

Perceived Loneliness and Emotional Maturity: A Comparative Study Among University Student

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Abstract—Loneliness and emotional maturity are key psychological factors that affect students' social adjustment, well-being, and mental health during young adulthood. This study investigated the levels of perceived loneliness and emotional maturity among college students and compared these variables based on gender and residential status (hostellers and day scholars). A purposive sample of 100 students aged 18–26 years from institutions in Delhi NCR, Uttar Pradesh, and Gurugram was assessed. Students were screened for loneliness and then evaluated for emotional maturity. Statistical analyses included descriptive measures, t-tests, and ANOVA. Findings showed moderate loneliness and average to moderately high emotional maturity. Gender differences were observed in loneliness but not in emotional maturity, while residential status showed no significant impact on either variable. Overall, emotional maturity appeared stable across groups, whereas loneliness varied by gender. The results emphasize the need for better emotional regulation and social support to promote students' psychological well-being.

Index Terms—perceived loneliness, emotional maturity, college students, gender differences, hostellers, day scholars

I. INTRODUCTION

Human beings are inherently social in nature, and their psychological growth and well-being is deeply rooted in the quality of their interpersonal relationships.

From early childhood to adulthood, individuals rely on meaningful social connections to experience affection, belongingness, emotional security, and self-worth. These relationships serve as essential sources of support, identity formation, and mental stability. Consequently, the presence or absence of satisfying relationships plays a critical role in

determining emotional health and overall life satisfaction. In contemporary society, despite increased opportunities for communication and social interaction through technological advancements, experiences of emotional disconnection and loneliness have become increasingly prevalent. This paradox highlights that mere physical proximity or social contact does not guarantee emotional fulfillment. Instead, what truly matters is the individual's subjective perception of the adequacy and quality of relationships.

Among the various psychosocial challenges faced by individuals today, perceived loneliness has emerged as a significant concern due to its strong association with emotional distress, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and impaired social functioning. At the same time, emotional maturity has gained recognition as a crucial psychological strength that enables individuals to regulate emotions effectively, maintain balanced relationships, and cope with life stressors in adaptive ways. Emotional maturity influences how individuals interpret social situations, respond to interpersonal conflicts, and manage their emotional needs. Therefore, understanding the interaction between perceived loneliness and emotional maturity becomes essential for explaining individual differences in social adjustment and psychological resilience. An exploration of these constructs is particularly relevant during adolescence and early adulthood, developmental stages characterized by emotional sensitivity, identity formation, and increased dependence on peer acceptance. To comprehend this relationship more comprehensively, it is necessary to examine the concepts of perceived loneliness and emotional maturity in detail.

1.1 Perceived Loneliness

1.1.1 Concept and Definition

Perceived loneliness refers to a subjective psychological state characterized by feelings of emotional emptiness, social dissatisfaction, and a sense of isolation that arises when an individual believes their social or emotional needs are not adequately fulfilled. Unlike objective isolation, which concerns the actual number of social contacts, perceived loneliness emphasizes the personal interpretation and evaluation of one's relationships.

Perlman and Peplau (1981) defined loneliness as *"the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient either quantitatively or qualitatively."* This definition underscores the importance of cognitive appraisal; loneliness depends not on how many people one interacts with, but on whether those interactions provide emotional satisfaction and meaningful connection.

Thus, a person may experience loneliness even while living within a family or social group if they feel misunderstood, unsupported, or emotionally disconnected.

1.1.2 Nature and Characteristics of Perceived Loneliness

Perceived loneliness is multidimensional and encompasses emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects.

Emotional Component

Emotionally, loneliness is often accompanied by sadness, emptiness, longing, and a persistent desire for companionship. Individuals may feel neglected or unvalued, leading to emotional distress and low morale.

Cognitive Component

Cognitively, loneliness involves negative self-perceptions and distorted beliefs about social acceptance. Individuals may interpret neutral interactions as rejection, develop feelings of unworthiness, and assume that others are uninterested in forming relationships with them.

Behavioral Component

Behaviorally, loneliness may manifest as withdrawal

from social interactions, avoidance of communication, reduced participation in group activities, and reluctance to initiate new relationships. Ironically, such behaviors can further intensify isolation and perpetuate the cycle of loneliness.

