Amidst the Online Learning*:* the Social Adjustment and Its Relationship to Loneliness of Senior High School Public Students

Noryven Dela Cruz*, Janaica Tayras, David Castillo, Jhoselle Tus
For affiliations and correspondence, see the last page.

Abstract

In practically every corner of the world, COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdown had a negative impact on traditional face-to-face educational activities. As an alternative, online learning modality has become popular in many regions of the world. Thus, the students had a drastic adjustment in education and the other students who had previously had meaningful and delightful social connectedness were replaced by loneliness. However, since students' study from home parental participation is one of the factors that influence students' academic achievement and it can help to escape the students' loneliness. Thus, this study investigates the relationship between social adjustment and loneliness among senior high school students. The statistical result of the study revealed that social adjustment and loneliness had a significant relationship (r=.023).

Keywords: Loneliness, Social Adjustment, Covid-19 Pandemic, Online Learning Modality, Senior High School Students

Introduction

Online learning is a process of distance education which moderate by technology, and the direction is entirely delivered through the internet (Siemens et al., 2015). Students submit their work and receive feedback online through an online learning modality. Students can also associate and communicate with their friends online, and they can occasionally be in an online class with a teacher while working on digital lessons, materials, or evaluations (Stauffer, 2020).

Social adjustment is not only happened in the online class; it can also experience in traditional class, like in face-to-face classes. It has a higher impact on their social relationships in the classroom. According to the study of Malik et. al. (2017), in the classrooms, there are students who are adjusting. Adjustment is generally, the psychological methods through which people deal with the demands and obstacles of daily life. During the school of the students, they often caught in web of uncertainty, like their everyday life with course mates, lecturers, and other important members of their school.

Therefore, adjustment is a constant process in which people adapt their behavior in order to achieve more productive relationship with their surroundings, which includes changes in their academic, emotional, and social thinking (Ukaegbu & Obikoya, 2017). Student adjustment revealed limited proposing on the reciprocal nature of adaptation and several human characterizations as actors with the ability to

control their involvement in hard social environments (Hendrickson, 2018). Students adjust themselves to unfamiliar learning environments, curriculum and classmates after getting into university. Students must learn to manage their time better and develop personal responsibility (Pham & Popesko, 2021). However, prior study shows that positive social adjustment at school is significant because negative social adjustment is connected to lower academic commitment and achievement (Olivier et al., 2018). Consequently, it is important to students to have a positive social adjustment in order to promote social equality.

Loneliness is an undesirable emotion that people have when they perceive a conflict between expected and attained patterns in their social environment (Bhardwaj & Ashok, 2015). The rationale for this is that loneliness is a symptom of maladaptive coping. Significant research has indicated that loneliness is associated with a variety of clinically relevant and risky disorders, including depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, and suicidal thoughts (Goossens & Cacioppo, 2015). The results of research conducted by Prasetia and Sri (2014), revealed that there is a strong, negative and significant relationship between loneliness and adjustment themselves in first year students. In addition, the results of the study revealed that the level of loneliness adolescents in orphanage are generally in the moderate category, the level of emotional loneliness are in the moderate category, the level of social loneliness is in the moderate category, the level of loneliness life is in the low category, and the level of loneliness of adolescent

figures are in the medium category (Utami, Ahmad, & Ifdil, 2017).

Thus, it is important to understand how loneliness particularly influence students in the adjustment process. According to Schwartz-Mette (2020), Our experience of social relationships is intimately connected to our feelings of loneliness. Existing research shows that broader social interaction metrics, such as social competence and number of friends, are important in the development of loneliness. Yet, much less is known about the day-to-day social experiences that are related to loneliness, such as social interactions.

Moreover, the study investigates the relationship between social adjustment and loneliness among senior high school students amidst online learning. Thus, it would provide enough knowledge and understanding on how loneliness becomes a part of their adjustment, and also enlighten the situations and experiences of the senior high school students in this pandemic.

Research Question

This study aims to determine the relationship between social adjustment and loneliness of senior high students amidst online learning. Specifically, this sought to answer the following question:

1. Is there a significant relationship between social adjustment and loneliness among senior high students?

Literature Review

Social Adjustment

Social adjustment is insufficient to explain sex development, and there is also a growing acknowledgment that biological predispositions, like other psychological features, play a role in intimate relations characteristics (Berenbaum, 2018). According to Liran and Miller (2018), a social adjustment is a person's attempt to adapt to a society's standards, values, and needs in order to be accepted. In psychology adjustment it means "getting along with the members of society as best one can" (Kochupurackal 2021). Therefore, adjustment can be defined as an individual's response to the expectations and pressures of a social situation (Mohammadipour and Rahmati 2016). Individuals with stronger relations to society may be more accepted and have a higher level of social adjustment (Calandri et al. 2019).

