

LONELINESS AND SELF-ESTEEM AS RELATED TO  
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND GENDER  
IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Loneliness is becoming a major problem in the lives of many people (Donson & Georges, 1967). Society includes drastic changes that often contribute to the loss of important attachments. Americans live in a world that is mobile, where people regularly leave loved ones or are left behind (Donson & Georges, 1967). The breakup of marriages and families, of communities and neighborhoods, of friendships and working relationships, or organizations and partnerships are relatively frequent occurrences. There are communication gaps between generations, races, cultures, and sexes. In addition there are abiding universal factors producing loneliness such as death, illness, disability, and rejection (Simmell, 1949). The origins of loneliness reach deeply into the nature of society and its people. In spite of the prevalence of loneliness in the modern world, people are still hesitant to discuss the topic or their problems with it.

Simmell (1949) stated:

One may speak of an impulse to sociability in man. To be sure, it is for the sake of special needs and interests that men unite in economic associations or blood fraternities, in occult societies or robber bands. But above and beyond their special content, all these associations are accompanied by a feeling for, by a satisfaction, in the very fact that one is associated with others and that the solitariness of the individual is resolved in togetherness, a union with others. This association or union with others is basic to the nature of humans (p. 254).

The phrase "solitariness of the individual" that Simmel (1949) referred to is more commonly known as loneliness. Sullivan (1953, p. 290) defined loneliness as ". . . the exceedingly unpleasant and driving experience connected with inadequate discharge of the need for human intimacy, for interpersonal intimacy." According to Sullivan (p. 291), ". . . loneliness, as a phenomenon, is so terrible that it practically baffles clear recall." Sullivan's insistence that loneliness in itself is more debilitating than anxiety was prompted by the observation that loneliness will many times lead to behavior that induces severe anxiety.

In a national survey of Americans, Bradburn (1969) found that 26% of those responding reported feeling lonely or socially remote from others, and especially significant others. Tournier (1962) described loneliness as the most devastating malady of the modern age. Although there are many facets of loneliness on which there seems to be no agreement, one observation does seem to be widely accepted. No human being escapes the experience of loneliness (Epstein, 1974; Hoskisson, 1963; Moustakes, 1972; Weiss, 1973).

Little research has been conducted concerning loneliness in light of the frequency of lonely complaints in contemporary art forms, the media, and in everyday life. When Sullivan (1953) commented that loneliness could be a more powerful force than anxiety in the shaping of personal life, he was by implication providing an invitation to the investigation of loneliness. This study investigated the relationship between gender and academic achievement levels and the variables of loneliness and self-esteem in college students.

#### Theoretical Foundations of Loneliness

The sixth stage of Erikson's (1959) developmental theory involves

young adulthood--roughly the period of courtship and early family life that extends from late adolescence until early middle age. For Erikson, the previous attainment of a sense of personal identity and the engagement in productive work that marks this period gives rise to a new interpersonal dimension of intimacy at the one extreme and isolation at the other.

Erikson (1959, p. 87) spoke of intimacy as the "ability to share with and care about another person without fear of losing oneself in the process." In the case of intimacy, as in the case of identity, success or failure no longer depends directly upon the parents, but only indirectly as they have contributed to the individual's success or failure at earlier stages of development. According to Erikson, social conditions may help or hinder the establishment of a sense of intimacy. Likewise, intimacy need not involve sexuality, but rather includes relationship between friends and significant others. Erikson gave the example of soldiers who, when serving under the most dangerous circumstances, often develop a sense of commitment to one another that exemplifies intimacy in its broadest sense. If a sense of intimacy is not established with friends or a marriage partner, the result, in Erikson's view, is a sense of isolation, of being alone without anyone to share with or care for.

Existentialists take as their starting point the belief that humans are ultimately alone. Separateness is an essential condition of human existence. Moustakas (1972) emphasized the importance of distinguishing between loneliness anxiety and true loneliness. He mentioned that loneliness anxiety is a system of defense mechanism that distracts people from dealing with crucial life questions and that motivates them to constantly seek activity with others. True loneliness stems from the reality of being alone and of facing life's ultimate experiences alone.

Bowlby (1973) offered a comprehensive psychodynamic explanation of the causes of loneliness. Combining psychiatric and ethological points of view, Bowlby proposed that humans have evolved as proximity-promoting-mechanisms, since it has generally been accepted that it is safer for humans to live and travel together. Bowlby proposed that being alone is a natural clue to danger and may be feared intrinsically. During infancy, this natural fear of separation becomes associated with parental abandonment. He stressed that if this absence is frequent or prolonged, or even if the absence is only threatened, it can contribute to lasting insecurity and neurosis.

#### Statement of the Problem

One may experience loneliness at any age, yet the beginning of college is a period in which life circumstances exposes students to a greater degree of loneliness than any other period. The transition from high school to college precipitates stress and change in the lives of students. Many students are miles from the security of home and the comfort of personal relationships (Jones, 1978). Woodward (1972) surveyed several age groups and found college students to be more lonely than any group surveyed, including the elderly.

Recent evidence suggested that loneliness is more closely associated with being dissatisfied with existing relationships than it is with objective interpersonal characteristics such as number of friends or social opportunities (Cutrona, Russell, & Peplau, 1979). The possibility that some people, especially college students, feel lonely despite objective social opportunities emphasizes the need to explore the psychological mechanisms that may inhibit the restoration of satisfying interpersonal

relationships once loneliness has developed (Jones, Freeman, & Goswick, 1981).

Although academic achievement is an important factor for students throughout their college career, many students described their colleges as very impersonal and ambivalent concerning the students' academic progress (Newman, 1971). Knapp (1967) described education as fragmented and depersonalized. "Some public colleges use the freshman year as the real basis of admission, and in many state universities, less than half of those who begin the year finish it" (Reisman & Jenks, 1977, p. 118). Attributions to lack of effort in terms of academic achievement lead to feelings of shame and guilt, presumably because if students had tried harder, they would have done better. Failure attributed to personality or lack of ability was associated with feeling incompetent and inadequate; such attributions may be most damaging to self-esteem (Janoff-Bulman, 1980). Therefore, this study is designed to answer the following question: ~~Is there a relationship among grade point average, gender, loneliness, and self-esteem among college students?~~

#### Significance of the Study

Although this distressing condition of loneliness is widely distributed (Weiss, 1973), the concept of loneliness as a major contributor to the human condition appears to be vastly underestimated (Wright, 1975). Little is known about the causes of loneliness, the subjective experience of loneliness, or effective interventions to alleviate the condition (Peplau, 1979). The studies that are available are most often of a theoretical, observational, and speculative nature. Very little empirical research has been directed toward the problem. Applebaum (1978) suggested that loneliness usually has been viewed as either a normal

reaction needing no explanation, or a symptom of another disorder, such as depression. Weiss (1973, p. 236) noted that ". . . one of the burdens of loneliness is that we have so many preconceptions regarding its nature, so many defenses against recognizing its pain, and so little knowledge of how to help."

Intuitively, one might expect feelings of loneliness to motivate the search for new relationships. However, current research among American undergraduates suggested that loneliness can become an enduring condition, persisting despite the availability of potential for new relationships (Cutrona, Russell, & Peplau, 1979). Since loneliness has been related empirically to numerous problematic conditions (~~anxiety, low self-esteem, physical illness~~) (Jones, 1978), an important question is: What perpetuates the condition of loneliness? ~~Lonely college students have been shown to have a low estimate of self-worth (self-esteem),~~ and apparently expect others to share in that view. They may also be somewhat anormative in their social interactions. For example, their ~~negative self-concept~~ may be matched by derogatory and hostile views toward most other people as well (Jones, 1978). This derogation of others seems to be particularly strong among lonely men (Jones, Freeman, & Goswick, 1981). <sup>√</sup> Lonely people seem to have as much social contact as nonlonely people. However, compared to nonlonely people, they spend a greater proportion of their time interacting with nonintimate others such as strangers or acquaintances, and a smaller proportion of their time interacting with friends or family (Jones, Freeman, & Goswick, 1981). Similarly, lonely people appear less likely (either less willing or less able) to engage in intimate self-disclosure in social settings (Chelune, 1979).

Although studies suggested that loneliness and self-esteem are correlated with gender and academic achievement (Russell, Peplau, & Perlman, 1982; Weiss, 1973), few empirical studies have been conducted to test if, in fact, there is a relationship between these four variables. Russell, Peplau, and Ferguson (1981) conducted two studies with a college-age population in order to establish validity for the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale. In the first study, tests for sex differences were conducted. A significant gender difference was found, with ~~males scoring higher~~ (more lonely) than females on the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale. Conversely, no significant differences in regard to gender were found in the second study.

In another study, Booth (1984) examined the relationship between academic performance, gender, and loneliness. No significant differences were found among any of the variables.

