

## *Original Research Article*

# IMPULSIVITY, AGGRESSION AND SUICIDAL IDEATION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS WITH THE HISTORY OF RELATIONSHIP BREAKUP

### ABSTRACT

This research examined the connections between impulsive behavior, aggressive tendencies, and thoughts of self-harm among young adults who have experienced ofrelationship breakup. To hypothesize that gender was important since different features were seen depending on gender. It has been discovered that among young adults, the relationship breakup predicts levels of impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal thoughts.200 individuals, ranging in age from 17 to 37, had their data gathered purposive sampling methods. IBM SPSS (23.0) used to analyze the data, and the results showed substantial correlations between the variables.Assessments questions used AGQ for aggression, the SIDAS for suicidal behavior, and BIS-R for impulsivity.Employing a cross-sectional survey approach, the findings revealed notable associations among impulsiveness, expressions of anger, and the occurrence of suicidal thoughts in young adults with relationship breakup. To improve generalizability, future research should take into account collecting data from other Punjab provinces.

**Keywords:** “Aggression”, “Breakups”, “Impulsivity”, “Relationship”, “Suicidal ideation, “Young adults’

### Introduction

Relationship breakup is using as independent variable and impulsivity, aggression and suicidal ideation are the dependents variables in this research. Relationship breakup are widely recognised as distressing events that greatly impact people, particularly young adults who are still going through a critical stage in their lives and are still developing emotionally. This in-depth analysis explores the complex relationships between relationship breakup and three key psychological characteristics in young adults: impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation. For the development of successful intervention strategies and support networks for people coping with the suffering resulting from relationship breakup, a thorough understanding of these relationships holds promise (Ben-Porath & Winer, 2013). The World Health Organization (WHO) has rightfully recognised that aggressive behaviors, suicidal thoughts, and impulsive conduct pose serious global public health issues and account for close to one million suicide deaths per year. The biggest factor in injury-related deaths globally is suicide (MacLennan, 2002).

Examining the association between young adults who have had relationships breakup and the incidence of impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal thoughts is the main goal of this study. Young adults are increasingly suffering from these three common behavioral and mental health problems, which are having a negative impact on their physical, social, behavioral, and mental health. The complexity of mental health conditions underscores the importance of gaining a deep understanding to facilitate the implementation of effective treatments, lifestyle modifications, and therapeutic approaches. Young adults who have gone through relationship breakups often exhibit heightened impulsivity, aggression, and thoughts of suicide. These reactions are typically rooted in the emotional distress and pain associated with the end of a relationship breakup. Research indicates that individuals who display increased impulsivity and aggression are more prone to act on suicidal thoughts, highlighting a connection between these traits and suicidal actions. Mathais and Dougherty (2011) noted that both aggression and impulsivity are personality traits associated with suicidal behavior.

This study explores the increased impulsivity and aggression that are shown in young adults who have suffered the relationship breakup that are stable a factor that significantly increases thoughts of suicide. Intriguingly, it appears that aggressive behavior exerts a more pronounced influence on suicidal thoughts compared to impulsiveness. However, the intricate

relationship between aggression and suicide remains an active area of investigation (Neuner & Hubner-Liebermann, 2011).

In the current study, a sample of young adults who have expressed suicide thoughts will be analyzed to determine whether impulsivity and aggression can act as precursors to suicidal behavior. The results show that aggressiveness-score-high young adults are more likely to have suicidal thoughts, whereas impulsivity-score-high young adults have significant potential as key predictors of suicidal ideation. Additionally, for those dealing with the effects of a relationship breakup, a concerted effort incorporating family (with regard to developmental issues), social support, and the advice of mental health specialists (psychologists) may result in more favorable outcomes. This collaborative study looks at how impulsivity, violence, and suicidal thoughts affect young adults, who have experienced relationship breakup in a number of Faisalabad, Pakistan (Klonsky & May, 2010).

