Relationship between Loneliness and Self-esteem among Nursing College Students at Zagazig University

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Abstract

Background: Loneliness has shown to be particularly prevalent in college students. In fact; it was one of the most common complaints of students reporting to health and counseling centers. **Aim of the study:** was to determine relationship between loneliness and self-esteem among students at Faculty of Nursing, Zagazig University. **Subjects & Methods: Research design**: A descriptive design was used. **Setting:** the present study was conducted at the Faculty of Nursing, Zagazig University. **Subjects:** Three hundred and twelve nursing students were enrolled in the present study. **Tools of data collection**: Socio-demographic data sheet, Russell Loneliness Scale and Rosenberg scale of Self-esteem. **Results**: the present study showed that more than half of the studied sample had Loneliness feelings and the majority of the studied sample had high level of self-esteem .There was negative correlation between loneliness and self-esteem. **Conclusion**: Based on the findings of the present study, concluded that self-esteem had positive impact in lowering level of loneliness. **Recommendations:** The study recommended that, establishing psychosocial counseling center or psychiatric clinic at Faculty of Nursing to assist students to handle issues that constitute a source of stress in their life.

Keywords: loneliness, self-esteem, nursing students

Introduction:

University is a transition period from being an adolescent to being an adult. It is a period for university students to seek and fulfill their sense of individuality and, at the same time, to seek and build close and social relationships with others. For many university students, this may be the first time they live away from their parents. They may move from the emotional and social support of their families and leave home as well as their hometown friends. The separation of university students from their homes for the first time may create feelings of doubt, confusion, and anxiety, which the close companionship of residential halls may not totally prevent [(1)]. Loneliness has shown to be particularly prevalent in college students .In fact; it was one of the most common complaints of students reporting to health and counseling centers [(2)]. .Experiencing loneliness as a youth might be more detrimental than at other times of life as it might impede personal growth, identity resolution, and intimacy issue resolution. It was suggested that loneliness was negatively related to self-esteem [(3)].

Self-esteem was significantly predictive of loneliness following the college adjustment period. This finding suggested that the relationship between self-esteem and loneliness is stable over time. Loneliness can also be attributed to internal factors such as low self-esteem [(4)]. People who lack confidence in themselves often believe that they are unworthy of the attention or regard of other people. This can lead to isolation and chronic loneliness, [(5)].

Significance of the study:

Loneliness is a more prevalent and serious problem among college students. It is an unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relationships is deficient in some important ways; including lack of group

participation, absence of the sense of belonging, lack of social support, lack of relationship with others and feeling a lack of connection .Perceived loneliness in college students has been found to be related to myriad mental health constructs, life dissatisfaction , depression, suicide and as well as physical health problems such as heart disease, smoking addiction, obesity , eating disturbances , sleep disturbances , poorer immune systems effectiveness , elevated blood pressure and premature mortality.

Aim of the study:

The study aimed to determine the relationship between loneliness and self-esteem among nursing college students at Zagazig University.

Research questions:

Is there a relationship between loneliness and self-esteem among nursing college students at Zagazig University?

Subjects and methods

Research Design:

A descriptive design was utilized in this study.

Study Setting:

The study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing, Zagazig University at Sharkia governorate.

Study Subjects:

The subjects consisted of Random sample of 312 students from different grades at the Faculty of Nursing, Zagazig University according to the following inclusion criteria:

- Male &female students

- Agree to participate in the study.

Tools of data collection:

1-Structured interview questionnaire sheet :.

This scale was developed by El-Gilany,et al[7] to assess the personal characteristics of the students and their parent. It included age, gender, residence, marital status, education level of parents, occupation of parents, family size, income and social level.

The Scoring system:

The scoring system for socioeconomic level of the students was calculated and total score for questions is 84 degree.Total social class score was calculated as:

-Low social class: 0-42 degree.

-Middle social class: 43-63 degree.

-High social class: ≥64 degree.

2-Loneliness Scale: constructed by Russell[8]It was used to measure level of loneliness in students.

