological method which aims to explore an experience from the participant's perspective. IPA assumes that human beings are sense making creatures, therefore the accounts they provide will reflect their attempts to make sense of what is happening to them. But, the access to their experience depends on what they reveal to us. Therefore, the researcher needs to interpret only that account in order to gain an in-depth understanding of that experience (Smith et al., 2009).

#### **4.1 Sample and Participant Selection**

The sample comprised of two participants between 20-25 years of age residing in Delhi. The participants were selected using purposive or judgmental sampling. Five prospective participants, who have had a relationship for at least one year, were shown a vignette that briefly described a situation outlining the aim of the study. The vignette was shown to five participants out of whom two of them reported that they have experienced the situation explained in the vignette. The participants signed a consent form before being interviewed.

#### **4.2 Description of Participants**

##### **4.2.1.1 Participant 1**

Participant 1 was a 21 year old male residing in Delhi. He was pursuing film-making from a private university in Noida. He was extremely passionate about his course and had received several accolades for the short films that he has made so far. One short film which is partly based on his relationship, gathered immense critical acclaim but did not provide him elatedness.

##### **4.2.1.2 Participant 2**

Participant 2 was a 25 year old female residing in Delhi. She was pursuing English literature. She was passionate about painting as it was a way for her to express her emotions. Despite of being an untrained artist, after her relationship ended, she held an art exhibition which gained immense appreciation from art connoisseurs. But, she did not sell one painting in particular despite of it being auctioned for an extremely high price because it was too close to her heart.

### **V. DATA COLLECTION**

The data set for this study consists of transcribed semi-structured interviews with two participants. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews. The items included in the interview outlined the area of interest that had to be discussed during the course of the interview. It was kept in mind that the interview schedule was just a guide for the interview. It was ensured that it did not dictate the course of the interview. During the interview, some of the questions were also adapted to the specific context. The aim was to facilitate the participant describe his or her experience, not to check the researcher's preconception of posttraumatic growth following dissolution of romantic relationships. The verbatim transcripts acted as raw data that were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith, 1997).

### **VI. Data Analysis**

The analysis of data in interpretative phenomenological analysis involves four stages. They are described below:

#### **Step 1: Multiple Reading and Making Notes**

The first stage of analysis involved reading the transcripts several times to get completely immersed in the data. Then, comments and reflections of potential significance were given. Some parts of the transcripts were obviously more informative than the others and hence elicited more comments. While giving exploratory comments (on the left-hand margin), the emphasis was laid on content (what was discussed in the interview), linguistic features (such as, metaphors, pauses, repetitions) and context.

**Step 2: Transforming notes into Emergent Themes**

In this step, the notes were transformed into themes (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2012) and attempts were made to produce a concise phrase referring to a psychological concept. Nevertheless, it was ensured that the analysis remains grounded in the details of the participant’s account. Table I shows the list of emergent themes for both the participants.

**Table I:** List of Emergent Themes for both the participants

Participant 1	Participant 2
Ambition Clarity about goals Unrealistic goal setting Holistic appreciation Concentration on the task at hand Aversion to routine and rules Practical application Exploration Affect Perception Desire to escape the excruciating pain Self-inspiration Passionate Love Difficult Detachment Emotional Shattering Reaction formation Acceptance of vulnerability Lack of reciprocal feelings Enhanced understanding of work Social internalization Fear of inappropriate emotional expression Exclusive expression of emotions Reaction formation turning into sublimation Sublimation Denial Lack of happiness Continuous experience	Possessive partner Maladaptive coping mechanism Conformity Lack of self-development Cognitive distortion Self-development post dissolution Passive-aggressive behavior Passive-aggressive behavior turning sublimation Stimulus generalization Sublimation Difficult detachment Failed sublimation led to displacement Undermine material success Fear of being happy

**Step 3: Seeking relationships and clustering themes**

In this stage, attempts were made to look for connections between the emerging themes, group them together according to conceptual similarities and provide a descriptive label to each cluster. Some of the themes were dropped at this stage if they did not fit well with the emerging structure. The final list of themes comprised of various superordinate themes and sub-themes. The list of clustered themes for both the participants can be seen in table II.

