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A STUDY ON PERCEIVED LONELINESS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract:

The main objective of this study was to see the impact of some variables namely Sex, Locality and Family background of college students on Perceived Loneliness. Normative Survey method was adopted to conduct the study. Sampling was done randomly and data was collected from 300 College students of Puducherry region with the help of Perceived Loneliness Scale having a five-point rating scale. The t-ratios calculated between the Mean values of different categories of college students indicated that the Location did not have any significant effect on Perceived Loneliness but Sex and Family Background have significant effect on it.

INTRODUCTION

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Loneliness as an important personality variable in current psychological literature is of particular interest of social psychologist. Probably most people experience painful feeling of isolation and loneliness at same times in their lives. Because life is filled with social transitions that disrupt personal relationships and set the stage for loneliness. Being unloved and lonely has been called "the greatest poverty." Loneliness is an unlikable experience that occurs when a person's network of social relationships is significantly deficient in either quality or quantity (Peplau, and Goldston, 1984).

Loneliness as a recent topic of research among the western psychologist is a new field of investigation for third world countries like India. The problem of loneliness drew the attention of western scholars much earlier than their eastern and Asian counterparts. Because it emerges faster in those societies where the rate of scientific and industrial growth is higher and people believe in materialistic and individualistic way of life.

On 21st century when whole world believes in globalization and mechanization, India cannot keep itself away from the rest of the world as it has to compete with others in all aspect of development. Hence, it is the crying demand to think over the problems like loneliness and other, which will catch hold of the inmates of developing societies like India in its vicious cycle.

There is growing evidence that loneliness plays an important role in adjustment. When this consistently overloaded throughout long periods of a person's life, the likelihood increases that some sort of physical and mental weakness or disturbance. Sometimes it leads to suicide also. Now a day in India also day by day the rate of suicide is developing due to various reasons like frustration, stress, alienation, loneliness etc. In absence of social contact and other behavioural problems people are feeling lonely. It refers the behaviour and attitude of a person also.

Adolescence is a period in which loneliness is a common phenomenon. University life is a transition period for students from high school to college in which loneliness is a common phenomenon

because of moving from home, breaking social networks and attempting to develop new social networks. In Pepalu and Perlman's (1982) worked on developmental prospective of loneliness discusses childhood loneliness, loneliness during adolescence, loneliness during the transaction of college and loneliness among widows and elderly. The emphasis on adolescent period is where most of transition takes place and most of the foreign researches it is shown that in this period the loneliness are high. Studies conducted in India by Upmanyu et.al (1994) reveal that college students experienced moderate level of loneliness. Most of the studies (Kaur 1990, Biswas & De 1993, Bhatia 2007) show higher level of loneliness in female in respect to male. Researcher has come across very few studies conducted on loneliness with respect to adolescent. So, researcher felt that the need to study loneliness as to see that in India also the situation is same or somehow different.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A Study on Perceived Loneliness of College Students

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To find out the perceived loneliness of college students.
- To find out the perceived loneliness of male and female college students.
- To study the perceived loneliness of college students belonging to joint and nuclear family.
- To study the perceived loneliness of college students belonging to rural and urban areas.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- There will be no significant difference on perceived loneliness between male and female college students.
 - There will be no significant difference on perceived loneliness between college students belonging to joint family and nuclear family.
 - There will be no significant difference on perceived loneliness between college students belonging to rural areas and urban areas.
- Delimitation of the Study
- The data had been collected from the 1st year college students only.
 - The data has been collected for the academic year 2008-09.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research Design

The normative survey method is adopted by the researcher to study the perceived loneliness of college students. This method describes and interprets what exists at present.

Population

All the 1st year college students studying in the colleges of Puducherry union territory comprises as the population for the present study.

Sampling

The sample for the present study comprised of 300 college students drawn from four colleges of Pudduchery Union territory through Random Sampling technique.

Tool Used

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the investigator used the perceived loneliness Scale (standardized) by Jha, Praveen Kumar, 1997.

Scoring

Perceived Loneliness Scale by Jha, Praveen Kumar (1997) was used. It is a unidimensional self-report research tool which gives a holistic estimate of an individual. The scale consists of 36 items, among those 8 are negative items and 28 are positive items. Each item is rated on a five-point scale and the five options 5,4,3,2 and 1 stand for totally agree, agree, Can't say, Disagree, and totally disagree. An individual can score a maximum score of 180 and a minimum score of 36. The design of statement and the scoring pattern in such that the low score of an individual is indicative of low perceived loneliness whereas high score is to be interperated as high perceived loneliness.