Scoring System:

This scale consists of 20-items ask participants about how frequently do they agree with statements such as "I feel left out", "I lack companionship" and "I am no longer close to anyone". It includes 9 positive and 11 negative items, randomly distributed throughout the scale. The items are scored on a 4 point Likert-type scale. Each item is rated from 1 (Never feel lonely) to 4 (Often feeling of lonely).

3-Self-Esteem Scale :

Developed by Rosenberg[9]The purpose of this scale was to measure participants' self-esteem.

Scoring system

It includes ten statements, five statements of them are positive and the other five are negative. Each of the 10 items are rated on a 4-point Likert-type response format from 0 (strongly disagree) to 3(strongly agree). Higher scores obtained from

the scale indicated higher perceived self-esteem.

Content of validity and reliability:

The scales were translated for content validity by group of experts in the fields of psychiatry and psychiatric nursing. Reliability of the UCLA Loneliness Scale is high with a coefficient range of alpha .89 to .94 .Test retest reliability in adult samples has also been found to be high with a correlation of .73 (Russell, 1996). The Cronbach's alpha of Self-Esteem Scale in the present study was .76. Three-week test-retest reliability coefficient for SES was .81.

Field work:

Once permission was granted to proceed with the study, the researcher met with students at Faculty of Nursing who fulfilled the inclusion criteria. The nature, purposes, benefits of the study were explained to students who were invited to participate in the study. They were ensured of confidentiality and answered all related questions they raised. All participants were recruited directly in their respective sections after the end of section. Participation was completely voluntary. The researcher started the interview with the students individually using the data collection tools. The questionnaire was read, explained, and choices were recorded by students. From the pilot study results, it was found that the average time to fill in all tools, including Socio-demographic data sheet, loneliness scale and self-esteem scale was from 25-30minutes. Data collection period continued in about 2 months from the beginning of March till the beginning of May, 2014.

Pilot study:

A pilot study was conducted on 20 students from different university grades at the Faculty of Nursing, completed by students, constituting about 10 percent of the total study sample. It was done to test the feasibility and clarity of the tools, and also helped to know the time needed for filling the tools and not needed any modifications and those who shared in the pilot study were excluded later in the main study sample.

Administrative and Ethical Considerations:

The students were given a verbal description of the aims of the study, the benefits, and non-participation or withdrawal rights at any time without giving any reasons. The students were informed that their participation in this study was voluntary, no names were included in the questionnaire sheet and anonymity of each participant was protected by the allocation of code number for each student. The students were assured about confidentiality of the information gathered and its use only for their benefits and for the purpose of the study.

Statistical Analysis:

Data collected were analyzed by computer using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software version 20. According to the type of data, the following tests were used to test differences for significance. Differences between frequencies (qualitative variables) and percentages in groups were compared by Chi-square test. Correlation by Pearson correlation. P value was set at <0.05 for significant results&<0.001 for high significant result.

Results:

Table (1): Showed that the age of studied students sample ranged from 18-24 years with mean $\pm$ SD 20.26±1.35, while female were more than three quarter of the studied sample (80.1%) and most of them were unmarried (88.1%)and (59.6%) were from rural area. Regarding university grades of nursing students, this table illustrates that about one- third of students at 1st grade was (33.3 %).

Figure (1): indicated that more than half of studied sample had loneliness feelings (50.3%).

Figure (2): revealed that the majority of studied group had high level of self-esteem (63.5%) and the minority had low self-esteem (36.5%).

Table (2) indicated that: there was a statistically significant relation between loneliness and residence and university grade of students (p<0.05).

Table (3) displayed that there was significant relation between self-esteem and marital status and gender (p <0.05*). But there was no significant relation between self-esteem from one side age, residence and social class (p >0.05).

Table (4) showed that there was a negative correlation between loneliness and self-esteem among studied students.

