

LONELINESS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to explore relation between loneliness and emotional intelligence of university students as a function of ethnicity, family structure and gender. The study was conducted on purposively selected 120 respondents aged 18 to 28 years from different Universities of Chittagong district. They were categorized into groups on the basis of ethnicity, family structure and gender. The Bangla version of Loneliness Scale (Parveen, 2007) and Emotional Intelligence scale (Hossain and Uddin, 2008) were used to measure loneliness and emotional intelligence. The findings showed that non-tribal students have more loneliness score than tribal students ($F = 21.16, df = 1, 112, p < .001$); the students who came from joint family have less loneliness score than students of nuclear family ($F = 13.83, df = 1, 112, p < .001$). On the other hand, non-tribal students showed more emotional intelligence than tribal students ($F = 14.51, df = 1, 112, p < .001$); the mean of the students who come from joint family had more emotional intelligence score than students in nuclear family ($F = 59.66, df = (1, 112), p < .001$). Finally, result also showed significant negative correlation ($r = -.33, p < .01$) between loneliness and emotional intelligence.

Key words: *Loneliness, Emotional Intelligence and University Students*

Introduction

University is the highest educational institutions for a country in where students learn, explore and find identity in different pieces. Their contribution in different aspects glorifies of a country's recognition and reputation. But students come from different backgrounds (such as tribal, non-tribal) in diverse areas of a country. Especially, tribal students can admit in university after facing thorny challenges. After admitting in a university, students may suffer various problems such as lonely feeling, getting hygienic food, adjusting in hall environment or university, making new friendship, adjusting new syllabus or curriculums etc which is very challenging matter for any students. It may impact on their emotional intelligence. So, present study has been undertaken to explore loneliness and emotional intelligence between tribal and non-tribal university students.

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Loneliness can be defined as a negative feelings that occurs of a person's life because of disrupt or lacking of social relationships. According to Gierveld (1987) a person feels loneliness when his specific relationships are unfriendly or unkind. It may lead severe health issues such as physical (cardiovascular problems, lessen immune functioning and causing obesity) and psychological (depression, depressive symptom and suicide) problems. And it impacts on emotional intelligence (Ozdemir & Tuncay, 2008). Emotional intelligence (EI) is the capability to identify of own and other feelings, to differentiate between diverse emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior (Coleman, 2008). It also reflects abilities to join intelligence, empathy and emotions to improve thought and understanding of interpersonal dynamics.

Pijpers (2017) researched on loneliness among 481 students in higher education. They found 23% students suffer from loneliness. Masters and female students suffer from more loneliness than male and other students. Kaura and Sharma (2015) worked on loneliness and locus of control among 120 adolescents belonging to nuclear and joint families. Their result revealed that students in nuclear families were lonelier as compared to students in joint families. Javeed (2014) worked on the effect of nuclear family and joint family upon emotional intelligence and loneliness of children. Their result showed that nuclear family children have significantly high loneliness than join family children and joint family children have higher emotional intelligence than nuclear family.

Andrabi (2015) researched on emotional intelligence among tribal and non-tribal adolescents of Kashmir in India. He found non-tribal adolescent showed a higher level of emotional intelligence than tribal students. Jain and Yadav (2019) worked on emotional intelligence of tribal adolescents in India. They found girls showed more emotional intelligence than boy's tribal students. Rathi (2015) researched on emotional intelligence of 100 adolescent students in India. They found no significant difference between male and female students according to emotional intelligence. Tripathi (2016) studied on emotional intelligence as related to adjustment: a study of tribal non-tribal 400 adolescents of Ranchi (Jharkhand) District in India. They also found that tribal students have more emotional intelligence score than non-tribal group. Umadevi (2013) found that adolescent who were hailing from joint families were highly emotionally intelligent possessing the qualities like self-regard, independence, interpersonal skills, being empathic, flexible and adaptable than adolescent of joint families. Wols *et al.*, (2015) researched on prospective associations between loneliness and emotional intelligence of 196 adolescents. They found significant correlation between loneliness and emotional intelligence.

