

The Moderating Effect of Confiding on the Influence of Loneliness on Depression

Yuanyuan Fang ^{1,a,*}

¹*Institute of Psychology, Southwest University, Tiansheng, Chongqing, China*

a. 20138149@stu.sicau.edu.cn

**corresponding author*

Abstract: Today's society pays more and more attention to the physical and mental health of college students. In order to help people find effective ways to reduce their negative emotions, researchers at home and abroad have conducted studies on confiding, believing that confiding can relieve people's depression at certain times, and sometimes it will be aggravated. This study aims to investigate the moderating effect of confiding in the influence of loneliness levels on depression levels. The direct method was used to quantify the loneliness level, depression level, confiding frequency, and confiding empathy of the participants through questionnaires. The results showed that the level of loneliness had a significant positive impact on the level of depression, and neither the frequency of confiding nor the degree of empathy had a moderating effect on the level of loneliness and depression. Subsequent research should appropriately broaden the group of subjects, and improve the confiding itself by conducting more direct and precise research.

Keywords: Confiding, Loneliness, Empathy, Depression

1. Introduction

With the development of society, the pace of work and life is getting faster and faster, anxiety, loneliness, depression, other negative emotions, and negative psychological state have become the new enemy of human beings. They destroy everyone's physical and mental health, and damage people invisible. According to the authoritative data for 2021, there are more than 350 million patients with depression worldwide, and as many as 54 million people in China suffer from depression, accounting for 4.2% of the total population in China, which is equivalent to 4 patients with depression in 1,000 people. The prevalence is highest among young people, with higher rates of depression among those aged 18 to 34 than among other age groups, with college students and working professionals accounting for the majority [1]. Of course, there are different criteria to measure whether a person is depressed or not, but this data still has reference value, which is enough to make society pay attention to the depression of people, especially young people. As an individual, it is very important to pay attention to your mental health, and the elimination of negative emotions is also an essential skill. When it comes to dealing with negative emotions, the first thing that comes to mind is the act of talking. In this study, the study is carried out by "confiding".

Some people say, there is trouble to say it is good; others say, don't talk about things you don't want to talk about. However, can "talking" help people get rid of depression?

There is some research basis for the effect of confiding in the field of psychology. Yu Haibo and Zhang Jinfu mentioned in the review of foreign studies on the effect of confiding that confiding may have positive or negative effects on improving one's mood [2]. This shows that different conditions, and different qualities of confiding, may bring different results. In this way, confiding may act as a moderating variable moderating the other main effect. Through a literature review: loneliness is one of the causes of depression [3]. Also, another research shows that children's coping style of loneliness has a pathway effect on children's loneliness, and one of the nine factors constituting children's coping style of loneliness is exactly confiding [4]. The researcher also wanted to look separately at the relationship between confiding and loneliness. Based on daily experience, whether a person is "lonely" or not seems to be strongly related to confiding behavior. Therefore, researcher mentioned in the literature on loneliness, self-disclosure, and coping style of college students that self-concealment, self-disclosure, coping style, and social support are important factors affecting loneliness, and the intervention on loneliness of college students can start from these aspects [5]. In addition, research shows that one's loneliness can also be alleviated through empathy [6]. As an important skill of the listener and even psychological counseling, empathy may also have an impact on the quality of confidence. Studies have shown that long-term hospitalized patients with schizophrenia have obvious empathy deficits and loneliness, and should be encouraged to return to the community to alleviate loneliness and reduce empathy deficits [7]. Therefore, there seems to be a close relationship between empathy and loneliness.

This paper aims to investigate whether confiding plays a moderating role in the level of loneliness and depression. Therefore, according to the above materials, the researchers propose to study whether the frequency of confiding and the degree of empathy of confiding play a moderating role.

According to the experience of daily life, no amount of talking may not be as good as effective communication. Therefore, the researchers took a wild guess: the frequency of confiding did not moderate the effect of loneliness level on depression level, but the degree of empathy confiding did.

Therefore, based on the above points, researchers have made several reasonable hypotheses:

H1: The level of loneliness can have an impact on the level of depression.

H2: The frequency of confiding has no moderating effect on the effect of loneliness level on depression level.

H3: The degree of empathy of confiding played a moderating role in the impact of loneliness on depression

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

The participants were 103 college students, with an average age of 20.9 and a standard deviation of 1.62. There were 54 male subjects and 49 female subjects.

2.2. The measure

The participants were given questionnaires, which included questions about demographic variables of age and gender, the ULS-8 Loneliness Scale, and the SDS self-rating Depression Scale.

