



ATTACHMENT AND PERCEIVED LONELINESS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DURING THE VALENTINE'S WEEK

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Abstract

The current research was designed to assess the effect of attachment styles on perceived loneliness among university students during the valentine's week. A sample of 137 students was drawn from Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, India with the age range of 18-24 years (55.5%) and 25-31 years (44.5%) respectively. Among the sample, 32.8% were males and 67.2% were females. Among the sample, divisions pertaining to the relationship status were as follows: 45.3% students were single, 40.9% students were mingled and 13.9% students were in a complicated romantic situation. Among the sample, divisions pertaining to the educational qualification were as follows: 57.7% of the students were of Bachelors level and 42.3% of the students were of Masters level. The Experiences in Close Relationships – Short form (ECR-S) by Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, & Vogel (2007) and Perceived Loneliness Scale by Praveen Kumar Jha (1997) were employed in this study as instruments to collect psychometric data. The statistical analysis of data involved: Mean, Standard Deviation, Frequency distribution, t-test, correlation analysis and regression analysis. The findings showed that attachment whole showed significant positive correlation with perceived loneliness. The findings showed that there were significant mean differences in Attachment style [46.516, 34.554], attachment avoidance [20.47, 13.00] and attachment anxiety [26.05, 21.55] between single and mingled people respectively. The findings also showed that there were significant mean differences in attachment avoidance [18.58, 15.34] and Attachment style [43.263, 38.393] between the two age groups of 18-24 year olds and 25-31 year olds respectively. The results also revealed that Attachment style contributes ($r^2=.201$) in perceived loneliness.

Keywords: Attachment, Perceived Loneliness, Valentine's week

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Introduction

Young adulthood is the time when people set out into the world of possibilities and try to find a voice of their own in the cacophonous beauty of life. This time is full of uncertainty, especially in terms of social transitions, this brings along its own anxieties and excitement. One such area of exploration, characteristic of this period of development is that of romance. Romance is a vital part of the human experience as it has been exemplified throughout the generations through artistic expressions. In contemporary times, the world celebrates this important aspect of life on Valentine's Day. The impact of media on the expectations of romantic love in young adults cannot be overstated. The reinvigorating need to relate with someone romantically during the dead of winter is often accompanied by feelings of inadequacy and loneliness among young adults if these needs aren't met. According to attachment theory humans have an innate need to form and maintain social relationships for survival needs. Individuals, during the formative developmental stages, develop secure and insecure attachments which, in some sense, form a script for the way they relate to others. This is evident in romantic relationships too; decades of academic work in the domain of attachment theory backs it up with psychometric rigor.

Attachment theory is a psychological explanation for how humans create emotional connections with others, especially in early childhood. It was created by John Bowlby, a British psychiatrist and psychoanalyst and Mary Ainsworth, a Canadian psychologist (Slade and Holmes, 2019). Bowlby's theoretical progress was substantiated by the brilliant experimental and observational work of Mary Ainsworth. It was the amalgamation of the work by both of them which led to the development of Attachment theory.

According to attachment theory, there are four phases of attachment development in infants:

Pre-attachment (newborn to six weeks) : does not exhibit specific preferences among adults, Attachment-in-the-making (six weeks to six-eight months): infant, during this time period, learns that the primary caregiver, in most cases the mother, can satisfy their basic biological needs, Clear-cut attachment (six-eight months to eighteen to twenty-four months): exhibits strong protest upon separation from caregiver, and formation of reciprocal relationships (twenty-four months onwards): possibility of development of multiple attachments. These phases describe how infants behave with their caregivers and how they deal with separation and reunion.

Attachment theory also proposes that there are different kinds of attachment styles that affect how people relate to others in adulthood. These styles are based on the quality of the caregiver-child relationship and the child's expectations of others' availability and responsiveness. The four main attachment styles are secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant.

- Secure attachment: This is when a person feels safe and happy in their relationships. They trust their partners, express their needs and feelings, and offer support and care for others. They are not scared of intimacy or abandonment.
- Anxious-insecure attachment: This is when a person feels nervous and insecure in their relationships. They desire closeness and approval from their partners, but also worry about rejection and abandonment.
- Avoidant-insecure attachment: This is when a person feels disconnected and independent in their relationships. They avoid intimacy and emotional connection with their partners, preferring to depend on themselves.
- Disorganized-insecure attachment: This is when a person feels mixed and conflicted in their relationships.