Discussion:

Regarding the personal characteristics of students, the current study was carried out on 312 students at Faculty of Nursing. The range of age in the studied sample was from 18-24 years old with 20.26±1.35 Mean ±SD. This finding might be due to the rules of education in Egypt that the students attend university education at the age of 17 years old.
This result was supported by Ozdemir&Tuncay[1], in Turkey, in a study about "Correlates of loneliness among university students" found that the range of age in the study sample was from18-25years old (M= 21.58, SD= 1.73).

On the contrary, Al Khatib[6],in United Arab Emirates in a study about " Exploring the Relationship among Loneliness, Self-esteem, Self-efficacy and Gender in United Arab Emirates College Students" found that the age of the studied sample ranged between 18 and 36 years(M= 21.8,SD= 2.95).

The current study results showed that the majority of studied sample composed of female students. This finding might be due to that the majority of sample size composed of female students and the Faculty of Nursing at Zagazig University is predominantly attended by females more than males.

This result was supported by Yang [10], who found in a study in Asia, about "Relationship between gender traits and loneliness: The role of self-esteem " that more than half of the study sample were female college students.

On the contrary, Kadoumi et al,[11] in Jordon, in a study about "Psychological loneliness among Arab students" found that more than two thirds of the studied sample were male students.

Regarding university grade of nursing students, the current study findings revealed that about one third of students at the 1st university grade .This might be due to large number of students admitted to the Faculty of Nursing during the year of data collection.

This finding was in the same line with Soares et al., [12] in a study in Portugal, about "Psychological Symptomatology and loneliness in a college students sample " and found that more than half of nursing students were at the 1st university grade. On the contrary, Ozdemir &Tuncay[1] in a study in Turkey, about "Correlates of loneliness among university students" found that about half of nursing students were at the 2nd university grade.

Regarding the distribution of loneliness scale variables among the studied sample, the current study results revealed that more than half of the studied students sample had loneliness feelings. It might be due to that those students couldn't adapt with

stress life events in addition to new stressors such as new environment, face academic challenges and an increased workload and establish new relationships. Most students who join university leave their homes for the first time. This might subject them to loss of the traditional social support and residing with other students and peer relationships. Moreover, there was a change in the style of learning from what the students were used to at school. These changes may act as a risk factor to loneliness in university students.

This result was supported by Knox et al., [13], in a study in India; about" The Lonely College Male" found that more than one third of the studied students had severe loneliness feelings.On the contrary, Gnusareva, [14], in study carried out in Iran entitled" levels of loneliness among Irish and non-Irish students studying in Dublin and found that the minority of the studied sample had high level of loneliness.

Regarding the distribution of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale variables among studied sample, The current study findings revealed that more than half of studied sample had high self-esteem level and less than half of studied sample had low self-esteem level as most of students strongly disagree that they feel useless at times and strongly agree that they wish they could have more respect for themselves and take a positive attitude toward themselves. This might be due to that students, who had high level of self-esteem, might have high degree of self-confidence and a good relation with their families and friends and had more social networks.

Nearly similar findings were supported by Chaney [15], in study in Turkey about" Muscle Dysmorphia, Self-esteem, and Loneliness among Gay and Bisexual Men" and concluded that more than half of the Oakland University students reported high levels of self-esteem. on the contrary, ZHOU, [16] in study in China about Gratifications, Loneliness, Leisure Boredom and Self-esteem as Predictors of SNS-Game Addiction and Usage Pattern among Chinese College Students found that more than half had low self-esteem.

Regarding the Relationship between total loneliness score and personnel characteristics of studied sample, the findings of current study revealed that there was no statistical significant relation between loneliness and sex. This might be due to the characteristics of the participants themselves as well as the fact that both males and females may now face common stressors and have equal experience of the same pressure.

