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## **SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF WOMEN'S LONELINESS**

Розглядаються чинники переживання самотності жінками з різних соціальних груп, виокремлені в результаті факторного аналізу. Визначено шість структурних факторів: нейротизм, займана позиція особистості щодо себе і до інших, комунікабельність, міжособистісні стосунки, особистісний потенціал, типи поведінки. Кожен з цих факторів має протилежний вектор напрямку спрямованості, що визначає соціальність жінки та інтенсивність переживання нею почуття самотності.

Встановлено, що особистісні якості, які передбачають переживання негативних емоцій, включаючи низьку самооцінку та підвищені вимоги як до себе, так і до інших, депресію, страх і тривогу, невпевненість, емоційну нестабільність, сприяють появі асоціальності (соціальної байдужості) та почуття самотності. Виявлено, що одним з факторів, який дезадаптує особистість жінки в соціумі і робить її самотньою, є саме агресивно-негативна позиція. Також можна стверджувати, що деструктивне спілкування сприяє появі почуття самотності. Визначено, що гармонійність і комфорт в міжособистісних стосунках та рівень почуття самотності залежать від займаної жінкою позиції, дистанції і валентності в них. Встановлено, що жінки, які мають високий особистісний потенціал, меншою мірою схильні переживати почуття самотності, ніж жінки, які мають низький рівень особистісного потенціалу. Показано, що страх і агресія безпосередньо впливають на розвиток пригнічено-агресивного типу поведінки у жінок, який призводить до соціальної дезадаптації, що дозволяє розуміти причину страху самотності і механізм формування в них почуття самотності.

**Ключові слова:** самотність, соціальні групи, соціально-психологічні чинники, нейротизм, позиція особистості, комунікабельність, міжособистісні взаємини, особистісний потенціал, типи поведінки.

## Introduction

**Problem statement.** Recently, the problem of loneliness and its interpretation in sociology and psychology has become especially important. However, researchers agree that loneliness is not only an individual's psychological state, but loneliness also demonstrates people's physical, physiological states and social relationships with others who have different social statuses in a particular social environment. Scientists believe that people in the XXI century feel increasingly isolated, alienated, detached from their entourage (Zavorotnykh, 2009; Ivanchenko, 2008; Levina, 2001).

The feeling of social loneliness is exacerbated during the critical societal changes, leading to transformations of social structures, in general, and some social groups, in particular. Such changes can destroy ties of an individual with their entourage and ties of social groups linking them with the environment where people live as full members of society. This actualizes the problem of an individual's loneliness because social adaptation is complicated (Hawkey & Cacioppo, 2010). Thus, loneliness is determined by factors of both objective and subjective nature, which, in turn, depend on the micro- and macro- environment.

We should note that loneliness, its factors and impact on an individual's personal and social life becomes the more and more popular subject of study in psychology and sociology. However, gender characteristics of loneliness of women belonging to different social groups still remains poorly understood.

## Theoretical review

Numerous scientific studies show that the feeling of loneliness affects an individual's psychological health, causing depression, cognitive disorders, delinquent behaviour (alcoholism or drug addiction) (Cacioppo et al., 2006; Heikkinen & Kauppinen, 2004; Wilson et al., 2007), mental disorders with a risk of suicide up to hospitalization (Stravynski & Boyer 2001; Russell et al., 1997).

Prospective studies have shown that absent or insufficient social support, absent or insufficient personal survival resources contribute to the feeling of loneliness, affecting significantly health, contributing to rapid aging and physiological decline (Hawkey & Cacioppo, 2007). This is especially true for elderly people, who have cardiovascular problems, insomnia and also leads to their increased mortality (Hawkey et al., 2006; Caspi et al., 2006; Cacioppo et al., 2002).

Some studies have shown the importance of psychosocial risk factors, which relates age characteristics, crises and the feeling of loneliness. In

particular, recent studies of older people have identified five independent factors influencing sensitivity to loneliness: marital status, increased loneliness over the past decade, susceptibility to mental illness, current poor health, and worsened well-being to a greater extent than expected (Victor et al., 2005). Adolescence is also characterised by a high risk of loneliness of both health adolescents and adolescents with special needs (autism spectrum disorders, motor and / or sensory impairments) appeared in relationships with peers, which is important for the formation of pro-social self-concept in relationships with same-gender peers and with people of the opposite gender (Bossaert et al., 2011).

The researchers studying loneliness have also identified that person's race / ethnical identity affects the social well-being of minorities (Adams et al., 1989).