### **Rationale:**

Relationship breakups have wide-ranging effects on psychological and behavioral aspects, especially in young adults' impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation. The complexity of these influences highlights the importance of these elements in people's lives, with young adults being especially vulnerable to their impacts during the turbulent time after relationship breakup. Although many studies have examined the effects of relationship breakups, this research stands out because it considers impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal thoughts as potential breakup predictors. A thorough investigation is necessary to fill in any gaps in the literature because these factors haven't been thoroughly studied in Pakistan among this particular group. In the end, this study aims to equip young adults with knowledge of the practical issues causing an increase in impulsivity, aggression, and suicide thoughts after the relationship breakup.

### **Objectives of the study**

- This study's objective is to look into gender differences in impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation among young adults with the history of relationship breakups.
- This study examines whether young people who have experienced previous breakups in relationships show signs of aggression, impulsivity, and suicide ideation.

- Among young adults who have undergone relationship breakups, we want to assess the roles played by impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation as potential predictors of subsequent relationship breakup.
- The primary goal of this study is to compare the levels of impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation among male and female young people who had previously experienced relationship breakups.

## **Hypothesis**

- In the group of young adults who have had relationship breakup, it is anticipated that there would be a noticeable association between impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation.
- It is anticipated that there will be a significant gender differences in the young people cohort with a history of breakups in relationships when it comes to impulsivity, aggression and suicidal thoughts.
- Breakups in relationships are thought to predict impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal thoughts in young people.

## **Methods**

### **Study Design**

In this study, a purposive sampling technique was employed to conduct a cross-sectional analysis of 200 young scholars from Punjab, Pakistan, who were enrolled in a mix of state and private higher education institutions.

### **Sample Size**

The study concentrated on people aged 17 to 37 from various public and private institutions who had experienced previous breakups in relationships. The survey included 200 young adults from Punjab, Pakistan's universities, representing the public and commercial sectors, with a 50/50 gender split. The sample, which included both sexes, consisted of undergraduate and graduate students seeking clinical psychology degrees (n = 100 men and n =

100 women with a history of relationship breakups). Face-to-face surveys were used to gather data for this inquiry, using purposive sampling techniques.

### **Assessment Protocols**

In this research, several instruments were employed to gauge the variables of interest. These included the 29-item Aggression Questionnaire (AQ), the 5-item Suicidal Ideation Attributes Scale (SIDAS), and the 21-item revised Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (BIS-R-21), all of which served as data collection tools.

**Sociodemographic Form:** Participants' optional name, age, gender, education, occupation, birth order among siblings, socioeconomic position, and other details were collected using a sociodemographic questionnaire. In addition, surveys inquired about parental jobs, family structure, employment status, and history of relationships.

**The 21-item Barratt Impulsiveness Scale Revised (BIS-R-21):** The 21-item BIS-R-21, created by M. Kapitany-Foveny on May 22, 2020, is significant for evaluating impulsivity in a variety of populations, including people with mental, behavioral, or physical issues. The respondents are divided into three age groups based on their chronological age: Young Adulthood (18-29 years), Thirties (30-39 years), and Middle Age (40-64 years). According to M. Kapitany-Foveny (2020), impulsivity includes cognitive and behavioral aspects as well as restlessness and impatience.

**Aggression Questionnaire (AGQ):** 29 items make up the 1992 Buss and Perry-created Aggression Questionnaire (AGQ), which is graded on a seven-point Likert scale. It assesses four types of aggressiveness: hostility (items 22–29), verbal aggression (items 10–14), physical aggression (items 1-9), and anger (items 15–21). According to Buss and Perry (1992), scale scores are determined by adding up the pertinent elements, with items 7 and 18 receiving inverted scoring.

**Suicidal Ideation Attributes Scale (SIDAS):** In order to evaluate the seriousness of suicidal ideation, Van Spijker developed the Suicidal Ideation Attributes Scale (SIDAS) in 2014. Both convergent validity and excellent internal consistency are present. Planning and attempting suicide are highly correlated with thought control and frequency. For people aged 21 and older,

scores show a high chance of suicidal behaviors, making SIDAS a reliable on-demand assessment for determining the seriousness of suicidal thoughts.

