

MULTIFACTOR DYNAMIC LONELINESS MODEL

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Loneliness is a complicated emotion capturing the whole personality with her (his) thoughts, actions and behaviour. This is a depressed feeling linked with the real or imaginary absence of the satisfactory social relations. This work investigates the contemporary comprehension of the loneliness phenomenon through the social psychological prism, develops the dynamic model of its contents and analyses its approbation under the youth age conditions. In a multi-factor dynamic model of loneliness exists the following: "loneliness", "solitude" and "self-isolation", "isolation caused by circumstances". Understanding of the nature of loneliness will allow developing the optimal strategies of its overcoming under the conditions of the unstable and indefinite situation.

Keywords: *Dynamic Loneliness Model, Loneliness Type, loneliness, solitude, self-isolation, isolation conditioned by circumstances, youth age*

1. Introduction

The interest to loneliness in the XXI century is considered to be quite natural. The intensive changes, especially in the human self-consciousness, cause the feeling of instability and engender the thoughts of lost and senseless existence for a considerable group of people. The most unpleasant thing is that they have lost a constant image of the world and of the usual surroundings. All the abovementioned factors give rise to the negative sufferings of loneliness for different age groups of people, but they are especially typical for youth. The importance of the theme of this investigation is proved by the fact that the "Google" Internet searching system finds the English word "loneliness" 21 200 000 times, the Russian word «одиночество» 7 880 000 times and the Latvian word "vientulība" 24 200 times (2006.04.07.).

Loneliness is more often determined as a hard emotional comprehensive experience capturing feelings, thoughts, and personal activity. It runs through the whole personal structure and spreads on cognitive, emotionally – regulative and active – volitional sphere. On the whole the negative components of lonely persons are the following: emotional component (depressed emotional tone, negative emotional background, tension, emotional instability); cognitive, component (low self-esteem, presence of stereotype complexes, wrong attitude to themselves and surrounding world, lack of clear notion (conception) about themselves, disbalance of "I – real" and "I – ideal"; behaviour component (reduction of physical, mental and social activity, development of negative nature inclinations, lack of personal and socially important abilities and skills).

Causes of loneliness are shown most often in a complex, i.e. in a certain interconnection and interconditionality. There is a great number of objective socio – psychological reasons, which being interpreted through the personal ones acquire subjective character. For example, inadequate identity for young people, search for meaning of life, age crisis may cause a state of loneliness. Sometimes unfavourable social conditions may give rise to psychological prerequisites of future personal qualities closely connected with the loneliness. These prerequisites may acquire their own stimulating force and its logics of development even in the absence of conditions once caused them.

The survey of the scientific literature points out the works of A. Rokach [12], A. Rokach and H. Brock [10, 11], R. Andre [1], in which the factors causing loneliness as well as coping – strategies for the lonely people were considerably reflected. Scientists connect loneliness with anxiety, depression, inter – personal hostility [3, 6], drug and alcohol addiction [8, 9], and even with suicides [14]. A number of authors emphasize the interconnection between the feeling of loneliness and Internet system, the depressive influence of some mass media and modern technologies on youth [4, 5, 2, 13].

2. Constructing the theoretical dynamic model of the Loneliness Content

The analyses of the contents and interrelations of the "loneliness", "solitude" and "isolation" notions with distinguishing their difference, similarity and interconnection affirm the opportunity of their use in the dynamic loneliness model.

The main difference between the notion of “loneliness” and “solitude” lies in the fact that the latter is not connected with the negative emotional evaluation of a state; solitude means the voluntary going away from contacts with surrounding people. It is a necessary condition of the normal personality development and existence, it is understood as self – isolation in the name of some meaningful aim and acquires quite a different personal sense. In this case the individuality is always given an opportunity of going away from the situation.

Creating the dynamic model of loneliness we have decided to follow the point that loneliness and solitude are phenomena having their own contents and factors explaining their expressiveness.

A group of factors having the direct attitude to loneliness was named “the factors of loneliness”.

Factors of loneliness:

- people (absence);
- relatives and friends (absence);
- interpersonal relations, their quality (dissatisfaction);
- climate in the micro group (conflicts, lack of cohesion);
- conditions limiting peoples’ communication choice;
- unity, social identification (lack);
- communication, skills (not enough).