1.1.3 Types of Loneliness

Weiss (1973) proposed two distinct forms of loneliness:

Emotional Loneliness

This arises from the absence of a close emotional bond or attachment figure, such as a partner, best friend, or confidant. Emotional loneliness is often deeper and more painful because it involves the lack of intimacy and emotional security.

Social Loneliness

This occurs when individuals lack a broader social network or sense of belonging within a group or community. It reflects limited social integration rather than absence of intimate relationships. Both types may coexist and significantly affect psychological well-being

1.1.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Perceived Loneliness

Cognitive Discrepancy Theory

This theory suggests that loneliness results from a perceived mismatch between desired and actual relationships. When expectations regarding intimacy, support, or companionship remain unmet, individuals experience emotional dissatisfaction. Attachment Theory Bowlby's attachment framework emphasizes early childhood experiences. Insecure attachments may lead to fear of rejection, mistrust, and dependency in adulthood, increasing susceptibility to loneliness.

Social Needs Theory

According to this perspective, humans possess fundamental needs for belongingness, affection, and validation. Failure to satisfy these needs results in emotional discomfort and loneliness.

1.2 Emotional Maturity

1.2.1 Concept and Definition

Emotional maturity refers to an individual's ability to understand, regulate, and express emotions in a balanced, socially acceptable, and adaptive manner. It reflects emotional stability, self-control, empathy,

responsibility, and resilience in the face of life's challenges.

Singh and Bhargava (1990) described emotional maturity as a condition in which emotional responses are integrated with rational thinking, enabling effective adjustment to personal and social situations. An emotionally mature person does not suppress emotions but handles them constructively and appropriately.

1.2.2 Components of Emotional Maturity

Emotional maturity is a multidimensional construct comprising several interrelated components:

Emotional Stability

Ability to remain calm and composed during stressful situations without excessive emotional fluctuations.

Emotional Progression

Growth in emotional understanding, expression, and management over time.

Social Adjustment

Capacity to maintain harmonious and cooperative interpersonal relationships.

Personality Integration

Consistency between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, resulting in authentic and balanced functioning.

1.2.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Emotional Maturity

Emotional Intelligence Theory

Emphasizes emotional awareness, regulation, empathy, and interpersonal skills as key determinants of adaptive functioning.

Psychosocial Development Theory

Erikson's model suggests emotional maturity develops through successful resolution of psychosocial crises. Failure, particularly at the stage of intimacy versus isolation, may result in loneliness and emotional instability.

Humanistic Perspective

Humanistic theorists view emotional maturity as a result of self-acceptance, authenticity, and personal growth, enabling individuals to respond to experiences realistically and constructively.

1.3 Relationship Between Perceived Loneliness and Emotional Maturity

Perceived loneliness and emotional maturity share a dynamic and reciprocal relationship. Emotional maturity significantly influences how individuals interpret social interactions, manage emotional needs, and cope with perceived rejection or isolation. Individuals with higher levels of emotional maturity tend to possess effective coping strategies, realistic expectations from relationships, and the ability to communicate their feelings openly. They are better equipped to tolerate temporary social disconnection without experiencing intense distress, thereby reducing their vulnerability to loneliness.

In contrast, individuals with lower emotional maturity may exhibit impulsivity, emotional instability, dependency, and hypersensitivity to social feedback. Such tendencies often lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and difficulties in maintaining meaningful relationships. They may interpret neutral or ambiguous situations as rejection, which further reinforces feelings of loneliness. Consequently, emotional immaturity can contribute to maladaptive behaviors such as withdrawal, excessive reliance on others, or avoidance of social interaction, thereby perpetuating the experience of perceived loneliness.

Empirical evidence consistently indicates a negative relationship between emotional maturity and perceived loneliness, suggesting that greater emotional maturity is associated with lower levels of loneliness. Emotional maturity thus functions as a protective psychological resource that enhances resilience, promotes social adjustment, and fosters satisfying interpersonal relationships.