### **Young adults are asked two questions on their history of relationship breakup.**

1. Did your most recent relationship breakup?
2. If yes! When was that, in terms of months or years?

### **Procedure**

Every academic facility involved in the research mandated the submission of consent documents, authorization letters, and research metrics for validation. The study utilized targeted sampling and conducted direct interviews to collect information. Participants voluntarily consented, sharing information such as name (optional), age, sex, educational background, profession, birth order among siblings, economic standing, family structure, and the occupations of their parents. Signing of consent documents was a prerequisite.

The participants were provided with instructions and questionnaires, retaining the liberty to disengage at any point. They were encouraged to provide honest responses, and gratitude was extended to the team facilitating the data gathering process. The software IBM SPSS (version 23.0) was utilized for data analysis.

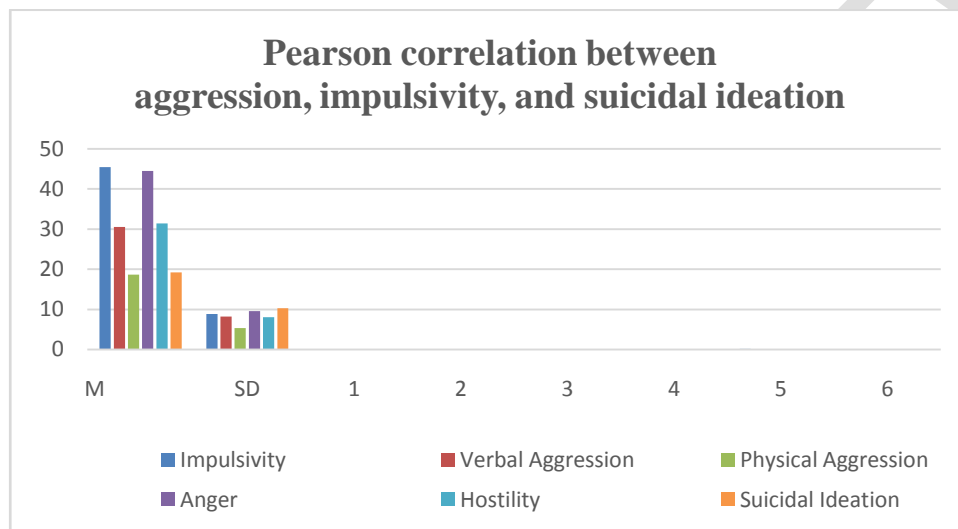
### **Results**

The results of the inquiry were calculated using IBM SPSS (version 23.0). The gathered data underwent a thorough analysis. Frequency distribution analysis was used to determine the percentages of demographic variable. The reliability of three scales was evaluated using reliability analysis in addition to descriptive analysis. Relationship breakups related to impulsivity, violence, and suicidal ideation were predicted using correlation analysis and linear regression analysis to evaluate the interrelationships between factors. To assess the primary hypothesis, a t-test for independent samples was employed, contrasting demographic information between two distinct groups, focusing particularly on gender differences.

**Hypothesis 1:** The initial hypothesis posited a noteworthy association among impulsiveness, aggressive behavior, and suicidal ideation in young adults experiencing the aftermath of

romantic separations. The results from the correlation analysis conducted to investigate this proposition yielded intriguing insights. At a significance level of 0.05, it was discovered that the relationship breakup showed a substantial positive link with impulsivity, anger, and suicidal ideation. These results highlight how strong the relationship between these variables is when it comes to young adults who have experienced relationship breakups.