The intensity of sufferings can be increased with the growth of the amount of their low level or lack factor and depends on the degree of importance of these factors for people. Their low level or lack is a source of the “non – loneliness” state. Under ordinary conditions the presence of “non – loneliness” is perceived as natural and not high stimulating solitude.

The second group of factors influences directly the human solitude. These factors got the name of “solitude factors”. They are connected with the human aspiration to their abilities, goals and tasks realization, with the aspiration to creativity and development of personality.

Factors of solitude:

- self – perfection;
- abilities of creative and professional growth;
- work, studies, requiring independence and responsibilities;
- success, spare time acknowledgement;
- ideas;
- individualized forms of spending leisure time.

Only these factors stimulate the voluntary escape from the surrounding people to stay in solitude. The lack or not enough amounts of factors of solitude do not cause the human loneliness. Human can be satisfied with the situation when he (she) has an opportunity to be sole or has such an opportunity sometimes, even if it frustrates him (her). Maximum of solitude is achieved in case of solitude factors presence and in case of low level of completeness or lack of "solitude factors" (Figure 1).

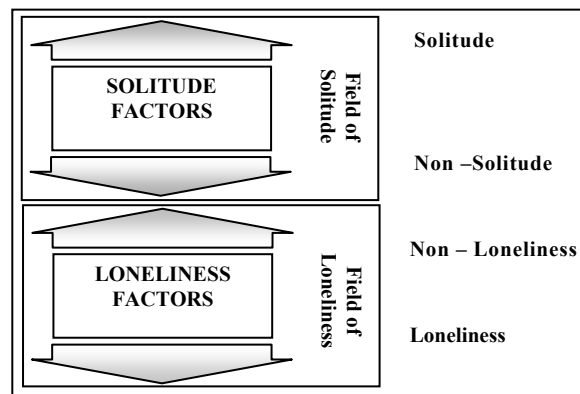


Figure 1. Two – factor Dynamic Loneliness Model

Factors of solitude can partially compensate the factors of loneliness. Under actual frustration of solitude factors (for example, losing job, re-evaluation of values etc.) an acute increase of loneliness experience may occur. Hence the factors of solitude are becoming the basis helping to reduce significance of loneliness factors, facilitating learning of new relationships and strategies of behaviour in a social environment.

Under the manifestation of personality connected with loneliness and solitude one can regard the disposition defined by G. Allport [21] as cardinal, central and secondary. Under cardinal disposition all

the human deeds can be generalized into influence of loneliness or solitude, under central disposition into the visible qualities of a lonely or sole person and under secondary – all the characteristics being dependent on the situation.

Such approach shows that if we want to achieve a marked improvement of life quality without loneliness we have to concentrate on 'solitude factors' and to enrich the contents of relations with social surroundings as well as interpersonal contacts, to diversify the monotony of spare time, labour, interaction with the others. If you are really touched with the problem of loneliness you should pay attention to the question – how factors of loneliness are actualized and, if possible, try to eliminate this problem independently or with the help of others, simultaneously developing 'factors of solitude'.

Multi-factor dynamic model of loneliness based on the "loneliness", "solitude", "isolation". The loneliness can't be matched to physical isolation, because isolation is the state, which is subjected to observation; it is regulated and controlled by a person. More often this notion is examined in the context of a group and understood as "social isolation". It is determined as the absence of other people nearby, existence without support, understanding, and feed-back from the side of surrounding people. The use of this term in psychological research is an exception where it is understood as protective mechanism [18]. The notion of "loneliness is connected with the notion of "isolation" on a level of cause and effect relations.

Depending on the used criteria such types of isolation can be picked out as individual and group with the following division of each type into voluntary isolation where a person comes to a decision himself (herself) whether to be in the condition of loneliness and into forced (accidental) isolation when a person is isolated from the society because of the situation or of other peoples' will. The forced individual isolation, other things being equal, is taken much harder than voluntary. One more criterion for picking out different types of isolation is a presence or absence of the opportunity of its interruption.

Isolation may become the prerequisite of the personal loneliness. The situation of isolation often leads to sensor and social deprivation and in the first place it has an effect on emotional and regulative spheres [17, 231; 19, 31]. Analysis of the papers contents [22, 15] where the situation of voluntary isolation is described shows that the greatest part of reactions that are of man's nature, refers to emotional and regulative spheres. The absence of violation in cognitive sphere may be explained by the man's readiness to the situations of isolation and their own activity. In this case isolation acquires quite a different personal sense and its subjective meaning is closer to the solitude.

