

A STUDY OF LONELINESS AND ACADEMIC ANXIETY AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Loneliness and academic anxiety have become common problems for many college students. The purpose of this study was to investigate students' loneliness levels and their academic anxiety at the college level. The descriptive survey research method was used for the study and the sample consisted of 210 college students (99 male and 111 female) which were selected randomly from Govt. Degree College Pulwama of J&K. Russell et al. (1980) revised Loneliness Scale and Academic Anxiety Scale by Singh and Gupta (2013) were used. The result of the study showed that: (1) there is a positive relationship between students' loneliness and their academic anxiety; (2) there is no difference between male and female students' loneliness; and (3) there is significant difference between academic anxiety of male and female students. Based on research findings, researchers suggest that the psychological counselling and guidance services of colleges must be functionalized and improved to moderate students' academic anxiety and to decrease loneliness level.

Keywords: Loneliness, Academic, Anxiety

Introduction

When the literature about loneliness is examined, it is seen that there are different descriptions. The descriptions of Peplau and Perlman are widely used in the literature. According to this description, loneliness is an unpleasant subjective psychological condition emerged as a result of incoherency between the existing social relation of the individual and desired social relation (Ozatca, 2009). The loneliness is a complex, difficult and an anxiety-giving situation. According to the related literature, the loneliness is a displeasing and unwanted experience which everybody avoids and which results in anxiety, anger, sorrow and the feeling of being different from others. The loneliness is both a situation and a feeling. All other feelings are influenced by the socio-cultural characteristics of the society one lives in as well as his/her physiological and psychological properties. However, a person's responses towards situations and events change according to the environment one is in (Gun, 2006). Loneliness is also seen as a normal experience that leads individual to achieve deeper self-awareness, a time to be creative, and an opportunity to attain self-fulfilment and to explore meaning of life (Borys and Perlman, 1985). According to Weiss, loneliness is caused not by being alone but being without some definite needed relationship or set of relationships. Loneliness appears always to be a response to the absence of some particular relational provision, such as deficits in the relational provisions involved in social support (DiTommaso, 2003). According to the Larson (1990) in the presence of social relationships, loneliness may occur. Because being with others, will not protect the individual from the sense of loneliness at all times. Loneliness may result from small number of social relationships, it may also result if social relations haven't the desired meaning and character. The person's cognitive processes determine the individual's feeling alone or not feeling alone, more than the frequency of communication (Turan, 2010).

The word "anxiety" was first used, conceptualized and defined by Freud in psychology field. Freud put forward that anxiety is emerged as a result of the power suppressed, sourced by drive and instinct. Freud later changed his opinion about this and he connected anxiety to a perception of dangerous

situation of ego and in order to hide this situation, he accepted that the suppressed system functioned (Köknel, 1987, cited by Duman, 2008). Educational or academic anxiety is a kind of anxiety which relates to the imminent danger from the environment of the educational institutions together with teacher and certain subjects like Science, Mathematics, and English to some extent for some north Indian states (Anand, 1989). It is a mental sensitivity of uneasiness or distress in response to school or college circumstances that is perceived negatively. Academic anxiety is totally not a bad thing. However, it is true that a high level of anxiety interferes with concentration and memory which are critical for day to day academic performance and success, however it is also true without any anxiety, and majority of us would lack the enthusiasm and motivation to study for exams, do everyday homework or write any research papers (Tina & Annayat, 2014). A modest amount of anxiety actually helps academic performance by creating morale and motivation (Garg, 2011). Academic anxiety is a common issue that students cannot ignore if they want to achieve academic success in school. If academic anxiety is not properly addressed, it can have many serious, severe and long lasting consequences such as causing a student to start hating a subject or a teacher, procrastinate, tell lies to parents, perform poorly on school work, absent classes to pursue activities that interest him and withdraw from socializing with peers or friends and may recoil into his own cocoon and drop school (Bihari, 2014).