They want to be close to their partners, but also fear them or feel unworthy of them.

Somasundaram et al (2012) conducted a cross-sectional study to understand the link between attachment security and psycho-social adjustment with rejection sensitivity as the mediating link. Correlational analysis between attachment dimensions and rejection sensitivity revealed significant but weak correlations. Higher security in attachment will be related to lower rejection sensitivity, which has implications in future interpersonal relationships. This also implies that rejection sensitivity may be influenced by other constructs like temperament, emotional regulation etc. Rejection sensitivity was a statistically significant mediator of the link between attachment security and psychosocial adjustment in adolescents.

Malhotra et al (2021) conducted a study to understand attachment styles, social support and adjustment in three generational families. The statistical findings provided partial support to two hypotheses of the study, viz., "Three generations would not differ significantly on the nature of attachment style, social support and area of adjustment" and "The relationship amongst attachment style, social support & adjustment would vary from generation to generation". However, the third hypothesis stating "There would be inter-generational transmission in the context of attachment style" did not get support.

These results provide insight into the psychodynamics of the joint family system.

Dasgupta et al (2016) conducted a study to understand the role of attachment styles on friendship dimension, love attitudes and prosocial behaviour in male and female college students of Kolkata. In the context of young love, eros (as measured by Love Attitudes Scale, 1998) attitude seems relevant and the findings reveal that students with fearful attachment style were highest in erotic love followed by secure style then preoccupied style and lastly dismissing style.

When a person's social contacts are regarded by that person to be less numerous and especially of lower quality than anticipated, felt loneliness is the uncomfortable emotion that results. An individual can be alone and not feel lonely, yet they can also feel lonely while around others. Loneliness is a very subjective sensation. Both the cognitive and affective dimensions are affected by perceived loneliness. High levels of loneliness are thought to be a primary contributor to severe depressive illness (Wang, Chen, & Li (2020)). Both long-term physical health and well-being are seriously threatened by perceived loneliness.

The history of research on loneliness in psychology is relatively short, but it has been influenced by several theories and perspectives. One of them is attachment theory, developed by John Bowlby, which emphasizes the importance of a strong emotional bond between the infant and the caregiver. According to this theory, loneliness occurs when children with insecure attachment patterns behave in ways that result in their being rejected by their peers.

Another influential theory of loneliness was proposed by Robert S. Weiss, who identified six functions or needs of social relationships that, if in short supply, contribute to feelings of loneliness. Those needs are attachment, social integration, nurturance, reassurance of worth, sense of reliable alliance, and guidance in stressful situations. Weiss also maintained that friendships complement but do not substitute for a close, intimate relationship with a partner in preventing loneliness.

Depending on the behaviour and objectives typical for each stage of life, perceptions of loneliness may change over the course of an adult's life. Young adults, for instance, could experience loneliness if they struggle to develop close friendships or achieve their professional goals, whereas elderly persons might experience loneliness if they lose their spouse or friends as a result of a death or move. As a result, the causes of experienced loneliness may vary depending on a person's developmental stage. (Franssen, Stijnen, Hamers, & Schneider (2020))

Objectives

1. To identify the influence of Attachment style on Perceived Loneliness.
2. To note the difference in Attachment Anxiety, Attachment Avoidance and Attachment style with respect to Age, Gender, Relationship Status and Educational Level.
3. To observe the difference in Perceived Loneliness with respect to Age, Gender, Relationship Status and Educational Level.

Hypothesis of the study

1. There will be a significant relationship between attachment style and perceived loneliness.
2. Attachment style will significantly influence Perceived Loneliness.
3. There will be significant difference in Attachment style with respect to Age, Relationship Status, Gender and Educational Level.
4. There will be significant difference in Attachment Anxiety with respect to Age, Relationship Status, Gender and Educational Level.
5. There will be significant difference in Attachment Avoidance with respect to Age, Relationship Status, Gender and Educational Level.
6. There will be significant difference in Perceived Loneliness with respect to Age, Relationship Status, Gender and Educational Level.

Methodology

Variables

The variables of the study are Attachment, Relationship status, Age, Gender, Educational Level and Perceived Loneliness

Sample

Random sampling technique was used to yield a sample of 137 university students (45 males and 92 females) with age ranging from 18-31 years from Lovely Professional University during the Valentine's week (8th-15th February).