In a multi-factor dynamic model of loneliness "loneliness", "solitude" and "self-isolation", "isolation caused by circumstances" exists.

Such approach allows singling out the following types of loneliness: solitude – self-isolation stipulated by a personal choice; solitude – isolation stipulated by circumstances, forced loneliness – self-isolation; loneliness – isolation stipulated by circumstances (Figure 2).

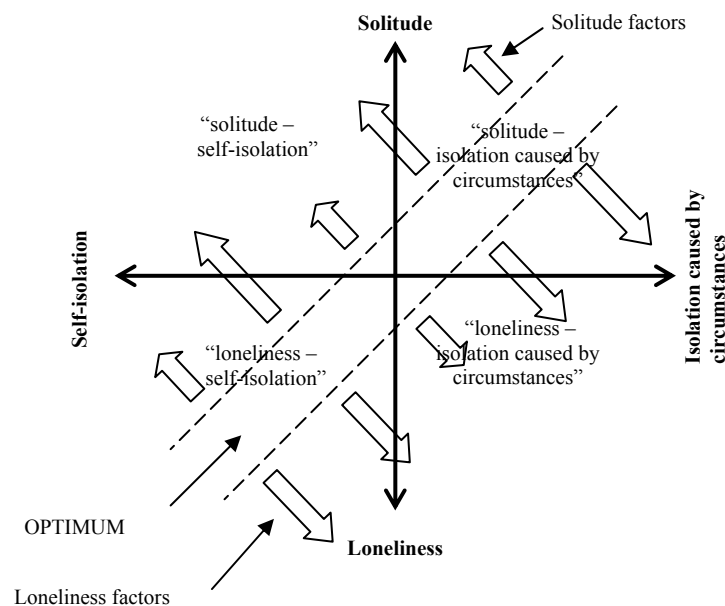


Figure 2. Multifactor Dynamic Loneliness Model

Solitude – self-isolation assumes the reception and interpretation of the situation as the necessary condition of existence and self – perfection. This is a motivated loneliness. Contacts with others are settled only necessarily, for solving tasks.

Isolation is seen in behaviour. A person feels his (her) loneliness subjectively positively. He (she) may identify himself (herself) with a part of a group, be the bearer of certain goals, feel spiritual unity with God, etc.

Solitude – isolation, stipulated by circumstances. Circumstances force a person to be outside the society of important people. This may work in other town or abroad, business trips, etc. A person is regarded with attention to this situation because it is temporary, and he (she) can interrupt these conditions at any time by his (her) will.

He (she) devotes much more attention of his (her) activity to his (her) filled position, self-development, lives in the name of his (her) goal, future, and the situation acquires personal sense.

Loneliness – self- isolation bears serious negative consequences. A person himself (herself) forms his (her) loneliness conditions. It may be explained by the loss of close friends and disability to form new relations, fear of new acquaintances. Here we see a person's suffering of loneliness, longing for people and communication. A person understands that he (she) is lonely. The world is apprehended more often through mentioning of his (her) loneliness. Nevertheless he (she) still lives in loneliness, in the best case using solitude factors as compensatory protective mechanism. He (she) thinks that it'll be better for him (her) if he (she) lives in isolation. It may be also connected with self-estrangement on emotional, cognitive and behaviour level.

Loneliness – isolation stipulated by circumstances is understood as negative loneliness, not forced by a person's will to stay lonely. He (she) doesn't have any choice. He (she) is forced to stay under such conditions where there is no important communication. He (she) sometimes doesn't know when his (her) loneliness is over. It may be stipulated by the external estrangement from the side of the society, lack of social-psychological protection, and lack of professional realization guarantees and chances of future job placement. Acculturation stress and anomie depression may serve as an example of estrangement, as O. Dolginova says [16].

Dialectical comprehension of connection between loneliness and solitude allows us saying that under certain conditions a negative display of loneliness may acquire a positive character. In this case the "loneliness – self-isolation" and "loneliness – isolation stipulated by circumstances" type may show the characteristics of "solitude – isolation stipulated by circumstances". These changes are connected with the features of the attitude to loneliness goal components, loneliness perception, explaining loneliness for him (her) (negatively or positively).