**Table II:** List of clustered themes for both the participants

First Participant	Second Participant
High need for love and belongingness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passionate love</li> <li>• Difficult detachment</li> <li>• Affect perception</li> <li>• Continuous experience</li> <li>• Lack of reciprocal feelings</li> </ul>	Effect on self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maturity</li> <li>• Fear of being happy</li> </ul>
Effect on social relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaction formation</li> <li>• Acceptance of vulnerability</li> <li>• Social internalization</li> <li>• Fear of inappropriate emotional expression</li> </ul>	Effect on romantic relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stimulus generalization</li> </ul>
Effect on work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-inspiration</li> <li>• Desire to escape the excruciating pain</li> <li>• Enhanced understanding</li> <li>• Exclusive expression of emotions</li> </ul>	Effect on work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passive-aggressive behavior</li> <li>• Passive-aggressive behavior turning into sublimation</li> <li>• Sublimation</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaction formation turning into sublimation</li> <li>• Lack of happiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failed sublimation leading to displacement</li> <li>• Undermining material success</li> <li>• Lack of happiness</li> </ul>
--	---

**Step 4: Integration of cases**

In this stage, an attempt was made to look for convergences and divergences in the accounts of both the participants. A master theme table was produced (as seen in table III) that captured the quality of participants' shared experiences of the phenomena under investigation.

**Table III: Master theme table**

High need for love and belongingness -Difficult detachment
Voyage of Sublimation -Reaction formation turning into sublimation -Passive-aggressive behavior turning into sublimation
Perception of Success obtained post dissolution of relationship -Lack of happiness -Undermining material success

**VII. FINDINGS**

This section presents three superordinate themes which emerged from the analysis viz. high need for love and belongingness, voyage of sublimation and perception of success obtained post dissolution of relationship.

**7.1 High need for love and belongingness**

Participants were not asked specific, close-ended questions about their relationship with their respective ex-partners, instead they were simply asked to describe aspects of their relationship such as , how did they meet their ex-partners, when did the problem arise, did they think that they were the cause of the break-up etc. While responding to these questions, both the participants concurred that they get very attached to their loved ones in general, but face extreme difficulty in detaching themselves from them. They cannot let go off relationships easily.

Both the participants showed a tendency to over-value the ex-partner's importance in their lives. Due to this tendency they endeavored to continue their relationship even if it was detrimental. The first participant attempted to cling on to his broken relationship by befriending his ex-partner but gradually when he realized that the partner doesn't reciprocate his feelings to the same extent, he separated from her.

*“Not easily, I can't you know, I can't just let it go even if something bad happens or something wrong that happens you know, I'd still love to hang around with them”*

A major element in his breakup was the way in which it was terminated. He was taken aback with the subtlety of break up. He was shocked that the person who became the center of his world ended the relationship with him so swiftly and in his words “in a cold-blooded manner”. In case of the second participant, the relationship was an exploitative one; her ex-partner tried to conceal her personal freedom which she detested but never confronted him about this and wanted to continue the relationship. When asked how she feels about him now, she replied that she still feels the same. This indicates that she hasn't been able to completely detach herself from him.

*“Obviously, I think I did. And till date, I don't think that I can harm him, you know, I cannot hate him or harm him.”*

**7.2 Voyage of Sublimation**

The increased work productivity of both the participants was actually a socially acceptable way to express their feelings and emotions about their breakup. Hence, the master theme was named “sublimation”. A difference between the two participants was that while the first participant's voyage started with reaction formation, the second participant's journey started with passive-aggressive behavior. In case of the first participant, when his ex-partner ended the relationship, he tried to befriend her and pretended to be “cool” in front of his friends; his behavior was opposite to his feelings (reaction formation). But, gradually when he started accepting the loss as a permanent one, he started becoming a reserved person; he started alienating himself from others. His feelings were now being brought to the conscious mind. In order to avoid being fully conscious of his feelings, defense mechanisms were deployed. He used to express his feelings about his breakup in his film-making which was always characterized by heart-break or betrayal (sublimation). Hence, as his acceptance of his breakup increased, his reaction formation decreased and sublimation increased.