Reliability

The loneliness scale possesses fairly high reliability. Firstly, it was determined by Kudar-Richardson formula and the obtained value was to be .65 on a sample of 100 undergraduate students. Test-retest reliabilities were determined, one after an interval of 5 weeks and other of 8 weeks on a sample of 60 students. The value of these reliabilities were found to be .84 and .82 respectively.

Validity

The validity of the Scale was examined by three ways, i.e., Content Validity, Predictive Validity and Concurrent Validity. It has been confirmed that the Scale possess all three Validity on which was examined.

Data Collection

The investigator approached the principal of the colleges and after getting permission investigator personally administered the tools on the sample students. After the completion of PL-Scale the same were taken back and data were put to further analysis.

Data Analysis

To understand the nature of distribution of the scores of Perceived Loneliness and to estimate the difference between the variables various statistical techniques like Mean, Standard deviation and t-ratios were calculated and presented in Table 2.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1

Mean values of college students on Perceived Loneliness Scale

Variables		Sample	Mean
Sex	Male	150	121.96
	Female	150	124.93
Family	Joint	148	118.15
	Nuclear	152	128.81
Location	Rural	147	123.72
	Urban	153	123.17

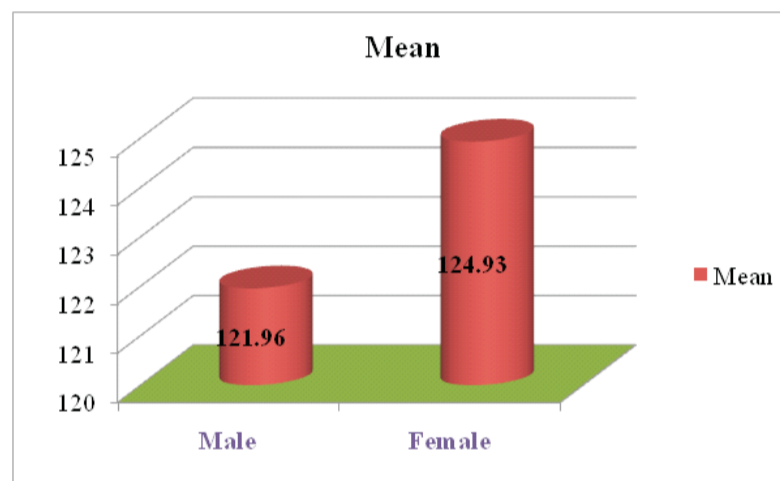
A keen observation of Table 1 clearly shows that College Students posses moderate level of Perceived Loneliness in their life.

When the Mean values were carefully observed, it was found that the mean value on Perceived Loneliness Scale of College Students belonging from joint family is least (M=118.15), followed by the Male College Students (121.96 each). The mean value of the College Students belonging from Nuclear Family is the highest (M=128.81) followed by Female College Students (M=124.93).

Table 2

't' showing the significance of difference between the male and female College Students of two groups in respect to Perceived loneliness