2.2.1. ULS-8 Loneliness Scale

The results of exploratory factor analysis showed that ULS-6 (after removing item 3 and item 6) was consistent with the theoretical conception of the original text. The Cronbach's α coefficient of the ULS-6 total scale was 0.831, and the test-retest reliability was 0.715. The correlation coefficients between items and total score were statistically significant, which proved that the ULS-6 scale had

good empirical validity. The reliability and validity of the ULS-6 scale are good, which meets the requirements of psychological measurement [8].

2.2.2. SDS Self-rating Depression Scale

Other researchers used Self-rating Depression Scale (SDS) to evaluate 1340 normal subjects, including 705 males and 635 females. The average age is 30.12 ± 10.14 years old, and the average education level is above junior high school. The total score of the evaluation results was 33.46 ± 8.55 , and the standard score was 41.88 ± 10.57 . There was no significant difference between men and women and among all age groups. Individual scores of more than 2 points count morning weight evening light and other 4 items. SDS is specific, simple, and feasible, and can understand the recent mood of the respondents to a certain extent. The above data can be used as the norm results in China.

The researcher strictly followed the instructions of the two scales to score the loneliness score and the depression score respectively [9].

2.2.3. Questions about Moderator Variable

The literature related to "self-disclosure" mentioned that there was a description of the frequency of self-disclosure [10]. Since self-disclosure is similar to "confiding", the method of "self-disclosure" in the paper is used to study the frequency of confiding. The paper pointed out that the study was based on the measurement of the psychological perception of the subjects, so no specific numerical provisions were set, but set as "rarely", "occasionally", "often" and "frequently" and conducted data statistics. In the subsequent data processing, the four degrees were respectively assigned 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the imitation scale for research. Accordingly, the questions about the frequency of speaking in the questionnaire were set as:

How often do you confide in others?

"Rarely," "occasionally," "often," "frequently," "never confide in anyone."

Among them, the fifth option was not selected in the 103 questionnaires, so it will not be processed here. The subjects were asked how they felt about their level of empathy:

Do you think people understand how you feel when you talk to them? (Likert seven-point scale)

Remember, did you feel better after you talked than before? (Likert seven-point scale)

2.3. Data analysis

Finally, the values of the two questions were added to get the final degree of empathy.

The data were imported into SPSS, and the independent variable loneliness score, the frequency of confiding, and the degree of confiding empathy were respectively centralized to prevent collinearity. And then we do linear regression.

3. Experimental Results

3.1. Descriptive statistics

Figure 1 shows the statistics of the frequency of confiding.

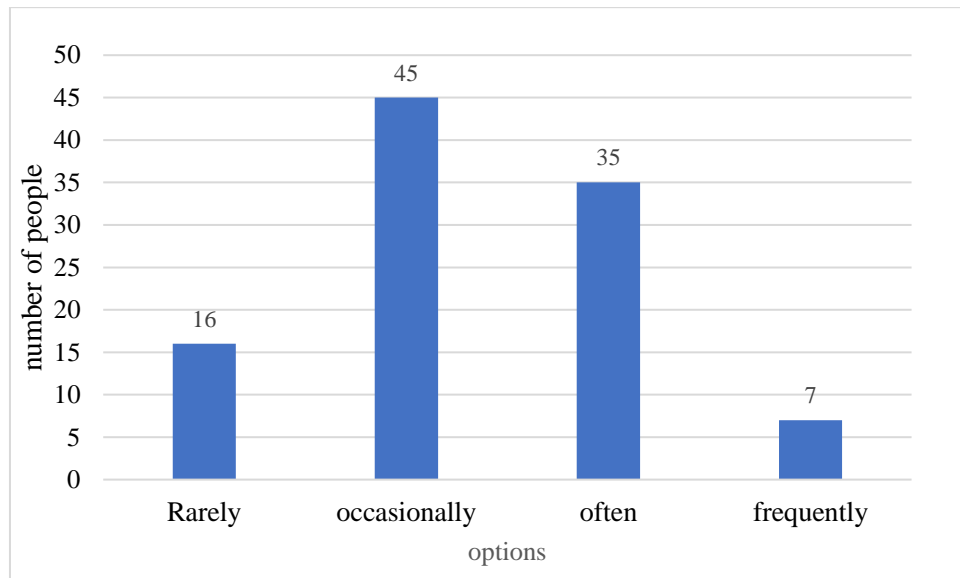


Figure 1: Frequency of confiding

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation information of the degree of empathy, loneliness score, and depression score.

Table 1: The mean and standard deviation of variables

Variable	Degree of empathy	Degree of loneliness	Depression score
Mean value	6.50	17.64	40.79
Standard deviation	1.78	4.27	9.57

3.2. Moderating effect model

Figure 2 shows the hypothetical model of the study.

