

PERCEIVED LONELINESS IN ADOLESCENTS POST COVID 19

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Abstract: Adolescence is a unique and critical period in the human life-cycle. It is the transition period from childhood to adulthood between the ages of 10 to 19. Adolescence is a period of experiencing rapid physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development which affects how adolescents feel, make decisions, interact and think about themselves and about the world around them. Global covid 19 has disrupted the mental health of many adolescents developing negative emotions in them. Quarantine and social distancing during the covid-19 pandemic had increased levels of loneliness as well as social isolation, which had produced physical health along with mental health related consequences among adolescents. The purpose of the study aims to explore the prevalence of perceived loneliness in adolescents after Covid 19. The population for the study included students from various schools. The data was collected by a convenience sampling method using google forms with a mean age of 15.5 years. Out of the total 218 responses, avoiding the incomplete responses 204 responses (102 female and 102 male adolescents) were used for this study. The standardized questionnaire of perceived Loneliness scale was used for this study. The collected data were assessed using descriptive statistics and found that the Perceived loneliness mean of female adolescents was 114.40 and of male adolescents was 113.10, which indicates that female adolescents experience a higher range of perceived loneliness than male adolescents. The study concluded that female adolescents experienced an elevated range of perceived loneliness.

Keywords: Female Adolescents, Male Adolescents, Perceived loneliness, Post Covid 19.

I. INTRODUCTION

Loneliness is an anxious experience that occurs when the person in question experiences less than recommended the number and especially the quality of his social relationships. (Gao, Davis, Hart, Roige, Han, Cacioppo, Palmer, 2016). Loneliness is usually defined as an unpleasant emotional state. (Gao, Davis, Hart, Roige, Han, Cacioppo, Palmer, 2016). Loneliness is also seen as a social pain; it is a psychological mechanism that encourages people to seek more social connections. (Gao, Davis, Hart, Roige, Han, Cacioppo, Palmer, 2016). Loneliness is known to be associated with poorer physical as well as mental health difficulties along with increased mortality. (Lunstad, Smith, Harris, et al 2015). This loneliness is often associated with lack of intimacy or closeness and lack of connections among people. Though loneliness might seem to be similar to solitude, it is different from it. Solitude is the choice to be alone or being present with oneself more than being with others. (Paul Tillich, 1963). Solitude is explained simply as enjoyment with one's own company while loneliness is the state of being alone even when there is other's company. (Pope, 2016). Loneliness is also explained by a sense of isolation. Loneliness is a negative state of mind while solitude is a positive state of mind. Solitude results in inner peace and calmness while loneliness has more effects on one's own body and mind (Arendt, 1973).

Loneliness refers to an individual's subjective perception of himself that he lacks in close relationships. (Lunstad, Smith, Baker, Harris, Stephenson, et al 2015) Such as when a person feels lonely, although he longs for close relationships. (Lunstad, Smith, Baker, Harris, Stephenson, et al 2015) Perceived loneliness is often addressed by the combination of both social isolation and the feeling of loneliness. (Wang, Mann, Evans, Johnson, 2018). Perceived loneliness is a distressing feeling and there is a perception of lack of support from the social environment.

Loneliness is an important predictor of life satisfaction among young people. Observed loneliness can be caused by unpleasant childhood experiences that lead to an insatiable need for closeness. (Bareket-Bojmel, L., Shahar, G., Abu-Kaf, S., & Margalit, M. (2021). A usual problem of lonely young people is the feeling of boredom. Among other findings, lonely youth reported disorganized social connections. (Carollo, A., Bizzego, A., Gabrieli, G., Wong, K. K. Y., Raine, A., et al. (2021)



Adolescence is defined as the period of life between puberty and adult independence, which depends on individual development and cultural norms. Adolescence begins with characteristic changes in hormones and body, changes in the social environment, and changes in the brain and mind. It is the time of teenagers prone to various mental health problems. Adolescence begins with major changes in hormones and body and at the same time with a sharp increase in mental health problems. (Blakemore, Lancet, 2019)