1.4 Need and Significance of the Study

Understanding the interplay between perceived loneliness and emotional maturity holds considerable significance for psychological research and practice. As loneliness increasingly affects mental health across age groups, identifying factors that buffer against it becomes essential. Emotional maturity may serve as one such protective factor that can be cultivated through counseling, life skills training, and emotional education programs. Insights into this relationship can contribute to the development of preventive and therapeutic interventions aimed at enhancing emotional competence, improving social

relationships, and promoting overall well-being. Therefore, an in-depth examination of these constructs and their interrelationship is both theoretically meaningful and practically valuable in the field of psychology.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

College students often experience social transitions, academic stress, and separation from family, which may increase perceived loneliness and affect their psychological well-being. Emotional maturity, on the other hand, helps individuals regulate emotions, cope with challenges, and maintain healthy relationships. Understanding the relationship between perceived loneliness and emotional maturity is important for identifying factors that influence students' adjustment and mental health. Therefore, the present study assessed these constructs using the UCLA Loneliness Scale and the Emotional Maturity Scale to examine their association and differences across gender and residential status.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. (Niazi, 2025) The study explored the impact of hostel life on psychological well-being and loneliness among nursing students. The research involved 150 hostel-residing students aged 18–25 years. Loneliness was measured using the UCLA Loneliness Scale, and psychological well-being was assessed through self-reports of distress. Results indicated that first-year students experienced greater loneliness and emotional distress than senior students. A strong positive relationship was found between loneliness and psychological distress, while longer hostel stay was associated with better emotional adjustment.

2. (Hamid, 2025) The study conducted on adolescents living in hostels examined the relationships between social support, loneliness, and emotional regulation. The sample included 100 adolescents (approximately 75 boys and 15 girls) selected through purposive sampling. Measures used were the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), the UCLA Loneliness Scale, and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ). Results showed that social support was negatively correlated with loneliness and positively correlated

with emotional regulation. Social support also predicted reductions in loneliness and improvements in emotional control, with girls demonstrating higher emotional regulation and perceived support than boys.

3. (Singh, 2025) The study conducted on young adults compared loneliness and psychological distress between individuals living with their families and those living away from home. The sample included 60 participants (30 living with family and 30 living away). Loneliness was measured using the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3), while psychological distress was assessed using the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10). Results revealed that individuals living away from family reported significantly higher loneliness and distress compared to those residing with their families.

4. (Shree, 2025) The study conducted on undergraduate medical students investigated the prevalence of binge-watching behavior and its relationship with loneliness. A total of 400 MBBS students were selected using multistage random sampling. Data were collected using a pretested demographic questionnaire, the UCLA Loneliness Scale, and the Binge-Watching Addiction Questionnaire. Results showed a high prevalence of binge-watching (64%), with problematic binge-watching significantly associated with higher loneliness and reduced participation in recreational activities. The study highlighted the need for preventive interventions to promote healthier lifestyles.

5. (Mufina Begam, 2025) The study conducted on undergraduate students examined the influence of residential status on stress and emotional maturity. The sample consisted of 92 students (46 hostellers and 46 day scholars). Stress levels were assessed using the 52-item Measuring Stress Questionnaire, and emotional maturity was measured using the 48-item Emotional Maturity Scale. Findings revealed that hostellers experienced higher stress, but no significant differences were found in emotional maturity between the two groups.

6. (Jo, 2025) The study explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and loneliness among

young adults facing social, academic, and professional transitions. The participants consisted of individuals aged 18–25 years (exact sample size not specified). Emotional intelligence was assessed using the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), while loneliness was measured through the Loneliness Inventory Scale. The findings revealed a significant negative correlation between emotional intelligence and loneliness, indicating that individuals with higher emotional intelligence experienced lower levels of loneliness. Gender was found to significantly predict emotional intelligence, with females scoring slightly higher than males, whereas living arrangement had no significant effect on emotional intelligence. However, living situation significantly influenced loneliness, with hostellers reporting higher loneliness compared to day scholars. The study highlights the importance of strengthening emotional intelligence to reduce loneliness, especially among students residing in hostels.

7. (Sunny, 2018) The study conducted on college students aged 18–20 investigated emotional maturity differences between hostellers and day scholars who experienced loneliness. The sample consisted of 120 students (60 hostellers and 60 day scholars; 30 boys and 30 girls in each group). The Perceived Loneliness Scale (LSCALE by Dr. Praveen Kumar) identified lonely students, and emotional maturity was measured using the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS by Dr. Yashvir Singh). Results indicated no significant residential differences, but significant gender differences were observed, with girls showing greater emotional maturity. Most lonely students were found to be emotionally immature.