*“like a betrayal, haan, there can be a betrayal or there can be some kind of misunderstanding ahmmm...a lot of these things, I don't know why. So, there'll be something of a different kind that I will end up doing. I don't know why that happens. That are not my intentions although but it always happens.”*

In case of the second participant, when she ended the relationship with her ex-partner, she was full of rage and aggression that she had invested her time in a relationship with him which provided her nothing but concealment. She was angry at herself that she allowed herself to be in a relationship with him which didn't allow her to grow. Her ex-partner was a possessive person (as claimed by her) who didn't want her to spend time with her friends or for her education. According to the psychoanalytical school of thought, this aggressive behavior towards oneself is an exhibition of passive-aggressive behavior. She was initially angry at him but later that aggression was internalized. Like in case of the first participant, when the feelings and thoughts about the breakup started coming in the conscious mind, she channeled them into her paintings.

*“See my relationship was excreta (laughs), it was out in the flush pot. It was not like (brief pause) it meant nothing to me then. It was a nightmare. So, the entire process was not to express what I went through, in a way like with him, but what I could have been.”*

Her paintings demonstrate aggression towards the male gender; she had generalized that all men are exploitative. The female figures in her paintings represent a ray of hope in the ocean of sadness.

*“I think I was more angry at myself. There were more me figures in my paintings. The entire male concept is missing, the whole male figure is missing from my paintings.”*

### **7.3 Perception of Success obtained post-dissolution of relationship**

This section of findings captures the essence of the study. Since the work (film-making or painting) was an emotional expression, it was not intended to obtain benefits. The participants were simply expressing their emotions through their work. It wasn't any extrinsic reward which motivated them to invest their efforts into their work rather their work was the only domain which allowed them to fully express themselves in a socially-acceptable manner.

For both the participants, the outcome of sublimated efforts was just an expression of emotions. In case of the first participant, when he was asked about his feelings about his movie review, he told that he felt nothing. The movie mattered more to him than reviews because it was a piece of his broken heart.

*“Nothing, I simply don't feel anything about it. I was okay with the reviews but I wasn't oh, I wasn't on top of the world or something like that. You don't feel happiness after that, there is a different kind of a feeling all together.”*

In case of the second participant also the success of her exhibition didn't provide her happiness. She mentioned that one of her paintings which was immensely close to her was auctioned for Rs. 40,000 but she didn't sell it because she felt that the figure in the painting was actually her own journey.

*“I don't know, I think all those paintings you know somewhere were a piece of me and that painting in particular was my heart.”*

This shows that after a breakup, the importance of material success is reduced. A person doesn't feel elated because the work is not meant to achieve success. It is just an expression of emotions. Where other people feel that one should be proud of oneself after achieving material success, the participants in this study didn't feel anything about their material success. It was just their unflinching love that was expressed through their work not their ambition.

## **VIII. DISCUSSION**

The present study aimed at understanding how a person perceives overt professional success after the dissolution of an unmarried romantic relationship. Since developing important close relationships is a key goal in adolescence and young adulthood, significant distress occurs when these relationships are unsuccessful. Numerous studies have documented that breakups are very distressing (Field, Diego, Pelaez, Deeds, & Delgado, 2009; Lewandowski et al., 2003; Sprecher, Felmlee, Metts, Fehr, & Vanni, 1998; Tashiro & Frazier, 2003). The distress following romantic relationship breakups has recently been investigated with the assistance of brain imaging techniques (Kross, Berman, Mischel, Smith, & Wager, 2011; Najib, Loberbaum, Kose, Bohning, & George, 2004). Using fMRI studies, Kross et al. (2011) demonstrated that thinking of a recent romantic relationship breakup resulted in brain activity in the same locations as when a participant experiences actual physical pain, suggesting that the brain experiences intense emotional pain and physical pain in a similar manner. Dissolution of unmarried romantic relationship is one of leading causes of depression in Indian population (Patel et al., 1998; Chandran et al., 2002; Pereira et al., 2007; Patel et al., 2002; Rodrigues et al., 2003; Verma et al., 2007). Frazier and Hurliman (2001) found that dissolution of romantic relationships is regarded as one of the "worst events" in a phone survey inquiring about traumatic events. In a study by Park et al. (1996) on stress-related growth, when participants were asked to list the most stressful experience that occurred in the past year, "problems with romantic relationships" (p. 77) were the most frequently listed

problem above illnesses, accidents, deaths, family troubles and academic problems. Relationship dissolution is one of most common presenting problems at college counseling centers (Benton et al., 2003). The positive consequences of dissolution of romantic relationships are also well researched. Tashiro and Frazier (2003) found that following a breakup undergraduate students reported on average five positive changes or benefits, such as improved friendships, greater focus on university work, and personal growth (e.g., 'I am more self-confident'). But, no study has examined the perception of the person who experienced growth (in work) after the dissolution of an unmarried romantic relationship that is, whether that person perceived it as growth or not? Therefore, in this study I attempted to comprehend how a person, after going through the dissolution of an unmarried romantic relationship, perceives the overt professional success obtained as a result of his or her loss.