Technology of switching over to the positive way of thinking is very significant as the re-estimation of personal situations, of understanding loneliness as the necessity, opportunity and resource of self-development (as solitude), defining its urgency and working out personal active positions towards this feeling. This can be connected with the "I" – form of sufferings and with finding the sense of personal life under the definite living situations and self-attitude [20].

The given approach is based on the ratio of indices of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components of loneliness, considering them in close interdependence and inter-stipulation. Coming across the situation of loneliness a person makes its cognitive evaluation: summarizes the current information and its possible consequences (primary evaluation), determines the ways of influencing on the situation and its realization and finds the mechanisms and resources of overcoming loneliness; he (she) decides what is necessary to do in the given situation (secondary evaluation). Then the situation is considered by the so-called "fresh look". The cognitive evaluation of the situation takes place. After having evaluated the situation the person starts developing the mechanisms of loneliness overcoming (coping-process) and actualizes his (her) resources and chooses the behaviour strategies [according to 7].

The zone of "optimum" is connected with the activity, autonomy of Ego, with the attitude to loneliness experienced under the conditions of loneliness and isolation and stipulated by circumstances, dispositions being optimum on the level of "secondary" [21]. That is why this zone passes through the type "loneliness – self-isolation", and "solitude – isolation".

The intensity of loneliness feeling increases in "loneliness-isolation caused by circumstances" and drastically decreases in "solitude-self isolation". The last one in the situation of evident factors of solitude (e.g., in case of loss of social contacts, avoiding other people because they disturb, distract and annoy you) may bring potential loneliness, which can engulf person in case of solitude factors frustration.

Non-lone person is in the "optimum" zone because regulation processes providing his (her) equilibrium in the environment, progresses evenly and systematically. This regulation is caused by long-run adaptation to environmental conditions of a person who, using his (her) previous life experience, has worked out some set of algorithms of reacting on the relatively often repeating situations. The adopted

behaviour doesn't demand definite regulation mechanisms for supporting both organism important constructs and psycho processes, providing adequate reflection of reality in definite borders. The loneliness representation a person has and familiar behaviour strategies under loneliness conditions help these processes.

But the face, defining the person's equilibrium, isn't a line but some range of fluctuations and individual differences.

"The breach" of this face happens under the influence of loneliness factors. It is absolutely individual for every functional-dynamic system, taking in all the peculiarities of psycho mentality and human capability for reacting.

It can be a loss of a close person, a break of familiar system of relations, a loss of important values, incapability of reaching goals etc. Loneliness is followed by negative feelings, non-adoption, incapability to assess situation and to find an exit of it.

Intensive loneliness feeling can gradually decrease at any level if provocative loneliness factors lose their actuality or solution is found, or the solitude factors balance the influence of loneliness factors and gradually reduce their importance, and a reassessment of human motivation and evaluation sphere takes place, and new coping-strategies in new circumstances are worked out.

3. Loneliness Theoretical Model Approbation under the Youth Age Group Conditions

3.1. METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The research is connected with the approbation of loneliness models on the basis of how young people understand loneliness, compiling the questionnaire "Loneliness Types" in accordance with multi-factorial dynamic model, conducting research and results analysis.

1. Compiling the questionnaire "Loneliness Types" consisted of several sub-stages:

a) Making up the first variant of the questionnaire "Loneliness Types" (seven experts took part in the discussion, pre-test (pilot study) included 30 people), conducting research in order to get empirical data (203 people) and statistical analysis, to define structures, measuring scales and to confirmation of the basic questionnaire.

b) Compiling the main questionnaire, conducting research, statistical analysis and its final correction.

2. 417 people (213 young man and 204 young girls, aged 18 to 24, random choice) took part in the research with a help of questionnaire "Loneliness Types" and UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3)¹.

Statistical Development Methods – Computing Programme SPSS (v.11.5.0) (Statistical Package for the Social Science).

3.2. RESULTS

In order to define the content of such components as "loneliness", "solitude", "self isolation" and "isolation caused by circumstances" that are a part of the dynamic models of loneliness we have considered representation of affirmations reflecting emotional experience related to loneliness, attitude of a person to loneliness, solitude, surrounding people, spare time, work, choice of a situation, circumstances and their understanding, as well as behavioural stereotypes and reactions (40 affirmations).

