Loneliness in millenial generation

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Abstract

Loneliness is a condition where there is a difference between the relationship that an individual has with the relationship that the individual expects, both in the quality and quantity. This study aims to give an overview of loneliness in the Indonesian millennial generation. Research on loneliness is important due to its large impact on Describing the psychological condition of teenagers and the large population of millennials in Indonesia. The purpose of this study is to describe how lonely the millennial generation is in Indonesia. This study was conducted with 168 individuals who belong to the millennial generation. Millennials are individuals born in the period of 1982-1999. The data collection method of this research is questionnaire distributed online. This study uses quantitative methods with descriptive analysis. The results of this study showed that the level of loneliness in the millennial generation in Indonesia was in the moderate category, the type of loneliness in the unclassified category. This study also shows that gender provides a more diverse overview of the level and type of loneliness in millennials.

INTRODUCTION

Each individual born in the same time span is called a generation. One example of these generations is the millennial generation. The millennial generation is defined as individuals born between 1980 and 2000 (Ali & Purwandi, 2017). This generation is called millennial because it grew up in the era of technology that was starting to develop. The results of Pew Research Center research found that the use of technology is part of the lifestyle of the millennial generation (Vogels, 2019). One form of this technology is social media. According to Setiadi (2014) social media is a tool that can be used in various two-way activities such as information exchange, collaboration, and self-introduction with written, visual, and audiovisual media. This social networking application is created by imitating communication patterns in real life, but on a larger scale and aims to connect more people (Fahrimal, 2018).

This connection can be seen in an annual survey conducted by We Are Social and Hootsuite (Kemp, 2020) where internet usage in Indonesia rose by 17% to 175.4 million, while social media increased by 8.1% to 160 million users from the previous year. According to Satria (2018), because the use of social media allows people to interact without a time limit, they can interact with more people and have a

connection with them. Connection may provide happiness for an individual because according to Myers (2010) being connected to others is one of the elements that may create one's happiness.

However, Ahmad (2020) stated that the excessive use of social media by the millennial generation may cause cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes which ultimately result in social problems, including stress, depression, and loneliness.

Despite the high use of social media, the interaction in those platforms cannot replace direct social interaction. The millennial generation is still said to be individualistic and lacks a social life; in this case is a direct interaction with other people (Solin 2018). This is a new problem for the millennial generation. As reported in the Yougov survey (in Arbolario, 2019), 30% of millennials admit always experiencing loneliness, 27% say they do not have friends to share stories with, and 30% say they do not have friends. It means that 1 in 5 millennials have absolutely no friends to talk to about life problems (Arbolario, 2019).

Research on loneliness was conducted by Yaswi (2019) to 988 individuals who were in the early adulthood stage. The results of the study showed that all of the subjects experienced loneliness. The highest level of loneliness was found in moderate levels of loneliness with a total of 289 subjects or 29.3% of the total number.

Bruno (in Rizki, 2020) states that loneliness is a condition when people feel they lack meaningful relationships with other people. This situation is usually accompanied by a sense of alienation in the community. According to Peplau and Perlman (1982) loneliness is a condition where there is a difference between the reality and the expected relationship. Weiss (in Svendsen, 2017), Perlman and Peplau (1998) divide loneliness into two : a) emotional loneliness, which is loneliness that occurs due to the loss of an attached figure, and b) social loneliness, which is loneliness that occurs as a result of the lack of fulfillment of social needs. Considering the impact of loneliness which can threaten the social life of the millennial generation, this research is expected to provide information in understanding and finding out loneliness in the millennial generation.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach, with descriptive analysis techniques. Descriptive analysis was chosen to get a more comprehensive picture of loneliness in the millennial generation. Using purposive sampling technique, 168 valid subjects were chosen out of 171 subjects. Valid subjects in this study are those who meet the selection criteria: born between 1982 and1999.

