

Loneliness among Young Adults: A Comparative Study

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Abstract:

Loneliness was found to be a problem for a significant portion of the population. Loneliness can be described as a gnawing chronic disease without redeeming features which has long been recognized as a strong correlate of depressive symptoms. Loneliness is a common, universal human experience with emotional, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions, and has various types and degrees. The study aimed to assess loneliness among young adults across gender. It was carried out on sample of 120 young adults (60 men and 60 women) of Lucknow city who were administered by UCLA loneliness scale. The purposive random sampling technique was used. The data revealed that loneliness level was more in men than in women.

Key words: Loneliness, Young Adults, Gender, Chronic.

I. Introduction

Loneliness can be described as the most unfortunate thing. It's an awful experience when a person feels left alone in life, that is when bad actions and ideas come to mind. Loneliness can be described as a gnawing chronic disease without redeeming features which has long been recognized as a strong correlate of

depressive symptoms (Cacioppo, *et al.* 2006). Loneliness has been linked to poor social skills, poor interpersonal relationships, low self-esteem, shyness, and poor social adjustment. Researchers have explored the links between loneliness and a variety of factors, including demographic characteristics such as gender, emotional states such as loneliness and anxiety, inadequate social support networks. The most broadly accepted definition of loneliness is the distress that results from discrepancies between ideal and perceived social relationships. This so-called cognitive discrepancy perspective makes it clear that loneliness is not synonymous with being alone, nor does being with others guarantee protection from feelings of loneliness. Rather, loneliness is the distressing feeling that occurs when one's social relationships are perceived as being less satisfying than what is desired. This entry describes how loneliness is conceived and measured how loneliness is mentally represented; how loneliness influences thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; and consequences of loneliness for health and wellbeing.

II. Methodology

Aims and Objectives: The aim and objective of this study was to assess loneliness among young adults (20 to 35 years).

Research design: A research design is the specification of methods and procedure for acquiring the information needed. The research design for the present study was cross-sectional research design. Cross-sectional method was used because this method is extensive and can be used to collect data from a large sample at a particular point of time.

Sampling Design: The sample for the present study consisted of 120 respondents (60 male & 60 female). The purposive random sampling technique was used to select the sample from the selected area.

Methods of Data Collection: UCLA loneliness scale was given to the subjects to assess loneliness level.

Scoring of scale: There were total 10 items in the scale and the scoring was as follows-

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
4	3	2	1

Based on the scoring pattern loneliness was divided into three levels mild, moderate and severe to know the intensity of loneliness among adults across gender.

Levels of loneliness:

Categories	Scores
Mild	10-20
Moderate	21-30
Severe	Above 30

Data Analysis: For the analysis of data the following steps were followed:

(A) Coding- A coding plan was developed in which code numbers were given to every question and its responses and then tabulated on the coding sheet.

(B) Tabulation- The coded data was transferred from the coding sheet to comprehensive tables to give a clear picture of the findings.

(C) Statistical Analysis- The descriptive statistic applied was frequency, percentage distribution and Chi square test.

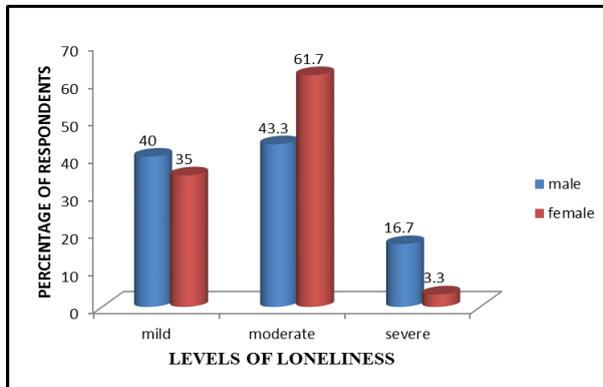
III. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of respondents on the basis of score obtained on loneliness scale

S.No	Levels Of Loneliness	Male (N=60)	Female (N=60)	Total (N=120)
1	Mild	24(40)	21(35)	45(37.5)
2	Moderate	26(43.3)	37(61.7)	63(52.5)
3	Severe	10(16.7)	2(3.3)	12(10)

(figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

The data in the above table showed that 40 percent male and 35 percent female respondents were having mild loneliness. Also 43.3 percent male and 61.7 percent female respondents were having moderate loneliness whereas 16.7 percent male and 3.3 percent female respondents were having severe loneliness. The results also showed that male suffered more loneliness than female. The findings of this study are at par with the findings of the study Yang J.2009 which showed that men had higher loneliness than females.



Distribution of respondents on the basis of score obtained on loneliness scale

Table 2: X2 Value between Loneliness and Gender

Variable`	d.f.	χ^2 value	Level of significance
Gender	2	7.2*	5

*significant at 0.05

The data in the above table showed that there was a significant difference between gender and loneliness. This meant that loneliness level may vary according to gender. The findings of this study are at par with study conducted by Ami Rokach, 2000 which showed that gender had influenced on loneliness.

IV. Conclusion

The study revealed that majority of the respondents was having moderate loneliness whereas only few were having severe loneliness. The findings also revealed that male had more loneliness than females. There was a significant difference between loneliness across gender which meant that loneliness level may vary according to gender.

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