Cordier et al. (2015), Social adjustment is defined as an association with social beliefs, observing the rules of the society, building coherent social contacts, and attempting to be satisfied with them. A person that socially adjusted can suitably practice the data received from the environment. Such a person can build a system of value for themselves in order to prevent being affected by negative emotions and arguments with others. Study in the US, the relationship this reasoning is not supported by the relationship between classroom diversity and social adjustment of societally dominant students. Positive social adjustment for dominant students in the US School diversity was related (Juvonen et al., 2018).

According to the study by Rahmayanti et al. (2020), feelings of rejection from the new environment, a lack of purpose and goal, and homesickness are all social adjustment issues that develop as a result of environmental changes in the origin culture. In the study of Rahat and Ilhan, (2016), the important factors in students' adjustment to their new environment are feeling belong in the organization's social culture and forming a connection with other students, or making friends.

As stated by Wang and Fletcher (2016), there's a beneficial influence on students' social adjustment between interpersonal trust and loneliness feelings, which is helpful to their personal development. According to Abaied and Stanger (2017), the ability of children to interact with others in a friendly way in a social environment is vital to their improvement. A year ago, school psychologists also focus their attention on children's social competence, such as social adjustment, and not only on the academic abilities or skills of the students.

Some researchers believe that in childhood, the social adjustment is made up of three components: self-concept, emotional well-being, and school enjoyment (Wang et al., 2016). A lot of studies found that students' interpersonal trust has a good impact on their social adjustment (Wang & Fletcher, 2016). However, some psychological methods explaining interpersonal trust's effect on social adjustment are still unknown. In addition, Bosman et al. (2018) discussed the other research on young students has found that the relationship with the teacher has a good impact on children's mental health, and academic success, all of these are useful for social adjustment.

Thus, Ettekal and Shi (2020) indicated that results showed that social adjustment, trust, and loneliness of students were positively correlated with each other.

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That is, students with higher levels of interpersonal trust have a better social adjustment. Also, based on the study of Ghadampour et al. (2019), painting can be concluded as a way to express emotions and plays an important role in identifying students' intelligence and devotion. The findings highlight the value of painting therapy in reducing loneliness and improving social adjustment in students and can be used as an effective strategy.

Loneliness

Loneliness is a despairing emotion that happens when a person's social relationships are deemed to be incomplete in quantity and, more importantly in quality, than desired. Loneliness is a profoundly personal sensation; a person can be alone without feeling lonely, and the other can feel lonely even socializing with people. In general, psychologists consider loneliness to be a lasting characteristic, it means that people have distinct set points for feeling lonely, and they move around these set points depending on their circumstances in life (Hawkley, 2018). The reason is that the experience of loneliness is a sign of maladaptive functioning, loneliness has been linked to a variety of clinically significant issues and hazards, including depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, and suicidal ideation, according to extensive studies (Cacioppo et al. 2015).

Loneliness is one of the reasons for students not finishing their thesis and can be indicated by feelings of a lack of quality social connection or relationships that do not match their needs (Bareket-Bojmel, et al. 2021). Since the year of 2020, the loneliness phenomenon or also known as global loneliness has spread around the world. It is caused by COVID-19 pandemic. This global loneliness is the result of many layers of age, gender, and culture. All of us are experiencing this kind of loneliness, and of course this phenomenon of loneliness has a negative impact on students and is not avoided in academic situations (Barreto M. et al. 2021).

According to Victor et. al. (2021), COVID-19 has affected many facets of human life, not least the education world. The matter of worldwide loneliness is one of the effects in pandemic education. Loneliness caused by COVID-19 pandemic, students are not able to meet their friends since its online learning modality, and some circumstances that promote loneliness can have a negative impact on students' psychological well-being. If not addressed properly, this might have a negative impact on students' academic achievement. Actually, students already had many academic problems before the COVID-19 happened, students already had various academic problems. Additionally, as stated by Spithoven, Bijttebier, and Goossens (2017), lonely people have a cognitive tendency toward dangerous social stimuli, as well as easy access to the feeling of loneliness.