8. (Prajapati, 2025) The study explored emotional maturity and self-concept among postgraduate students living with families and those residing in hostels. The research included 40 students (20 hostellers and 20 day scholars). Emotional maturity was measured using the Emotional Maturity Scale by Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava, while self-concept was assessed using the Self-Concept Questionnaire by Dr. R.K. Saraswat. Results showed significant differences in both emotional maturity and self-concept between the two groups, along with a moderate positive correlation between the two variables.

9. (Krishnaveni, 2024) The study conducted on higher secondary students aimed to assess their emotional maturity levels using a survey approach. The sample included 300 students selected purposively. Emotional maturity was measured using the Emotional Maturity Scale, and statistical analyses such as mean, standard deviation, percentage analysis, and t-test were applied. Results showed significant differences based on gender and residence, with hostellers demonstrating better emotional maturity than day scholars.

10. (Ravichandra, 2024) The study explored the concept of emotional maturity as a behavioural pattern that reflects an individual's ability to appropriately control, understand, and manage their own emotions while being sensitive to the emotions of others. Emotional maturity enables individuals to respond to situations in a balanced, thoughtful, and effective manner. The primary objective of the paper was to develop a comprehensive understanding of emotional maturity among secondary school students by synthesizing findings from multiple previous studies. It also aimed to examine gender differences in emotional maturity to determine whether boys and girls vary in their emotional development. Through the review of existing literature, the investigator identified several research gaps that require further exploration, thereby providing direction for future studies to enhance knowledge in this area.

11. (George, 2023) The study conducted on young hosteller students aimed to examine the influence of perceived loneliness on academic adjustment. Participants were selected purposively from colleges in Kerala (exact sample size not specified). Loneliness was assessed using the Perceived Loneliness Scale by Jha (1971), and adjustment was measured through the Adjustment Scale by Anderson, Guan, and Koc (2016). Statistical tests, including correlation, ANOVA, and t-test, revealed that perceived loneliness significantly affected overall academic adjustment, demonstrating that higher loneliness negatively influenced students' ability to adapt academically.

12. (Ganie, 2020) The study explored the relationship between emotional maturity and self-

efficacy among university hostellers. The sample included 200 hosteller students (100 males and 100 females) from Kashmir University. Emotional maturity was measured using the Emotional Maturity Scale by Singh and Bhargava, while self-efficacy was assessed using the General Self-Efficacy Scale by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). Results showed a significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and emotional immaturity, suggesting that students with higher self-belief demonstrated better emotional stability and independence.

13. (N, 2019) The study explored emotional maturity among adolescent day scholars and hostellers to understand how family bonding and hostel life impact emotional development. The results revealed a significant difference between the two groups, indicating that living arrangements influence emotional maturity. The study emphasized that emotional stability, personality integration, and social adjustment are essential qualities for adolescents and may be shaped by environmental and familial factors.

14. (Nayar, 2018) The study conducted on school-going adolescents aimed to determine the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and perceived loneliness and to compare hostellers with day scholars. The sample consisted of 80 students aged 11–17 years, including 40 hostellers and 40 day scholars. Psychological variables were assessed using the UCLA Loneliness Scale, the Screen for Child Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders (SCARED – child version), and the 11-Item Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale (KADS-11). Statistical analysis revealed that hostellers scored higher across most domains of anxiety, depression, and loneliness. However, significant differences were observed only for panic disorder and loneliness, while other anxiety domains showed no meaningful difference.

15. (Ishaq, 2017) The study explored the relationship between self-esteem and loneliness among university students residing in hostels. The sample comprised 400 hostel-living students aged 18–24 years, including 198 males and 202 females, selected from universities in Punjab, Pakistan. Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965), and loneliness was assessed through the UCLA Loneliness Scale. Correlation

analysis showed a significant negative relationship, indicating that students with higher self-esteem experienced lower loneliness.

16. (Bhattacharjee, 2016) The study explored emotional maturity among young adults by examining differences based on gender and living arrangements. The research included 200 postgraduate students (100 males and 100 females) aged 21–23 years from Tripura University, with equal numbers of hostellers and day scholars. Emotional maturity was assessed using the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) developed by Singh and Bhargava. Findings showed that male students were more emotionally mature than female students, and hostellers demonstrated higher emotional maturity than day scholars. However, no significant gender differences were found within each residential group separately.