Goswick and Jones (1981) investigated the relationship between loneliness and self-esteem. The findings indicated that loneliness was related to self-esteem (the higher the loneliness score, the lower the self-esteem score).

Due to the disparities in the findings of these studies, further investigation was clearly warranted. This study further investigated whether a relationship existed among academic achievement, gender, and loneliness. This study, however, also examined the relationship between academic achievement, gender, and self-esteem. Results of this study can add additional insights into counseling psychology, specifically the impact of loneliness and self-esteem in college students. Additionally, this study may add further insight into the construct of social esteem (as defined in this chapter), and how this construct related to academic achievement of both male and female college students.

## Definition of Terms

For purposes of the study, the following definitions of terms were employed:

Academic Achievement. Academic achievement was measured by the grade point average (gpa) of each subject: high = 4.00-2.96, medium (2.95-2.13), and low (2.12-1.00). Grade point ranges were established by finding the mean and standard deviation of all self-reported gpa's and adding 1.5 standard deviations to the mean to establish the high gpa range, and subtracting 1.5 standard deviations from the mean to establish the low gpa range.

Loneliness. "Loneliness is the unpleasant subjective experience that occurs when a person's social relations are deficient in some important way, either quality or quantity" (Peplau & Perlman, 1979, p. 157). In the present study, loneliness was measured by the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980). In scoring the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale, scores ranged from a low of 20 to a high of 80. The higher the score, the more loneliness the subject was expressing.

Self-Esteem. Self-esteem was defined as ". . . a person's conscious image of him or herself" (Hofling, Leiniger, & Bregg, 1967, p. 558). In the present study, self-esteem was measured by the Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) (Hudson, 1982). The Index of Self-Esteem was scored based on a range of possible scores from 0 (low score) to 100 (high score). The higher the subject scores on the ISE, the more likely it was that a person would have problems with low self-esteem.

Social-Esteem. Social-esteem was defined as the construct achieved when loneliness and self-esteem were operationalized as degrees of loneliness and self-esteem.



### Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were inherent in this study:

1. Any attempt to generalize the results of this study should be limited to college students as per the norming sample of the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale.
2. The subjective nature of the constructs employed in the study (self-report techniques used in collecting data on academic achievement, loneliness, and self-esteem) present a limitation in this study.

### Assumption

The efficacy of the current study relied on the assumption that the subjects who were selected for this study shared similar characteristics with other college students in similar educational institutions.

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at the .05 level of confidence:

- H<sub>1</sub>. There is no significant interaction between gender, levels of academic achievement, and the construct of social esteem when social esteem is operationalized as degrees of loneliness and self-esteem.
- H<sub>2</sub>. There is a significant interaction between gender, levels of academic achievement, and loneliness among college students.
- H<sub>3</sub>. There is a significant interaction between gender, levels of academic achievement, and self-esteem among college students.

### Organization of the Study

Chapter I has presented an introduction to the study, statement of

the problem, significance of the study, definition of terms, limitations and assumptions of the study, and hypotheses tested. Chapter II contains a literature review. The methodology and instrumentation to be used in this investigation are presented in Chapter III. Chapter IV presents the results of the study, and Chapter V includes a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of literature includes two areas pertinent to the study. The chapter begins with an examination of loneliness and its relationship to gender and academic achievement. The last section examines the relationship between self-esteem, gender, and academic achievement. Both sections begin with an overview of the respective terms, loneliness and self-esteem.

#### Loneliness

Loneliness has long been recognized as an aversive experience. Aristotle (cited in Moustakes, 1972) devoted two books in the Nicomachean Ethics to a discussion of the moral virtue of friendship. He stated: "No one would choose a friendless existence on condition of having all the other things in the world" (p. 12). Yet, there is a strong tendency to regard loneliness as a modern phenomenon resulting from a technological society (Gordon, 1976; May, 1953; Reisman, 1950). Gordon (1976, pp. 15-16) wrote: "What was once a philosophical problem, spoken of mainly by poets and prophets, has now become an almost permanent condition for millions of Americans." Rejecting this assertion, Mijuskovic (1977, p. 25) stated: "This view, I am convinced, is quite mistaken. Rather, I believe it can be established that man has always and everywhere suffered from feelings of acute loneliness." The experience of loneliness has been documented since earliest recorded history; the psychological study

of loneliness, however, is relatively contemporary. Gordon (1976, p. 16) spoke of loneliness in the following manner: "Knowing no limits of class, race, or age, loneliness is today a great leveler." Writers of various disciplines have tried to capture the complexity of loneliness by distinguishing among such experiences as the loneliness of the poet, the religious hermit, the abandoned orphan, or the widow (Gordon, 1976).

Loneliness is a distressing and common problem in which a person's network of interpersonal relationships is smaller or less satisfying than desired (Peplau & Perlman, 1979). A national survey indicated that 26% of the sample reported feeling lonely, which suggested the pervasiveness of the problem (Bradburn, 1969). Although the determinants of loneliness have not been identified, they are usually considered to be a combination of personal vulnerabilities (ineffective social skills) and circumstances such as divorce and social mobility (Weiss, 1973).

When defining loneliness it is important to differentiate between loneliness and aloneness. Researchers have found no relationship between peoples' degrees of loneliness and their indices of social contact (Cutrona, Russell, & Peplau, 1979; Jones, 1978; Sisewein, 1964). The important variable is the perception of a deficit by the individual, not the actual measurement of alone time (Jones, 1978). When a person feels aloneness, the withdrawal is voluntary. In loneliness, the withdrawal is involuntary, and the person feels separated and isolated by outside forces (Jones, 1978). If this loneliness becomes extreme, there is the feeling of no-relationship, the feeling that there is no significant human being in the world with whom to relate. Whereas aloneness may be constructive, loneliness is usually destructive. Weiss (1973) has suggested that scientists, like other mortals, tend to repress this painful experience of loneliness and thus discount its power in personal life.

Peplau, Miceli, and Morasch (1982) have assembled the following more recent definitions of loneliness offered by social scientists:

I define loneliness as the perceived absence of satisfying social relationships, accompanied by symptoms of psychological distress that are related to the actual or perceived absence. . . . I propose that social relationships can be treated as a particular class of reinforcement. . . . Therefore, loneliness can be viewed in part as a response to the absence of important social reinforcement (Young, 1980, p. 380).

Loneliness is an experience involving a total and often acute feeling that constitutes a distinct form of self-awareness signaling a break in the basic network of the relational reality of self-worth (Sadler & Johnson, 1980, p. 39).

Loneliness is the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively (Perلمان & Peplau, 1981, p. 31).

The varying definitions of loneliness reflect the differing theoretical orientations. These differences in particular center around the nature of the social deficiency experienced by lonely individuals. One approach to the study of loneliness evolves around the human need for intimacy. It has been argued by Weiss (1973) that vulnerability to loneliness may be a part of our evolutionary heritage.

The most obvious reason for the study of loneliness is that more people in the United States are living alone. According to a U.S. Bureau of the Census (1977) report, there were more than twice as many one-person households in 1976 as there were in 1960. This report indicated that there were 15.5 million persons living alone in the United States, representing 21% of all American households.

A dispositional approach to the study of loneliness asks the question: What is it about a people that causes them to feel lonely in a particular situation when other people do not? One of the first psychoanalysts to pose this questions was Fromm-Reichmann (1959). She believed in a widespread fear of loneliness, but argued that real

loneliness is found only among psychotics. Her analysis, although widely cited in the literature on loneliness, is not particularly useful for the present study.

Bowlby (1973) offered a comprehensive and persuasive psychodynamic explanation of the causes of loneliness. Combining psychiatric and ethological viewpoints, Bowlby proposed that humans have evolved proximity-promoting-mechanisms, since it has generally been accepted that it is safer for humans to live and travel together. Thus, Bowlby concluded that being alone is a natural clue to danger and may be feared intrinsically. During infancy, this natural fear of separation becomes associated with parental absence. Bowlby stressed that if this absence is frequent or prolonged, or even if the absence is only threatened, it can contribute to lasting insecurity and neurosis.

### Attachments

Bowlby (1973) also stressed the importance for both children and adults of having a secure base--a trustworthy attachment figure who provides an assurance of their presence should difficulties arise. A child's fear of separation is a gnawing uncertainty about the accessibility and responsiveness of the attachment figure. If this fear goes unchecked, or is confirmed (through parental rejection or separation), the child will be especially susceptible to fear in any situation. Even in adulthood, this fear can be re-experienced. If people grow up with an unavailable attachment figure, they will be more susceptible to respond with fear in any new or different situation, such as being alone (Bowlby, 1973).

Differentiating between anxious and secure attachments, Bowlby (1973) proposed that the former leads to neurosis or maladjusted

behavior, while the latter leads to relatively stable and self-reliant adult behavior. In a summary of separation, Bowlby stated three theoretical propositions: (a) If a people are confident that an attachment figure will be available whenever necessary, he or she will be less prone to separation anxiety than people without this confidence; (b) The feeling of confidence is built up gradually during childhood and adolescence, when expectations develop that will remain with the individual throughout life; and (c) Parental behavior is the crucial determinant of a child's sense of attachment or separation anxiety.

