Original Research Paper

Psychology

LONELINESS AND DEPRESSION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT To explore the relationship between loneliness and depression among university students, a sample of one twenty under graduate and post graduate students from the Manonmaniam Sundaranar university belonging to age range 17 to 23 were chosen using the method of convenient sampling to participate in the study. Adapting to survey method a total of 100 data were collected using Beck depression inventory and UCLA loneliness scale. Correlational research design was used to full fill the objectives of this study. Correlation and t-test were applied. Results revealed that there is positive correlation between loneliness and depression; there is significant loneliness among sample who is single child compared to sample who are born with siblings and there is significant difference in the level of depression between males and females

KEYWORDS : Depression , Loneliness, university students

Introduction:

Loneliness is a negative state of mind. Aloneness is positive, notwithstanding what the dictionaries say. In dictionaries, loneliness and aloneness are synonymous they are synonyms; in life they are not. Loneliness is a state of mind when you constantly miss the other; aloneness is the state of mind when you are constantly delighted in yourself. Loneliness is miserable; aloneness is blissful (Osho, 2010)

Loneliness is a complex and usually unpleasant emotional response to isolation. Loneliness typically includes anxious feelings about a lack of connection or communication with other beings, both in the present and extending into the future.

Loneliness touches every one. No one can escape it completely. Loneliness is no respecter of age or rank. Whether a young student, a stay-at-home mom, a busy executive, a retired pensioner, a grieving widower or widow, or even a pastor working with people every day, all know what it means to be lonely. Loneliness may be one of the most painful experiences that everyone goes through in their life. Perhaps everyone find themselves living in the midst of it at this very moment. Strikingly, many people who live alone never feel lonely, yet some who live with others in crowded cities know only too acutely how loneliness can infect our lives. When one think of loneliness often visualize the aged who live alone, but a young adult moving to a new city, an entrepreneur beginning a business, a partner in a struggling marriage, or a leader in a challenging corporate environment can be as lonely as a solitary elderly person in a one-room apartment.(Trevor Hudson, 2016)

Modern age has given a serious psychological problem-depression. The cases of depression have recently grown to an alarming number in developed and developing countries. Even in India, where the cultural and spiritual level is quite high; the number of depressed persons are increasing every day. Depression is a serious mental illness with a wide variety of mood variations of melancholy, sadness, disappointment and despair. It is a combination of emotional, cognitive and behavioral symptoms. Broadly speaking, a person faces an uncomprehending situation either courageously or succumbs to emotions that would precipitate into various types of depressive illnesses. All, at one stage or the other, come across mentally demanding environment, temporarily or continuously. But, if an abnormal pattern of behavior in a normal environment is shown repeatedly, it calls for immediate consultation and therapy. According to Secunda et al. (1973), "Depression may constitute the most prevalent form of psychopathology". Woodruff et al. (1974) summarized cross-cultural survey that suggests at least five percent of men and nine percent of women will suffer from clinically significant episodes of primary depression. Primary depression is depression in persons with no previous psychiatric history other than affective disorder. Depressive mood also occurs throughout the entire spectrum of psychopathology and especially associated with anxiety neurosis, hypochondria, a number of organic brain syndromes, marital adjustment and possibly alcohol. A survey by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH,

1973) found that 17.5 percent of 4,45,115 people receiving psychological treatment had been diagnosed as suffering from some type of depression. Depression is especially prevalent among college students. The earliest known description of depression was made by Hippocrates on psychological disorder is about 400 B.C. Hippocrates attributed the disorder to movement of black bile into the brain in a manner that 'dark ended' the spirits. About five hundred years later, in A.D.80, the physician Aretacus described the melancholic person as 'sad, dismayed and sleepless, they become this by their agitation and loss of refreshing sleep and at a more advanced stage they complain of a thousand futilities and desire death'. Aretacus is also remembered for having delineated different types of depressive syndromes including the manic depressive syndrome. As we know it is difficult to read human mind .and it is particularly so when we have to approach a patient with mood alterations. It is extremely complicated and challenging at the same time.

Review of Literature

Archana (2008) studied the effect of sociability and shyness on depression and loneliness among educated youth. Data was collected from one hundred and seventy seven college students in which males were ninety three and females were eighty four. The tools Beck Depression Inventory, Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale, Sociability Scale, Shyness Scale, Socio Economic Status Scale (2005) and personal profile was used. ANOVA/ANCOVA was carried out in order to find the effect of education, gender and their interactive effect on sociability, shyness, loneliness and depression. Similarly Inter Correlation Matrix was carried out for both college and school students separately. Results show that a significant positive relationship existed between depression and loneliness and between depression and shyness. This revealed that students who were depressed were found to lonely as well as shy, students who were sociable were found to be less depressed, less lonely and less shy and students belonging to high socio economic status family were found to be lonely.