17. (Bhattacharjee, 2015) The study explored perceived loneliness among postgraduate students by comparing differences based on residential status and gender. The sample consisted of 200 students aged 22–24 years, including 100 hostellers and 100-day scholars, with equal male and female representation. Loneliness was assessed using the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980) along with a background information schedule. Findings indicated that hostellers experienced significantly higher loneliness than day scholars, and female students reported greater loneliness than males across both groups.

18. (Agarwal, 2014) The study done on adolescents investigated the relationships among adjustment, emotional control, and perceived loneliness. Although the exact sample size and scales were not clearly specified, the study focused on understanding how emotional regulation and coping abilities influence feelings of loneliness. Findings from theoretical and empirical analysis indicated that poor adjustment and weak emotional control were associated with higher loneliness, negatively affecting adolescents' psychological well-being.

19. (Hasnain, 2012) The study explored the relationship between perfectionism, loneliness, and life satisfaction among engineering students. The

sample comprised 143 male students with a mean age of 21.43 years. Instruments used included the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3), and the Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale. Findings indicated that self-oriented perfectionism was positively associated with life satisfaction, whereas socially prescribed perfectionism showed no significant relationship. Loneliness levels did not significantly alter these associations.

20. (Rajakumar, 2012) The study conducted on higher secondary students investigated emotional maturity and academic achievement in economics. A large sample of 1,060 students participated. Emotional maturity was measured using the Emotional Maturity Scale constructed and validated by K.M. Roma Pal (1984), while academic achievement was assessed using an investigator-made test. Results showed significant differences in emotional maturity based on gender and residential status, although students demonstrated high academic performance overall.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design:

Data collection was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) was administered to college students aged 18–26 years to assess their levels of perceived loneliness. Based on the obtained scores, students with higher loneliness levels were selected as the sample group. In the second stage, the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) was administered to this selected sample, and their scores were analyzed and compared to interpret the results.

3.2 Aim:

To compare the levels of perceived loneliness and emotional maturity between day scholars and hostelers.

3.3 Objectives:

- To see the difference between Male and Female on their levels of Perceived Loneliness
- To see the difference between Male and Female on their levels of Emotional Maturity

- To see the difference between Hostler and Day Scholar students on their levels of Perceived Loneliness.
- To see the difference between Hostler and Day Scholar students on their levels of Emotional Maturity.

3.4 Variables:

Independent variable: Emotional maturity

Dependent variable: Perceived loneliness

3.5 Hypothesis:

Correlational Hypothesis:

- Emotional Maturity is associated with Perceived loneliness.

Hypothesis:

- There will be a significant difference between male and female students in their levels of Perceived Loneliness.
- There will be a significant difference between male and female students in their levels of Emotional Maturity. Same as above
- There will be a significant difference between Hostler and Day Scholar students in their levels of Perceived Loneliness.
- There will be a significant difference between Hostler and Day Scholar students in their levels of Emotional Maturity.

3.6 Sample:

The population for the study comprised college students aged 18–26 years who were pursuing different academic courses in Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Gurugram. The total sample included 100 students, consisting of 50 day scholars and 50 hostelers, with equal representation of boys and girls in each group. Hosteller population: Private and Government college within Delhi NCR, Uttar Pradesh and Gurugram. Day scholar population: Private and Government college within Delhi NCR, Uttar Pradesh and Gurugram.

The UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) was used as a screening instrument to assess perceived loneliness among the students. Those who obtained higher scores on the scale were selected as the final sample. Subsequently, the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) was administered to these selected participants to

measure their level of emotional maturity.

3.7 Sample Size:

Total participant population: 100 students with perceived loneliness.

Hosteller students with perceived loneliness: A sample of 50 hosteller students consisting of 21 boys and 29 girls.

Day scholar students with perceived loneliness: A sample of 50 day scholar students consisting of 21 boys and 29 girls.

3.8 Inclusion Criteria:

- Students aged 18–25 years (or your selected age group).
- Currently enrolled undergraduate/postgraduate students.
- Students residing either in hostel or with family (day scholars) for at least 6 months.
- Students willing to participate voluntarily.
- Students able to understand the questionnaire language.

3.9 Exclusion Criteria:

- Students with diagnosed severe psychological or psychiatric disorders.
- Students staying temporarily in hostel/PG for less than 6 months.
- Part-time or distance education students.
- Incomplete or improperly filled questionnaires.
- Students unwilling to give consent.