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by SARS-CoV-2. Various research conducted during the pandemic shows concern about the poor mental health and well-being of children and their parents (O'Neil, Nicholls, Redfern, Brown, et al 2021). Adolescents have different developmental needs than adults. Teenagers are at a stage in their lives where they are very invested in social relationships and separation from their parents. (Daniunaite, Kuneviciene, Thoresen, Zelviene, et al 2021). Thus, the social distancing requirements of COVID-19 have a different emotional impact on them than they do on adults.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the shutdown could have a negative impact on the mental health of young people, although the long-term impact of this crisis is not yet known. (Guessoum, S. B., Lachal, J., Radjack, R., Carretier, E., Minassian, et al. (2020).

Adolescents' family, social vulnerability, individual and family coping skills are factors associated with young adolescents' mental health in times of crisis. (Guessoum, Lachal, Radjack, Carretier, et al 2020). Adolescence is a vulnerable period which is distinguished by expeditious biological changes along with social changes, which can cause frequent and ordinary mental disorders to occur during this time. (Espinoza, G., & Hernandez, H. L. (2022).

The young adolescents who are being affected by these changes may also reveal an increased risk-taking behavior in the manner of social distancing, alcohol, drug abuse, and elevated self-harm activity so as to appear to be a coping mechanism (Panchal, Pablo, Franco, Moreno, et al 2021). Perceived loneliness is a usual experience during adolescence which is related to mental health as well as physical health problems so these feelings may have been elevated by social distancing measures introduced post COVID-19 period.

Few adolescents who have reported higher perceived loneliness significantly have higher symptoms of mental health problems due to the impacts and effects of covid 19. (Loades, M. E., Chatburn, E., Higson-Sweeney, 2020). Responses to the COVID-19 pandemic around the world include varying degrees of social distancing and isolation. It is important to provide a timely overview and synthesis of the impact of post- COVID-19 on perceived loneliness in general.

II. METHODS

RESEARCH DESIGN AND TECHNIQUES:

This research was conducted to find the prevalence rate of perceived loneliness in adolescence post covid 19 where that doesn't explain whether one variable affects another variable. It's a unidimensional research. This research was conducted as a descriptive study to find out the prevalence rate of perceived loneliness in adolescence post covid 19.

Participants:

The samples were collected through convenient sampling methods from different colleges and

schools. The total number of responses to the scale was 218. Avoiding the incomplete responses 14, out of 204 there were 102 female adolescents and 102 male adolescents' data was used for this study. The data were collected through an online survey method using Google Forms from a targeted population of age 13-18 years with an average of 15.5 years of age.

This was a quantitative method conducted to find out the prevalence rate of perceived loneliness in adolescence post covid 19. Quantitative methods where people's attitudes and behavior in accordance with perceived loneliness was studied based on numerical and statistical evidence.

Measure:

Perceived Loneliness Scale is a Likert scale which is a unidimensional scale used by researchers to gather the attitude and opinions of the responders to express their agreement or strength of feeling about the questions or statement from positive to negative. Perceived loneliness scale is a 5 point scale where the level of perceived loneliness ranges from

extremely lonely to extremely not lonely. Russell and colleagues (1980) developed a revised version of the UCLA Loneliness Scale that included positively worded or non-lonely items. In constructing the revised UCLA Loneliness Scale, Russell and colleagues selected 10 negatively worded and 10 positively worded items that had the highest correlations with a set of questions that explicitly asked about loneliness. Despite the addition of these opposite-worded items, scores on the revised scale remained highly reliable. Further- more. analyses presented by Russell and colleagues (1980) supported the discriminant validity of the revised UCLA Loneliness Scale against! measures of personality, social desirability, and depression.