Aim: To explore the relationship between loneliness and depression among university students

Objectives:

1. To find out whether there is a relationship between loneliness and depression among students.
2. To find out whether there is difference in the level of loneliness among students who are single child and who are born with siblings.
3. To find out whether there is gender differences in level of loneliness and depression among students.

Hypothesis:

1. There is relationship between loneliness and depression
2. There is difference in the level of loneliness among students who are single child and students who are born with siblings.
3. There is difference in the level of loneliness and depression between males and females.

Sampling: Using the method of convenient sampling, a sample of one twenty under graduate and post graduate students from the Manonmaniam Sundaranar university belonging to age range 17 to 23 were chosen to participate in the study.

Inclusion Criteria - Students who are studying in the university departments and Students aged between 17 and 23
Exclusion Criteria- Students who are studying in the university distance education and Students who are over and under the age range from 17 to 23

Data Collection: Adopting Survey method; a total of 120 data were collected of which 100 were valid and 20 were invalid due to incomplete response. Hence a total of 100 data were taken for the study. Personal details such as age, sex, educational qualification, family type, marital status, number of friends and number of sibling were collected to understand the socio-demographic status of the sample. Beck depression inventory and UCLA loneliness scale were used to collect the needed data.

Tools: Beck Depression Inventory (reliability coefficient is 0.93 and validity is 0.95) and UCLA Loneliness Scale (The reliability coefficient is 0.94).

Procedure: The investigator visited each department separately, contacted various department students of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University. The departments were computer science, communication, criminology and commerce. Both under graduate and post graduate students participated. The student's age group was 17 to 23. After interacting with the students, the investigator developed rapport. After getting the consent from the participants, the personal data sheet was distributed and filled by the participants. It required 10 to 15 minutes to complete the data sheet. Consequently, both BDI-II and UCLA loneliness scale were administered separately. The administration of BDI-II took 15 minutes and UCLA loneliness scale took 10 minutes. The items in both questionnaires were read aloud by the investigator. The students were allowed to ask any doubts from the test items if any. It took around two months for collecting the needed data.

Research Design: Correlational research design was used to study the relationship between loneliness and depression.

Statistical Analysis: To full fill the objectives of this study the correlation and t-test were applied using SPSS.

Results and Discussion
Table 1 Shows the relationship between loneliness and depression among university students

Variable	Depression
Loneliness	0.33**

$p \leq 0.01$**

Table 1 shows the correlation coefficient r=0.33 is significant at 0.01 level.

There exists positive correlation between loneliness and depression. Hence when loneliness increases, depression tends to increase and vice versa.

Table 2: Shows the difference in the level of loneliness among sample who are single child and who are born with siblings.

Variable	Siblings	N	Mean	SD	t	Significance (2- tailed)
Loneliness	None	22	25.5	6.3	2.06	0.04*
	Present	78	22.7	5.3	1.88	0.07

$p \leq 0.05$*

Table 2 shows that the mean of loneliness among sample who are single child is 25.5 and that of sample who were born with siblings is 22.7. The t-test analysis reveals t-value 2.06 and 1.88 for sample who are single child and who are born with siblings respectively. This indicates significant loneliness among sample who are single child at

0.05 level and that loneliness among sample who are born with siblings is not significant.

Table 3: Shows the difference between males and females in their level of loneliness and depression

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	Significance (2- tailed)
Loneliness	Male	30	23.10	5.62	-0.34	0.74
	Female	70	23.51	5.66	-0.34	0.74
Depression	Male	30	17.47	6.69	-1.93	0.05*
	Female	70	21.17	11.26	-2.35	0.02*

$p \leq 0.05$*

From table 3 it shows that the mean of loneliness among males is 23.10 and that of females is 23.51. The t-test analysis reveals t-value -0.34 and -0.34 for males and females respectively. The mean of depression among males is 17.47 and that of females is 21.17. This indicates there is no significant difference between males and females in their level of loneliness. And there is significant difference in the level of depression between males and females at 0.05 level.

Conclusion
1. There is positive correlation between loneliness and depression.
2. There is significant loneliness among sample who are single child compared to sample who are born with siblings.
3. There is significant difference in the level of depression between males and females.

Limitations of the Present Study
1. Use of convenient sampling method.
2. Representation of male and female population in the sample was not equal.
3. Influence of the family type and educational qualification of the sample on their level of loneliness and depression was not explored.

Recommendations for Future Research
1. Suicidal ideation can be included as a third variable and its relationship with Loneliness and Depression can be found.
2. Relationship between family type and level of loneliness as well as depression can be studied.
3. Causal relationship between loneliness and depression can be explored.
4. The same variables- Loneliness and Depression can be tested for their relationship in a different population.

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