3.10 Tools:

The UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3), developed by the University of California, Los Angeles, is a self-report measure used to assess perceived loneliness and social isolation. It consists of 20 items rated on a four-point scale ranging from *Never (1)* to *Often (4)*. After reversing positively worded items 9 items (1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19, 20), the scores are summed to obtain a total ranging from 20 to 80, where higher scores indicate greater loneliness. The scale shows strong reliability, with high internal consistency ($\alpha \approx 0.89-0.94$) and good test-retest reliability (0.73–0.85), along with satisfactory validity, making it a dependable tool for assessing loneliness in research and clinical settings.

The Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) developed by Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava (1999) was employed to assess the level of emotional maturity among participants. The scale consists of 48 items and is designed as a self-report measure based on a five-point response format. Higher scores on the scale indicate greater emotional immaturity, whereas lower scores reflect higher emotional maturity. The EMS evaluates multiple dimensions of emotional maturity, including emotional stability, emotional progression, social adjustment, personality integration, and independence. The scale demonstrates acceptable reliability, with a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.75, and a validity coefficient of 0.64.

3.11 Procedure:

Prior to data collection, consent forms were distributed to hosteller and day scholar students to obtain their voluntary participation. Those who agreed to participate were administered the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3), developed at the University of California, Los Angeles, to assess their levels of perceived loneliness. Students who obtained higher loneliness scores were selected as the study sample.

Subsequently, the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) developed by Yashvir Singh was administered to the selected participants. The obtained scores were analyzed, interpreted, and compared to derive the study results.

3.12 Ethical Considerations:

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study. Their anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the research process. Students enrolled in psychology courses were excluded to avoid response bias. No misleading information or prior hints about the questionnaires were provided. The tools were distributed randomly rather than targeting individuals with loneliness. Participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty, and no monetary incentives were offered. Additionally, supervised psycho-education on managing perceived loneliness and improving emotional regulation was provided for participants' benefits.

IV. RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N = 100)

Variable	n	Min	Max	M	SD
Gender	100	1	2	1.48	0.50
Residential Type	100	3	4	3.50	0.50
Loneliness (UCLA Loneliness Scale)	100	50	76	56.39	6.08
Emotional Maturity (Emotional Maturity Scale)	100	72	218	148.94	28.36

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Gender and residential type are coded categorical variables.

Table 2: Emotional maturity is associated with perceived loneliness.

Pearson Correlation Between Loneliness and Emotional Maturity (N = 100)

Variable	1	2
1. Loneliness (UCLA Loneliness Scale)	—	-.07
2. Emotional Maturity (Emotional Maturity Scale)	-.07	—

Note. Values represent Pearson’s *r*. *p* = .466 (two-tailed). The correlation is not statistically significant.

Pearson’s correlation analysis revealed a weak and non-significant negative relationship between loneliness and emotional maturity, $r(98) = -.07$, $p = .466$, indicating that perceived loneliness was not significantly associated with emotional maturity.

Table 3: Perceived Loneliness variation among Male and Female
Descriptive Statistics for Loneliness by Gender (N = 100)

Variable	Gender	n	M	SD
Loneliness (UCLA Loneliness Scale)	1	52	54.81	4.52
	2	48	58.10	7.06

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Replace gender codes (1, 2) with Male/Female if applicable.

Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Group Differences on Loneliness (N = 100)

Variable	t	df	p	Mean Difference	SE	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
Loneliness (UCLA)	-2.76	78.87	.007	-3.30	1.20	-5.68	-0.91

An independent-samples *t*-test supported this hypothesis, revealing a statistically significant difference in loneliness scores between the two groups, $t(78.87) = -2.76$, $p = .007$, with a mean difference of -3.30 .

Table 4: Emotional Maturity variation among Male and Female

Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Maturity by Gender (N = 100)

Variable	Gender	n	M	SD
Emotional Maturity (Emotional Maturity Scale)	1	52	145.12	28.69
	2	48	153.08	27.70

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Replace gender codes (1, 2) with Male/Female if applicable.

Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Group Differences on Emotional Maturity (N = 100)

Variable	t	df	p	Mean Difference	SE	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
Emotional Maturity (EMS)	-1.41	98	.161	-7.97	5.65	-19.18	3.24

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to examine group differences in emotional maturity, which revealed a statistically insignificant difference between the two groups, $t(98) = -1.41$, $p = .161$, indicating a mean difference of -7.97 .