University students are asset for any country. Their gargantuan contribution is accepted by any people for any country. Different types of students (tribal, non-tribal) are admitting to university from different areas. After leaving home most of the student lives in hall or different residential areas. And most of the students need to adjust with university circumstances, hall or other residential areas. This entire phenomenon is very complicating for university students. If students fail to adjust with this phenomenon, then they may suffer from loneliness, stress, anxiety, depression. It impact on their emotional intelligence, learning, physical and mental health, decision making, problem solving, academic achievement, memory and learning etc. Emotional intelligence is closely related with self-efficacy and mental health among students. It is also related to student performance at school and their physical and mental well being. So research on emotional intelligence and loneliness of university is paramount matter. Therefore, there are not many pragmatic explorations are available in Bangladeshi context to highlight the socio-cultural, ethnicity practice and all things considered, setting of tribal and non-tribal students. Along these lines, the study will be considered as a pioneer investigation with tribal and non-tribal students in Bangladesh. The objectives of the present study were to a. see whether loneliness of university students varies according to ethnicity, family structure and gender, b. find out emotional intelligence of university students varies according to ethnicity, family structure and gender; and c. investigate whether there is any relationship between loneliness and emotional intelligence.

Material and Methods

Respondents

In order to collect data, 120 students were selected purposively as study participants from the different university of Chittagong district. Among 120 respondents 60 (50%) were tribal and 60 (50%) were non-tribal students; 60 (50%) were male and 60 (50%) were female students; 69 (57%) were from nuclear family and 51 (42.5%) were from joint family students. Their age ranged from 18 to 28 years. All the respondents were physically and mentally well.

Measuring Instruments

Two questionnaires were used in the present study. Those were:

Loneliness Scale

The Loneliness Scale was originally developed by Russel *et al.*, (1978). It was revised by Russell *et al.*, (1980). An adapted Bangla version of Loneliness Scale (Parveen, 2007) was used for measuring loneliness. It is a 20 items Likert type scale. 10 statements are positive and 10 are items negative. There are four alternatives for each statement. The score of positive items are, 1 for Never, 2 for Rarely, 3 for Sometimes and 4 for often. Moreover, the scoring system for negative items is just opposite of the scoring system of positive items. The scale score ranged from 20 to 80. Higher score means high level of loneliness and lower score means low feeling of loneliness. The measure found highly reliable, both in terms of internal consistency (Coefficient α ranging from .89 to .94) and test-retest reliability over a 1-year period ($r = .73$). Convergent validity for the scale was indicated by significant correlations with other measure of loneliness. Construct validity was supported by significant relations with measure of the adequacy of the individual's interpersonal relationships, and by correlations between loneliness and measures of health and well-being. Significant correlation ($r = .88$) between score of English and Bangla version indicated translation reliability of the scale.

Emotional Intelligence Scale

The original emotional intelligence scale was developed by Hyde, Pethe and Dhar (2002). The Bangla version of the scale was adapted by Hossain and Uddin (2008). The Bangla version contains 34 items. Participants rated each items using a 5-point scale anchored 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Bangla version of EIS contains a Cronbach alpha value of .86, split-half value of .89. The Bangla version also assured high level of content and construct validity (corrected item total correlation & convergent validity). High scores indicate high level of emotional intelligence.

Design

A cross-sectional survey research design was followed for conducting the present study.

Procedure

The main purpose of the study was to collect information about the student's emotional intelligence and loneliness. For this reason, participants were selected purposively from different Universities in Chittagong district. The questionnaires were administered to each of the 120 respondents individually and at the same time rapport was established through conversation with each of them. The participants were requested to express their actual feelings and thoughts regarding to the emotional intelligence and loneliness through each question. Those who did not understand properly, they were given necessary explanations. Upon completion of the questionnaire, the respondents were thanked for co-operation.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of the present research was to see the difference between loneliness and emotional intelligence of university students as a function of ethnicity, family structure and gender. Obtained data were analyzed using *F*-test and Pearson product moment correlation. All statistical analyses were carried out using the statistical program SPSS version 16.0 for window. The findings are presented in the following table.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Loneliness Scores According to Ethnicity, Family Structure and Gender

Ethnicity	Family Structure		Gender		Total
	Nuclear	Joint	Male	Female	
Tribal Students	M = 41.53 SD = 8.67	M = 36.79 SD = 7.56	M = 38.50 SD = 8.55	M = 40.13 SD = 6.46	M = 39.32 SD = 7.56
Non-tribal Students	M = 47.97 SD = 7.71	M = 42.52 SD = 6.96	M = 46.30 SD = 8.83	M = 45.47 SD = 6.84	M = 45.88 SD = 7.84
Total	M = 44.99 SD = 8.73	M = 39.37 SD = 6.61	M = 42.40 SD = 9.47	M = 42.80 SD = 7.12	M = 42.60 SD = 8.35

Table 1 indicates that mean loneliness score of tribal student was 39.32 ($SD = 7.56$), and non-tribal student was 45.88 ($SD = 7.84$). That means non-tribal students have more loneliness score than tribal students. The mean score of students in nuclear family was 44.99 ($SD = 8.73$) and joint family was 39.37 ($SD = 6.61$). That means, the students who come from nuclear family had more loneliness score than students in joint family. Mean score of male students was 42.40 ($SD = 9.47$) and female students was 42.80 ($SD = 7.12$).

