The Relationship between Loneliness with Anxiety and Depression in Students of Hormozgan University

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Abstract This study aimed to investigate the relationship between loneliness and psychological problems of Hormozgan University students in 2014. The research was descriptive and correlation-based. The study statistical population consisted of all Hormozgan university students in 2014 academic year. Of these, 267 subjects were selected by random sampling. The loneliness scale of Usher, Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS) and Beck's Suicide Scale were used to collect information. The results of this study indicate that the relationship between loneliness and psychological problems, including anxiety and depression ($P < 0.05$). The role of depression is more prominent than other psychological problems. Gender differences implies that girls feel less anxiety and loneliness than boys ($P < 0.05$).
Keywords: loneliness, anxiety and depression

Introduction

Mental health is of the most important issues of different populations, especially student population that can increase or decrease the area of education for the students alone. Students face mental pressures due to: studying at the university and higher expectations of their society, lack of interest in the field, issues of communication, isolation from family, new social life, dormitory life, the necessity of accommodation with educational problems and stresses and tough courses. These issues can lead to academic failure, personal and social stresses, relationship problems on campus and the lack of talents' flourishing. Study on Mental Health, the prevalence of mental disorders, adjustment of students to college, family problems, neurological and psychological disorders and educational problems including academic failure, repeated probation and expulsion are only a part of the conducted researches (Bakhshi Pour Roodsari et al., 2005).

Loneliness is one of the factors that students encounter in their academic course.

Perlman and Viplav (1982) know loneliness as an undesirable emotion that emerges from deficiency in the social relations network of a person qualitatively and quantitatively and the lack of access to close and desirable relationship with others. Various researches have shown that loneliness will cause the inability in coming over life problems and the creation of negative understandings of life and satisfaction reduction (Jones and Heb, 2003). Moreover, researches have shown that loneliness is related to the negative side of mental health. For example, it has been found with being alone is related to depression (Hardy & Tee, 2007), suicidal thoughts and anxiety (Johnson et al., 2001) alexithymia (Kivalter et al., 2012), lack of necessary social skills (Russell et al., 2008) anxious- ambivalent attachment style and low self-esteem (Ahadi, 2009).

According to the importance of students in various national fields, the main purpose of

this study is to examine loneliness with anxiety and depression in a sample of Iranian students.

Methodology
The research was descriptive and correlation-based. The statistical population consists of all male and female students in Hormozgan University who were studying in 2014 academic year. 187 (69.7%) were female and 81 (30.30%) were boys who were selected by available sampling as sample. The average age of study subjects was 22.01 and the standard deviation is 4.03 and tools used in this research are:
Loneliness scale
Usher loneliness scale: this scale has 24 questions 8 questions of which are misleading and are related to topics related to the subject's interests but are not used in loneliness scale scoring. Therefore, main scale questions are 16. Usher et al loneliness scale has been used in different studies. The researches done with this scale indicate the appropriate validity and reliability of the scale. For example, the validity of Usher et al loneliness scale was obtained as 0.88 in Vimalay research. In the research done by Hussein Chary and Khayer with the aim of evaluating credit validity of the 24-item loneliness scale of Usher et al on 369 students (186 female and 183 males) at junior high school, they concluded that the scale has an acceptable validity and reliability. Internal consistency of the scale in this research was obtained as 0.81. In the present study, 24-item loneliness scale of Usher et al translated by Hussein Chary and Khayer is been used. 24 questions of loneliness scale of Usher et al (revised version) are called students loneliness scale from now on. Questions 2, 5, 7, 11, 13, 15, 19 and 23, that have been specified by*, are misleading and entertaining items and questions 1, 4, 8, 10, 16 and 22 are scored inversely.
The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale:
This scale was made by Lovibond and Lovibond in 1995. The scale has two forms; the short form has 21 items that evaluate each mental, depression, anxiety and stress structures by 7 different items. The short form is been validated by Sahebi et al (2005) for the Iranian population. Besides, Anthony and colleagues (1998) found a similar pattern of correlations in clinical samples. Crawford and Henry (2003) compared this tool with two other tools related to anxiety and stress in a sample of 1771 people in England and reported the reliability of the tool for depression as 0.95, anxiety as 0.90 and stress as 0.93 and for the total scores as 0.97 using Cronbach's alpha. The way of responding to questions is 4 options that are completed as self-assessment. The response range is from never to always. Grading is considered from zero to 3.
The researchers referred to Hormozgan University and volunteer students were asked to respond to research questionnaires. Pearson correlation test was used to analyze the data. Also, independent t-test was used to compare male and female students in the research variables.