Nearly similar findings were supported by, Atik, [17] in a study in China about "The role of locus of control, Self-esteem, parenting styles, loneliness, and academic achievement in predicting bullying among middle school students and found that there was no significant difference in the level of loneliness between males and females. On the contrary, Girgin, [18], in study in Turkey about" Evaluation of the factors affecting loneliness and hopelessness among university students in Turkey" found that loneliness levels were higher among males than females. Also On the contrary, Gierveld et al., [19]in cambridge in a study about" Loneliness and social isolation" found that loneliness levels were higher among females than males.

The present study results demonstrated that there was statistical significant relation between loneliness and residence. This might be owing to that the place of live influences the occurrence of loneliness as living in urban areas considered a risk factor for loneliness. This result was in

agreement with King et al., [20] in Australia in a study about "The loneliness of relocating" and found that there was significant relation between loneliness and residence.

The present study findings revealed that there was significant relation between loneliness and academic year. It might be attributed to that there was a negative relation between loneliness and age by which advancing age and academic year, the student could adapt with this stage and had more friends and social networks and students at first year may feel more lonely than students at fourth year as this may be the first time they live away from their parents.

This result was supported by AKIN,[21] in a study in Turkey, about"Self- compassion and Loneliness" and found that there was significant relation between loneliness and academic year. On the contrary Kadoumi, et al.,[11] in a study), in Jordon, about "Psychological Loneliness among Arab Students at Irbid National University, and found that there was no significant relation between loneliness and academic year.

The present study findings revealed that there was no significant relation between loneliness and parent's education. This result might be due to that cultural background of parents is not responsible in enduring loneliness.

In contrast with Wei et al, [3] in a study, in Taiwan, about "Adult attachment, social self-efficacy, self-disclosure, loneliness, and subsequent depression for freshman college students" found that college students with lower paternal education had high level of loneliness. They found that Parents with higher level of education were able to pay close attention to students' psychological condition and actively communicate with students,

which can decrease students' loneliness.

Concerning relation between loneliness and social class, the current study demonstrated that there was no significant relation between loneliness and social class. It might be owing to small sample size in addition to, that loneliness found in all social class and not limited to specific social class. This result was supported by KUMAR, [22], in a study in India about "perceived loneliness of college students "and found that, there was no correlation between loneliness and social class.

This result was in contrast with Ozdemir&Tuncay, [1], in a study in Turkey, about "Correlates of loneliness among university students" and found that individuals from families with a lower social class were more prone to display higher prevalence of loneliness.

Regarding the relation between loneliness and income, the current study findings indicated that there was no significant relation between loneliness and income. This might be due to that incomes were basically the same for most individuals; in addition, most families of studied sample had income that is enough for daily needs.

This result was in contrast with Hawkley& Cacioppo,[23] in a study in Chicago about" Loneliness Matters: A Theoretical and Empirical Review of Consequences and Mechanisms and found that there was significant relation between loneliness and low income.

Regarding relation between self-esteem and the gender, the current study results demonstrated that there was a significant relation between self-esteem and the gender as males' self-esteem was higher than that of females. This might owing to society rules that sets limits on behaviors of females, and male adolescents were more involved in nurturing,

communality, and affiliation. Hence, this enabled them to have a good level of self-esteem.

Similar finding was supported by Al Khatib[6], in a study in United Arab Emirates about "Exploring the Relationship among Loneliness, Self-esteem, Self-efficacy and Gender in United Arab Emirates College Students" and found that that males' self- esteem was higher than that of females. On the contrary, Dhal, et al., [24] in a study in India about" Adolescent Self-Esteem, Attachment and Loneliness" found that there was no significant relation between self-esteem and sex.

The present study results illustrated that there was negative relation between loneliness and self-esteem that is to say, if the self-esteem levels of college students increases, loneliness will decrease. This might be due to that self-esteem affects all aspects of an individual's life especially the relationship with others. Individuals with low self-esteem usually avoid social settings and isolate themselves resulting in having the feelings of loneliness from their lack of confidence.

Similar findings were reported by Yaacob et al.,[25] in a study in Malaysia about "Loneliness, stress, self-esteem, and depression among Malaysian adolescents" and found that there was negative relation between loneliness and self-esteem. On the contrary, Gnusareva (14), in study carried out in Iran entitled" levels of loneliness among Irish and non-Irish students studying in Dublin and found that there was a positive correlation between loneliness and self-esteem.