Inclusion criteria of sample:

- Male and Female students
- Between the age group of 18-31 years
- Students from Lovely Professional University

Exclusion criteria of sample:

- Students from universities other than Lovely Professional University
- Students above the age of 31 years

Instruments

1. Experiences in Close Relationships – Short form (ECR-S): The Experiences in Close

Relationships – Short form developed by Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, & Vogel (2007) was used to assess the attachment style and security among the students. The scale consists of 12 items, six items assessing each of two subscales of adult attachment patterns viz., Attachment Avoidance and Attachment Anxiety. The ECR-S uses a seven point Likert Scale with 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree with reverse scoring for items 1, 5, 8 and 9. The coefficient alpha for anxiety subscale is .78 and for avoidance subscale is .84.

2. Perceived Loneliness Scale(PLS): The Perceived Loneliness Scale developed by Praveen Kumar Jha (1997) was used to assess the perceived loneliness levels of the university students. The scale consists of 36 items on a five-point Likert scale (scoring for positive items is done from 5 to 1 and reverse scoring is done for negative items i.e. from 1-5) and measures perceived loneliness as a unidimensional construct. Reliability was determined by two methods : Kuder-Richardson formula (0.84) and test-retest method (0.82).

Procedure

The procedure involved approaching university students during the valentine's week and briefing them over what the study was about and once consent to collect data was verbally affirmed by them they were presented with the two forms viz., Experiences in Close Relationships- short form (ECR-S) and Perceived Loneliness Scale(PLS),

along with relevant instructions pertaining to each form. The students were assured of the confidentiality of the data being collected through these psychometric tools. The participants were acknowledged for sparing their precious time and being a part of the study. The data was analysed using descriptive, inferential, correlational and regression analysis.

Results

The present study assesses attachment styles and perceived loneliness among university students during the valentine's week. The subjects were evaluated on the variables considered viz., attachment and perceived loneliness. Other patterns based on various demographic data were also examined. Independent sample t-test was used to measure attachment avoidance, attachment anxiety, Attachment style and perceived loneliness in relation to different demographic characteristics which included the respondent's age, gender, relationship status and educational level. Additionally, to understand the relationship between attachment avoidance, attachment anxiety, Attachment style and perceived loneliness, correlation analysis was carried out (Pearson correlation coefficient). To check whether attachment affects perceived loneliness among students a regression analysis was carried out. The study's findings are thoroughly addressed in this section.

Table 1: Description of respondents with respect to Age, Gender, Relationship Status and Educational Level

Category	Sub category	Frequency	Percent
Age	18-24 years	76	55.5
	25-31 years	61	44.5
	Total	137	100
Gender	Male	45	32.8
	Female	92	67.2
	Total	137	100
Relationship status	Single	62	45.3
	Mingled	56	40.9
	Complicated	19	13.9
	Total	137	100
Educational level	Bachelor's Level	79	57.7
	Master's Level	58	42.3
	Total	137	100

Table 1 displays the frequency distribution and percentage of the participants based on the demographic characteristics: Age, Relationship Status, Gender and Educational Level. Out of the sample of students, majority (55.5%) belonged to the age range of 18-24 years, while the remaining (44.5%) belonged to the age range of 25-31 years. 45(32.8%) students were male and 92(67.2%)

students were female. Pertaining to the relationship status, 62(45.3%) students were single, 56(40.9%) students were mingled and 19(13.9%) students were in a complicated romantic situation. Pertaining to the educational level of the students, 79(57.7%) were pursuing their Bachelor's Degree while 58(42.3%) were pursuing their Master's Degree.

Table 2: Mean difference in Attachment Anxiety, Attachment Avoidance, Attachment(whole) and Perceived Loneliness with respect to Age, Gender, Relationship Status and Educational Level