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the relationship between students’ loneliness levels and their academic anxiety.
2. To compare the male and female students’ level of loneliness.
3. To compare the academic anxiety of male and female students.

Hypotheses

1. There is no relationship between students’ loneliness levels and their academic anxiety.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female students’ level of loneliness.
3. There is no significant difference between academic anxiety of male and female students.

Method and Sample

Descriptive survey method was used by the investigator to collect the relevant information for the research. In the present study the sample consisted of 210 college students (99 male and 111 female) selected through stratified random sampling technique from Govt. Degree College Pulwama of J&K. Whereas, for the data collection, investigator used the Russell et al. (1980) revised Loneliness Scale and Academic Anxiety Scale by A.K.Singh and A. Sen Gupta (2013).

Results and Interpretation

The data was analyzed by used statistical techniques like, Pearson’s product moment correlation and t test.

1. Relationship between students’ loneliness levels and their academic anxiety.

Table 1

Group	N	R
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Male	99	0.76**
Female	111	0.90**
Total	210	0.80**

Interpretation

It is evident from table 1 that the coefficient of the correlation between male students' loneliness levels and their academic anxiety is 0.76 which is positive and significant at both levels of significance. Further the coefficient of the correlation between female students' loneliness levels and their academic anxiety is 0.90 which is also positive and significant at both levels of significance. It is also evident from the table 1 that the coefficient of correlation between students' loneliness levels and their academic anxiety is 0.80 which is positive and significant at both levels of significance. This implies that there is a positive and significant relationship exists between students' loneliness levels and their academic anxiety. The positive relationship between students' loneliness levels and academic anxiety indicate that the students who have higher loneliness levels having higher or moderate academic anxiety.

2. Comparison between the male and female students' Loneliness levels.

Results pertaining to study the significant difference between the male and female students' loneliness levels have been shown in table 2.

Group	N	M	S.D	t-value
Male	99	21.30	9.16	1.175
Female	111	20.31	8.82	

Interpretation

The table 2 depicts that the difference between the mean scores of male and female students' loneliness levels is (21.30) and (20.31) respectively. The calculated t value (1.17) is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the hypothesis No.2 that is, "there is no significant difference between male and female students' loneliness levels" is not rejected. This indicates, that male and female students having no difference in their loneliness levels.

3. Comparison between the academic anxiety of male and female students.

Results pertaining to study the significant difference between academic anxiety of male and female students have been shown in table 3.

Group	N	M	S.D	t-value
Male	99	37.00	11.65	

				3.095*
Female	111	33.75	9.60	

Interpretation

The table 3 depicts that the difference between the mean scores of male and female student perceptions of their classroom environment is (37.00) and (33.75) respectively, which shows that male students having more academic anxiety than female students. The calculated t value (3.095) is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the hypothesis No.3 that is, “there is no significant difference between academic anxiety of male and female students” is rejected. This indicates, that male and female student having significant difference in their academic anxiety. Hosseine and Khazali (2013) analysed that male students scored higher in academic anxiety than female students.

Conclusion

The result of the study showed that there is positive relationship between students’ loneliness and academic anxiety, the students who have higher level of loneliness having higher academic anxiety. The result also shows that academic anxiety also differ significantly with respect to gender, but shows no significant difference in their levels of loneliness. This is proven by past studies which suggested that students’ levels of loneliness are not related to the gender of the student. This specific finding of the study is consistent with the results found out by Jones, Freeman and Goswick (1981), Wittenberg and Reis (1986), Russell, Peplau and Cutron (1980), Ari and Hamarta (2000) who have claimed that males and females do not differ in their level of loneliness. Individuals’ psychological developments are influenced by cultural values of the society in which they live. Hosseine and Khazali (2013) analysed that female students scored higher in academic anxiety than male students. Girls were more likely to have positive social interactions and student support (Slavin, 2003) as in affiliation scale which encourages friendships and group work (Fisher and Fraser, 1983).

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