To determine whether the differences observed between the means in Table 1 were statistically significant, three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed.

Table 2: Summary of the Analysis of Variance of Loneliness Scores According to Ethnicity, Family Structure and Gender

Sources of Variations	SS	df	MS	F	Sig. Level
Ethnicity (A)	1112.350	1	1112.350	21.16	.000
Family Structure (B)	726.932	1	726.932	13.83	.000
Gender (C)	1.585	1	1.585	.030	.862
A*B	3.445	1	3.445	.066	.798
A*C	67.524	1	67.524	1.28	.260
B*C	195.675	1	195.675	3.72	.056
A*B*C	132.362	1	132.362	2.52	.115
Error	5888.453	112	52.575		
Total	226064.00	120			

Table 2 shows that ethnicity had significant effect on loneliness ($F = 21.16$, $df = 1,112$, $p < .001$); family structure had significant effect on loneliness ($F = 13.83$, $df = (1, 112)$, $p < .001$); gender had no significant effect on loneliness. Non-tribal student had more loneliness than tribal students and students who come from nuclear family had more loneliness than students in joint family.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Intelligence Scores According to Ethnicity, Family Structure and Gender

Ethnicity	Family Structure		Gender		Total
	Nuclear	Joint	Male	Female	
Tribal Students	M = 124.84 SD = 10.51	M = 145.14 SD = 11.16	M = 135.70 SD = 14.94	M = 132.93 SD = 14.81	M = 134.32 SD = 14.81
Non-tribal Students	M = 136.95 SD = 13.35	M = 149.17 SD = 8.91	M = 142.97 SD = 11.82	M = 140.30 SD = 14.53	M = 141.63 SD = 13.20
Total	M = 131.33 SD = 13.48	M = 146.96 SD = 10.31	M = 139.33 SD = 13.85	M = 136.62 SD = 15.01	M = 137.98 SD = 14.45

Table 3 indicates that mean emotional intelligence score of tribal student was 134.32 ($SD = 14.81$), non-tribal student was 141.63 ($SD = 13.20$). That means non-tribal students showed more emotional intelligence score than tribal students. The mean score of students in nuclear family was 131.33 ($SD = 13.48$) and joint family was 146.96 ($SD = 10.31$). That means, the students who come from joint family had more emotional intelligence score than students in nuclear family. Mean score of male students was 139.33 ($SD = 13.85$) and female students was 136.62 ($SD = 15.01$).

To determine whether the differences observed between the means in Table 3 were statistically significant, three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed.

Table 4: Summary of the Analysis of Variance of emotional intelligence Scores According to Ethnicity, Family Structure and Gender

Sources of Variations	SS	df	MS	F	Sig. Level
Ethnicity (A)	1857.21	1	1857.21	14.51	.001
Family Structure (B)	7633.69	1	7633.69	59.66	.001
Gender (C)	75.92	1	75.92	.59	.44
A*B	458.81	1	458.81	3.59	.06
A*C	.68	1	.68	.01	.94
B*C	175.58	1	175.58	1.37	.24
A*B*C	284.00	1	284.00	2.22	.14
Error	14331.77	112	127.96		
Total	2309285.00	120			

Table 4 shows that ethnicity had significant effect on emotional intelligence ($F = 14.51$, $df = 1$, 112 , $p < .001$); family structure had significant effect on emotional intelligence ($F = 59.66$, $df = (1, 112)$, $p < .001$); gender had no significant effect on emotional intelligence. Non- Tribal students had more emotional intelligence than tribal students and students who come from joint family had more emotional intelligence than students in nuclear family.

Finally, to find out whether there is any relation between emotional intelligence and loneliness of university students, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was conducted. Significant negative correlation ($r = -.33$) was found between emotional intelligence and loneliness of university students with an alpha level of $p < .01$. With the increase of loneliness, emotional intelligence of university students decreases. The same result was found by Wols *et al.*, (2015). Lonely student fails to cope with emotion, deal with different challenges, make interpersonal relationship, make a satisfactory result and build up a good carrier.