Some social-economic factors, namely poor education or financial status, are closely related to deep loneliness (Savikko et al., 2005). In turn, unemployment and low financial status provoke marital discord, misunderstandings and family conflicts, changing social roles, thus causing separation from the family and the feelings of loneliness. Moreover, all family members feel loneliness – adults and children (Baum et al., 1999; Pinquart & Sörensen, 2003). This feeling negatively affects social relationships with colleagues, clients, supervisors, subordinates, and can become a reason why a sense of belonging to a group, which prevents effectively loneliness, is not developed (Hawkley et al., 2005).

It is obvious that the feeling of loneliness affects many areas of human life. The question on the factors causing women's loneliness remains open: it can be social-economic, personal, health factors, relations with entourage, facts of migration, dismissal, etc. (Kulaeva, 2009; Bern, 2001; Ivanova, 2003; Zavorotnykh, 2009; Verbytska, 2002; Lapshina, 2007; Douglas et al., 2009; Shchytyova, 2009; Korchagina, 2008). Basing on above research, we should study women's loneliness in the context of the discussed factors, loneliness manifestations, and groups of membership.

The article **purpose** is to determine psychological factors causing women's loneliness.

## Research methods

An empirical study was conducted to achieve the put-forward goal.

*Methods.* The following psychological examining methods were used in our study: Freiburg Personal Inventory FPI (Form B) (Fahrenberg et al., 1963), adapted by A.O.Krylov and T.I. Ronginskaya (Vansovskaya, 1997); A.T.Jersild's Personal Issues Inventory (Kolesnikova, 2019); the method diagnosing communicative social competence (Fetiskin et

al., 2002); the questionnaire on basic aspirations (Motkov, 1998); the questionnaire on importance of basic needs in the modification proposed by I.A.Akudinova (Pugachev, 2003); T. Ehlers' method examining an individual's motivation for success or for failure avoidance (Raigorodsky, 2002); the test of life-meaningful orientations proposed by D. A. Leontyev (Leontyev, 2000); Differential Loneliness Scale (DLS) proposed by Schmidt & Serma (Tikhonov, 2006); Emotional Loneliness Scale for Adults (SELSA) (Di Tommaso & Spinner, 1993); the questionnaire for the subjective assessment of interpersonal relation (Dukhnovsky, 2007); Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Kletsina, 2003); Burns Relationship Satisfaction Scale (Tikhonov, 2006) and R.S. Eliot's Quality of Life Index (Nikiforova, 2005).

The **sample** consisted of 180 women from different social groups: 1) living at the temporarily occupied territory; 2) religious; 3) staying in a prison colony (PC); 4) having migrated from the temporarily occupied territory; 5) disabled (with hearing impairments); 6) control group (women living in Kyiv).

The obtained empirical data were statistically processed with factor analysis. Data processing was performed using the computer program SPSS 21.0.

## Results and discussion

In our empirical study, we used 14 methods, including 84 indicators, to identify the factors influencing women's feeling of loneliness. Since some indicators from different methods measure the same qualities, it has been hypothesized that the feeling of loneliness can be investigated with fewer indicators. Therefore, factor analysis was used to reduce the data amount and to find new cross factors and generalize the structural components of female loneliness. We applied the method of maximum likelihood with promax rotation (oblique), which allows possible correlations of factors, has less margin of error and greater proximity of factors to the initial indicators. The factor model adequacy was examined with Bartlett's test of sphericity; the test result was statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), which indicated that the indicators correlated. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was also high (0.754).

We have identified six factors of women's feelings of loneliness. These factors contribute 32,6% to the total data variance. This percentage is not high, but it is most common for studies like the one performed by us. After rotation, the first factor accounted for 3.1%, the second did 3.1%, the third did 3.3%, the fourth did 2.7%, the fifth did 2.7% and the sixth did 1.1%. It is important to note that the selected "promax" rotation allows correlations

among factors, that is why the total variance summed by factors is not be equal to the obtained percentage of the total explained variance.

To verify the factoring correctness for six factors determined with Kaiser criterion, we used scree test (Fig. 1).