Data retrieval is done by distributing a loneliness scale online via Google Forms. This loneliness scale consists of 52 items which are specifically arranged in two parts: emotional loneliness and social loneliness. This is to facilitate the process of analyzing the type of loneliness. According to Gierveld and Dykstra (2006), aspects of emotional loneliness scale were feeling restless, bored, unloved, and misunderstood. Aspects of social loneliness scale are isolation, rejection, having no friends, and

reluctance to open up. An example of an emotional loneliness scale item is "I often daydream", while an example of a social loneliness item is "I feel like I don't have anyone to talk to". This scale has a reliability coefficient score of 0.882 for emotional loneliness and 0.931 for social loneliness

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Loneliness in General

After loneliness data has been obtained, it is further categorized to find the level of loneliness in the millennial generation. The categorization results show that the percentage of loneliness is high at 1.2%. The percentage of moderate level of loneliness is 73.8%, while the percentage of low-level loneliness is 25%. This means that the majority of the subjects (124 out of 168 individuals) felt a moderate level of loneliness, as shown in Figure 1.
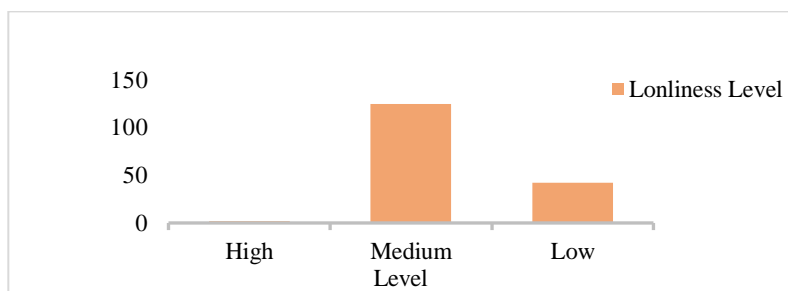

Fgure 1. Loneliness in General

Loneliness level was then categorized to determine the level of loneliness based on the year of birth of an individual. This analysis was conducted in order to map the level of loneliness based on the year of birth in accordance with the criteria of the millennial generation, namely 1982-1999. Figure 2 illustrates the level of loneliness by year of birth.
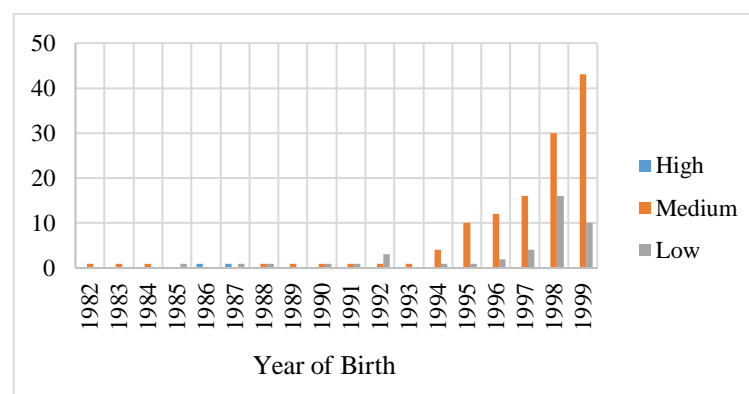

Figure 1. Loneliness Rate by Year of Birth

Graph 2 shows that compared to individuals born in the 1990s (aged 21-29 years), individuals born in the 1980s (aged 30-39 years) have lower levels of loneliness in both categories of low-level loneliness. The year of birth that has the highest point on this graph is an individual born in 1999. The results of the analysis which show that individuals born in the 1900s are more dominant are similar to the findings in a survey by the Mental Health Foundation (Ewens, 2016). The survey found that individuals aged

18-34 admit to being more afraid of being lonely. In other words, compared to individuals born in the 1800s, loneliness tends to be a problem for young individuals or in this study for individuals born in the 1900s.

Loneliness Type

Weiss (in Gierveld et al., 2006) states that there are only two types of loneliness: emotional loneliness and social loneliness. The results of this study showed that only 20 subjects experienced emotional loneliness, while only 15 subjects had social loneliness. The rest (133 subjects) did not meet the criteria for the two categories, so they were included in the third category, namely the unclassified category. Individuals included in the unclassified category are individuals whose social loneliness scores and emotional loneliness scores are the same, so they do not meet the criteria for both. Therefore, most individuals in this study felt the same high degree of loneliness in both types of loneliness (emotional loneliness and social loneliness).

