

Relation among Grief, Relational-Interdependent Self-Construal, and Personal Goals

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People experience psychological and social difficulties when faced with the loss of someone close to them. This pain is a natural phenomenon, and when need dictates, it is advisable that grieving parties seek help from therapists. This study investigates grief symptoms caused by a loss, in terms of self-identity.

The hypotheses are the following: A Relational-Interdependent Scale at a high level (RISC; this scale measures the extent to which an individual thinks about him/herself in terms of significant others) would predict higher grief symptoms (hypothesis 1); the relation of hypothesis 1 is mediated by intimacy avoidance (hypothesis 2); an RISC scale at a high level would result in more personal goals (hypothesis 3); if people have a lot of personal goals regarding grief, grief symptoms seem to be stronger (hypothesis 4); and the reason for the most important personal goal regarding grief is related to grief symptoms (hypothesis 5).

The study consisted of 185 participants (mainly university students), and the data of 78 people was used for the following analysis. The questionnaire involved the use of the RISC scale, Intimacy Avoidance scale, points regarding a loss experience, a grief response scale for university students, personal goals regarding grief, and relationally autonomous reasons and personally autonomous reasons for grief-related goals.

A *t*-test was conducted. A high-level RISC resulted in higher “physically bad conditions” (significant), “feelings of meaningless and emptiness” (marginally significant), and “anxiety and depression” (significant), in which hypothesis 1 is partially supported. Also, a relationship between attachment avoidance and grief response was not found, in which hypothesis 2 is NOT supported. Further, a high-level RISC resulted in significantly numerous personal goals regarding grief, in which hypothesis 3 is supported. Then, in the group involving more personal goals, “anxiety and depression” was magnificently higher, in which hypothesis 4 is supported. If the reason for a personal goal was not a personally autonomous reason (i.e., personally controlled reasons), grief symptoms were significantly harder, but this was not the case for non-relational-autonomous reasons (i.e., relational-controlled reasons), in which hypothesis 5 is supported. This study concludes that the results partially support previous research that exemplifies the relationship between self-identity and grief, and that we can consider support based on relational-interdependence self-construal.