**Figure 1:** shows the Pearson correlation between aggression, impulsivity, and suicidal ideation (N=200).



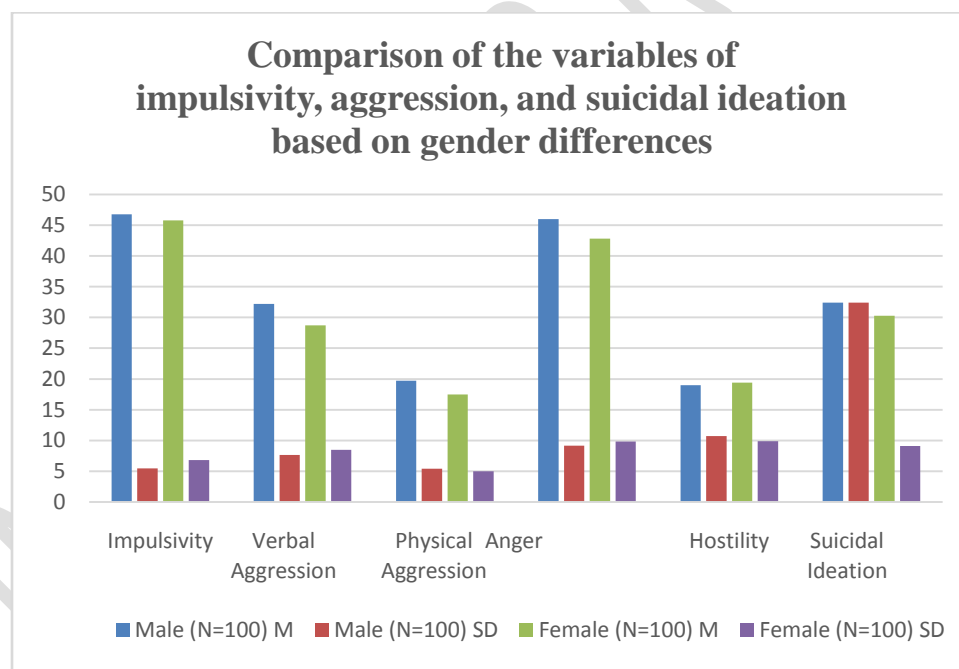
\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Figure 1** presents data that underscores a significant correlation among impulsive behavior, aggressive tendencies, and thoughts of self-harm. The impact of romantic separations on individuals is profound and warrants careful scrutiny. Notably, the median scores for verbal and physical aggression, anger, hostility, and suicidal thoughts stand at 30.565, 18.685, 44.505, 19.225, respectively. Furthermore, the average score for impulsiveness is observed to be 45.451. Delving into variability, the standard deviation for impulsiveness is recorded at 8.874, for physical aggression at 5.332, for verbal aggression at 8.240, for anger at 9.604, for hostility at 8.025, and for suicidal ideation at 10.311. These statistics offer insights into the commonality and diversity present within the data collected.

**Hypothesis 2:** To explore the potential variation in impulsivity, violence, and suicidal thoughts among young adults post-relationship termination, two hypotheses, labeled hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3, were proposed and examined. The investigation employed the T-test to scrutinize these suppositions. The outcomes of the analysis revealed a pronounced positive association between the termination of a romantic relationship and increased levels of impulsivity, violent behavior, and suicidal thoughts. Intriguingly, this association was statistically significant at the 0.05 level for genders, corroborating the hypotheses and highlighting the profound impact that the dissolution of a relationship can have on these psychological aspects in the youth demographic.

**Figure 2:** A comparison of the variables of impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation based on gender differences (N=200)



**$P < .05$**

**Figure 2** presents an analysis of how different genders react emotionally after a breakup. The data reveals that women tend to exhibit more impulsive behaviors, both verbally and physically, and show higher levels of anger and hostility compared to men. On average, women score slightly higher in impulsivity (M=46.80) than men (M=45.87), while men score more in verbal

aggression (M=32.21) compared to women (M=28.78). Furthermore, the variation in responses is smaller among men (SD=7.66) than women (SD=8.50). When it comes to expressing anger, men have an average score (M=46.05) that is noticeably higher than that of women (M=42.82), with standard deviations being (SD=17.38) for men and (SD=21.50) for women. Importantly, all variables exhibit significant positive p values with large magnitudes, demonstrating a connection between young people's impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal thoughts. All of these p values are under 0.05. In addition, Chon's d value for impulsivity, verbal aggression, physical aggression, and rage is discovered to be 0.705, while it is significantly higher for hostility at d=0.708, and it reaches d=0.733 for suicidal thoughts. All other variables and the relationship with t values are favorably associated, with the exception of hostility, which has a negative correlation (t=-0.307).