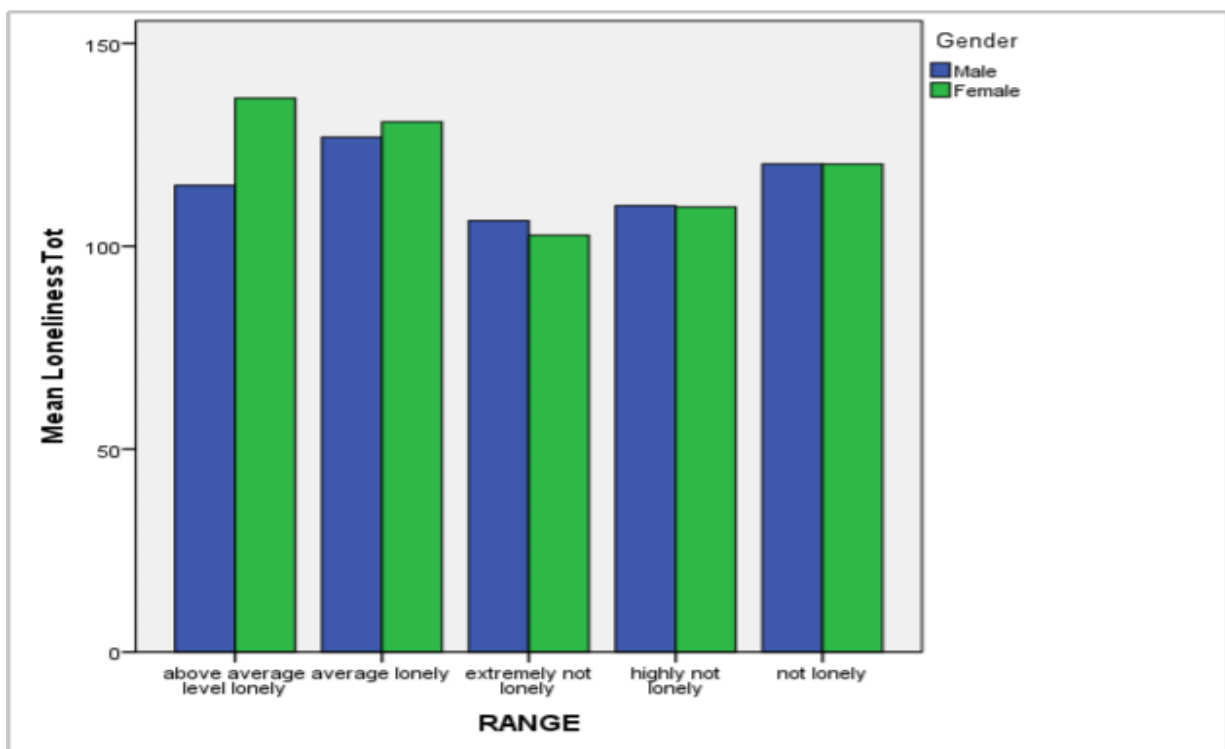
Statistical analysis procedure

III. RESULTS

The data collected from the population of adolescents are assessed using descriptive statistics in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). It was found that the perceived loneliness mean of female adolescents was 114.40 and mean of male adolescents was 113.40. These results indicate that female adolescents experience slightly higher levels of perceived loneliness than the male adolescents from the population.

GRAPHS

The below graph denotes the range of perceived loneliness among male adolescents and female adolescents. Chart 1



IV. DISCUSSION

The data collected from the population assessed using descriptive statistics in SPSS, the mean of perceived loneliness for female adolescents was 114.40 and for male adolescents was 113.40.

It was also found from the graphs that the different levels of perceived loneliness as above average level loneliness, average level of loneliness, extremely not lonely, highly not lonely, not lonely according to the scores obtained from the perceived loneliness scale which were applied to the data. The following are the interpretations of the data which were found in accordance with each level of loneliness were, female adolescents experience more of an above average level of perceived loneliness than male adolescents and female adolescents experience more of average perceived loneliness than male adolescents. Though more or less the same, male adolescents experience less levels of perceived loneliness.

V. CONCLUSION

From the present study, it was found that there was a higher rate of perceived loneliness in female adolescents than male adolescents of the research population of adolescents post covid-19.

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