Perlman and Peplau (1981) have postulated another approach to the conceptualization of loneliness which emphasized "cognitive processes," which concerns peoples' perceptions and evaluations of their social relations. From this perspective, loneliness results from perceived dissatisfaction with one's social relationships (Flanders, 1976; Sadler & Johnson, 1980). For example, Lopata (1969, p. 250) defined loneliness as "a wish for a form or level of interaction different from the one presently experienced." Cognitive approaches (Peplau & Perlman, 1979; Sermat, 1978) propose that loneliness occurs when the individual perceives a discrepancy between two factors: The desired and the achieved pattern of social interactions.

According to Young (1980), a third approach to examining loneliness identifies insufficient social reinforcement. According to this view, social relations are a particular class of reinforcement. The quantity and quality of contact people find satisfying is a product of their reinforcement history. Young pointed out that relationships can assume secondary reinforcer status. Periods of isolation can cause deprivation, thus enhancing the subsequent reward value of social contacts.

The quantitative aspects of social relationships are only modestly predictive of well-being or loneliness among both older and younger adults (Peplau, Miceli, & Morasch, 1982). Loneliness appears to be largely a subjective experience associated with a perceived lack of interpersonal intimacy.

### Intimacy

Sullivan (1953) discussed loneliness in terms of the frustration of an inborn need for intimacy. In the context of his interpersonal theory of psychiatry, Sullivan implied that loneliness is a common phenomenon occurring throughout an individual's life span. According to Sullivan, the need for intimacy begins at birth. The infant has a need for contact, the caring and protection of human contact. Later, the small child requires adult participation in play, to share in the pleasure of the first accomplishments. In the juvenile era, a different need for intimacy develops, the need for peers, who give children a sense of acceptance. Finally, during adolescence (and onward), adults begin to need intimacy with a significant other. If any of these basic needs go unmet in an individual, loneliness will result (Sullivan, 1953).

Despite its importance, systematic research in this area has been relatively uncommon until recently. In particular, one question which has yet to be extensively addressed concerns the mechanisms that perpetuate loneliness. This line of investigation is important because, in all probability, it is the persistence of loneliness beyond transitory states which fosters the development of problematic behaviors and the sense of hopeless resignation frequently observed among lonely persons (Jones, Freeman, & Goswick, 1981). There is evidence that loneliness is relatively stable among college students over a two-month period (Russell,



Peplau, & Ferguson, 1981). In another study, Cutrona, Russell, and Peplau (1979) found that approximately two-thirds of a group of lonely, beginning college students were still lonely seven months later. The persistence of loneliness among college students is particularly perplexing because, unlike the lonely person who is physically isolated in some remote area, typically there are potential friends or social contacts in the lonely student's college environment. For many students, the college years are relatively unencumbered by parental supervision of social life. Although students are entering college at an older age (Jones, 1978), the vast majority of college students are not restricted by marital, vocational, and other more or less permanent commitments, and yet college students, as a group, are more lonely than others (Seevers, 1972). Thus, paradoxically, the lonely college student apparently feels interpersonally deprived in an environment of unattached and potentially available friends, dates, and partners.

#### Types of Loneliness

The following are types of loneliness most prevalent in recent literature:

Chronic Loneliness. Chronic loneliness is defined as an expressed feeling (Jong-Gierveld & Raadschelders, 1983). Chronically lonely individuals report being lonely over several situations. Their loneliness is long-term, they often lack an intimate partner, and generally have few relationships. Although some of these individuals express strong feelings or dissatisfaction with their relations, others have become resigned to their situation (Jong-Gierveld & Raadschelders, 1983). The chronic lonely who perceive themselves as the source or cause of the loneliness usually have some awareness of either the unmet relationship needs, or

what inabilities exist which interfere with the development of satisfying relationships. These individuals have a tendency to ". . . think something is wrong with themselves because of the inability to establish and maintain satisfying relationships" (Belcher, 1973, p. 73).

Chronic loneliness is experienced as both anxiety and depression (Knaupp, 1968). Most lonely people feel some major features of depression, although the converse is not necessarily true (May, 1953). Depression is a more general and global experience than loneliness and frequently results from events unrelated to loneliness. Depressed lonely people are more significantly dissatisfied with the nonsocial aspect of their lives, and experience more anxiety and anger than the nondepressed lonely. Both groups, however, are equally dissatisfied with social relationships (Bragg, 1979). Loneliness and depression are distinct but correlated phenomena, and although they seem to share some common causal origins, neither is the cause of the other (Weeks, Michela, Peplau, & Bragg, 1980).

Social Isolation. Any severe disruption of a social role is capable of producing social isolation. Situations that lead to a loss of contact with those who share one's concerns may give rise to feelings of loneliness referred to as social isolation (Weiss, 1973). Social isolation is the feeling of loneliness due to the loss of friendships; whereas, its counterpart, emotional isolation, refers to the loss of an intimate attachment (Weiss, 1973). Young people are particularly susceptible to social isolation because of the frequent moves they are required to make (for example, from junior high school to high school, and then for some, to college). At the same time, they are in a developmental stage when peer relationships are extremely important (Erikson, 1968).

The young person achieves self-definition in part by identifying with a peer group that shares commonalities, and in part by occupying a unique place in that group. Continued interaction that communicates a group's perception of the individual is necessary during this developmental period to sustain a self-identity. "This may explain the difficulty sometimes encountered by those who move into a radically different milieu" (Weiss, 1973, p. 147).

Situational Loneliness. When social isolation is short-term and the result of an environmental change, it is described as situational loneliness (Applebaum, 1978). Situational loneliness is one of many transient situational disturbances. The major diagnostic indicators are an essentially benign and nonpathological history and a reaction which is proportionate to the realistic significance of the loss (Applebaum, 1987). The situation is perceived as casual, not the personality characteristics of the lonely individual (Weiss, 1973).

Social integration provides for the pleasures of sociability. "Social isolation removes these gratifications; it very directly impoverishes life" (Weiss, 1973, p. 150). The two terms "anomie" and "alienation" explain the conditions that are frequently responsible for the extended maintenance of social isolation, which was initially situational in nature.

Anomie. Durkehim (1961, p. 38) referred to anomie as ". . . the perceived condition of one's social environment, such as the perception of a breakdown of social norms regulating individual conduct in modern societies." College students frequently find themselves in an environment totally different from that which they left at home. The value system of their new companions is often so different from their high school friends and family that individuals may feel confused, not knowing

what behaviors are now acceptable. Individuals experiencing anomie are willing to engage in behaviors that might be positively reinforced, or at least consider them, but simply does not know what those desired behaviors are (Durkheim, 1961).

Alienation. Alienation is an individual's general experience of unacceptance by others (Belcher, 1973). Alienation can be described as the lack of identity with, or the rejection of, prevalent social values by the individual. Alienation expressed as a lack of relatedness with society, and as a concomitant isolation from the general culture, is experienced as unacceptance of the individual by others (Belcher, 1973).

Alienation is distinguished from anomie in that anomie indicates a lack of knowledge about the norms or behaviors that will gain acceptance or be positively reinforced. In alienation, an individual knows what behaviors will be positively reinforced, but refuses to engage in those behaviors. The individual then feels rejected and alienated from the group (Belcher, 1973).

Seeman (1971) proposed five variants of the concept of alienation: meaninglessness, isolation, powerlessness, self-estrangement, and normlessness. Gould (1969) defined alienation as a general syndrome consisting of feelings of cynicism, pessimism, apathy, distrust, and emotional distance. In general, the alienated person is very distrustful and pessimistic (Gould, 1969).

Emotional Isolation. Emotional isolation refers to the lack of an intimate attachment (Clark, 1959). As in social isolation, the experience of emotional isolation may be chronic or situational. Situational emotional isolation follows a precipitating event, such as divorce or the death of a spouse (Clark, 1959). The loss is of a significant other and the positive reinforcement that resulted from the intimate interactions

with that significant other (Clark, 1959). Emotionally isolated individuals frequently state that there is no one to talk with about personal concerns. Clark (1959, p. 96) continued to say that ". . . there is an awareness of the specific type of deficiency and a longing for intimacy."

Causation. The precipitating event in any type of loneliness appears to be the experience of loss (Applebaum, 1978). The causation of the loss can be attributed to several factors which fall into three major categories: self, others, and situational (Peplau & Perlman, 1979). Loneliness is often described as a response to a discrepancy between desired and achieved levels of social contact (Jones, Freeman, & Goswick, 1981). Both of these levels are determined by the perceptions of the individual. The cognitive process of determining that a deficit exists and the causal factors of that deficit can have moderating or exacerbating influence on the experience of loneliness (Applebaum, 1978).

#### Attributions of the Lonely

Lonely people frequently use external attributions, or blame their loneliness on others (Young, 1980). These people are frequently angry and frustrated because they have little power to change the people they see as responsible for their discomfort and therefore see no relief from their condition (Young, 1980). Lonely individuals also tend to blame themselves, thinking that if it were not for their own personal inadequacies, people would like them (Young, 1980). This self or internal attribution can and many times does result in depression (Young, 1980). The perception of one's self can often play an important role in the experiencing the phenomenon of loneliness (Young, 1980).

## Self-Esteem

Lonely people often feel worthless, incompetent, and unlovable. Indeed, the link between severe loneliness and low self-esteem is one of the most consistent findings of the loneliness research (Moore & Sermat, 1974; Paloutzian & Ellison, 1979; Wood, 1978). Loucks (1980) found that loneliness was significantly correlated with self-criticism, low self-esteem, and uncertainty of self-view. Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona (1980) found a correlation of  $-.49$  between scores on the revised UCLA Loneliness Scale and the Texas Social Behavior Inventory, a measure of social self-esteem. In a large-scale survey, Rubenstein and Shaver (1980) found that self-depreciation, including feelings of being stupid and ashamed, was a common correlate of loneliness for males, while feeling unattractive was the most common correlate for females.

Although the link between loneliness and low self-esteem has been established, the reasons for this association have not been precisely specified. Wood (1978) found that the relationship of loneliness to self-esteem can often reflect several different causal processes; low self-esteem may be both a cause and a consequence of loneliness. Rogers (1961) discussed loneliness as an estrangement between the people and their true inner feelings. Rogers believed that in searching for acceptance and love, people often develop facades, and so become alienated from themselves. Whitehorn (1961) agreed with this position:

Some substantial incongruity between the self as felt and the self as reacted to by others generates and accentuates a feeling of loneliness, and this process may become a vicious cycle of loneliness and estrangement (p. 16).

The above theorists proposed that loneliness originates in the individuals' perceptions of discrepancies between their real selves and the way others view them. Eddy (1961) tested this idea when he hypothesized

that loneliness was related to discrepancies among three aspects of self-concept: (a) the peoples' self-view (actual self), (b) the person's ideal self, and (c) the people's views of how others see him or her (reflected self). Using a sample of students in the Merchant Marine Academy, Eddy found strong support for these predictions. Loneliness was correlated .71 with the discrepancy of actual and ideal self, .71 with the discrepancy of actual and reported self, and .63 with the discrepancy of ideal and reflected self. In accord with Eddy's belief that perceptions are more important than objective features of social interaction, no relationship was found between loneliness and actual popularity ratings by classmates. In a later study, Sisewein (1964) took a somewhat different view, hypothesizing that loneliness results from a discrepancy between how people view themselves and how others view them. Contrary to expectation, however, Sisewein found no relationship between loneliness and discrepancies of self versus other ratings.

Low self-esteem is often associated with beliefs and behaviors that interfere with initiating or maintaining satisfying social relationships (Ickes & Layden, 1978). People with low self-esteem may interpret social interactions in self-defeating ways, and these individuals may be more likely to attribute social failures to internal, self-blaming factors (Ickes & Layden, 1978). People who devalue themselves may assume that others will similarly find themselves undesirable (Jones, Freeman, & Goswick, 1981). In studies that have experimentally altered peoples' self-esteem, it appears that low self-esteem individuals are especially responsive to a friendly confederate, but feel especially hostile toward a rejecting confederate. People who are low in self-esteem may interpret ambiguous social exchanges in more negative ways than do people with high self-esteem (Jacobs, Berscheid, & Walster, 1971).

According to Zimbardo (1977), low self-esteem can affect peoples' social behavior. Zimbardo postulated that:

The person with low esteem . . . is likely to be more passive, persuasible, and less popular. These people (especially males) are overly sensitive to criticism, thinking it confirms their inadequacy, and they have difficulty accepting compliments (p. 152).

People with low self-esteem may be more socially anxious and less willing to take risks in social settings; hence, are less likely to start new relationships or deepen existing ones. Zimbardo (1977) asserted that in some instances, low self-esteem reflects an inaccurate assessment of the peoples' social skills. It is not uncommon for attractive, competent individuals to perceive themselves and their behavior as inept. However, in other cases, low self-esteem reflects actual deficits in the skills necessary to begin or sustain social relations (Horowitz, 1979).

#### Self-Esteem and Social Failure

To be without a lover, friends, or family is to have failed in the eyes of society, and often in our own eyes as well (Gordon, 1976). Milner (1975, p. 3) observed: "To say that I'm lonely is to admit you're essentially inadequate, that you have nobody who loves you." The absence of social relationships is not only personally distressing but socially awkward as well. Stereotypes depict people who live alone as cold and unfriendly (Parmelee & Werner, 1978). In a gregarious culture, the lack of friends or a mate can be seen as a social failure. Perhaps less obvious but equally important, having unsatisfying relationships--an unhappy marriage or superficial friendships--may also be seen as a social failure (Wells & Marwell, 1976).

Some years ago, James (1908, p. 187) proposed that self-esteem was ". . . a fraction of which our pretensions are the denominator, and the



numerator our success; thus self-esteem = success." Wells and Marwell (1976) emphasized the correspondence between peoples' personal ideals or aspirations and their accomplishments. Thus, the perception of a social deficit can indeed detract from a person's self-esteem.

If, as James (1908) and others have suggested, self-esteem is based on the extent to which society attains its personal goals, then any failure should harm self-esteem. In actuality, however, the effects of failure on self-esteem is mediated by the person's causal attributions for failure (Weiner, Russell, & Lerman, 1978). In a study of achievement-related behavior, Weiner, Russell, and Lerman (1978) reported that emotions accompanying failure differed significantly, depending on the attribution made. Attributions to external causes led to feelings such as surprise and anger that were unrelated to self-esteem. Attributions to lack of effort led to feelings of shame and guilt, presumably because the person might have done better if he or she had tried harder. Failure attributed to personality or lack of ability was associated with feeling incompetent and inadequate; such attributions may be most damaging to self-esteem (Bulman, 1980).

#### Academic Achievement

The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement has long been of interest (Calsyn & Kenny, 1977), but the nature of this relationship for college students has not received adequate attention. Griffore and Samuels (1978), in their efforts to determine the relationship between college students' self-concepts and academic achievements, utilized the Brookover Self-Concept Scale. This scale was administered to 100 undergraduate psychology students. Moderate to high correlations were obtained between self-concept and overall gpa (.58).

In another study concerning self-esteem and academic achievement, Simpson and Boyle (1975, p. 37) asked a sample of 159 undergraduate students (M=63, F=96) the following questions: (a) "Generally, how high is that part of your esteem which is based on your assessment and evaluation of your intellectual abilities?" and (b) "Generally, how high is your esteem in academic-educational situations (in your classes and other situations directly related to your education)?" These questions were believed to indicate intellectual esteem and educational esteem, respectively. The correlations obtained between gpa's and answers to the questions were .30 ( $p < .01$ ) and .29 ( $p < .01$ ), respectively. There were no significant differences between males and females regarding their academic achievement and self-esteem.

In a study of self-esteem and performance on a cognitively demanding task, Lynch and Clark (1985) acquired data from 45 college undergraduates. The subjects were asked to predict how well they thought they would do on the cognitive task after having seen one sample problem, to estimate how well they thought they had done after completing all of the problems, how difficult they thought each problem was, and how certain they were that their answer was correct. Analysis indicated that self-esteem was significantly related to performance (.47). Contrary to expectations, however, individuals high in self-esteem did not predict that they would do better, and they did not express more confidence in their answers to problems (Lynch & Clark, 1985).

### Gender

Few topics have generated more controversy than the concept of gender differences in relation to achievement. Baumrind (1972) distinguishes between instrumental competence and incompetence. Males,

according to Baumrind, are trained to become instrumentally competent, while females learn how to become instrumentally incompetent. By instrumental competence, Baumrind meant behavior that is socially responsible and purposive, while instrumental incompetence is more aimless behavior. Baumrind offered the concept that parents often expect lower achievement of females than they do of males (parents expect sons to become doctors and daughters to become nurses).

In their review of the achievement orientation of males and females, Stein and Bailey (1973) concluded that females have lower expectancies for success across many different tasks than do males. They also found that females have lower levels of aspirations, more anxiety about failure, less willingness to risk failure, and more feelings of personal responsibility when failure occurs (Stein & Bailey, 1973). In one set of investigations, females and males attributed male achievement to ability, and female success to effort and luck (Feldman-Summers & Kiesler, 1974).

#### Summary

There seems to be general agreement that loneliness reflects a deficit condition, a lack of something. The antidote to loneliness is generally agreed to comprise human closeness, meaningful relationships, intimacy, or some other form of human contact (Flanders, 1976). Intervention strategies attempt to provide these missing elements by teaching the lonely individual to interact and think in ways that will enhance their social relationships (Beck, 1967). It has not been determined precisely what the missing elements in the social relationships are.

Previous research regarding self-esteem (Gordon, 1976; Scheerer, 1949) has shown that people who dislike themselves are prone to dislike others as well, perhaps as a protection from rejection. This barrier

enables a person with low self-esteem to effectively shut out others, and prevents social failure by the lack of social risk (Gordon, 1976).

Researchers have suggested that low self-esteem and high degrees of loneliness among male and female college students have played an important part in their academic achievement (Russell, Peplau, & Ferguson, 1981). Empirical research in this area, however, is limited.

## CHAPTER III

### INSTRUMENTATION AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between loneliness, self-esteem, academic achievement, and gender. The chapter begins by discussing the subjects employed in the study, and examines the instruments used to measure loneliness and self-esteem. The methodology used in conducting this study also is explained. Specifically, the demographic information and selection of subjects, experimental design, the treatment procedures, and the statistical analysis are discussed.

#### Subjects

The study employed 252 students from a large land-grant university in the southwestern United States. The subjects (126 males and 126 females) were undergraduate students enrolled in social science classes during the 1986-87 academic year. In order to achieve the power of .80 (alpha level .05), it was determined that an average of 42 subjects per cell was needed. The sample was stratified by gender and by levels of academic achievement (low, medium, and high). Since complete classrooms of subjects were utilized, nonrandomization was a clear sampling bias of this study. The academic levels of the subjects included in the study were 40.4% seniors, 50.6% juniors, and 9.0% sophomores. The data indicated that 91% of the subjects were education majors. The subjects had a mean age of 22.8 years (Table 1), with males averaging 23.5 years of age

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics From Demographic Information Sheet

	Age	Academic Level of Students in Study			% Employed	% Married	% Single & Roommate	Average Number of Organizational Involvement
		Soph.	Jr.	Senior				
Male <sup>1</sup>	24.7	1.9(7)	6.6(16)	8.3(22)	.74	.35	.88	3.2
Male <sup>2</sup>	23.4	1.7(6)	11.4(29)	7.7(19)	.75	.29	.91	2.7
Male <sup>3</sup>	22.3	1.2(6)	5.8(16)	5.6(15)	.56	.21	.94	2.3
Female <sup>1</sup>	24.2	1.1(4)	7.9(18)	8.1(20)	.63	.38	.89	3.1
Female <sup>2</sup>	21.7	1.4(5)	8.3(22)	8.2(19)	.73	.28	.93	2.6
Female <sup>3</sup>	20.4	1.9(7)	4.6(14)	2.5(8)	.53	.11	.89	1.3

Note: Total number of male subjects=126; total number of female subjects=126.

Male<sup>1</sup> - High Academic Achievement Level

Male<sup>2</sup> - Medium Academic Achievement Level

Male<sup>3</sup> - Low Academic Achievement Level

Female<sup>1</sup> - High Academic Achievement Level

Female<sup>2</sup> - Medium Academic Achievement Level

Female<sup>3</sup> - Low Academic Achievement Level

and females averaging 22.1 years of age. Data on marital status indicated that 28.3% of the male subjects were married, and 25.6% of the females were married, for an overall percentage of married subjects of 26.9. Of the subjects who were not married, 7.8% reported living alone (8.6% of the males, and 7% of the females) (see Table 1). The male population of the sample reported a 68.3% employment rate, while 63% of the females in the sample reported employment. Males had a group membership mean of 2.7, while females had a mean of 2.3.

### Instrumentation

#### The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale

The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980) was employed in this study to measure the level of loneliness in college students. The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale is a 20-item self-report paper-and-pencil instrument. The test is a Likert-type scale consisting of four choices: (a) never=1, (b) rarely=2, (c) sometimes=3, and (d) often=4 (Items 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19, and 20 are scored in reverse ((a)=4, (b)=3, (c)=2, and (d)=1)). Students were directed to respond to how often they felt the way described in each of the 20 statements (for example, "I lack companionship" (item number 2 on The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale)).

The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale was tested for reliability and validity, using 499 heterogeneous undergraduate students from the University of Tulsa and from UCLA. The students completed The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale, along with a set of items asking them if they were lonely or not (Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona, 1980).

Reliability. The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale shows a high internal consistency for a scale of 20 items (Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona, 1980). Using a college sample (n=591), it was found that the scale showed high internal reliability (coefficient alpha of .96). Jones, Freeman, and Goswick (1981), using 102 University of Tulsa students assessed over a two-month period, found a test-retest correlation of .73. This suggested stability in the measure over time, despite changes in an individual's level of loneliness that may be expected to occur in a two-month period.

Validity. The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale has been examined using several validity criteria. Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona (1980) found a correlation between the subjective self-report question about current loneliness and the loneliness scale score to be significant ( $r(45)=.79$ ,  $p<.001$ ). High scorers on the loneliness scale described themselves as more lonely than other people in general. Loneliness scores of people who were sufficiently troubled by loneliness to volunteer for a three-week clinic program differed dramatically from scores of students in a comparison group who were tested concurrently. The mean loneliness score of clinic participants was 60.1, compared to a mean of 39.1 for the comparison sample ( $t(41)=5.09$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

Scores on The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale have correlated significantly with several other loneliness measures. Solano (1980) reported a correlation of .74 between the Bradley loneliness measure and the UCLA scale. Ellison and Paloutzian (1979) found a correlation of .72 between their Abbreviated Loneliness Scale and The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale.

In a study by Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona (1980), concurrent validity for The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale was examined by determining



relationships between social relationships and loneliness, as measured by the loneliness scale. For solitary relationships, significant correlations (all  $p < .001$ ) were found between loneliness scores and the amount of time students spent alone each day ( $r = .41$ ), the number of times they had eaten dinner alone during the previous two weeks ( $r = .34$ ), and the number of times they had spent a weekend night alone during the past two weeks ( $r = .44$ ). Lonely students also reported doing fewer social activities with friends ( $r = -.28$ ) and having fewer close friends ( $r = -.44$ ). The relationship between loneliness and dating or marital status was examined using analysis of variance to compare three groups; those students who were not dating at all, those students dating casually, and those students who were either dating steadily or who were married. Using scores on The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale as the dependent measure, significant differences were found among these groups ( $F(2,187) = 22.97, p < .001$ ). Students who were not dating at all had a mean loneliness score of 43.1; students who were dating casually and those who were romantically involved had means of 34.0 and 32.7, respectively. Comparisons indicated that students who were not dating were significantly more lonely than the other groups ( $F(1,189) = 35.23, p < .001$ ); students who were dating casually did not differ significantly from those who were dating steadily or who were married.

Further validation is provided by evidence linking scores on The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale to other emotional states. Belcher (1973) and Ortega (1969) suggested that loneliness is associated with depression and with anxiety. In a study by Russell, Peplau, and Ferguson (1981), scores on The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale correlated with participants' self-ratings of being depressed ( $r(131) = .49, p < .001$ ) and anxious ( $r(131) = .35, p < .001$ ). In a separate study at the University of Tulsa, Jones,

Freeman, and Goswick (1981) found that The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale correlated significantly with the Beck (1967) depression scale ( $r(47) = .38, p < .01$ ), and with the anxiety subscale of the Multiple Affect Adjective Checklist (Zuckerman & Lubin, 1965) ( $r(65) = .43, p < .01$ ).

Data available from 133 participants in a study by Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona (1980) provided further information about the correlates of The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale scores. Consistent with the view of loneliness as an exceedingly unpleasant experience (Sullivan, 1953; Weiss, 1973), The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale scores were associated with low self-ratings of satisfaction ( $r = -.43, p < .001$ ) and with being happy ( $r = -.40, p < .001$ ). Specific emotional correlates of loneliness suggested by Gordon (1976) and Weiss (1973) were also confirmed. Scores on The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale were significantly (all  $p < .001$ ) correlated with feeling empty ( $r = .58$ ), self-enclosed ( $r = .54$ ), awkward ( $r = .46$ ), restless ( $r = .38$ ), and bored ( $r = .36$ ). Lonely students also were more likely to describe themselves as less attractive ( $r = .36, p < .001$ ). Loneliness scores did not correlate with self-ratings on such adjectives as "hard working" and having "wide interests," providing evidence of the scale's discriminant validity.

In summary, the validity of The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale was indicated in several ways. The content of individual items provided face validity for the scale. Concurrent validity was shown by the relationship of scale scores to self-reports of current loneliness and to volunteering for a loneliness clinic. Finally, correlates of scores on The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale supported theoretical views linking loneliness to emotional states such as depression, anxiety, or feelings of boredom and emptiness.

### Index of Self-Esteem

The Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) is one of nine short-term assessment devices that are collectively referred to as the Clinical Measurement Package (Hudson, 1982). The ISE is a 25-item scale that was designed to measure the degree, severity, or magnitude of a problem with self-esteem within an individual.

The ISE is structured to have a score that ranged from 0 to 100; a low score represents the relative absence of a problem with self-esteem and a higher score indicates the presence of a more serious problem. A feature of the ISE scale is that it has a clinical cutting score of 30. Persons who obtain scores below 30 are nearly always found to be free of a clinically significant problem with self-esteem, whereas those who score above 30 are nearly always found to have a problem with self-esteem that is severe enough to be regarded as clinically significant (Abell, Jones, & Hudson, 1984).

The ISE is a Likert-type scale consisting of five choices, ranging from "rare" or "none of the time," to "most" or "all of the time." Of the 25 items, 12 items are worded as positive statements, and the remaining 13 are negatively worded, in order to partially control for response set biases.

Scoring on the ISE consists of summing all the item scores and then subtracting a constant 25 from each sum. Before obtaining the final score, however, it is necessary first to reverse the score on the 12 positively worded items (for example, an item score of 5 becomes a 1; 4 becomes a 2).

Hudson (1982) employed two samples in the standardization of the ISE. The first group, clinicians (n=85), were asked to complete a

research questionnaire concerning their perceptions of their clients' self-esteem. The second sample used in the standardization process were clients (n=1,161) of the clinicians who completed the ISE. Each clinician was asked to complete a research questionnaire that consisted of background information on each client. The information gathered from the information sheets established the cutting score (30) on the ISE, and the rates of false negatives and false positives that can be expected when using the cutting score as a diagnostic criterion.

Reliability. The reliability of the ISE was estimated by using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, which is a measure of internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). To examine the reliability, several samples from previous studies (Combined Standardization (CS)) were pooled, totaling 1,161 subjects (Hudson, 1982). The reported alpha was .9347 (Abell, Jones, & Hudson, 1984). The standard error of measurement (SEM), which provides another view of reliability that is not influenced by differences in sample variance, was computed at 5.23. Based on these findings, it was concluded that the ISE is an excellent measure of reliability (Abell, Jones, & Hudson, 1984).

Validity. Inspection of the discriminant and construct validity of the ISE was accomplished with a sample of experienced clinicians (n=85). The clinicians were asked to divide their caseloads into three groups: (a) clients whom the clinicians were certain had no clinically significant self-esteem problems, (b) clients whom clinicians were certain had self-esteem problems, and (c) clients about whom the clinicians were unsure vis-a-vis the absence or presence of problems with self-esteem. The clinicians were then requested to administer a research questionnaire, of which the ISE was component, to clients in the first two

groups. Clients in the third group were not included in the validation study in order to preclude ambiguity (Abell, Jones, & Hudson, 1984).

To investigate the discriminant validity, a one-way analysis of variance was performed using the criterion group status (either group a or group b) as the independent variable, and the scores from the ISE as the dependent variable (Abell, Jones, & Hudson, 1984). In addition to the ISE, other scales such as the Psychosocial Screen Package and the Generalized Contentment Scale were administered in order to test the hypotheses that the ISE better discriminates between the two criterion groups than do other tests that purportedly measure other constructs.

Findings of this study indicated that the mean ISE score for persons in group (a) was 2-1/2 times larger than the mean score for those persons in group (b). The difference between these means was found to be statistically significant at the .01 level. The results also revealed that the ISE discriminated better between the two criterion groups than did any of the other scales. The correlation between the ISE scores and the criterion group status was found to be .78, and was regarded as the primary coefficient of discriminant validity.

In determining construct validity, Abell, Jones, and Hudson (1984) assumed that good convergent and discriminant validity indicated good construct validity. Convergent validity, therefore, would be supported by the finding that the ISE scale correlated strongly to the client's statement of a problem with self-esteem, the clinicians' observation of the presence of such a problem, and such measures as depression, marital discord, and sexual discord.

#### Research Design

The design of this causal comparative study was a 2 x 3 factorial

design, with the factors being gender of student (male, female) and level of academic achievement (high, medium, and low). This design was utilized to permit investigation of the main effect of each independent variable, and allowed the examination of any interaction between the independent variables.

Since the independent variables could not be manipulated, the causal comparative method was chosen. This method determined if a relationship existed between the independent (academic achievement and gender) and dependent variables (loneliness and self-esteem), and the degree to which a relationship existed (if any). Cause and effect, however, could not be established.

#### Procedures

Each student (n=252) was given a packet containing a demographic questionnaire (Appendix A), The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980) (Appendix B), and the ISE (Hudson, 1982) (Appendix C). The demographic information asked the students to complete information relative to: age, class, gender, gpa, marital status, college major, and the number of organizations with which they were affiliated. The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale and the ISE were counterbalanced, with one-half of the packets having The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale following the demographic sheet, and the other half having the ISE following the demographic sheet.

After the packets were distributed, the researcher instructed the students to read the directions on each sheet and to answer each item honestly and to the best of his or her ability. The students were given as much time as needed to complete the instruments, and the packets were then collected.

### Analysis of Data

One two-way analysis of variance was performed on the data. The analysis employed a MANOVA with two dependent variables: loneliness and self-esteem. The independent variables for the analysis were gender (male and female) and levels of academic achievement (high, medium, and low). Results of evaluation of assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, linearity, and multicollinearity were satisfactory.

A Wilke's Lambda (Linton & Gallo, 1975) test of significance was conducted. Since the Wilke's Lambda showed statistical significance, univariate F tests for each of the dependent variables were employed to determine how the independent variables contribute to the variance of the dependent variables. Since there was statistical significance, Eta squared (1-Wilke's Lambda) was utilized to determine strength of association.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results and statistical analysis utilized to test the three hypotheses. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the dependent variables, loneliness and self-esteem, and the independent variables, gender and academic achievement level.

With the use of Wilke's Lambda criterion, the combined dependent variables (Table 2) were significantly affected by both academic achievement level ( $F(2,246)=3.84, p<.05$ ) and gender ( $F(2,246)=5.17, p<.05$ ), and the interaction between gender and academic achievement level ( $F(2,246)=2.55, p<.05$  (Table 3). This indicated that a significant construct was formed between the combined dependent variables with each of the independent variables. The strength of association between the independent variables and the combined dependent variables, loneliness and self-esteem (the construct of social esteem), was calculated using 1-Wilke's Lambda. Therefore, gender (1-WL=.04), academic achievement level (1-WL=.06), and the interaction between gender and academic achievement level (1-WL=.04) was significant. This indicated that the amount of variation shared by the dependent construct of social esteem and gender and academic achievement level, and the interaction between gender and academic achievement level was 4%, 6%, and 4%, respectively.



Table 2

Group Means of Self-Esteem, Loneliness, and Academic Achievement Level  
(n=252)

	Self-Esteem	S.D.	Loneliness	S.D.	Academic Achievement	S.D.
Males <sup>1</sup>	19.31	8.16	39.81	11.07	3.508	.308
Males <sup>2</sup>	12.33	6.82	39.69	11.24	2.368	.172
Males <sup>3</sup>	16.53	8.67	44.50	13.03	1.645	.300
Females <sup>1</sup>	20.00	7.56	41.67	12.57	3.509	.326
Females <sup>2</sup>	18.04	8.64	42.06	11.07	2.356	.154
Females <sup>3</sup>	29.00	9.18	46.15	8.92	1.612	.329

Male<sup>1</sup> - High Academic Achievement Level

Male<sup>2</sup> - Medium Academic Achievement Level

Male<sup>3</sup> - Low Academic Achievement Level

Female<sup>1</sup> - High Academic Achievement Level

Female<sup>2</sup> - Medium Academic Achievement Level

Female<sup>3</sup> - Low Academic Achievement Level

Table 3

Multivariate Test of Significance

Effect	Test Name	Value	Approximate F	Degrees of Freedom	Significance
Gender by A.A. Level	Wilkes	.95965	2.549	2,246	.039
A.A. Level	Wilkes	.94019	3.836	2,246	.004
Gender	Wilkes	.95951	5.169	1,246	.006

## Hypotheses

H<sub>1</sub>

A significant multivariate F was found for the interaction of gender and academic achievement level, and the construct of loneliness and self-esteem ( $F(2,246)=2.56, p<.05$ ). The Roy-Bargman Stepdown F showed that, of the two dependent variables, self-esteem was the only significant variable that contributed to the interaction between gender and academic achievement level ( $F(2,245)=25.13, p<.05$ ). The strength of the relationship between self-esteem and the interaction, as measured by  $1-WL=.04$ , indicated that 4% of the statistical variance associated with self-esteem could be attributed to the interaction of gender and academic achievement level. (See Table 4 for results of Roy-Bargman Stepdown F analysis.) Subsequent univariate analysis, as shown in Table 5, supported this interaction ( $F(4,492)=5.13, p<.05$ ). A posteriori comparison between means and the dependent variable, self-esteem, indicated that

Table 4

Roy-Bargman Stepdown F Analysis of Two Ordered Dependent Variables for Gender  
by Academic Achievement Level

Variable	Hypotheses Mean Square	Error Mean Square	Stepdown F	Hypotheses Degrees of Freedom	Error Degrees of Freedom	Sig. of F
<u>Gender by A.A.</u>						
Loneliness	2.900	128.945	.0224	2	246	.978
Self-Esteem	663.482	135.000	5.1273	2	245	.007
<u>A.A.</u>						
Loneliness	512.318	128.945	3.972	2	246	.020
Self-Esteem	501.701	135.000	3.716	2	245	.026
<u>Gender</u>						
Loneliness	238.057	128.945	1.846	1	246	.175
Self-Esteem	1139.009	135.000	8.436	1	245	.004

Table 5

Test of Loneliness, Self-Esteem, and Their Interaction

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Univariate F	Degrees of Freedom	Stepdown F	Degrees of Freedom	Sig. of F
A.A. Level	Loneliness	3.972	2,246	3.972	2,246	.020
	Self-Esteem	4.560	2,246	3.716	2,245	.026
Gender	Loneliness	1.846	1,246	1.846	1,246	.175
	Self-Esteem	9.211	1,246	8.436	1,245	.004
A.A. Level by Gender	Loneliness	.022	2,246	.022	2,245	.978
	Self-Esteem	2.505	2,245	5.127	2,245	.007

females with low academic achievement levels scored significantly lower on the ISE ( $X=29.00$ ) than did any of the other five groups examined. However, both males ( $X=12.33$ ) and females ( $18.04$ ) who scored in the mid-range of academic achievement level had the highest self-esteem scores of their perspective groups. Also, the lowest male self-esteem score (high male academic achievement level,  $X=19.31$ ) was only slightly lower than the highest female self-esteem score (medium female academic achievement level,  $X=18.04$ ). After the pattern of differences measured by self-esteem, a nonsignificant difference was found for loneliness, as measured by The UCLA Loneliness Scale (stepdown  $F(4,492)=.98$ ,  $p<.05$ ). (See Table 4 for Roy-Bargman Stepdown F analysis.) This information was also supported by results from the univariate F tests.

## H<sub>2</sub>

H<sub>2</sub> examined (tested) the relationship between academic achievement level and gender, and loneliness. Academic achievement level and gender had no statistically significant effect on loneliness among college students, at the .05 level of significance, in this study ( $F(4,492)=.98$ ,  $p>.05$ ). The univariate F and the Roy-Bargman indicated that loneliness did not contribute to the construct of social esteem when self-esteem was entered into the equation (see Tables 4 and 5).

## H<sub>3</sub>

There was a statistically significant interaction on self-esteem by the independent variables of academic achievement level and gender. A unique contribution to predicting the differences between males and females was made by the construct of loneliness and self-esteem ( $F(1,246)=5.17$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The results of the Roy-Bargman Stepdown F's revealed that,

in order of priority, self-esteem made the greatest contribution ( $F(1,246)=8.436, p<.05$ ); however, loneliness ( $F(1,246)=1.846, p>.05$ ) was not found to be significant when ordered among the prioritized dependent variables. The strength of association between the dependent variable self-esteem, as indexed by 1-Wilke's Lambda, was .04, indicating that 4% of the variance associated with self-esteem can be attributed to gender. (See Table 4 for the Roy-Bargman Stepdown Analysis.)

Examination of the univariate F's supported the stepdown analysis, in that statistically significant differences were found between the mean scores of males and females, as measured by the ISE ( $F(1,246)=9.211, p<.05$ ). (See Table 5 for a description of the univariate F's.) Males appeared to report higher levels of self-esteem ( $X=16.05$ ) than did females ( $X=22.34$ ). In contrast, a nonsignificant difference was found between males and females regarding loneliness, as measured by The UCLA Loneliness Scale ( $F(1,246)=1.846, p>.05$ ) (see Table 5).

#### Summary

With the use of Wilke's Lambda criterion, the combined dependent variables were significantly affected by both academic achievement level ( $F(2,246)=3.84, p<.05$ ) and gender ( $F(2,246)=5.17, p<.05$ ), and the interaction between gender and academic achievement level ( $F(2,246)=2.55, p<.05$ ) (Table 6). This indicated that a significant construct had been formed between loneliness and self-esteem, and gender and academic achievement level.

The data indicated that, of the six groups tested, females with low academic achievement levels also had the lowest scores in terms of self-esteem, as measured by the ISE ( $X=29.00$ ). However, both males and females who scored in the medium range of academic achievement level had

the highest self-esteem scores of their prospective gender groups. Also, the lowest male self-esteem score ( $X=19.31$ ) was only slightly, but not statistically significantly lower, than the highest female self-esteem score ( $X=18.04$ ). After the pattern of differences among all six groups regarding self-esteem were examined in conjunction with loneliness, a nonsignificant difference was found for loneliness, as measured by The UCLA Loneliness Scale.

Table 6

Tukey's Specific Comparison Test Between Gender and A.A. Level  
on Self-Esteem

	Y1 (19.31)	Y2 (12.33)	Y3 (16.53)	Y4 (20.00)	Y5 (18.04)	Y6 (29.00)
Y1 (19.31)	--	6.97*	2.77	.69	1.26	9.70*
Y2 (12.33)	--	--	4.20*	7.67*	5.71*	6.67*
Y3 (16.53)	--	--	--	3.47	1.51	12.47*
Y4 (20.00)	--	--	--	--	1.96	9.00*
Y5 (18.04)	--	--	--	--	--	10.96*
Y6 (29.00)	--	--	--	--	--	--

\*qR (252 @ .05)=4.06;  $p < .05$

Note: Y1 - Males (4.0-2.94) Academic Achievement Level  
 Y2 - Males (2.93-2.13) Academic Achievement Level  
 Y3 - Males (2.12-1.00) Academic Achievement Level  
 Y4 - Females (4.0-2.94) Academic Achievement Level  
 Y5 - Females (2.93-2.13) Academic Achievement Level  
 Y6 - Females (2.12-1.00) Academic Achievement Level

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether a relationship existed among loneliness and self-esteem, and gender and academic achievement among college students. Loneliness has become a major problem in the lives of many people, including college students. One may experience loneliness at any age; yet, college in particular can be a time when life circumstances can expose the student to a greater degree of loneliness than at any other stage of life. The transition from high school to college precipitates stress and change in the student's life (Jones, 1978). Woodward (1972) surveyed several age groups and found college students to be more lonely than any group surveyed. Americans live in a mobile society, where people leave loved ones, or are left behind, on a regular basis (Donson & Georges, 1967). The breakup of marriages and families, of communities and neighborhoods, of friendships and working relationships, or of organizations and partnerships are relatively frequent occurrences (Simmell, 1949).

Since loneliness has been related empirically to numerous problematic conditions (for example: anxiety, low self-esteem, physical illness) (Jones, 1978), an important question is: "What causes loneliness?" Lonely college students have been shown to have a low self-estimate (self-esteem) of themselves, and apparently expect others to share in that view (Jones, 1978).



There have been few empirical studies examining the relationship between loneliness and self-esteem, and academic achievement level and gender. Russell, Peplau, and Ferguson (1981) conducted two studies with a college-age population in order to establish validity for The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale. In the first study, tests for gender differences were conducted. A significant gender difference was reported, with males scoring higher than females on The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale. Conversely, no significant differences were found regarding gender in the second study.

In another study, Booth (1984) examined the relationship between academic performance, gender, and loneliness. No significant differences were found among any of the variables. Investigating the relationship between loneliness and self-esteem, Goswick and Jones (1981) found an inverse relationship between loneliness and self-esteem (the higher the loneliness score, the lower the self-esteem score). The literature did not offer conclusive evidence concerning the relationship between loneliness and self-esteem, and gender and academic achievement level. Therefore, this study was designed to fill a gap in the research by focusing on gender and academic achievement level in relation to loneliness and self-esteem in college students.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

H<sub>1</sub>. There is no significant interaction between gender, levels of academic achievement, and the construct of social esteem, when social esteem is operationalized as degrees of loneliness and self-esteem.

H<sub>2</sub>. There is a significant interaction between gender, levels of academic achievement, and loneliness among college students.

H<sub>3</sub>. There is a significant interaction between gender, levels of academic achievement, and self-esteem among college students.

Data were collected from 252 subjects (college sophomores, juniors, and seniors) enrolled in social science courses. The students were divided into six groups, representing male and female, and three categories (high, medium, and low academic achievement levels). Each subject was administered The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona, 1980), the Index of Self-Esteem (Hudson, 1982), and a demographic questionnaire.

A 2 x 3 multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the data and test the three hypotheses. Gender and academic achievement level (three levels) were the independent variables. The dependent variables were loneliness and self-esteem.

Examination of the data showed that the dependent variables were significantly related to both gender and academic achievement level. This indicated that a significant construct (social esteem) had been formed between the combined dependent variables and each of the independent variables.  $H_1$  was rejected after examination of the results for a two-way interaction between gender and academic level on the construct of social esteem (loneliness and self-esteem) indicated a significant difference.  $H_2$  was not rejected after examination of the data found no significant interaction between gender and academic achievement level, and loneliness.  $H_3$  was rejected after an examination of the data indicated a significant relationship between gender and academic achievement level, and self-esteem.

### Conclusions

On the basis of the results of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Although the literature appeared inconclusive in regards to the interaction of gender and academic achievement level, and loneliness and self-esteem, it did indicate a trend toward linking the variables. This study indicated that there is an interaction between gender and academic achievement levels which creates differences in the construct of social esteem. The construct of social esteem includes the dependent variables loneliness and self-esteem.

Further examination of the data indicated that self-esteem was the variable within the construct where a significant difference occurred. Females generally scored lower on the self-esteem index than did males, and females with low academic achievement levels scored lower on the self-esteem index than did any of the six groups included in the study. This supported the work done by Ickes and Layden (1978), which indicated that people with low self-esteem will devalue themselves and see themselves as failures in social and other situations. Wells and Marwell (1976) also emphasized the correspondence between people's personal ideals or aspirations and their accomplishments. Since Young (1980) and others (Moore & Sermat, 1974; Paloutzian & Ellison, 1979; Wood, 1978) suggested that loneliness and self-esteem are highly correlated, it is not surprising that females also had a higher mean score on The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale, indicating that they felt lonelier than the males included in this study. One possible explanation for females experiencing more loneliness than males is that more of the male students in the sample were married, which supported Sullivan (1953), who spoke of loneliness in terms of not having a significant other in one's life. Also, marriage may not be the buffer against loneliness for females as it is for males. In their study of married couples, Russell, Peplau, and Perlman (1982) found that marriage tends to isolate the female (except

for kin relationship contact, which increases for females after marriage), but not for the male. Another possible explanation for females experiencing more loneliness than males is that a greater percentage of males were employed, thus giving them more opportunities to interact with other people.

2. Singularly, there was no significant interaction between gender, academic achievements, and loneliness. This supported the study by Booth (1984), who found no significance between the variables of gender, academic performance, and loneliness. Also, Gordon (1976) reported finding no significant difference between male and female scores on The UCLA Loneliness Scale. Donson and Georges (1967, p. 186), in their work with college students, supported the current findings when they stated that "Loneliness has no boundaries of generation, race, culture, or gender."

3. The result of this study was consistent with the research by Simpson and Boyle (1975), who found significance between self-esteem, gpa, and gender. In another study, Lynch and Clark (1985) found that self-esteem and performance were significantly related. The present study also indicated differences in gender in terms of self-esteem. This was consistent with the findings of Stein and Bailey (1973), who reported that females tend to have lower levels of aspirations, score lower on self-esteem scales, experience more anxiety about failure, and harbor more feelings of personal responsibility when failure occurs. Perhaps a reason for females scoring lower on the self-esteem scale is that some females have accepted the role as a low achiever in order to maintain relationships with some males who may be threatened by "high achieving" females. Baumrind (1972), in a study to determine the competence of males and females on a mechanical task, found that females who perform the task better than males often rate their performances lower than

males. When shown that their performances were superior to that of the males, the females' attributed their performances to luck, or to the poor performance of the males. Another possible reason for the lower self-esteem scores by females in this study was that parents tend to expect less of females than they do of males. Parents expect sons to become doctors and daughters to become nurses.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are presented as a result of this study:

1. Although this research supported the theory that gender and academic achievement level interact to make a significant difference on the variables loneliness and self-esteem, future research should test the hypothesis in a nonacademic population.

2. Due to the lack of information concerning race in the literature on loneliness or self-esteem, it is recommended that the study be duplicated with race being an independent variable. It is also recommended that the study include data on racial groups who are a minority in one institution and a majority in another.

3. Because this study was conducted using a college-age population, it is recommended that further research be done employing various age groups, especially the elderly, since the literature referred to the elderly as second only to college students as viewing themselves as lonely.

4. The literature did not address economic status and its relationship to loneliness. Future research in this area could shed light on the question, "Does money bring intimacy/happiness?" and "Does it prevent loneliness?"

5. Because this study employed mostly in-state students, where home and family are relatively close geographically, further research is recommended using a private institution where most of the students are from various geographical areas.

6. Due to developmental issues concerning intimacy, future research is recommended using age as a variable with the dependent variables of loneliness and self-esteem.

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## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION



## Demographic Information

Please supply the following information:

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: Single \_\_\_\_\_ Married \_\_\_\_\_

If you are single, do you live alone? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Circle your class: Freshman    Sophomore    Junior    Senior

Write your accumulated Grade Point Average (estimate if you are not sure)

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your college major? \_\_\_\_\_

Check the type of organizations of which you are an active member:

Fraternity \_\_\_\_\_ Sorority \_\_\_\_\_ Church \_\_\_\_\_ Political \_\_\_\_\_

Special interest club (flying club, backpacking club, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Educational organizations (French club, agricultural club, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Others \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

APPENDIX B

THE REVISED UCLA LONELINESS SCALE

**Directions:** Indicate how often you feel the way described in each of the following statements. *Circle* one number for each.

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>
*1. I feel in tune with the people around me	1	2	3	4
2. I lack companionship	1	2	3	4
3. There is no one I can turn to	1	2	3	4
*4. I do not feel alone	1	2	3	4
*5. I feel part of a group of friends	1	2	3	4
*6. I have a lot in common with the people around me	1	2	3	4
7. I am no longer close to anyone	1	2	3	4
8. My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me	1	2	3	4
*9. I am an outgoing person	1	2	3	4
*10. There are people I feel close to	1	2	3	4
11. I feel left out	1	2	3	4
12. My social relationships are superficial	1	2	3	4
13. No one really knows me well	1	2	3	4
14. I feel isolated from others	1	2	3	4
*15. I can find companionship when I want it	1	2	3	4
*16. There are people who really understand me	1	2	3	4
17. I am unhappy being so withdrawn	1	2	3	4
18. People are around me but not with me	1	2	3	4
*19. There are people I can talk to	1	2	3	4
*20. There are people I can turn to	1	2	3	4

\* The total score on the scale is the sum of all 20 items. Items with asterisks should be reversed (i.e., 1 = 4, 2 = 3, 3 = 2, 4 = 1) before scoring. The four item survey version of the UCLA Loneliness Scale consists of items 1, 13, 15 and 18. Reprinted from "The revised UCLA Loneliness Scale: Concurrent and discriminant validity evidence" by D. Russell, L. A. Peplau, and C. E. Cutrona, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1980, 39(3), p. 475. Copyright 1980 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted by permission.

APPENDIX C

INDEX OF SELF-ESTEEM

This questionnaire is designed to measure how you see yourself. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can by placing a number by each one as follows:

1. Rarely or none of the time
2. A little of the time
3. Sometimes
4. A good part of the time
5. Most or all of the time

Please Begin:

1. I feel that people would not like me if they really knew me well \_\_\_\_\_
2. I feel that others get along much better than I do \_\_\_\_\_
3. I feel that I am a beautiful person \_\_\_\_\_
4. When I am with other people I feel they are glad I am with them \_\_\_\_\_
5. I feel that people really like to talk with me \_\_\_\_\_
6. I feel that I am a very competent person \_\_\_\_\_
7. I think I make a good impression on others \_\_\_\_\_
8. I feel that I need more self-confidence \_\_\_\_\_
9. When I am with strangers I am very nervous \_\_\_\_\_
10. I think that I am a dull person \_\_\_\_\_
11. I feel ugly \_\_\_\_\_
12. I feel that others have more fun than I do \_\_\_\_\_
13. I feel that I bore people \_\_\_\_\_
14. I think my friends find me interesting \_\_\_\_\_
15. I think that I have a good sense of humor \_\_\_\_\_
16. I feel very self-conscious when I am with strangers \_\_\_\_\_
17. I feel that if I could be more like other people I would  
have it made \_\_\_\_\_
18. I feel that people have a good time when they are with me \_\_\_\_\_
19. I feel like a wallflower when I go out \_\_\_\_\_
20. I feel I get pushed around more than others \_\_\_\_\_
21. I think that I am a rather nice person \_\_\_\_\_
22. I feel that people really like me very much \_\_\_\_\_
23. I feel that I am a likable person \_\_\_\_\_
24. I am afraid I will appear foolish to others \_\_\_\_\_
25. My friends think very highly of me \_\_\_\_\_

VITA <sup>2</sup>

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Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: LONELINESS AND SELF-ESTEEM AS RELATED TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT  
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