Conclusion:

Based on the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that there was a negative relation between loneliness and self-esteem as high level of self-esteem leads to decreasing loneliness among students.

Recommendation:

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Establishing Counseling center or psychiatric clinic at faculty of nursing to identify the students with Psychological problems at early stage.
- Providing psychosocial counseling sessions at Faculty of Nursing to assist students to handle issues that constitute a source of stress in their university.
- Further research should be developed for studying the effect of loneliness symptoms on the academic achievement.

Table (1)Socio- demographic and personal characteristics of the studied sample (n=312).

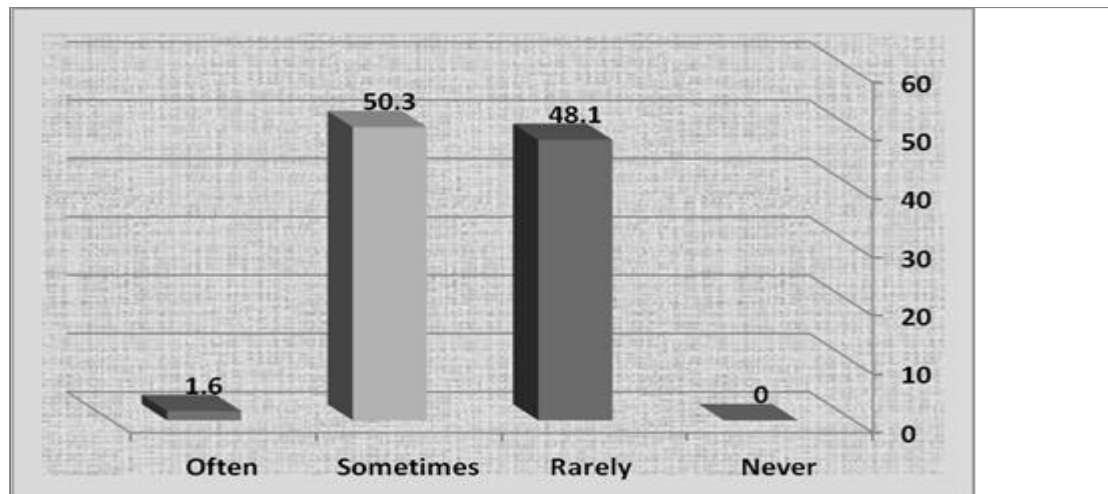| student's social characters	No	%
Age (years):		
▪ 18-	104	33.3
▪ 20	140	44.9
▪ 22-24	68	21.8
▪ Mean+SD	20.26±1.35	
▪ Range	18-24	
Sex		
▪ Male	62	19.9
▪ Female	250	80.1
Social Status		
▪ Single	275	88.1
▪ Married	37	11.9
Residence		
▪ Rural	186	59.6
▪ Urban	126	40.4
Academic year		
▪ First	104	33.3
▪ Second	89	28.5
▪ Third	55	17.6
▪ Fourth	64	20.5
▪ Total	312	100.0