The same high degree of loneliness in these two types of loneliness indicates that an individual can adequately feel both symptoms of loneliness at the same time. This finding is consistent with Bevinn's (2011) concept of loneliness which states that loneliness is a condition that arises due to negative emotional feelings and perceptions of isolation in the social life of the individual. Similar to the work of Bevinn (2011), Svendsen (2017) states that although young adults tend to feel social loneliness, these two types of loneliness (emotional and lonely) usually occur simultaneously. A further description of the types of loneliness is in figure 3.
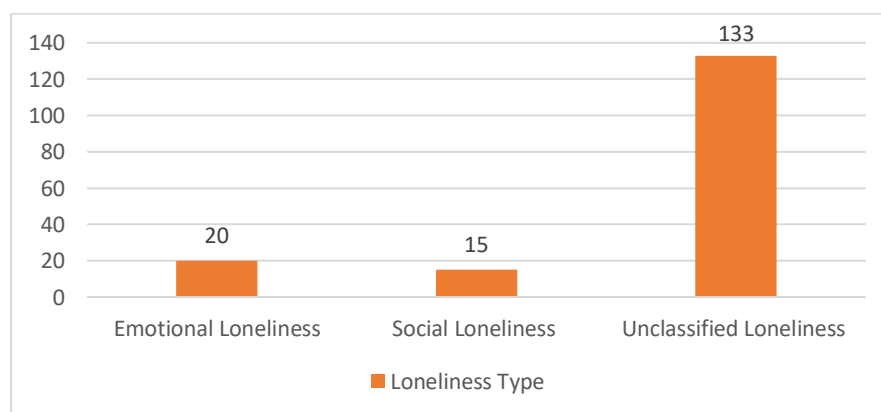

Figure 2. Loneliness Type

Gender

Loneliness by Gender

Independent t-test was conducted to find the tendency of loneliness to a certain gender. Based on the results of the analysis, the data has met the requirements for normality and homogeneity with a p value of 0.719. Based on the norm in the independent test, the t-test is said to be significant if the p value < 0.050. In this study, the p value is 0.719 which means there is no significant correlation between gender and loneliness. Based on these results, it can be concluded that overall loneliness does not have a

tendency towards certain genders. Wedaloka and Turnip (2019), however, found that there is a correlation between gender and loneliness. According to the study, women tend to feel lonelier than men.

Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona (1980) stated that there was no strong correlation between gender and loneliness because of the insignificant difference in loneliness scores. Loneliness scores depend on how the subject fills in the existing loneliness scale. The filling process can be influenced by the subject's own decisions. According to Lau and Gruen (in Yang, 2009), the difference in loneliness scores can occur because of negative connotations and social consequences of loneliness that makes it difficult for an individual to admit that the individual is lonely.

Loneliness Rates by Gender

The results of the analysis show that the percentage of loneliness in women is greater than that of men, in the categories of high, medium, and low loneliness. These results corroborate several previous studies which state that loneliness is higher in women than men. Although higher, subsequent analysis showed that gender did not have a significant association with loneliness levels. This is in accordance with the results of Yaswi's latest research (2019) which states that there is no significant difference in loneliness by gender, and gender does not have a strong attachment to an individual's level of loneliness. Figure 4 depicts the level of loneliness by gender.
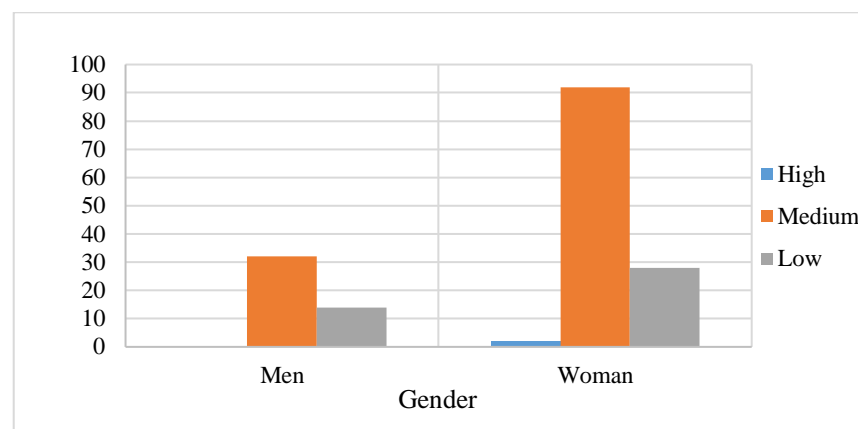