I started with the assumption that after the dissolution of an unmarried romantic relationship, a person would try to express his or her emotions in some or the other way and the outcome of that expression would be more valuable to him or her than just material success. To explore this phenomenon, I conducted semi-structured interviews with two participants selected using purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The master themes (as seen in table 5.3) have been explained in the findings section. The findings revealed that both the participants faced difficulty in detaching themselves from their respective ex-partners. They could not fully accept the fact that the relationship has been terminated (Bowlby, 1980). The participants went through the first phase (i.e., experiencing a loss) but not the other two phases (viz. pulling apart and moving beyond) of the model of change and personal growth by Hebert and Popadiuk (2008). After going through a traumatic breakup, the participants tried to vent out their emotions by engaging in some activity. In the case of first participant, it was film-making and in case of second participant, it was painting. When the participants were asked about their feelings towards success achieved for the expression of their emotions, they reported that they didn't feel happy. They were not elated because the effort invested to create that piece of art was actually unintentional, it was their priceless emotions; a "piece of their heart" that they showcased before the world.

In order to maintain the idiographic feature of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith, 2009), I'll be discussing the relevance of the master themes in case of each participant separately rather than discussing each theme with instances from the participants' accounts.

In case of the first participant, he got immensely attached to his ex-partner who didn't reciprocate his feelings to that extent. When she broke the news to him about her infidelity, he was heart-broken; he was shattered that how could someone who became the center of his world (Helgeson, 1994a), end the relationship with him in a jiffy. He experienced high level of distress due to this dilemma. Schwartzberg and Janoff-Bulman (1991) found that bereaved college students (bereavement and grief caused due to relationship dissolution are similar, as found by Emery (2004)) who were able to find meaning and coherence regarding death-related losses experienced less intense grief than those individuals who did not construe meaning out of their loss.

His distress can also be attributed to the fact that he was the initiator of the relationship and the recipient of the dissolution (Sprecher et al., 1998). It took him aback but at that time, he didn't express what he was actually feeling; on the inside he was feeling doleful but on the outside he pretended to be "cool" (reaction formation). He endeavored to still be in the company of his ex-partner by befriending her but that attempt was successful only for a short period of time. Gradually, when the friendship also came to an end, he alienated himself from others. So, as his reaction formation was reducing, his real feelings were coming to his conscious mind. But, since one never really confronts his or her real feelings and thoughts, he started expressing them in his work i.e., his film-making. The participant mentioned that he just lets his emotions flow when he is on a film set, he doesn't hold back his feelings at that time; the lava of sadness and despair that burns inside him erupts when he arrives on sets. Also, he mentioned that in all his stories, the element of heart-break is common even when he tries to avoid it but somehow it still seeps in.

About one film for which he received several accolades, it was a short film in which the protagonist lost his beloved because of some misunderstanding and the pain was caused by this traumatic experience made him a successful artist. The participant received several great reviews for this short-film, but those reviews didn't matter to him at that time because for him, that film was his life, it resolved around the person whom he loved so much but couldn't be with. Although, it was this film that got him a lot of critical acclaim but it didn't provide him any happiness. In his words, "*I felt nothing. You don't feel anything after something like this*". This shows that although the film provided him success but it was not what he wanted. The pain of heartbreak which caused the success paradoxically reduced the importance of success. He even called the motivation of grief, a bizarre perception but also accepted the fact that it was applicable in his case.