Gender	Mean	SD	N	df	t'
Male	121.96	12.03	150	298	2.38
Female	124.93	9.32	150		

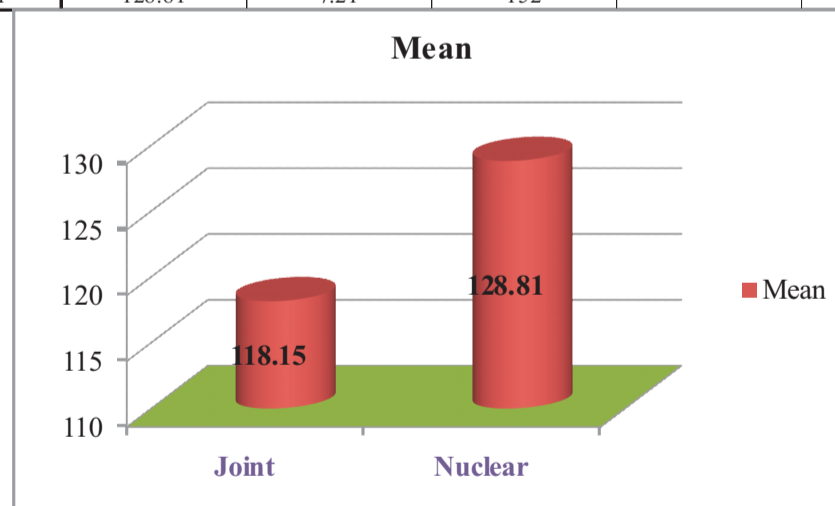


When the t-ratio was examined on the variable of the Sex between the Mean values of Male and Female College Students ($t=2.38$), it is found significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This means Male and Female College Students differ significantly on the measure of Perceived Loneliness Scale. The reason why male adolescents feel less lonely than girls may be because they participate more frequently in social and sports activities and therefore socialize more. On the other hand, more parental pressure on female adolescents may make girls introverted and thus intensify their feeling of loneliness.

Table 3

't' showing the significance of difference between the College Students belonging to Joint and Nuclear Family in respect to Perceived loneliness.

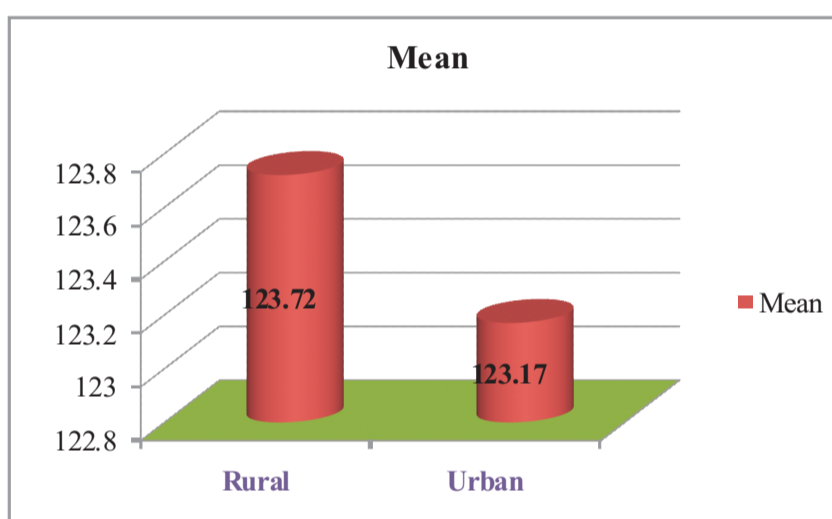
Family Type	Mean	SD	N	df	t'
Joint	118.15	11.25	148	298	9.74
Nuclear	128.81	7.21	152		



On the basis of variable background of the family, when t-ratio of College Students was examined between the Joint and nuclear family (t-ratio=), it is found significant at 0.05 level of confidence. The mean Scores of joint and nuclear family are 118.15 and 128.81 respectively, which clearly demonstrates that College students who belongs from Joint family posses less Perceived Loneliness in comparison to Nuclear family. It may be because in nuclear family, members do not have enough time for them and they cannot share much with their family whereas in joint family, members are more and they can discuss certain issues with family members.

Table 4
 't' showing the significance of difference between the College Students resides in Rural and Urban location in respect to Perceived loneliness.

Location	Mean	SD	N	df	't'
Rural	123.72	9.72	147	298	0.44
Urban	123.17	11.88	153		



The College Students belonging from Rural and Urban areas did not differ significantly on Perceived Loneliness Scale. The t-ratio (0.44), between these students not found significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This means College students belonging to rural and urban areas did not differ significantly on the measure of Perceived Loneliness Scale.

CONCLUSION

The present study reveals that the college students have normal level of perceived loneliness even male are coming under low lonely category and female comes under normal lonely. Therefore, the male and female college students differ significantly on perceived loneliness. Students belonging to joint family have low perceived loneliness (non-lonely) but students from nuclear family have normal level of loneliness. Hence, students from joint and nuclear family significantly differ on perceived loneliness. College students either belonging to rural areas or urban areas are facing normal level of loneliness and did not differ significantly on perceived loneliness. The result of the study is same as the study conducted by Upmanyu, upmanyu, and Bhardwaj (1994) reveals that college students experienced moderate level of loneliness. Its results also correlate with the study conducted by Kaur (1990) which states that female students experienced greater level of loneliness than male.

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