Table 5: Perceived Loneliness variation among Hosteller and Day Scholars (both male and female) Descriptive Statistics for Loneliness by Residential Type (N = 100)

Variable	Group	n	M	SD
Loneliness (UCLA Loneliness Scale)	Day Scholars	50	55.44	4.75
	Hostellers	50	57.34	7.09

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Independent-Samples t-Test Comparing Group Differences in Loneliness (N = 100)

Variable	t	df	p	Mean Difference	SE	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
Loneliness (UCLA)	-1.58	85.65	.119	-1.90	1.21	-4.30	0.50

An independent-samples *t*-test indicated that loneliness scores did not differ significantly between the two groups, $t(85.65) = -1.58, p = .119$, with a mean difference of $-1.90, 95\% \text{ CI} [-4.30, 0.50]$.

Table 6: Emotional Maturity variation among Hostellers and Day Scholar Descriptive Statistics for Loneliness and Emotional Maturity by Residential Type (N = 100)

Variable	Group	n	M	SD
Emotional Maturity (Emotional Maturity Scale)	Day Scholars	50	152.42	28.96
	Hostellers	50	145.46	27.59

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Independent-Samples t-Test Comparing Group Differences in Emotional Maturity (N = 100)

Variable	t	df	p	Mean Difference	SE	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
Emotional Maturity (EMS)	1.23	98	.222	6.96	5.66	-4.27	18.19

An independent-samples *t*-test revealed no significant difference in emotional maturity scores between the two groups, $t(98) = 1.23, p = .222$, with a mean difference of $6.96, 95\% \text{ CI} [-4.27, 18.19]$.

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Results

The present study examined perceived loneliness and emotional maturity among college students and explored whether these variables differed across gender and residential status. Grounded in the theoretical perspectives outlined in the introduction—particularly Cognitive Discrepancy Theory, Attachment Theory, and Emotional Intelligence frameworks—the study sought to understand how subjective feelings of social disconnection relate to the development of emotional regulation and adjustment capacities during young adulthood. The findings provide partial support for the hypotheses and offer meaningful insights into the psychosocial experiences of college students.

Descriptive statistics indicated that participants experienced moderate levels of perceived loneliness and average to moderately high emotional maturity. This pattern is consistent with developmental literature suggesting that late adolescence and early adulthood involve emotional transitions, identity exploration, and increased social demands, which may simultaneously evoke feelings of isolation while promoting emotional growth. Thus, the coexistence of moderate loneliness and adequate emotional maturity reflects the complex nature of this developmental stage.

The correlation analysis revealed a weak and non-significant relationship between loneliness and emotional maturity. Although the review of literature suggested that emotionally mature individuals should demonstrate better coping and reduced loneliness, the present findings indicate that these constructs may operate relatively independently. While emotional maturity involves regulation, stability, and social adjustment, loneliness is primarily a subjective perception influenced by situational and environmental factors. Students may therefore feel lonely despite possessing adequate emotional control. This result contrasts with studies reporting significant negative associations between emotional competence and loneliness, but aligns with perspectives that loneliness is not solely a function of emotional immaturity, but also of contextual circumstances such as relocation, academic stress, or reduced social support.

With regard to gender differences, a significant difference was found in perceived loneliness, whereas emotional maturity did not differ significantly between males and females. The significant gender difference in loneliness is supported by several studies reviewed earlier. For instance, prior research has documented higher loneliness among female students, possibly due to greater emotional sensitivity and heightened awareness of interpersonal relationships. Socialization patterns may also make females more comfortable acknowledging and reporting feelings of loneliness, while males may suppress or underreport such emotions. Therefore, the current finding is consistent with the broader literature indicating gender-based variations in emotional experiences.

In contrast, the absence of gender differences in emotional maturity suggests that both male and female students develop similar levels of emotional stability and coping skills during college years. This finding supports studies that emphasize the role of environmental exposure and life experiences over biological sex in shaping emotional maturity. It also aligns with research indicating that emotional growth occurs through social learning, academic challenges, and peer interactions that affect students similarly regardless of gender.

The analysis of residential status (day scholars versus hostellers) revealed no significant differences in either loneliness or emotional maturity. These findings correspond with several studies in the review that reported minimal or no residential effects on emotional maturity. Although some researchers have suggested that hostellers may experience greater loneliness due to separation from family, the present results suggest that peer bonding, shared living environments, and campus engagement may buffer these effects. At the same time, day scholars may encounter commuting stress or limited social interaction after classes, which may balance out potential advantages of living at home. Thus, residential context alone may not be a decisive factor in determining emotional well-being.