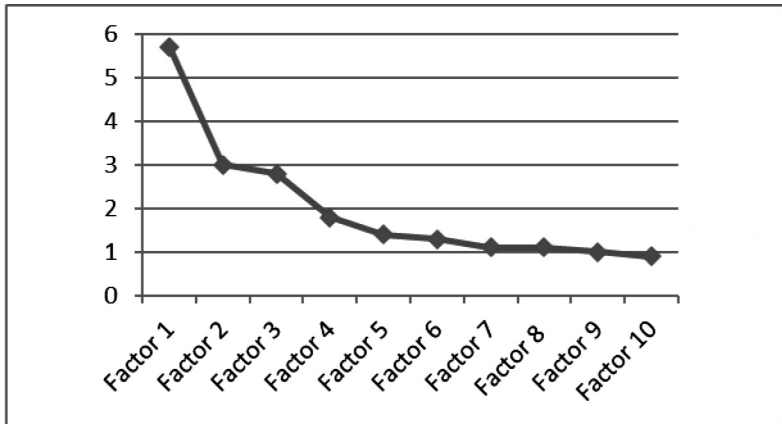


Fig.1. Graph of eigenvalues

Fig. 1 traces the first six factors, where eigenvalue exceeds one. Thus, the scree test does not contradict Kaiser criterion and allows us to make stop at the sixth factor and do not to use all subsequent components.

We should also note that the chi-squared test obtained for our study has a value higher than  $p > 0.005$ , namely  $p = 0.852$ ; this means that factor analysis with the determined six factors can satisfactorily explain correlations of the obtained indicators.

Thus, we have identified six social-psychological factors in the structure of women's loneliness: neuroticism, an individual's position concerning herself and other people, sociability, interpersonal relationships, personal potential, behavioural types.

**Factor 1. Neuroticism** (3.1% of variance). This factor includes several characteristics (Table 1) and allows us to determine personal traits and qualities contributing to the feeling of loneliness.

*Table 1*

**Factor loads for indicators influencing women’s loneliness  
(Factor 1. Neuroticism)**

<b>Factor load</b>	<b>Factor 1. Neuroticism</b>	
0,748	deviation into pedantry	informality
0,566	perfect love	real ideas on love
0,540	fear of criticism	self-confidence, self-approval
0,525	resentment and bitterness	joy, the ability to forgive
0,484	low self-esteem	high self-esteem
0,401	depression	enthusiasm, activity
0,342	fear to disclose oneself	openness, trust
0,322	fear of being linked and captured	absent fear of relationships
0,276	alienation and isolation	Social involvement and civic-mindedness

The first factor was named “Neuroticism” because the indicators making it up related to personal qualities, developed due to experienced negative emotions, including low self-esteem with high demands to themselves and others, depression, fear and anxiety, insecurity as well as emotional instability. Thus, women from different social groups, who are prone to neuroticism, feel dissatisfied for their inner desires and needs; this, in turn, causes the feeling of inferiority, moral and emotional discomfort. They often find themselves in stressful or unfavourable situations, they feel completely unadapted to the social environment, so alienated and isolated. Thus, we can say that existing neuroticism contributes to women’s asocial attitudes (social indifference) and loneliness. Vice versa, opposite personal qualities, such as openness and trust, self-confidence, high self-esteem, joy, activity, etc. contribute to emotional stability and constructive relationships in society, and therefore, such women do not experience feelings of loneliness.

**Factor 2. An individual’s position concerning herself and other people** (3.1% of variance) includes characteristics (table 2) related with a woman’s position, her attitudes to herself and others and affecting the feeling of loneliness.

*Table 2*

**Factor loads for indicators influencing women’s loneliness  
(Factor 2. An individual’s position concerning herself and other people)**

<b>Factor load</b>	<b>Factor 2. An individual’s position concerning herself and other people: aggressive-negative or positive-indulgent</b>	
0,673	meaninglessness of existence	existing meanings of life
0,574	reactive aggressiveness	proactive calmness (good will)
0,496	Solitude	Sociality
0,490	spontaneous aggressiveness	calmness (even temper)
0,469	feelings of confusion, state of abandonment	light-heartedness, certainty
0,425	freedom of will	selectivity in choice
0,414	discrepancy between real and ideal self	consistent self-concept
0,326	relations with larger groups, society	relations with a small group (family, friends)
- 0,262	failure avoidance	feeling of failure

The second factor “An individual’s position concerning herself and other people: aggressive-negative or positive-indulgent (socially adapted or maladapted)” is based on the ideas of social psychology, where a position is understood a stable system of an individual’s attitudes to society and to him/herself, his/her willingness to implement these attitudes in specific evolving activities. That is, a woman’s position, its pole (orientation) is a way to be included into society: a set of her views, attitudes and beliefs, behavioural reactions, emotional manifestations, skills and corresponding actions that implement her attitude to the world. It is important to note that a chosen position also affects self-concept and determines a women’s place in social relations.