He mentioned that even though he got success because of that film but he really wished that it doesn't happen to anyone else because the pain caused by such an event is larger than the success obtain by its expression. For him, it was a painful expression rather than an effort to obtain reward. Contrary to previous studies (Helgeson, 1994b), the participant's increased engagement in his work cannot be called posttraumatic growth because he still hasn't been able to completely overcome the loss; all his films have elements of heart-

break in them. Contrary to previous studies (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2001) when he was asked if he was still in love with his ex-partner, he replied, “*Yes yeah (long pause) yeah I am*”. This shows that even after five years, he has not been able to completely forget his ex-partner. It cannot be called posttraumatic growth because the memory of the ex-partner is still etched in his mind. He hasn’t dated anyone else since then and feels that he doesn’t want to get attached with anyone else because the pain that is caused when an attached person leaves you is overwhelming.

In case of the second participant, she had a distorted perception about love, she thought that one finds real love only once in life and she had found hers. Her ex-partner was a possessive person who wanted to restrict her interaction and meeting with others. She did not confront him about this because she had a maladaptive coping mechanism; she closed herself to him, she concurred with whatever he used to tell her because she was having this perception that she has been made for him and has to accept him with all his charms and flaws. But, when she had a breakup with him, she was depressed. Tashiro and Frazier (2003) also suggested that breakup distress is greater when the breakup is attributed to the mood or insensitivity of ex-partner. She claimed that she was angry at herself that she wasted four years of her life in an exploitative relationship. Adopting a psychoanalytic lens to interpret it, she was engaging in passive-aggressive behavior; it might have been that she was initially angry at him but later on it got refracted onto her. This might’ve been the cause of her depression as psychoanalytic school of thought states that “depression is anger turned inwards”.

In order to come out of depression, she started painting (sublimation). She was an amateur painter. Initially, she had to put in conscious efforts to develop her skill so that she can express herself effectively. During this phase, occasionally her failed sublimated effort got converted into displacement. She mentioned that once when she was not able to paint proficiently, she picked up her computer screen and smashed it on the floor. But, it was only the rage inside her that motivated her to not stop and work hard to develop her skill. This shows that her passive-aggressive behavior gradually got converted into sublimation. After she developed her skill to the level where she could paint proficiently, she claimed that painting became an effortless process for her. At that time, she used to express aspects of her relationship in her paintings. Her aggression towards her ex-partner which was generalized to the entire male gender was also reflected in her paintings. This contradicts the structural equation modeling by Asano et al. (2010) which suggested that psychological detachment from ex-romantic partners directly increased sense of coherence (SOC). In this case, the participant’s SOC increased by being psychologically attached to the ex-partner.

She showcased her paintings at an exhibition which was a huge success. Despite of being an untrained painter, her paintings were auctioned at quite high prices. One of her paintings was auctioned for Rs. 40,000, the highest among others but she did not sell it because it clearly depicted her journey with her ex-partner. This shows that after the dissolution of an unmarried romantic relationship, the value of material success is reduced because the product is not an outcome of effort aimed at achieving results, instead it is merely an expression of emotions.

On being asked about her current feelings towards her ex-partner, she claimed that she still loved him and blamed herself for the end of relationship. She mentioned that it was not entirely her ex-partner’s fault; it was also her fault because she did not confront him about the aspects of relationship she did not like. This indicates that she is still in love with him and hasn’t been able to overcome the loss. The study is having some implications. It can be used in relationship counseling as it shows that even if a person showing increased productivity, it does not mean that he or she has been able to overcome the loss of relationship. It even has implications for the construct of posttraumatic growth as it suggests that the self-reported change in behavior should not be taken as a sign of posttraumatic growth because the underlying cognition might be maladjusted. Therefore, this study encourages one to go beyond what is overt and explore what it is covert.

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

The purpose of the study was to examine what it is like to experience overt professional success after the dissolution of an unmarried romantic relationship. For this, the data were collected from two participants who have had a breakup. The data were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The findings showed that three superordinate themes emerged viz. high need for love and belongingness, voyage of sublimation and perception of success obtained post dissolution. This indicates that after the dissolution of an unmarried romantic relationship, a person may express his or her feelings through an organized activity or work which may provide him overt professional success. But, that person doesn’t value that success because for him or her, the effort is not deployed for the purpose of obtaining success instead it is merely an expression of pain; deep pain which a person is still struggling with and hasn’t been able to overcome. Therefore, if after a breakup, a person reports that he or she has experienced posttraumatic growth (in the form of professional success) after the dissolution of a romantic relationship, the person needs to be probed to identify whether he or she has actually experienced growth or whether he or she is just utilizing the medium of work to express himself or herself.