As developed by Bowlby Attachment Theory in 1969 (as cited in Hawkley 2018), Attachment theory highlights the essential of a tough emotional relationship between the infant and the caregiver; it is a foundation to modern loneliness ideas. From that viewpoint, when children with insecure attachment patterns act in ways that cause them to be avoided by their peers, they become lonely. Those rejections limit their social growth and enhance their distrust of others, increasing their loneliness. Although loneliness has always been part of human life, it has only recently become a focus of psychological research. Weiss Loneliness Theory in 1973 (as cited in Hawkley 2018) Weiss discovered that attachment, knowing your self-worth and guidance in stressful situations are needed to help loneliness feelings. Weiss emphasized the attachment theory would expect, that friendships support but do not replace a close, personal relationship with a partner decreasing loneliness. Despite the fact that attachment theory served as the foundation for a popular psychological theory of loneliness.

In addition, loneliness is correlated with social anxiety, shyness, distrust, and low self-esteem, traits that limit one's ability to interact skillfully and rewardingly. Indeed, it's been proven that lonely people have a hard time creating and keeping profound connections. They're also less inclined to disclose personal information with their friends and relatives, which may explain why they complain about a lack of affection with close friends (Laubering and Robert, 2018).

However, when students were made to experience loneliness, they scored lower on levels of social abilities, optimism, good mood, and social support and higher on levels of shyness, anger, anxiety, and fear of unfavorable evaluation. Oppositely, when people were brought to believe that their intimate, oriented, and collective social demands were being met, they were more positive and engaged (Hawkley, 2018).

Social Adjustment and Loneliness

Loneliness shows the relationship between the needed and achieved a level of social interaction, when needed the low levels of social contact, they may be perceived positively. Loneliness define as irritating emotional

experience and it causes dissatisfaction, and sadness. So when not being with your family and friends puts you from loneliness, it can be considered as a social adjustment (Vijayalakshmi, 2020).

According to Diehl et al. (2018), the level of social and emotional loneliness of students, 7.7% of the participants in the sample group felt social and emotional loneliness, and 3.2% experienced serious social loneliness. In the study of Weiten et al., (2015), since loneliness isn't just about feeling lonely when you're alone, it may also mean feeling lonely in a social environment therefore, social adjustment might happen. This scenario is mostly caused by a lack of significance in life, and the sad sense of loneliness is caused by people not being in a social environment that will fulfill them.

According to Sarıçam and Deveci (2017), it was found that there is a negative relationship between loneliness and social connectedness, which is defined as an individual's subjective knowledge of their social environment. Individuals with a high level of connectedness can easily be with other people and identify with them, as well as they participate in social settings and social adjustment.

Hence, Finkelstein and Lichtman's (2021) study revealed that there's a significant direct links of attachment pattern was found to influence adolescent loneliness and well-being. Adolescents' social and emotional adjustment was highly influenced by home environment characteristics such as family togetherness, family flexibility, inter-parental conflict, and parent-child connections.

In the study of Qualter et al. (2015), throughout this time, persons become increasingly self-sufficient and maverick of their families, and they have the chance to form intimate relationships with their peers. However, Moeller & Seehuus (2019), discussed that during university years, not all students are able to form close bonds with their peers, and for someone who has also departed from their families, loneliness becomes unavoidable. Therefore, individuals throughout this time period are more likely to feel lonely or be more sensitive to loneliness so, their social interaction and adjustment were active.

Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive-correlational design was used in this study to analyze the current relationship between social adjustment and loneliness among senior high students.

Descriptive correlational studies describe the variables as well as the natural relationships that exist between and among them, it provided an overview of the current situation and to identify relationships between variables, and forecast future events based on current knowledge. And also, to analyze connections between two or more variables, but without allowing the researcher to deceive or control any of them (Stangor & Walinga, 2019).

Respondents

The participants of this study were 153 senior high students who were enrolled in any public school, and now experiencing an online learning modality. Furthermore, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this study employed a convenience sampling method.

Instruments

The researchers used two standardized questionnaires to assess the social adjustment and loneliness of senior high school students. The UCLA Loneliness Scale designed by Russel, Peplau, and Ferguson (1978) was containing 20 items with four-point Likert scale from 1 to 4. This scale was utilized to determine or to measure the loneliness level of the students. Furthermore, the Adjustment Inventory by Weinberger, the researchers picked standardized questions to determine and to measure the social adjustment of senior high students, it containing 20 items with Likert scale starting from 1 to 4.