Analyzing the indicators composing of this factor, we can see, on the one hand, an aggressive-negative (anti-social) position, with negative attitudes towards others and oneself; and, on the other hand, a positive-indulgent position, reflecting an individual’s integral active moral quality, tolerance and readiness for constructive interactions with people and groups. Thus, a position chosen by a woman (aggressive-negative or positive-indulgent) affects her social adaptation/ maladaptation. Thus, we can say that one

of the factors that leads to a woman’s social maladaptation and makes her lonely is her aggressive-negative position.

**Factor 3. Sociability** (3.3% of variance) includes characteristics that ensure women’s constructive or destructive interactions (table 3).

*Table 3*

**Factor loads for indicators influencing women’s loneliness  
(Factor 3. Sociability)**

<b>Factor load</b>	<b>Factor 3. Sociability (constructive or destructive interactions)</b>	
0,713	optimism	pessimism
0,609	support	hindering
- 0,603	negative emotions	positive emotions
0,564	interactions with friends and relatives	detachment from loved ones, isolation
0,517	self-control	lack of control

The indicators included into this factor indicate the forms and features of interpersonal contacts. Destructive interactions negatively affect interlocutors, causing negative emotions, and complicate mutual understanding, thereby destroy relationships. During constructive interactions, women-interlocutors have the aim to achieve interpersonal understanding, so they are able to hear and understand each other, to achieve a positive outcome. It is also important that women, who are characterized by constructive communications, have the ability to control their emotions, thoughts and behaviour. Thus, we can say that one of the factors that support women’s loneliness is destructive interactions.

**Factor 4. Interpersonal relationships** (2.7% of variance) explains why women feel loneliness in interpersonal relationships (Table 4).

*Table 4*

**Factor loads for indicators influencing women’s loneliness  
(Factor 4. Interpersonal relationships)**

<b>Factor load</b>	<b>Factor 4. Interpersonal relationships (harmony (comfort) or disharmony (discomfort))</b>	
0,582	tension in relationships	easy relationships

<b>Factor load</b>	<b>Factor 4. Interpersonal relationships (harmony (comfort) or disharmony (discomfort))</b>	
0,515	aggression in relationships	security in a relationship (defence)
0,452	alienation in relationships	interest in relationships
- 0,362	need for respect from others	indifference to public opinion
-0,290	need for self-realization	inaction, insufficiently developed personal potential

The indicators included in the fourth factor are placed on three coordinates describing significant relations and proposed by O.O. Kronik and E.O. Kronik (1998), where a distance (closeness – farness) is determined by alienation or interest in relationships; an attitude (respect – disrespect) is determined by the need for self-realization, respect from others or inaction, underdevelopment of personal potential, indifference to public opinion; a valence (sympathy – antipathy) is determined by aggression, tension in relationships or easiness and a sense of security in them. This means that harmony and comfort in interpersonal relationships and the feeling of loneliness depends on a woman’s position, distance and valence in relationships.

**Factor 5. Personal potential** (2.7% of variance) allows us to see how women’s motivation for self-realization influences their feeling of loneliness (Table 5).

*Table 5*

**Factor loads for indicators influencing women’s loneliness  
(Factor 5. Personal potential)**

<b>Factor load</b>	<b>Factor 5. Personal potential (present or absent motivation for self-realization (successful or unsuccessful))</b>	
0,652	work and career	idleness, degradation
0,615	Health	disease
-0,331	social inclusion, interest	social loneliness
-0,215	need for interpersonal relationships	sufficiency of interpersonal relationships
0,128	sociability	Restraint

Table 5 show the indicators included into the factor “Personal potential” (present or absent motivation for self-realization (successful

or unsuccessful)). These indicators correspond to structure of personal potential, proposed by M.S. Kagan (1972), who examined an individual through the prism of their social activities.

Drawing an analogy between the obtained data and M.S. Kagan's structure of personal potential, we can see that women with high potential are characterized by: sociability and cognition (epistemological component), value orientations acquired during socialization (axiological component), self-acquired and developed skills and abilities to work, self-development, implementation of these abilities in professional work and society as a whole (creative component), existing needs, with their intensity, content, achievement and satisfaction (artistic component). This factor also contains a component that is absent in M.S. Kagan's structure of personal potential, but important for the personal potential: health, both psychological and physical. Thus, we can say that a woman with high personal potential is a future-oriented person, less likely to experience feelings of loneliness than women with low personal potential.

**Factor 6. Behavioural types** (1.1% of variance) show how behaviour can contribute to the feeling of loneliness (Table 6)..