Figure 3. Loneliness Rate

Types of Loneliness by Gender

The results of the study were re-analyzed by relating them to gender to see the types of loneliness by gender in the millennial generation. The results of the analysis show that women have higher levels of loneliness than men do in all types of loneliness: emotional, social, and unclassified loneliness. Figure 5 further summarizes the types of loneliness by gender.
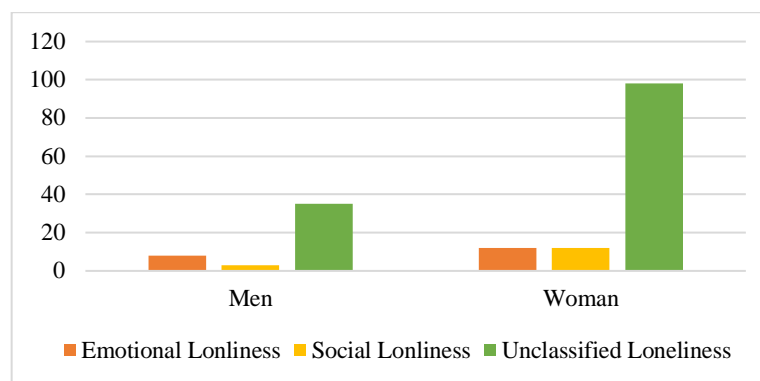
Figure 4. Types of Loneliness by Gender

Fgure 5 shows that loneliness is more common in women than in men in all types of loneliness. The higher levels of loneliness in women than in men can occur because men tend to be more careful and store emotions, including feelings of loneliness, so men are more difficult to express the loneliness they feel. This can happen because there are views that consider loneliness and longing (need for others) are incompatible with normative masculine gender traits (Salo et al., 2020).

Research conducted by Barreto et al (2020) shows that differences in loneliness between women and men can be explained by differences in the set of developmental and socio-cultural mechanisms, such as age, economic status, and income. Even so, the results of the analysis also show that the relationship between gender and the type of loneliness is not significant or not strong, which means that gender does not have much of a role in the type of loneliness experienced by an individual.

The emergence of social media technology today makes it easier for individuals to communicate. Social media is created by imitating social patterns that exist in society and is intended to make it easier for an individual to interact with others, thereby increasing the quality and quantity of social relationships that the individual has. The more and better connected are a person and other people, the more likely the individual will attain happiness, which will indirectly prevent a person from being lonely. The existence of social media has not always been able to replace social interaction in the real world that could strengthen human social relationships. In contrast, research conducted by Pagan (2020) shows that establishing relationships with family through social media can reduce loneliness. However, this is determined by the quality of the previous relationship.

CONCLUSION

The descriptive analysis of 168 valid subjects provided information about loneliness in the millennial generation. The results of this study are grouped into three categories: loneliness in general, types of loneliness, and gender.

The results from the descriptive analysis of the third category, which is loneliness by gender, showed three key findings. First, gender did not make a difference in loneliness scores of the subjects from the millennial generation. Second, in terms of the level of loneliness by gender, this study found that females tend to dominate the three levels of loneliness (high, medium, and low), but further analysis

showed that gender did not markedly affect the level of loneliness in the millennial generation. Finally, this study found that women had the highest levels of loneliness in all types of loneliness (emotional loneliness, social loneliness, and unclassified loneliness); however, deeper analysis showed that the type of loneliness experienced by millennial generation was not differed by gender. As this is a self-report study, the subjects can manipulate the answers. However, the participants in this study were anonymous so this could avoid social-desirability bias

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