**Hypothesis 3:** Consistent with the third hypothesis, which posited, "Young adults with a history of romantic separations are likely to exhibit increased impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal thoughts," a linear regression was employed to investigate this assertion. The results of this analysis, significant at the 0.05 level, revealed a marked link between the experience of a romantic split and heightened impulsivity, aggressive behaviors, and thoughts of self-harm. This suggests that the dissolution of a romantic relationship serves as a distinct variable that can influence other behaviors and mental states, such as impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation.

**Table 1:** Summary of the linear regression analysis using relationship breakup as a significant predictor of impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation (N=200).

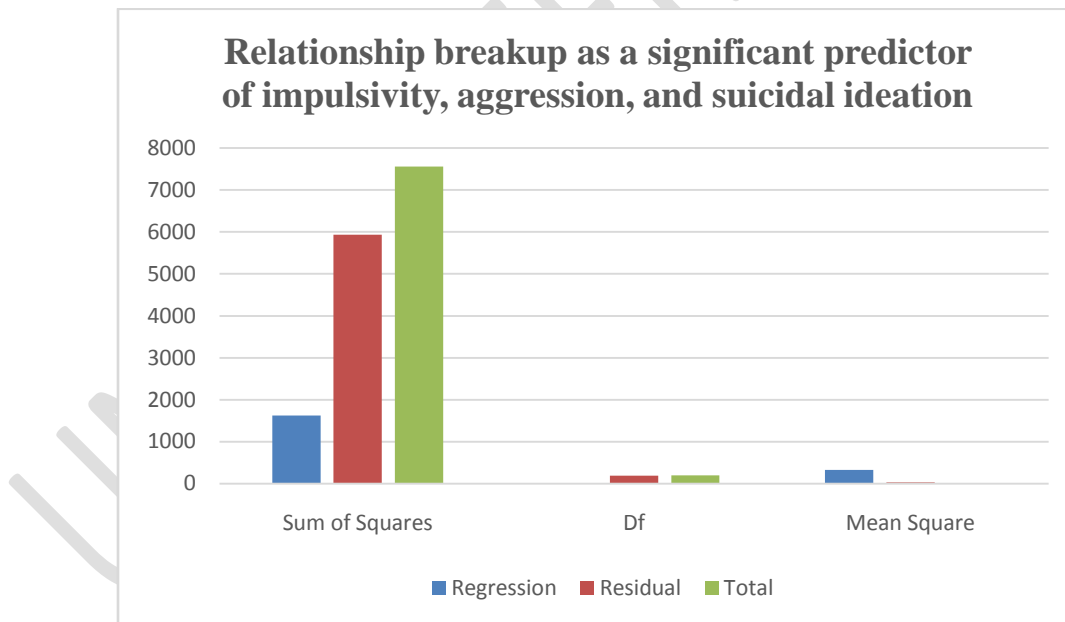
Predictors	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	Df	Sig.
Relationship Breakup	.464	.215	.195	10.619	194	.000

\*p<.05

The information in **Table 1** highlights the significant role that relationship breakdown has in predicting young people's impulsivity, violence, and suicide ideation. With an R-value of 0.464

and an associated R-squared value of 0.215, the statistical analysis reveals interesting results. The Adjusted R-squared value is 0.195, and it indicates that the predictor variable accounts for about 21.5% of the variation in the dependent variables. The calculated F-statistic, which is 10.619, together with the astoundingly low p-value of 0.000, emphasizes the relationship's statistical importance even more. The data presented in the table clearly indicates that the sole independent factor, the termination of romantic relationships, considerably influences fluctuations in the dependent factors such as impulsivity, aggression, and thoughts of self-harm among the youth, accounting for a 1.95% variance. These results underscore the pivotal influence of romantic breakups on the psychological and emotional health of young individuals, shedding light on the need for better comprehension and intervention strategies for issues related to impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal tendencies in this demographic.