It was evident from table 2 that non-tribal students had more loneliness than tribal students. Most of the non-tribal university students come from different areas and cultures in our country. They have feeling of sadness, instability, stress, hopelessness and depression. They also show a lot of changes in their life style, work patterns, fear of unknown, social insecurities and degree of independence after admitting in university. These factors impact on their mood and emotion. As a result they suffer from loneliness. On the other hand, loneliness of tribal students is low. The number of tribal students is very small in our country. Although they are deprived from their opportunities but interpersonal relationship is very strong within tribes. There are several associations of tribe students such as BMSC (Bangladesh Marma Student Council), PCP (Pahari Chatro Porishod), ACF (Adibashi Chatro Forum). They organized different Cultural program, Group tour, Boishabi program etc. Through these program they can know each other, share their views, problems, thoughts. They also help each other in any difficulties situation. As a result, their feeling of loneliness is low than non-tribal students.

It was evident from table 2 that nuclear family had more loneliness than joint family. This result is similar of other findings (Bayder & Brook-Gunn, 1991 and Javeed 2014). Family plays major role in overcoming the loneliness issue. Due to the emerging trends of modernism, the traditional system of extended family has been changed into the nuclear family. According to Parsons (1965), nuclear family is based upon the parents and their children. People of nuclear family are mostly self-centered and self –fulfillment and elders are moving in the care centers or old houses. Children of nuclear family have low opportunity to spend their time with their grandparent. Interaction between grandparent and grandchildren is related to higher cognitive development and fewer behavior and

psychological problems like loneliness, aggression, depression (Bayder, & Brook-Gunn, 1991). On the other hand, students in joint family receive better opportunity than nuclear family. Children can share their emotion, pass their free time and play game to their grandparents. As a result, their feeling of loneliness is low than students of nuclear family.

Findings also revealed that gender were no significantly effect on loneliness (table 2). This finding is consistent with other researchers (Rahman *et al.*, 2017). That means, there were no significant differences between male and female according to loneliness. In the present time, with easily accessible internet, both male and female students browse internet (facebook, messenger, whatsapp etc), enjoy movie, video, learn educational program etc. For these reason there is no significant difference between male and female students according to loneliness.

It was evident from table 4 that non-tribal students had more emotional intelligence than tribal students. This result is similar to Andrabi (2015). Non-tribal students have self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation, emotional stability and self-development. A high emotional intelligence helps to maintain a state of harmony in oneself and finally be more self-confident in dealing with the challenges of living and learning in educational institutions. On the other hand, until most of the tribes are economically inferior, uneducated at times and are less exposed to the modern world. Being the earliest inhabitant of the country, they have maintained a distinctive life style for centuries. Unfortunately the isolation has kept them out of mainstream and made them easy prey to exploitation. When they are forced to get along with the mainstream culture, they don't get adjusted easily. So their emotional intelligence is low.

It was evident from table 4 that family structure had significant effect on emotional intelligence. Joint family had more emotional intelligence than nuclear family. This finding is similar to Javeed (2014). Adolescents of joint families are highly empathetic as they are sensitive to emotions of others and are better at listening to others. They are also friendly, sociable, helpful and skilful in dealing with people, and open about their feelings. Therefore, joint family system provides those many opportunities for interpersonal interactions in which they can learn these things. On the other hand, adolescents of nuclear families are less sociable, friendly, helpful and skilful in dealing with people, and are not open about their feelings. They have low ability to manage, identify and label emotions than adolescent of joint family. The adolescents of nuclear

families are characterized by low level of self awareness, so their emotional intelligence is low.

Findings also revealed that gender were no significantly effect on emotional intelligence (table 2). This result is similar to other researcher Rathi (2015). This result is contradictory to other findings (Ahmad *et al.*, 2009), they found that male students had more emotional intelligence than female students. Opposite result was found by Sandhu and Mehrotra, (1999) that female students had more emotional intelligence than male students. As female student can participate different programs like male student, so they have a lot of opportunity to interact with others, solve problem, and make decision. And that why there is no significant difference between male and female students according to emotional intelligence.

Conclusion

The research findings reveal the necessity is more to provide proper counseling and guidance service in order to make effective interventions against the loneliness between tribal and non-tribal students. University authority should appoint counselor in every hall and faculty. Findings are also helpful for teachers and authorities of tribal and non-tribal students to identify what problems are faced. Considering the fact that psychosocial management is an important component of psychiatric care and called for a need to establish developmental program for tribal and non-tribal students; ensure that the government, protects the most vulnerable students and provide essential services.

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