Figure (1): percentage distribution of total loneliness scale among the studied sample(n=312).
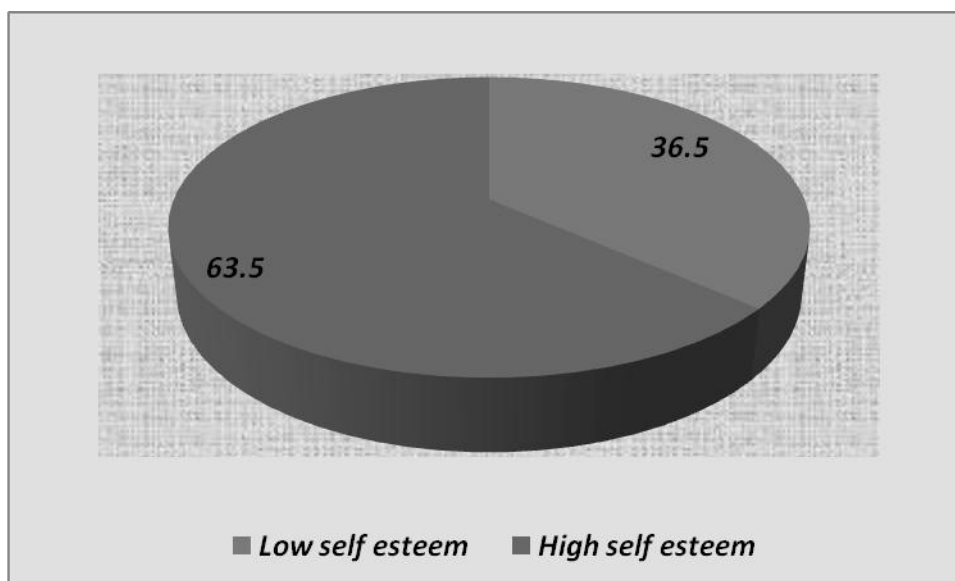
Figure 2: percentage distribution of total self-esteem scale among the studied sample (n=312).

Table (2): Relationship between total loneliness score and personnel characteristics of studied sample (n=312).

Variable	Rarely 48.1 (%)	Sometimes 50.3 (%)	often 1.6 (%)	Chi Square	P Value
Age :					
▪ 18-	57(38.0)	44(28.0)	3(60.0)		
▪ 20	60 (40.0)	78(49.7)	2 (40.0)	6.11	**>0.05**
▪ 22-24	33(22.0)	35(22.3)	0(.0)		
Sex :					
▪ Male	120(80.0)	125(79.6)	5(100.0)		
▪ Female	30(20.0)	32(20.4)	0(0)		
				1.26	**>0.05**
Academic year:					
▪ First	60 (40.0)	43(27.4)	1(20. 0)		
▪ second	39(26.0)	46(29.3)	4(80.0)		
▪ Third	23(15.3)	32(20.4)	0(.0)	12.67	**<0.05***
▪ Fourth	28(18.7)	36(22.9)	0(.0)		
Marital Status:					
▪ Single	130(86.7)	140(89.2)	5(100.0)		
▪ Married	20(13.3)	17(10.8)	0(.0)		
				1.14	**>0.05**
Residence:					
▪ Rural	79(52.7)	103(65.6)	4(80.0)		
▪ Urban	71(47.3)	54(34.4)	1 (20.0)	6.21	**<0.05***

Table (3): Relationship between total self esteem score and personnel characteristics of the studied sample(n=312).

Variable	Low self esteem (36.5%)	High self esteem (63.5%)	Chi Square	P Value
Age :				
▪ 18-	36(31.6)	68(34.3)		
▪ 20	51(44.7)	89(44.9)	.461	**>0.05**
▪ 22-24	27(23.7)	41(20.7)		
Sex :				
▪ Male	87(76. 3)	163(82.3)		
▪ Female	27(23.7)	35(17.7)		**<0.05***
			10.20	
Academic year:				
▪ First	34 (29.8)	70(35.4)		**>0.05**
▪ second	38(33.3)	51(25.8)		
▪ Third	12(10.5)	43(21.7)	1.64	
▪ Fourth	30(26.3)	34(17.2)		
Marital Status:				
▪ Single	103(90.4)	172(86.9)		
▪ Married	11(9.6)	26(13.1)		**<0.05***
			10.23	
Residence:				
▪ Rural	71(62.3)	115(58.1)		
▪ Urban	43(37.7)	83(41.9)	6.21	**<0.05***

Table (4): Correlation between studied participants' total loneliness and total self-esteem score (n=312).

Variable	*R*	p- value
Total loneliness and Total self esteem	-.062	>0.05

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Zagazig Nursing Journal   July; 2017   Vol.13, No.1

218