Results:
Pearson correlation results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship

between loneliness and depression, anxiety and stress (P <0.05).

Independent t-test results show that in anxiety and loneliness, there is a significant difference between boys and girls (P <0.05). Means comparison shows that in the mentioned dimensions, girls have achieved lower scores than boys. So, it can be said that the female students feel less alone and anxious than male students.

Table1. Correlation matrix between loneliness and anxiety and stress variables (n=267)

Components	Mean	Standard deviation	1	2	3
1. Depression	6.76	4.67	1		
2. Anxiety	6.45	3.82	0.69**	1	
3. Stress	38.68	10.78	0.54**	0.42**	1

Table2. Independent t-test to investigate gender differences in psychological problems and loneliness

Variable	Levin test	Significance	t-test	Degree of freedom	Significance
Depression	2.51	0.11	-1.77	265	0.08
Anxiety	0.19	0.66	-3.26	265	0.001
Loneliness	22.76	0.001	-6.21	265	0.001

Discussion

The results showed a positive and significant relationship between loneliness and anxiety and depression. These results are consistent with the results of Ahadi (2009) and Jones and Heb (2003). Research has shown that loneliness is associated with negative aspects of mental health. Different studies have noted that being alone is related to depression (Hardy & Tee, 2007) and suicidal thoughts and anxiety (Johnson et al, 2001).

The findings of this study suggest that the loneliness is positively correlated with depression and anxiety respectively. In other words, depression has the strongest relationships with loneliness. In the theoretical literature, the role of being alone in the development of depression is noted. Although loneliness is one of the characteristics of depressed people, it is not sufficient for diagnosis. In the cognitive approach, depressive thoughts to create depression are focused. Loneliness has a great role in depressive and suicidal thoughts. The person who feels alone face thoughts like "I have no one to talk with," "I feel so alone," "I feel that others have abandoned me and do not pay attention to me" and "I Feel I do not like the people around me ". These thoughts and cognitive errors behind these ideas create a sense of depression and suicidal thoughts.

About the relationship between loneliness and depression, psychoanalytic theory can be noted. Psychodynamic theorists insist on the three causes of depression: anger that has been noticed by self, over-dependence on others and failure in achieving goals (Sadok and Sadok, 2003, translated by Pour Afkaari, 2007). Freud believed that suppressed anger can produce depression. In his view, people get depressed because they are afraid of showing their anger and are worried that to be disregarded and disrespected by others. Accordingly, they hide their anger and notice it to themselves. Freud believed that depression is a kind of self-loathing that arises from stacked anger (bronze, 1990, translated by Qarache Daghi, 2006). Also, according to this view, depression is

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interpreted as a reaction against the deficiency. Regardless of the type of deficiency, the depressed person shows a severe reaction against it, because the current situation revives all the fears and feelings with a certain deficiency of Childhood (lack of parental affection) (Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith, bam and Hoksma , 2000, translated by Baraheni et al., 2005).

The feeling of loneliness is associated with a kind of anxiety. The alone person has a kind of fear of negative evaluation since nobody likes him or pay attention to him which is the background of social stress. Beck et al (1985, quoted in Moeeni, 2009) believe that one of the essential hypotheses of cognitive approach in the field of stress is that stress is generated with the prediction of an event or negative harmful incidence or threatening understanding. In cognitive theories, it is believed that anxiety is usually caused by wrong operation due to the perceived risk. The fear of being disliked by others, fear of losing attention and fear of lack of interaction with others all lead to anxious thoughts in the person.

Among the study limitations included the inability to generalize results to the whole country students and other Azad, Payam Noor and so on university students, the lack of attention to the situation of students living in dormitories, lack of available and useful scientific resources. Due to limitations of the study, the research proposal are:

- Select samples of all universities (national, Azad, Payam Noor, Medical Universities)
- Use matched samples to verify the research variables
- Use more new questionnaire with more appropriate psychometric properties
- Presenting a model based on the relationship between social support, loneliness and psychological problems and test the model in the students community

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