Overall, the findings both support and extend the literature reviewed. Consistent with earlier work, gender differences emerged in loneliness but not in

emotional maturity, and residential status showed limited influence. However, the absence of a significant relationship between loneliness and emotional maturity suggests that these constructs should be conceptualized as distinct yet complementary aspects of psychological functioning. Emotional maturity may help individuals manage distress, but it does not necessarily eliminate the subjective experience of loneliness.

From a theoretical standpoint, the results reinforce the view that loneliness is a cognitive–emotional appraisal of relationship adequacy rather than merely a deficit in emotional skills. From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight the need for institutional interventions that address both constructs separately. Counseling services, peer-support groups, and emotional regulation training may strengthen coping abilities, while social engagement programs and mentoring initiatives may reduce loneliness by enhancing connectedness and belongingness.

In conclusion, the present study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by clarifying the complex relationship between perceived loneliness and emotional maturity among college students. By integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical findings, the study underscores that loneliness is influenced more by subjective and social factors, whereas emotional maturity reflects broader personality development. Together, these insights can guide preventive mental health strategies within educational settings.

5.2 *Limitations of the Study*

- The sample size was relatively small and limited to only 100 college students, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to the wider student population.
- Participants were selected from a single institution/region, and therefore cultural, social, and environmental variations were not adequately represented.
- The study relied exclusively on self-report scales such as the UCLA Loneliness Scale and the Emotional Maturity Scale, which may be affected by response bias, social desirability, or inaccurate self-evaluation.

- The cross-sectional research design measured variables at only one point in time, making it difficult to establish causal relationships between perceived loneliness and emotional maturity.
- Only demographic variables such as gender and residential status were considered, while other important factors (family environment, socio-economic background, personality traits, academic stress, and peer relationships) were not controlled.
- The study focused only on the age group of late adolescence/early adulthood (college students), limiting the applicability of findings to other age groups.
- Lack of qualitative methods (interviews, case studies, or observations) restricted a deeper understanding of students' personal emotional experiences.
- Temporary moods or situational stress at the time of testing might have influenced participants' responses.

5.3 *Future Applications and Implications*

- Future research should include larger and more diverse samples from multiple colleges and regions to improve external validity and generalizability.
- Longitudinal studies may be conducted to track changes in loneliness and emotional maturity over time and to determine cause-effect relationships.
- Mixed-method approaches combining quantitative scales with qualitative interviews can provide richer and more meaningful insights.
- Additional psychological variables such as self-esteem, coping skills, resilience, social support, and mental health indicators should be included for a more comprehensive understanding.
- Colleges can implement screening and counseling programs to identify students experiencing loneliness or emotional difficulties at an early stage.
- Psycho-educational workshops on emotional regulation, stress management, and interpersonal skills can be organized to enhance emotional maturity.
- Peer mentoring groups and social engagement

activities may help reduce feelings of isolation and promote belongingness among students.

- Teachers, parents, and counselors should provide consistent emotional support and guidance to foster healthy emotional development.
- The findings can guide institutional policies aimed at strengthening campus mental health services and improving overall student well-being.

VI. CONCLUSION

The present study explored the levels of perceived loneliness and emotional maturity among college students and compared these factors based on gender and residential background. Standardized tools, including the UCLA Loneliness Scale developed at the University of California, Los Angeles and the Emotional Maturity Scale by Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava, were used to assess these variables. The results showed that students generally experienced moderate feelings of loneliness along with average levels of emotional maturity. The analysis revealed a significant difference in loneliness between male and female students, whereas emotional maturity did not vary significantly across gender or residential groups. Furthermore, the association between loneliness and emotional maturity was found to be weak and statistically non-significant, indicating that the two constructs may function independently rather than directly influencing one another. Overall, the findings suggest that loneliness may be shaped more by personal perceptions and situational experiences, while emotional maturity appears relatively consistent across different demographic groups. These outcomes emphasize the importance of providing institutional support through programs that improve emotional coping skills and encourage social connection among students. Future studies involving larger and more diverse samples are recommended to strengthen the generalizability and deepen the understanding of these relationships.

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