Demography	Variable	Category	n	Mean	s.d.	df	t-value	sig.(2-tailed)		
Age	Attachment	18-24 years	76	24.68	6.016	135	1.557	.122		
	Anxiety	25-31 years	61	23.05	6.219					
	Attachment	18-24 years	76	18.58	6.520				2.784	.006
	Avoidance	25-31 years	61	15.34	7.045					
	Attachment	18-24 years	76	43.263	9.7247				2.887	.005
	style	25-31 years	61	38.393	9.9185					
	Perceived	18-24 years	76	108.91	19.475				1.845	.067
Loneliness	25-31 years	61	102.93	18.005						
Gender	Attachment	Male	45	24.98	5.960	135	1.367	.174		
	Anxiety	Female	92	23.46	6.195					
	Attachment	Male	45	16.69	6.494				-.530	.597
	Avoidance	Female	92	17.36	7.149					
	Attachment	Male	45	41.667	9.4604				.463	.644
	style	Female	92	40.815	10.3975					
	Perceived	Male	45	104.60	19.599				-.709	.480
Loneliness	Female	92	107.05	18.758						
Relationship Status	Attachment	Single	62	26.05	5.556	116	4.188	.000		
	Anxiety	Mingled	56	21.55	6.102					
	Attachment	Single	62	20.47	6.350				6.758	.000
	Avoidance	Mingled	56	13.00	5.573					
	Attachment	Single	62	46.516	7.8422				7.605	.000
	style	Mingled	56	34.554	9.2381					
	Perceived	Single	62	108.45	20.075				1.406	.162
Loneliness	Mingled	56	103.41	18.727						
Educational Level	Attachment	Bachelor's	79	24.32	5.792	135	.801	.425		
	Anxiety	Master's	58	23.47	6.602					
	Attachment	Bachelor's	79	18.14	6.488				1.995	.048
	Avoidance	Master's	58	15.78	7.315					
	Attachment	Bachelor's	79	42.456	9.5189				1.862	.065
	style	Master's	58	39.241	10.5835					
	Perceived	Bachelor's	79	107.96	18.392				1.234	.219
Loneliness	Master's	58	103.91	19.721						

Table 2 displays the Mean, S.D. and t-values of Attachment Anxiety, Attachment Avoidance, Attachment style and Perceived loneliness based on the demographic variables: Age, Gender, Relationship Status and Educational Level. The results of the independent samples t-tests revealed the following: There was a significant difference in attachment avoidance between age group - 1, i.e., 18-24 years old ($M = 18.58$, $SD = 6.520$) and age group - 2, i.e., 25-31 years old ($M = 15.34$, $SD = 7.045$), $t(135) = 2.784$, $p = .006$, 95% CI = (.937, 5.532). There was a significant difference in Attachment style between age group - 1, i.e., 18-24 years old ($M = 43.263$, $SD = 9.7247$) and age group - 2, i.e., 25-31 years old ($M = 38.393$, $SD = 9.9185$), $t(135) = 2.887$, $p = .005$, 95% CI = (1.5341, 8.2053). There was a significant difference in attachment anxiety between "single" ($M = 26.05$, $SD = 5.556$) and "mingled" ($M = 21.55$, $SD = 6.102$), $t(116) = 4.188$, $p = .000$, 95% CI = (2.369, 6.620). There was a significant difference in attachment avoidance between "single" ($M = 20.47$, $SD = 6.350$) and "mingled" ($M = 13.00$, $SD = 5.573$), $t(116) = 6.758$, $p = .000$, 95% CI = (5.279, 9.656). There was a significant difference in Attachment style between "single" ($M = 46.516$, $SD = 7.8422$) and "mingled" ($M = 34.554$, $SD = 9.2381$), $t(116) = 7.605$, $p = .000$, 95% CI = (8.8470, 15.0781). There was a significant difference in attachment avoidance between "Bachelor's" ($M = 18.14$, $SD = 6.488$) and "Master's" ($M = 15.78$, $SD = 7.315$), $t(135) = 1.995$, $p = .048$, 95% CI = (.021, 4.706). Further, there was no significant mean difference in perceived loneliness on the basis of Age, Gender, Relationship Status and Educational Level. The mean values of perceived loneliness in age group-1, i.e., 18-24 years old were slightly higher (108.91) than age group-2, i.e., 25-31 years old (102.93). The mean values of perceived loneliness in males were slightly lower (104.60) than in females (107.05). The mean values of perceived loneliness in "single" were slightly higher (108.45) than "mingled" (103.41). The mean values of perceived loneliness in "Bachelor's" were slightly higher (107.96) than in "Master's" (103.91). Moreover, there was no significant difference in attachment anxiety on the basis of Age and Educational Level. The mean values of attachment anxiety for age group-1, i.e., 18-24 years old is minutely higher (24.68) than age group-2, i.e., 25-31 years old (23.05). The mean values of attachment anxiety for "Bachelor's" is minutely higher (24.32) than for "Master's" (23.47). There was no significant mean difference in Attachment style on the basis of Educational Level as the mean