**Figure 3: Summary of the linear regression analysis using relationship breakup as a significant predictor of impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation (N=200).**

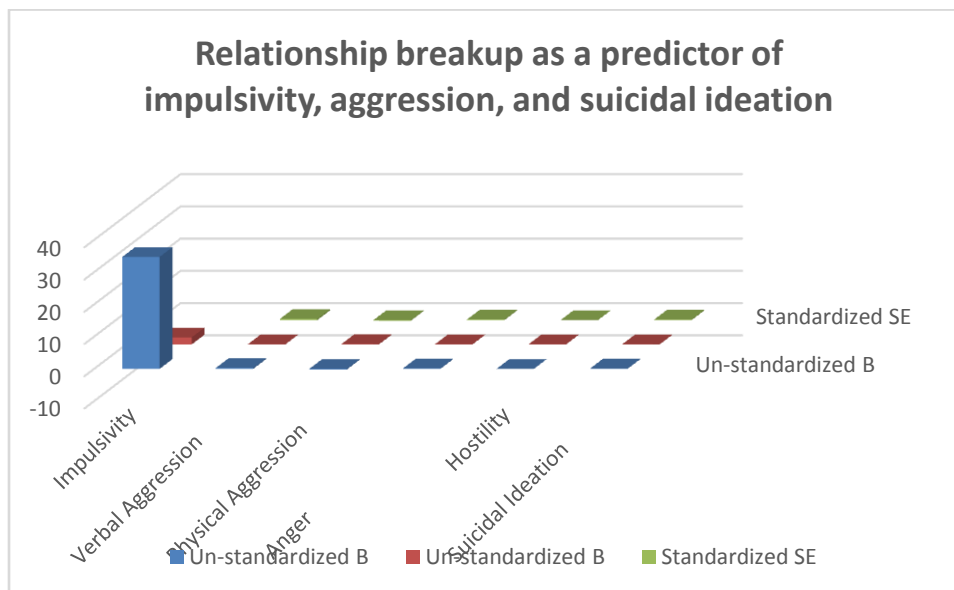


Independent Variable; Relationship breakup

Dependent Variables; Impulsivity, Aggression & Suicidal ideation

**Figure 3:** Relationship breakdown (independent variable) and impulsivity, violence, and suicidal thoughts (dependent factors) show a strong association (Figure 3). The P-value for the Anova results is less than 0.05 (.000), which denotes statistical significance.

**Figure 4:** Relationship breakup is a predictor of impulsivity, violence, and suicidal ideation in the linear regression analysis (N=200), as shown in Figure 3's coefficients.



Results for the coefficients are shown in Figure 4. The dependent variables, impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation, have a correlation of 0.356 with a one-unit change in relationship dissolution, according to a beta value of 0.356.

## Discussion

The current study looks into how young adults, of both sexes, who have just relationship breakup exhibit impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation. The study combines its findings with the body of earlier research in this field before exploring the underlying causes at work in its conclusion. As a result, it is found that university students both male and female enrolled in both public and private institutions are more vulnerable to a range of psychological and emotional difficulties brought on by relationship breakup. The discussion that follows aims to clarify how relationship breakup affects the emergence of these problems. Numerous studies have pinpointed

key factors, like impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation, which are notably common in young adults and college students and significantly contribute to relationship breakup along with the concomitant psychological and behavioral repercussions. The presence of impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation among young adults enrolled in various academic institutions in Pakistan with a history of relationship breakups is crucially important to understand in order to fully appreciate the study's findings.

There are several reasons, including societal conventions and gender roles, which can explain why there are gender differences in how people express and control their emotions. Males may be taught to express their emotions more openly, but females may be conditioned to display increased aggression while hiding emotions like sadness or vulnerability. Therefore, cultural socialization may have a big impact on young people's impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal thoughts (Coyne, Linder, & Stockdale, 2020). These tendencies may take different forms depending on cultural and environmental circumstances, as well as societal norms, values, and social support networks. Different social groups' prevailing gender roles and cultural norms undoubtedly affect behavioral patterns, which have an impact on mental health outcomes (Follman, Arbona, & Alarcon-Martin, 2021).

