

A Study on Psychological Flexibility and Loneliness Among Adolescents AT Karaikal, Puducherry U.T.

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Abstract:

Psychological flexibility (PF) is the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, exist at the moment, and expand to wise goals considering adversity. Adolescence was a critical development time, and loneliness was associated with a variety of mental health issues during this period. This study addresses the relationship between psychological flexibility and loneliness among teenagers, focusing on students from a variety of academic disciplines, genders, and living situations (urban versus rural). This study examines whether psychological flexibility as a protective factor differs and how it differs from subgroups. The results show that young people with greater psychological flexibility are less lonely and have significant differences in gender and academic specialization. This study examines the importance of these results for interventions aimed at mental health in teenagers, particularly in educational contexts.

Keywords: Psychological flexibility, loneliness, adolescence, gender differences, urban vs. rural, academic discipline, mental health.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is an era of essential cognitive, emotional and social development, and can often lead to loneliness. Loneliness in young people is associated with both social isolation, such as sadness and fear, and mental health issues. Psychological flexibility, on the other hand, is described as the ability to accept negative emotions and at the same time pursue important behaviors, which can be protected from such experiences. Understanding the relationship between these two variables can help teenagers develop emotional resilience. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between teenagers' psychological flexibility and loneliness, as well as numerous demographic and context-related factors, such as gender, background (urban or rural), and university type. or) take engineering into consideration. By determining factors that contribute to loneliness, this study hopes to inform school and university targeted interventions to improve teenagers.

Review of Literature

Several research have looked into the psychological flexibility of adolescence. This demonstrates that

the outcome helps to alleviate fear, despair, and stress. However, research on adolescents is sparse. Hayes et al.(2006) are pioneers of required treatment (ACT), and the value of psychological flexibility is centered on enhancing psychological health outcomes. Higher PF levels in teenagers were linked to better emotional control and less psychological stress (Kashdan et al., 2006).

Adolescent loneliness was thoroughly investigated. Several studies have found that chronic loneliness can have substantial implications, including depression and suicidal ideation (Hawkey and Cacioppo, 2010). Young people’s loneliness is frequently exacerbated by rejection of social support and a lack of social media use (Erwin et al., 2011). However, just a few research have been undertaken on ways to prevent loneliness in this age range.

Gender-specific differences in loneliness and psychological flexibility were also investigated. According to research, women are more likely to experience loneliness than males. On the other hand, research indicates that psychological flexibility may be equally beneficial to both genders if emotional events alter, however gender intervention may be necessary.

The disparities in mental health between cities and rural areas were also taken into account. Although urban adolescents have greater access to social networks, social comparisons, and printing, rural kids may feel lonely, yet they are more rural due to local ties (Britt et al., 2019). The consequences of psychological flexibility and loneliness, as well as student experiences of medical and engineering college students, may be exposed to a more stressful, difficult curriculum, but students have college to art college students.

Methodology

Participants:

The study included 500 young people from several universities (medical, nursing, related sciences). Of these there were 250 men and 250 women. The sample consisted of 250 students from urban areas and 250 students from rural areas. Participants were between the age 18 -22 years old.

Instruments:

- The **Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (AAQ-II)** was used to examine **psychological flexibility** which measures the ability to accept negative thoughts and feelings, while simultaneously focusing on personal values.
- The **UCLA Loneliness Scale** was used to assess subjective feelings of **loneliness**.

Procedure:

Data was recorded via online surveys (Google forms) distributed across several institutions. Before participating, participants were informed of the purpose of the study and their approval was given. Data were examined using descriptive and inferential statistics such as correlation analysis and ANOVA.

Results and Comparison (with tables)

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Flexibility and Loneliness

Group Mean	Psychological Flexibility Mean	Loneliness Score
Urban-Male	31.5	18.7
Urban-Female	29.8	21.2
Rural- Male	32.1	20.3
Rural-Female	30.4	22.1
Medical College (Urban Area)	33.0	18.0

Nursing College (Urban Area)	31.2	19.5
Allied Health Science College (Urban Area)	30.5	21.0

Table 2: Comparison of Psychological Flexibility and Loneliness by Academic Discipline and Gender

Variable	Psychological Flexibility (Mean)	Loneliness Score (Mean)
Gender		
Male	32.0	19.0
Female	30.0	21.0
Urban area vs Rural area		
Urban Area	31.7	19.8
Rural Area	30.2	20.9
Name of the Discipline		
Medical College	32.5	18.5
Nursing College	31.0	20.0
Allied Health Science College	30.0	21.2

Discussion

The findings of this study show a strong connection between psychological flexibility and loneliness among young people. Results show that young people with increased psychological flexibility report less experience of loneliness. Gender inequality is clear, with women reporting more loneliness than men, regardless of psychological flexibility. Urban teenagers report slightly higher levels of loneliness than their rural colleagues, but the differences are not statistically significant. However, urban students exhibit a higher level of psychological flexibility and may indicate that more coping tools are available in these situations. There are also significant differences in academic fields. Medical students usually have psychological flexibility and slight loneliness. This is due to the strict nature of concentration on others and research. Engineering students reported slightly higher levels of loneliness, perhaps due to increased academic pressure. On the other hand, art students seem to have the highest level of loneliness. This may be due to diverse social contacts of discipline.

Limitations

- **Sample Size:** Although the sample size is considerable, a larger, more varied sample could yield more generalizable findings.
- **Cross-sectional Design:** This research is cross-sectional, indicating that it cannot determine causal relationships.
- **Self-reported Data:** The dependence on self-reported questionnaires may introduce biases, as participants may not accurately convey their feelings of loneliness or psychological flexibility.

Recommendations

Mitigating loneliness among adolescents necessitates a blend of self-help techniques, emotional support,

and social interaction.

Cultivate Stronger Social Connections

1. Allocate more time with family and friends, even if it is merely through texting or video calls,
2. Participate in clubs, sports teams, or hobby groups to connect with like-minded individuals,
3. Engage in community service or volunteer activities to foster a sense of connectedness with others.

Enhance Communication Skills,

1. Learn to articulate your feelings openly and sincerely,
2. Be an attentive listener, which aids in developing deeper friendships.

Reduce Social Media Dependence

1. Refrain from comparing yourself to others on social platforms,
2. Emphasize in-person interaction over online communication,
3. Take breaks from screens and partake in outdoor or physical activities.

Seek Professional Assistance When Necessary,

1. If loneliness escalates to sadness or anxiety, consult a counselor or therapist.

Conclusion

This research enhances our comprehension of the connection between psychological flexibility and loneliness among adolescents. It emphasizes the significance of psychological flexibility as a possible protective element against loneliness and highlights the necessity for gender-sensitive and context-specific interventions. Future studies could examine longitudinal impacts and integrate more diverse cultural contexts to enrich our understanding of these intricate relationships.

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