## X. LIMITATIONS

Despite of using a rigorous qualitative method, the study has some limitations. First, the sample size was small. Second, only interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to explore the research question. Mixed method approach i.e., triangulation would have been conducive in determining the ecological validity of the construct and its applicability to the general population. Third, the experiences of only unmarried young adults were explored in this study. The experiences of adults who have been in long term serious relationship might be different.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Aron, A., & Aron, E. N. (1997). Self-expansion motivation and including other in the self. In S. Duck (Ed.), *Handbook of personal relationships: Theory, research and interventions* (2nd ed., pp. 251-270). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- [2] Aron, A., Aron, E. N., & Norman, C. (2001). Self-expansion model of motivation and cognition in close relationships and beyond. In M. Clark & G. Fletcher (Eds.), *Blackwell's handbook of social psychology*, Vol. 2: Interpersonal processes (pp. 478-501). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- [3] Asano, R., Horike, H., & Daibo, I. (2010). Do People Mature after Romantic Break-ups?: The Effects of Coping Strategies and Psychological Detachment on Sense of Coherence. *Japanese Journal of Personality*, 18(2), 129-139.
- [4] Benton, S.A., Robertson, J.M., Tseng, W.C., Newton, F.B., & Benton, S.L. (2003). Changes in counseling center client problems across thirteen years. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 34, 66-72.
- [5] Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and loss*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- [6] Calhoun, L. G., & Tedeschi, R. G. (2001). Posttraumatic growth: The positive lessons of loss. In R. A. Neimeyer (Eds.), *Meaning reconstruction: The experience of loss* (pp. 157-172). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- [7] Chandran, M., Tharyan, P., Muliyl, J., & Abraham, S. (2002) Post-partum depression in a cohort of women from a rural area of Tamil Nadu, India Incidence and risk factors. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 181, 499-504.
- [8] Emery, R. E. (2004). *The truth about children and divorce*. New York: Viking.
- [9] Field, T., Diego, M., Pelaez, M., Deeds, O., & Delgado, J. (2009). Breakup distress in university students. *Adolescence*, 44(176), 705-727.
- [10] Frazier, P. A., & Hurliman, L. (2001). Posttraumatic stress disorder following low and high magnitude events. Manuscript submitted for publication
- [11] Helgeson, V. S. (1994a). The effects of self-beliefs and relationship beliefs on adjustment to a relationship stressor. *Personal Relationships*, 1(3), 241-258.
- [12] Helgeson, V. S. (1994b). Long-distance romantic relationships: Sex differences in adjustment and breakup. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20(3), 254- 265.
- [13] Herbert, S. & Popadiuk, N. (2008). University Students' Experiences of Nonmarital Breakups: A Grounded Theory. *Journal of College Student Development*, 49(1), 1-14. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2008.0008>
- [14] Kamp, C.M. & Amato, P. (2005). Consequences of relationship status and quality for subjective well-being. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 22, 607-628.
- [15] Kross, E., Berman, M. G., Mischel, W., Smith, E. E., & Wager, T. D. (2011). Social rejection shares somatosensory representations with physical pain. *PNAS Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 108(15), 6270-6275. doi:10.1073/pnas.1102693108
- [16] Laumann, E., Gagnon, J.H., Michael, R.T., Michaels, S. (1994). *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- [17] Lewandowski, G. W., Jr., & Aron, A. (2002, February). The self-expansion scale: Construction and validation. Paper presented at the third Annual Meeting of the Society of Personality and Social Psychology, Savannah, GA.
- [18] Lewandowski, G., Aron, A., Bassis, S., & Kunak, J. (2006). Losing a self-expanding relationship: Implications for the self-concept. *Personal Relationships*, 13(3), 317- 331. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6811.2006.00120.x.
- [19] Marks, N. F. (1996). Flying solo at midlife: Gender, marital status, and psychological wellbeing. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 58, 917-932.
- [20] Monroe, S., Rohde, P., Seeley, J., & Lewinsohn, P. (1999). Life events and depression in adolescence: Relationship loss as a prospective risk factor for first onset of major depressive disorder. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 108(4), 606-614.