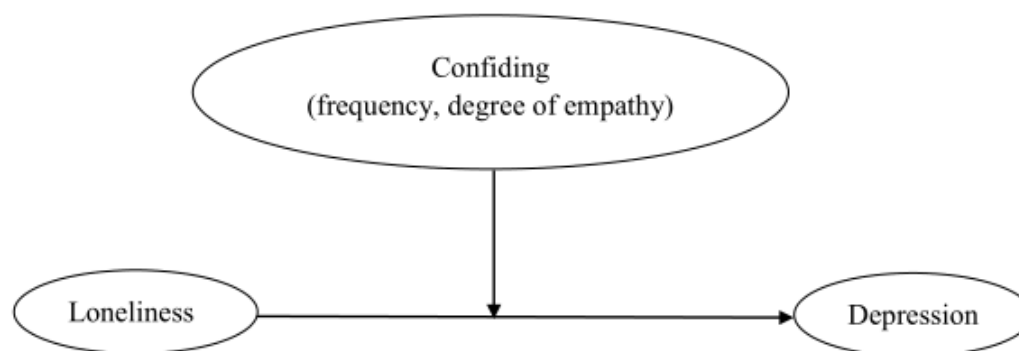


Figure 2: The Moderating effect model

3.3. The main effect of the level of loneliness on the level of depression

Experimental data show that the level of loneliness of confounders can have a significant positive impact on their level of depression. ($p < 0.01$)

3.4. The moderating effect of confiding frequency on the effect of loneliness on depression

The experimental data showed that the significant F value of the interaction term of increasing the standard deviation of confiding frequency and the standard deviation of loneliness level had no significant change compared with that before ($P > 0.05$), so the change of R square of the interaction term was not significant. It can also be seen from the coefficient table that the regulation effect of the frequency of confiding was not significant, but the effect of the independent feeling score on the score of depression was significant ($P < 0.05$). H1 and H2 were verified again.

3.5. The moderating role of the degree of empathy of confiding in the impact of loneliness on depression

The experimental data showed that the F value of the model significance of increasing the standard deviation of empathy and the standard deviation of loneliness level had no significant change compared with that before ($P > 0.05$), so the R square of the interaction term had no significant change. It can also be seen from the coefficient table that the regulation effect of confiding frequency is not significant, but the effect of the independent feeling score on depression score is significant ($P < 0.05$), which verifies H1 again, but H3 is not proved.

4. Discussion

4.1. About the results

The results show that loneliness is indeed related to depression, which is also verified by previous studies. In the study of the frequency of confiding, the researchers found that the frequency of confiding did not play a moderating role in the effect of loneliness on depression, which also well indicates that confiding does not improve people's depression the number of times. For empathy, the

results were not significant. The results showed that the level of empathy did not mediate the relationship between loneliness and depression. In the previous literature, it was found that the effects of confiding in different conditions were not nearly the same [2], so the research was carried out to find out what conditions caused the different results, but it seems that it may not be the degree of empathy. Future research should look more closely at the dimensions and conditions of confiding to identify what might be moderating the effect.

4.2. About the participants

The participants were college students from almost the same area, which may lead to a lack of generality in the research data. In addition, although the study was only conducted among college students in their age group, it may be appropriate to broaden the selection to include people who often confide in others.

4.3. About Tools

The two scales selected in this study are mature scales with good reliability and validity tests, so they are directly applied. To ensure that both the frequency of confiding and the degree of confiding empathy were the subjective feelings of the confiding, the frequency of confiding was set to the four levels of self-rated by the subjects after referring to the relevant literature. However, the scales in each participant's mind may be only roughly similar, not the same, which may lead to errors. If future research needs to optimize this point, it is necessary to find additional subjects specifically and quantitatively unify the frequency of confiding.

As for empathy, the researchers chose to study the level of empathy by adding the answers to two questions.

The experimental hypothesis H3 has not been verified, which may be due to the deviation in the measurement of the degree of empathy for confiding, or it may be that the degree of empathy for confiding does not have a moderating effect. Future research needs to find other possible structural models.

4.4. Research on moderating variables

Confiding is a common way of regulating emotions in people's life. There is no systematic and accurate definition and division of the study, and the confiding in this study is only based on the participants' overall recall of their confiding, which may lead to bias. If further research is carried out, it is necessary to track the subjects' confiding, and accurately record their confiding frequency and each confiding state, so as to carry out more accurate research.

5. Conclusion

The level of loneliness can have a significant positive impact on the level of depression. The frequency of confiding and the degree of empathy of confiding have no moderating effect on the effect of loneliness level on the level of depression.

However, future research should explore other dimensions of confiding, or directly study the confiding behavior itself, to investigate under which circumstances it can improve people's mood and under which circumstances it can aggravate people's depression. It may lead to new discoveries.

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