Aggression, impulsivity, and suicidal thoughts may all have complex relationships with mental illnesses. Young adults who have had relationships breakup may struggle with effective control over strong emotions like anger, frustration, or grief. Such people are more likely to have suicide thoughts because they may use impulsive and aggressive behaviors as unhealthy coping techniques. Conflicts or aggressive behavior between people might amplify levels of impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation. Relationship problems can make people feel less confident in themselves and put them under more stress, which makes them more likely to act impulsively and aggressively. This worsens the current suffering and increases suicidal thinking (DiLillo et al., 2015).

According to the results of the first hypothesis, young adults who have had relationships breakup have been seen to have considerably higher levels of impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation ( $p < 0.05$ ). This implies that there is a strong correlation between these psychological factors and young individuals who are college students. These results are consistent with and supported by earlier research projects, as described by Maiano et al. in 2017.

Additionally, significant gender-based differences and connections have been found when impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation among young adults who have experienced relationship breakups are examined. These findings provide empirical support for the second hypothesis put out in this study, which theorized that men and women would experience relationship breakups differently ( $p = 0.05$ ). This finding is in line with the research conducted in 2013 by Fischer, Shanahan, and Heatherton, the results of whose work have been smoothly incorporated into the larger framework of our study.

Our research findings, which show that relationship breakups significantly affect the levels of impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation among both young adults and adolescents, lend support to the third and final hypothesis of this study. The results of the current study are seamlessly integrated with knowledge gained from earlier investigations, particularly those carried out by Scott and Dutton in 2019. Using information gathered from a sample of 500 recently divorced adults, we examined the link between impulsivity, aggression, and relationship breakdown in the study. According to our data, there is a strong positive association between impulsivity, violence, and the end of relationships. Particularly, those who had just ended a romantic relationship showed higher levels of impulsivity and aggression than those in steady relationships. Notably, our study focused especially on how suicidal ideation was examined in this setting (Scott & Dutton, 2019).

## **Conclusion**

According to the study's findings, young adults who have experienced breakups show increased impulsivity. This is characterized by hasty decisions, difficulties controlling one's emotions, and actions committed without giving the implications adequate thought. Young adults may become more hostile after a breakup, which could result in arguments or physical altercations or an increased propensity for violent behavior. In addition, the study finds that young adults who have gone through breakups are more likely to experience suicide ideation. Suicidal ideation includes the presence of self-harming thoughts and intents. The emotional pain and sense of loss that come with breakups increase our openness to such beliefs.

The study makes a significant connection between the impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation seen in young adults after breakups. It's important to note that higher levels of impulsivity and aggression are associated with a higher chance of having suicidal thoughts.

The study's key finding is that breakups in relationships have a significant impact on young adults' impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation. It's noteworthy that people who exhibit higher degrees of impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal ideation are more likely to end relationships. The study also reveals a gender gap, with male young adults experiencing breakups more frequently and displaying higher levels of impulsivity, anger, and suicidal thoughts.

### **Implications of the study**

Future implications of this discovery are significant and cross many domains. First off, it clarifies the link between psychological issues and relationship breakups, which helps in risk assessment and reaction. This realization makes it easier to prepare for unfavorable outcomes such as increased impulsivity, aggression, or suicidal thoughts. As a result, customized interventions can be created to help those who are at risk during this time.

Second, it shows promise for aiding mental wellness. Relationship breakups can exacerbate current mental health issues or lead to the emergence of new ones. Mental health practitioners can help young people struggling with these issues more effectively if they have a thorough awareness of the specific psychological factors that lead to breakups. Third, it helps with preventative actions. The creation of preventive measures can be influenced by recognizing the potential effects of relationship breakups on impulsivity, aggression, and suicidal thoughts. These could include support groups, coping mechanisms, and relationship education programs that help young adults get through the emotional upheaval that comes with breakups and lessen the likelihood of unfavorable outcomes.

Finally, it influences programs for relationship education. Programs designed to give young people the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with relationship difficulties and potential breakups can be shaped by the lessons learned from these studies. These approaches lessen detrimental psychological effects by encouraging efficient coping mechanisms, communication abilities, and emotional control techniques.

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