- [21] Najib, A., Lorberbaum, J. P., Kose, S., Bohning, D. E., & George, M. S. (2004). Regional brain activity in women grieving a romantic relationship breakup. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 161(12), 2245-2256. doi:10.1176/appi.ajp.161.12.2245
- [22] Osborn, M. & Smith, J. (2003). The personal experience of chronic benign lower back pain: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 3, 65-83.
- [23] Park, C. L., Cohen, L. H., & Murch, R. L. (1996). Assessment and predication of stress-related growth. *Journal of Personality*, 64(1), 71-105.
- [24] Patel, S., Shah, R., Patel, H., Tilwani, M., & Vankar, G.K. (1998). Depressive symptomatology among adolescent schoolgirls. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 40(35).
- [25] Patel, V., Rodrigues, M., & DeSouza, N. (2002). Gender, Poverty, and Postnatal Depression: A study of mothers in Goa, India. *Army Journal of Psychiatry*, 159, 43-57.
- [26] Pereira, B., Andrew, G., & Pednekar, S. (2007). The explanatory models of depression in low income countries: Listening to women in India. *Journal of Affect Disorder*, 102, 209-218.
- [27] Pietkiewicz, I. & Smith, J.A. (2012) Praktyczny przewodnik interpretacyjnej analizy fenomenologicznej w badaniach jakościowych w psychologii. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne*, 18(2), 361-369.
- [28] Rhoades, G.K., Dush, C.K., Atkins, D. Stanley, S. & Markman, H. (2011). Breaking up is hard to do: The impact of unmarried relationship dissolution on mental health and life satisfaction. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 25(3), 366-374, doi: 10.1037/a0023627.
- [29] Rodrigues, M., Patel, V., Jaswal, S., & De Souza, N. (2003). Listening to mothers: Qualitative studies on motherhood and depression from Goa, India. *SocSci Med*, 57, 1797-1806.
- [30] Sbarra, D. A., & Emery, R. E. (2005). The emotional sequelae of nonmarital relationship dissolution: Analysis of change and intraindividual variability over time. *Personal Relationships*, 12(2), 213-232. doi:10.1111/j.1350-4126.2005.00112.x
- [31] Sbarra, D.A. (2006). Predicting the onset of emotional recovery following nonmarital relationship dissolution: Survival analysis of sadness and anger. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32, 298-312.
- [32] Schwartzberg, S. S., & Janoff-Bulman, R. (1991). Grief and the search for meaning: Exploring the assumptive worlds of bereaved college students. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 10, 270-288.
- [33] Smith, J. A. (1996). Beyond the divide between cognition and discourse: Using interpretative phenomenological analysis in health psychology. *Psychology and Health*, 11, 261-271.
- [34] Smith, J.A., Flowers, P. and Osborn, M. (1997) 'Interpretative phenomenological analysis and health psychology', in L. Yardley (ed.), *Material Discourses and Health*. London: Routledge, pp. 68-91.
- [35] Smith, J.A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. London, UK: Sage.
- [36] Sprecher, S., Felmlee, D., Metts, S., Fehr, B., & Vanni, D. (1998). Factors associated with distress following the breakup of a close relationship. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15(6), 791-809.
- [37] Tashiro, T., & Frazier, P. A. (2003). "I'll never be in a relationship like that again": Personal growth following romantic relationship dissolution. *Personal Relationships*, 10, 113-128.
- [38] Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (2004). Posttraumatic Growth: Conceptual Foundations and Empirical Evidence. *Psychological Inquiry*, 15, 1-18.
- [39] Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (2004). Posttraumatic Growth: Conceptual Foundations and Empirical Evidence. *Psychological Inquiry*, 15, 1-18
- [40] Tedeschi, R. G., Park, C. L., & Calhoun, L. G. (1998). *Posttraumatic growth*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- [41] Tedeschi, R., & Calhoun, L. (1996). The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory: Measuring the positive legacy of trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 9(3), 455-472. doi:10.1002/jts.2490090305.
- [42] Waite, L.J., Gallagher, M. (2000). *The case for marriage*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- [43] Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing Qualitative Research In Psychology*. London, UK: Open University Press.

IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) is UGC approved Journal with Sl. No. 5070, Journal no. 49323.

Jasmeet Singh. "Pathos of grief: The saga of a broken heart." *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* 22.7 (2017): 42-50.