95% CI = (8.8470, 15.0781). There was a significant difference in attachment avoidance between "Bachelor's" ($M = 18.14$, $SD = 6.488$) and "Master's" ($M = 15.78$, $SD = 7.315$), $t(135) = 1.995$, $p = .048$, 95% CI = (.021, 4.706). Further, there was no significant mean difference in perceived loneliness on the basis of Age, Gender, Relationship Status and Educational Level. The mean values of perceived loneliness in age group-1, i.e., 18-24 years old were slightly higher (108.91) than age group-2, i.e., 25-31 years old (102.93). The mean values of perceived loneliness in males were slightly lower (104.60) than in females (107.05). The mean values of perceived loneliness in "single" were slightly higher (108.45) than "mingled" (103.41). The mean values of perceived loneliness in "Bachelor's" were slightly higher (107.96) than in "Master's" (103.91). Moreover, there was no significant difference in attachment anxiety on the basis of Age and Educational Level. The mean values of attachment anxiety for age group-1, i.e., 18-24 years old is minutely higher (24.68) than age group-2, i.e., 25-31 years old (23.05). The mean values of attachment anxiety for "Bachelor's" is minutely higher (24.32) than for "Master's" (23.47). There was no significant mean difference in Attachment style on the basis of Educational Level as the mean

for "Bachelor's" is slightly higher (42.456) than "Master's"(39.241). Lastly, there is no significant gender difference in attachment; The mean values of attachment anxiety(male- 24.98 ,female- 23.46),

attachment avoidance(male- 16.69 , female-17.36) and Attachment style [male- 41.667 , female-40.815] showed minute differences.

Table 3: Relationship of Attachment Anxiety with Attachment Avoidance, Attachment(whole) and Perceived Loneliness

Variable	Attachment anxiety	Attachment Avoidance	Attachment style	Perceived Loneliness
Attachment anxiety	1	.186*	.737**	.433**
Attachment avoidance		1	.801**	.278**
Attachment style			1	.455**
Perceived loneliness				1

Note. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the correlation matrix using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to assess bivariate relationship among attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, Attachment style and perceived loneliness. The findings showed that attachment anxiety was significantly positively correlated with attachment avoidance [$r=.186$, $p<.05$], Attachment style [$r=.737$, $p<.01$] and perceived loneliness

[$r=.433$, $p<.01$]. Additionally, attachment avoidance was significantly positively correlated with Attachment style [$r=.801$, $p<.01$] and perceived loneliness [$r=.278$, $p<.01$]. Lastly, Attachment style was significantly positively correlated with perceived loneliness [$r=.455$, $p<.01$].

Table 4: Influence of Attachment style on Perceived Loneliness

independent variable	dependent variable	r	r ²	adjusted r ²	std. error of the estimate
Attachment style	Perceived Loneliness	.455 ^a	.207	.201	16.985
b		.858			
std. error		.145			
beta		.455			
t		5.933			
sig.		.000			

The result from table 5 infer that Attachment style contributes 20% ($r^2 = .207$) in perceived loneliness. This indicates there is a significant positive relationship between Attachment Style and Perceived Loneliness i.e., if there is an increase in attachment style there will be a corresponding increase in perceived loneliness. A person who is insecure in their attachment style is more likely to feel lonely. Sparks, Zidenberg, & Olver (2023) find in their study that incels(involuntary celebrities) experience higher instances of feelings of loneliness and social isolation and both these variables are associated with relational health issues along with other mental health issues. These findings are relevant as they support the current findings that as insecurity in attachment increases the perception of loneliness also increases.

Discussion

The above description of the results was revelatory and interpretative of the various aspects and dimensions of the current study. The focus of the current study was on the effect of attachment on perceived loneliness during the valentine's week. The findings revealed that Attachment style positively (significantly) correlated with perceived loneliness (See Table 3) and thus supported the

first hypothesis of the study. The results of the current study support the recent research conducted by Borawski and Sojda (2022) where they found that emotional intelligence is a mediator between attachment and loneliness and that attachment and loneliness are significantly positively correlated. Lewis and Roche(2022) found that there was significant positive correlation between attachment and loneliness as in their study they found that people with insecure attachment styles score higher in loneliness. People with insecure attachment styles are more likely to perceive a lack of quality social relationships i.e., they are more likely to be lonely.

The findings revealed that Attachment style influences perceived loneliness (See Table 4), this substantiates the second hypothesis.