Procedures

Data collection procedures, different variables or topics were assessed and considered in order to provide more benefits to the researchers. Participants were given informed consent and enough time to answer the questions. The participation of respondents was voluntary therefore, their names or other personal information and responses will be kept strictly confidential and will be protected by the Data Privacy Act of 2012. (R.A. 10173). The gathered data were correspondingly organized with factual references when students were done answering the surveys or questionnaires. The collected data served as the foundation for developing factual interpretation and analysis in order to create a presentation of the findings.

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Ethical Considerations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the condition of researchers' ethical standards was properly adhered in the numerous online platforms. As a result, the survey questionnaire was shared on social media and via google forms. The form was thoroughly checked to ensure proper construction, based on fact questions, and confidential information. Furthermore, the respondents' data input was kept private and are being secured by the researchers and in this study and the data collection instruments and methods were also approved by the research professor, and with utmost respect for the school's and government's guidelines. In addition, with the above- mentioned factors associated, the language used in the questionnaires or survey form was appropriate for both Filipino and English speakers. Therefore, ethical considerations were used.

Result

Through the use of a research question, this section reveals the study's statistical findings. The Pearson correlation coefficient was also calculated with the help of SPSS. The mean, as well as the relationship between variables, were determined and compared as a result of this.

Relationship between Social Adjustment and Loneliness

This study's main focus is the relationship between social adjustment and loneliness of senior high students. As the results of the statistical analysis in Table 1 revealed that social adjustment and loneliness have a significant relationship. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 1
Relationship between Social Adjustment and Loneliness

CORRELATION	Social Adjustment	Loneliness
Social Adjustment	-	.023*
Loneliness	.023*	-

Figure 1. .

In the study of Damayanti and Taufik (2019), loneliness is not only about an individual's being alone, but also a lack of necessary relationships or set of relationships. Loneliness is psychological anxiety that people experience when their social relationships are lacking in some critical parts. It is a reaction to the loss or absence of a close relationship. An individual that feels lonely will be afraid to open up, easily depressed, and feel isolated. Therefore, the study findings revealed that social adjustment and loneliness have a significant relationship, with the higher the level of loneliness, the lower the social adjustment, and vice versa. The higher the social adjustment, the lower the level of loneliness.

Discussion

In different conducted researches, it supported the result of the relationship between social adjustment and loneliness among senior high students. Nevertheless, other and some studies rarely consider the importance of the two variables in terms of their relationship. The responses of the participants were used to fabricate verifiable data about student social adjustment and loneliness. Thus, this investigation demonstrates that social adjustment is highly connected to loneliness. As a result, it can be stated that the present pandemic has become one of the reasons why students experience loneliness, and it influences how students manage and deal with social connections. It showed that loneliness affects and increases the students' social adjustment and how they communicate with their peers, relatives and classmates. On the other hand, this research revealed that even in the midst of a pandemic some students can still manage challenging situations while being connected to the people.

Therefore, to lessen the loneliness of the students amidst the online learning modality, school should balance the individual and group work in projects and activities. And also, students must have a strong connection to their family and close friends to avoid being left alone and to feel lonely, and such students will not perceive social isolation and circumstances of adjustment. Furthermore, the positive events like communicating with friends, teachers, classmates and family should promote and make priority to the students so they do not feel unattractive. And students should terminate their critical inner voices that keep themselves from challenging to step outside their comfort zone.

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Conclusion

Amidst the online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has affected the social adjustment of senior high students and moderately caused of their loneliness. According to the findings, there is a significant relationship between social adjustment and loneliness among Filipino senior high students, revealing that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Based on the study's findings, academic counselors, family and peers support should be able to make recommendations and therapy to young students in order to just provide advice and services that include student support for loneliness and low social circumstances and connection. Finally, by creating a welcoming environment in online education, students will be able to retain positive relationships and self-control even in the midst of a pandemic.

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Affiliations and Corresponding Informations

Corresponding: Noryven Dela Cruz
Email: delacruznoryven@jilcf.edu.ph
Phone:

Noryven Dela Cruz

Noryven Dela Cruz:
Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc.

Janaica Tayras:
Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc.

David Castillo:
Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc.

Jhoselle Tus:
Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc.