Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS
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The first finding of our research i.e., high lonely subjects show poorer academic performance than low lonely subjects, is in the expected direction. It has been established beyond doubt that people experiencing loneliness often feel depressed, anxiety, anger and develop poor self concept. Moreover, lonely individuals are often overly self critical and self absorbed in their unhappiness. These characteristics of the individual are bound to impair their academic performance. Numerous studies have provided empirical support to this contention Goswick and Jones (1981), for instance have demonstrated a positive relationship between loneliness and poor self concept and Bartlett (2002) has found that lonely individuals are depressed, they lack a clear purpose (meaningful goals) and develop feelings of inadequacy (self esteem), which, in turn, lead to low level of academic achievement. Similarly, Demir and Tarhan (2001) have found positive relationship between loneliness and social dissatisfaction and their results also revealed a significant relationship between achievement scores and loneliness, indicating that as the level of loneliness increased, academic achievement decreased. The first finding of our research is in total agreement with the findings cited above. Our finding also supports the view that loneliness induces depression, anxiety and poor self concept, which, in turn, causes poor academic performance (Ashtiani, Ejei, Khodapanahi and Tarkhorani, 2007).
Another potential explanation of our present finding may be the fact that a positive relationship has been found between loneliness and neuroticism, between loneliness and satisfaction with life, between loneliness and anxiety, and between loneliness and maladjustment (Neto and Barros, 2000, 2003; Tumkaya, Aybek and Celik, 2008). It is very much obvious that a person, who is neurotic, dissatisfied with his life, anxious and maladjusted, is likely to show poorer academic performance as compared to a person who does not have these characteristics. The first finding of our investigation provides strong empirical support to this contention by showing that high lonely subjects secured poorer marks in their examination as compared to low lonely subjects.

Personality factors like low self esteem, social anxiety and shyness significantly contribute in the development of loneliness (Jong-Gierveld, 1987). These personality characteristics are assumed to impair academic performance. Our first finding provides empirical support to this assumption. Our finding is also consistent with the findings obtained by Ashtiani, Ejei, Khodapanahi and Tarkhorani (2007), who have demonstrated a negative significant relationship between self-concept, self-esteem and depression which decreases academic achievement.

Last but not the least important explanation of our finding, i.e., high lonely subjects show poorer academic performance as compared to low lonely subjects, is consistent with the previous results (Perry et. al., 1988; Boulton & Smith, 1994; Austin & Joseph, 1996; Ladd, Kochenderfer & Coleman.
The second finding of our research, i.e., subjects with high level of neuroticism and subjects with low level of neuroticism did not differ with respect to their academic performance, is an addition in the already existing gravely conflicting findings regarding the impact of neuroticism on academic performance. There are good number of studies which have found negligible or no relationship between neuroticism and academic performance (Mwamwenda, 1995; McKenzie, Taghavi-Khonsary and Tindell, 2000; Furnham, Chamorro-Premuzic and McDougall, 2003), other investigators have demonstrated negative correlation between neuroticism and academic performance strongly suggesting that neuroticism impairs academic performance. (Savage, 1962; Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham, 2003; Diseth, 2003; Laidra, Pullman and Allik, 2006; Pallegama, Ariyasinghe and Parera, 2007). To add fuel to fire, interestingly some researchers have shown facilitative effect of neuroticism on academic performance (Furneaux, 1956, 1962; Broadbent, 1958; Lynn, 1959; Lynn and Gordon, 1961; Upmanya, 1974). Still other investigators have observed a U- Shaped relationship between neuroticism and academic success (Lynn and Gordon, 1961; Savage, 1962; McKenzie, Taghavi-Khonsary and Tindell, 2000). Such a curvilinear relationship was explained in terms of Yerkes-Dodson law.
which states that the optimum drive required for efficient learning is inversely related to the complexity of the task. Hence, Lynn (1959) has reported neuroticism impairs performance when the task is difficult but facilitates performance when the task is simple or easy. Similarly, McKenzie, Taghavi-Khonsary and Tindell (2000), have observed negligible or negative correlation between neuroticism and academic achievement for the low super-ego group of subjects but observed positive correlation between neuroticism and academic achievement for the high super-ego group of subjects.