The findings revealed that there was significant mean difference in Attachment style between the two age groups of 18-24 year olds and 25-31 year olds with the former group scoring higher(See Table 2), implying that they are more likely to exhibit insecure attachment. This may be attributed to the nature of uncertainty and transience in social situations i.e., friendships and romances associated with young adulthood. Thus, the findings partially substantiate the third hypothesis, i.e., 'There will

be significant difference in Attachment style with respect to Age, Relationship Status, Gender and Educational Level' with respect to the independent variable 'Age'. Sagone, Commodari et al (2023) conclude that a secure intimate relationship can be a protective factor for long term emotional stability, and as people mature with age they understand who they are compatible with or not better. This may be helpful in explaining the significant difference between attachment scores for both the age groups of 18-24 year olds and 25-31 year olds.

The findings were revelatory as there was significant mean difference in attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance and Attachment style between "single" and "mingled" groups with the former scoring higher in all the aforementioned variables(See Table 2). This may be attributed to the general sense of insecurity which may come with not being in a relationship for the "single" group, i.e., looking for reassurance from an outer source, a romantic partner for instance. Satiation of the attachment need in "mingled" group may be the reason for the significant difference between the groups. Thus, these findings partially substantiate the third, fourth and fifth hypotheses with respect to the independent variable 'Relationship Status'. This falls in line with the findings by Vu, Van Heel et al (2022) which found that as the adolescents reached young adulthood the attachment insecurity (both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) increases. Sagone, Commodari et al (2023) also conclude in the results of their study that there is greater emotional stability in people who are in relationships as compared to people who are single, this falls in line with the aforementioned conjecture that satiation of attachment need is the reason for the significant difference in attachment scores.

The findings revealed that there was significant mean difference in attachment avoidance between the two age groups of 18-24 year olds and 25-31 year olds with the former scoring higher, implying that they are more likely to exhibit attachment avoidance behaviours(See Table 2). This may be attributed to the younger generation being more likely to have been brought up in a family situation where both the parents are working, this puts pressure on the kids to be self-reliant from a younger age than expected or if they are taken care of by nannies they lack the amount quality time spent with the parents. This likely contributes in attachment pattern being avoidant as valuable interactions with parents are less likely to happen. Similarly, significant mean differences in attachment avoidance scores can be speculated for "Bachelor's" and "Master's" groups too(See Table

2) as they correspond to age group-1(18-24 year old) and age group-2(25-31 year old) respectively. Thus, the results partially substantiate the fifth hypothesis, i.e., 'There will be significant difference in Attachment Avoidance with respect to Age, Gender, Relationship Status and Educational Level' with respect to the independent variables of 'Age' and 'Educational Status'. The results partially agree with the findings by Huang, Sirikantraporn et al (2020) which reveal that attachment avoidance is presents in people who fall closer to the second age group, i.e., 25-31 year olds.

The findings revealed that there was no significant mean difference in perceived loneliness on the basis of Age, Relationship Status, Gender and Educational Level. Thus, the sixth hypothesis, i.e., 'There will be significant difference in Perceived Loneliness with respect to Age, Relationship Status, Gender and Educational Level' was rejected. This can be attributed to the conjecture, as substantiated with evidence from the current study, that perceived loneliness is an experience which knows no demographic difference, i.e., it can be experienced by all.

Conclusion

To sum up, considering the findings of the current study, it is concluded that with increase in insecurity of attachment there is an increase in perceived loneliness. Students with insecure attachment are more likely to feel lonely during the valentine week. It was also concluded that being in a relationship does not act as a buffer against feelings of loneliness. However, being in a relationship does indicate that there are lesser issues with regards to attachment as compared to being single. Being younger in age is indicative of higher insecurity in attachment as compared to being older.

Limitations

As the current study had the exclusionary criteria of sampling students from Lovely Professional University, the sample size is less. Moreover, to keep the data collection procedure less daunting for the participants the total number of questions were limited to under 50 and as the scales used were ECR-S and PLS there was higher resolution in the data for the latter.

Suggestions

Perceived loneliness is one of the most pernicious experiences that humans experience as it is linked with higher rates of physical as well as mental distress. A secure attachment acts as a buffer against it as the individual is able to handle being

alone and is able to derive more value from their relationships. Engaging in the activities of ones community brings a sense of connectedness among individuals which may act as a shield against feelings of loneliness. It also helps in lifting one's spirit up and makes one feel more responsible for the people around. Attachment patterns have been found to be generally stable throughout life but with proper interventions the distress associated with insecure attachment can be managed. With the help of mental health professionals one can learn skills which help the individual to overcome some of the pitfalls of insecure attachment.

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