After factor analysis of the first variant of the "Loneliness Types" questionnaire statements data were grouped as "loneliness", "solitude", self-isolation" and "isolation caused by circumstances". The final questionnaire has 32 statements – 8 for every component. Four negatively formulated ("lonely") and four positively formulated ("not lonely") statements were used in the component "Loneliness".

The questionnaire check up concerning reliability was conducted by checking inner coordination. Chronbach's Coefficient is equal to .88, which confirms high level of statements coordination and questionnaire reliability.

Correlation analysis (Pearson) of the statistical characteristics of the questionnaire statements with the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) shows that all statements have correlation at level $p < 0,01$.

Indices of components – *loneliness*, *solitude*, *self-isolation*, *isolation conditioned by circumstances* – have high correlation with each other. The results of research with the questionnaire „Loneliness Types" show that „loneliness" has mean value 14,7; „solitude" – 13,2; „self-solitude" and „solitude conditioned by circumstances" – 15,4 and 15,0 correspondingly. Dispersion of indices is in the range 8,39 to 17,78. Kurtosis values confirm the distribution form as that close to normal (Table 1).

¹ Ph. D. Daniel W. Russel permitted 1p use the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) in our scientific work

TABLE 1. Statistical Characteristics of the „Loneliness Types” Components

	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
LONELINESS	19,00	8,00	27,00	14,6619	2,89699	8,393	.652	1,278
SOLITUDE	15,00	8,00	23,00	13,1799	3,39878	11,552	.856	.330
SELF-ISOLATION	19,00	8,00	27,00	15,3645	4,21667	17,780	.465	-.459
ISOLATION CONDITIONED BY CIRCUMSTANCES	19,00	8,00	27,00	15,0216	3,60715	13,012	.580	.144

Indicators of “loneliness” up to 12 points – low factor expression, 16 plus – high expression, “solitude”: up to 11 points – low expression, 15 plus – high expression, „self-isolations” – 12 and 18 and „isolations conditioned by circumstances”: – 12 and 17 correspondingly.

The analysis of sex differences that is of the „Loneliness Types” indicators of girls’ and boys’ was verified with the help of t-criterion for independent selections. There are significant differences in the components „loneliness”, „solitude”, and “isolation conditioned by circumstances” at level $p < 0,01$.

Conclusions

1. Conceiving loneliness as a complicated, dynamic phenomenon determined by many factors made it possible to work out a model of the loneliness, which includes the following structural components – loneliness, solitude, self-isolation and isolation conditioned by the circumstances in dynamic interconnection. There was taken into account the correlation of the cognitive, emotional, and behaviour levels of loneliness. They were considered in close interdependence (realising a state of loneliness; emotional assessment of a lonely state, personal interpretation of inter-psychological connections in a state of loneliness).

2. There are defined the types of loneliness: *solitude – self-isolation; solitude – isolation, conditioned by circumstances; loneliness – self-isolation; loneliness – forced isolation conditioned by circumstances.*

3. Defining the two-factor model of the loneliness shows the dynamics of the factors’ interaction connected by loneliness and solitude. The person’s balance between „loneliness” and „solitude” is not a straight line but rather some range of fluctuations and individual differences. If we wish to increase notably the quality of life without experiencing loneliness, we should concentrate on the factors of „solitude” and to enrich the content of relations with the surrounding people, of inter-personal contacts, to diversify the content of leisure, labour, and interactions with other people.

4. In the multifactor dynamic model the component of „loneliness” has the mean value 14,7; „solitude” – 13,2; „self-isolation” and „isolation conditioned by circumstances” – 15,4 and 15,0 correspondingly. Kurtosis values confirm the form of distribution as that of close to normal.

5. In the dynamic model of loneliness, the most optimal state (non-loneliness) is connected with the activity, the autonomy of „I” in relation to loneliness, the certainty of the person’s relations with the surrounding medium, which help to minimize the intensity of loneliness when such state occurs. Intensive experience of loneliness may be lowered when the factors, which brought up loneliness, have lost their actuality and some decision has been found or when the factors of loneliness have balanced the loneliness factors and gradually lowered their actuality.

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