In the light of these conflicting findings regarding the impact of neuroticism on academic performance, the second finding of our research is in agreement with the findings obtained by (Mwamwenda, 1995; McKenzie, Taghavi-Khonsary and Tindell, 2000; Furnham, Chamorro-Premuzic and McDougall, 2003), who have also demonstrated that neuroticism has no effect on academic performance.

The third finding of our research i.e., internally oriented subjects and externally oriented subjects did not significantly differ in their academic performance, is surprising and in the unexpected direction, hence needs deep and through analysis. In view of the characteristics of internally oriented and externally oriented subjects, a positive relation between locus of control beliefs and achievement is logical. Logically, if success is positively valued, people who feel more able to control outcomes should exert more effort and hence should get greater success as compared to externally oriented people who
firmly believe that the outcome is the result of luck and chance. For example, an internal student, who studies hard and done well on a test, will attribute the success to own actions. This student will then continue to study hard, because an expectation to succeed in the future is established. Moreover, the individual feels a positive emotional response of pride for the successes, which strengthens the expectation and the motivation. On the other hand, an external student may study and do well on a test, but may believe the success is due to an easy test, or luck, or a variety of other factors. This student does not attribute success to own actions, and so may not consistently study. Therefore, the more internal the perspective, the greater the expectation, and the stronger the motivation to achieve. Thus numerous studies have shown that internally oriented subjects show superior academic performance than externally oriented subjects (Phares, 1976; Lefcourt, 1976; Bar-Tal and Bar-Zohar, 1977; Wiest, Wong and Kreil, 1998; Carden, Bryant and Moss, 2004; Gifford, Mianzo and Briceno-Perriott, 2006; Kirkpatrick, Stant, Downes and Gaither, 2008). The second finding of our investigation is not in agreement with the finding cited above. However, our finding provides strong empirical support not only to Phares, Wilson and Klyver’ (1971) hypothesis but also to the findings obtained by previous researchers. Phares, Wilson and Klyver’ (1971), hypothesized that the generalized expectancies for internal verses external control of reinforcement would operate in a situation which does not provide any very explicit cues that external forces may have influenced one's
performance, but would recede in importance in a situation which does provide such explicit cues. The academic setting provides a number of explicit cues relating to the course and the instructor arousing specific expectancies regarding the locus of blame for poor academic performance. On the basis of Phares' hypothesis, it would be predicted that individual differences in locus of control would be unrelated to attribution of responsibility for poor academic performance. Thus, the second finding not only provides empirical support to this hypothesis, but also is in agreement with the finding obtained by Brenenstuhl and Badgett (1977) and Gadzella, Williamson and Ginther (1985), who did not find any significant correlation between academic achievement and locus of control.

Another possible explanation of the second finding may be given in terms of size of the sample. As states elsewhere there were 50 subjects in each group which may not be considered as large sample. It is possible that if large sample is used the result may be reversed. Hence further research is needed in future using large sample. The finding of such a study may resolve the controversy regarding the impact of locus of control on academic performance. The foregoing discussion clearly highlighted the existing controversy regarding the influence of locus of control on academic performance. We have just noticed that a large number of studies have found that internally oriented subjects show better academic performance than externally oriented subjects. But at the same time other studies, though smaller in number, demonstrated no
relationship between locus of control and academic performance, i.e., internal and external oriented subjects did not differ with respect to academic performance. Hence, an exhaustive study is needed to resolve this controversy.

All the interactional effects, i.e., interaction between loneliness and neuroticism; interaction between loneliness and locus of control; interaction between neuroticism and locus of control and interaction among loneliness, neuroticism and locus of control are insignificant. These insignificant interactional effects suggest that all the independent variables worked independently. For example, the insignificant interaction between loneliness and neuroticism suggest that the academic performance of high lonely and low lonely subjects is independent of neuroticism. The other insignificant interactional effects may possibly be explained in the same way.

The overall findings of the present research at least highlight the fact that student should not feel lonely whether they are at home or in hostels, for loneliness is found to have profound adverse effects on academic performance. On the basis of our findings, it is strongly recommended to parents and academic administrators to leave no stone unturned to evolve a mechanism by which a student may not develop a feeling of loneliness. In this sense the findings of the present research are very important for parents and academic administrators.