*Table 6*

**Factor loads for indicators influencing women's loneliness  
(Factor 6. Behavioural types)**

<b>Factor load</b>	<b>Factor 6. Behavioural types: depressed-aggressive and active-balanced</b>	
0,434	fear of being left alone	self-confidence, self-importance, self-value
0,360	proneness to conflicts	consistency in the relationship
0,303	family loneliness	existing partner, family
-0,219	instability, aggression	balanced behaviour

The highest values among the indicators included into the sixth factor are fear and proneness to conflicts. Fear is one of the basic emotional reactions that combine high tension, impulsivity and activity. Thus, at the behavioural level, fear leads to increased emotionality, destructive activities, proneness to conflicts and aggression, i.e. regulative mechanisms are weakened. This causes a great desire, on the one hand, to avoid traumatic experiences by using protective behaviour – “avoidance”, and on the other hand, to remove an object that causes fear, by destruction and suppression. Both means are destructive and can be aimed at either social environment or oneself, which

leads to inter- and intra-group conflicts. Therefore, we can conclude that fear and aggression directly affect the appearance of a certain behaviour at women, namely depressed-aggressive, which leads to social maladaptation.

On the contrary, women with active-balanced behaviour, facing a life challenge or danger, show a constructive response, characterized by personal mobilization, self-confidence and active focus on problem solving without destructive consequences for themselves or society.

Thus, constructive behaviour, namely the active-balanced behavioural type, helps to establish interaction both within a group and with members of other groups, thereby eliminating the feelings of loneliness.

## Conclusions

We have identified six cross-factors that influence the feeling of loneliness of women from different social groups. Each factor has two poles, and a woman's sociality and deepness of loneliness depend on what pole is characteristic for her.

We have found out that loneliness experienced by a woman is influenced by the factors:

1) Neuroticism: personal qualities developed because of experienced negative emotions (low self-esteem, depression, fear, anxiety, insecurity, emotional instability, inferiority), as well as dissatisfied inner desires and needs, which causes moral and emotional discomfort, contributing to asociality (social indifference);

2) An individual's position concerning herself and other people: aggressive-negative, which is anti-social and promotes social maladaptation, or positive-indulgent, which integrates with a morally tolerant position and willingness to interact constructively with society, making women socially adapted and reducing their feeling of loneliness;

3) Sociability (constructive or destructive interaction), namely women's willingness and ability to easily establish and maintain positive contacts, both in communications and interactions with other people;

4) Interpersonal relationships (harmonious (comfort) or disharmonious (discomfort)), which can be placed on three coordinates describing significant relationships: distance (closeness – farness), position (respect – disrespect), valence (sympathy – antipathy);

5) Personal potential (present or absent motivation for self-realization (successful or unsuccessful)), which is influenced by the epistemological, axiological, creative, artistic components and health;

6) Behavioural types influencing women's feeling of loneliness: depressed-aggressive or destructive (fear, tension, conflict, aggression, etc.), which contributes to the feelings of loneliness, and active-balanced

or productive (personal mobilization, self-confidence, focus on needs, coherence in relationships), which reduces the feelings loneliness.

**Prospects for further research** are to identify the factors of loneliness characteristic for women from different social groups, and to find corresponding differences in factors.

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## Abstract

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## SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF WOMEN'S LONELINESS

Factors of loneliness experienced by women from different social groups, identified with factor analysis, are considered. Six structural factors were identified: neuroticism, an individual's position in relation to herself and others, sociability, interpersonal relationships, personal potential, behavioural types. Each of these factors has a direction, so determines a woman's sociality or, vice versa, deepness of her loneliness.

We have determined that personal qualities developed due to experienced negative emotions, including low self-esteem, too high demands toward themselves and others, depression, fear and anxiety, insecurity, or emotional instability, contribute to antisocial behaviour

(social indifference) and loneliness. A woman's aggressive-negative position is one of the factors influencing her maladaptation to society and making her feels lonely. We can also argue that destructive communications also contribute to the feeling of loneliness.

We have found that harmony and comfort at interpersonal relationships and loneliness depends on a woman's position in interpersonal relationships, their distance and valence. Women with a high personal potential are less likely to experience feelings of loneliness than women with low personal potential. Moreover, fear and aggression directly affect the development of women's depressed-aggressive behaviour, which leads to social maladaptation; this fact allowed us to understand the causes for the fear of being alone and the mechanism forming women's feeling of loneliness.

**Key words:** *loneliness, social groups, socio-psychological factors, neuroticism, personality position, sociability, interpersonal relationships, personal potential, types of behavior.*

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