



The Factors Correlated with Psychological Alienation Among Adults: Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Psychological alienation has studied throughout different standpoint but we still need to dive into its root. We conduct a systematic review seeking to explore the multifaceted factors correlated with psychological alienation among adults, we systematically analysed studies from various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and psychiatry, to identify key variables influencing alienation. Factors examined include social isolation, cultural dislocation, mental health issues, and socioeconomic status. The review highlights the role of multiple factors, technological developments that contribute to state of alienation. This synthesis of literature provides a foundational understanding for future research and practical applications aimed at reducing alienation in diverse populations.

INTRODUCTION

Inserting Artificial intelligence in industries, quarantine as a result of pandemic, Economic Issues, Revolutions, political suppression, War, Armed disputes and conflicts; All of these changes that world has been witnessed with no doubts, has a significant impact on individuals and youth in particularly. these changes and challenges caused a complete change in people's life, one of these impacts manifested in feeling of Alienation.

Alienation as a socio-psychological phenomenon that has a significant impact on communities in which undermines social norms, distorts and replaces profoundly positive values with values that encourage each person to do what he/she wants without considering societal customs and traditions, and threatens the social fabric between members of a homogeneous society and moral disintegration results from this. These days, the alienated person is a serious threat to society as well as to himself since alienation destroys the individual's sense of belonging. This result from the individual's lack of confidence to achieve goals, demands, and social position they strive to get it despite their efforts and hard work. (Khayyat & Mousa, 2022; Zorcec et al, 2023)

The response of individuals towards changes and challenges that face them are different from one to another, based on their recognizing of these challenges and other aspects such as personality traits, the study of Vinokurov & Kozhina (2020) revealed the positive association between work alienation neuroticism, depression, introversion, and emotional lability, while it is negatively associated with sociability. These personality traits can be indicators of psychological alienation, also role of stress, inappropriate attitudes and contradictory cultural expectations all can be determinants of alienation (Braun, 1976) Furthermore, studies has shown the significant role of psychological and social elements in the conflict between wants and control, between moral standards and social norms, and between generations' cultural differences (Israel, 1971).

Alienation has a history in academic research where has addressed in different context, the beginning of this concept, researchers determine the religious standpoint, however Marx rejected that aspect of conception but Hegel adopted that aspect and material side in definition of this concept and later Marx, Seeman and Fromm addressed alienation through sociology perspective, social psychology and organization science . (Thundiyil, T & Wang, J, 2014)

It's a complex phenomenon, occurs when a person withdraws or isolates himself from their surroundings or from interaction with others. Alienated individuals exhibit rejection toward of society or close relationships and this is one of symptoms of alienation. Furthermore, they may also suffer from feelings of distance and estrangement, including from their own emotions. (Zorcec, 2023) Researchers noted that social elements associated to the society in which an individual lives and psychosocial factors related to young people's psychological and physical development cause the feeling of alienation, which prevents the individual from overcoming life's challenges. The immature interplay of psychological, social, cultural, and economic elements can lead to alienation. (Al-Asimi, 2002).

Psychological alienation, according to Zorec and others, is a sense of loneliness and disconnection from oneself, other people, and society. Several factors, including cultural standards, economic circumstances, societal pressures, and individual experiences, might contribute to it. Anxiety, despair, and a sense of purposelessness are just a few of the detrimental effects psychological alienation may have on a person's mental health and wellbeing (Zorcec et al.,2023).

One of the main psychological disorders and social issues that society is currently facing it is psychological alienation, which has an impact on young people and may manifest in their thoughts, feelings, and actions, eventually leading to some degree of extremism in behaviour.

Study of Zulekha (2012), Banat & Makhoul (2005) referred to feeling of alienation led to increase of desire among young people to move away and isolate from others, accompanied with feeling of inferiority, lack of self-confidence, and an inability to establish social relationships, so the individual becomes a negative personality in society, which thus affects his self-efficacy. (Khayyat S., & Mousa a, 2022)

Kaçire (2016) changed the idea of alienation from business organisations to educational settings and defining it as disappointment and dispersal in business organisation that also occurred in university.

Thereby, alienation was studied across different organisational settings, and the results indicated that alienation was born out of frustrated situations (Apriyanti,2021)

According to a psychological and sociological standpoint, this phenomenon has been described as one of the most dangerous psychological phenomena for the survival of human society. Whereas the psychological approach concentrates on the subjective experiences of alienation, the sociological perspective concentrates on the social processes that result in alienation (Zorcec et al.,2023).

Studies referred to it as a multidimensional concept which encompasses various dimensions describe the various ways in which individuals can feel disconnected from themselves, others, and society. These dimensions explained by Seeman as following:

1. social isolation is a term referring to the individual's withdrawal and separation from the dominant culture in his society, as well as feelings of loneliness, feeling empty, insecurity, strained social relations and distance from other people.
2. powerlessness refer to feeling that the individual is unable to impact
3. the conditions he encounters, nor can he make his own choices or determine his destiny, additionally he feels that his destiny is beyond of his control and is determined by luck and fate.
4. self-alienation: In this case, Individual feels disconnected from himself and is unable to express what he feels toward himself. A sense of emptiness and dissatisfaction are actual aspects of a person's sense of self.
5. Meaninglessness is the lack of knowledge and comprehension of all the meanings connected to all aspects of life, as well as the incapacity of the

individual to comprehend and explain things, which prevents him from giving his actions any true significance.

6. Abnormality: this feeling happens when societal standards that regulate individual behaviours are violated or no longer serve as effective standards for behaviours.
7. The sixth dimension is cultural alienation rejection or disconnection from the dominant principles and values of the culture. The individual feels that his or her values don't align with those of the majority of the community (Seeman, 1991).
8. Interpretation psychological alienation through Maslow's Hierarchy of psychological needs can be understood as a failure to meet psychological needs which is considered a result of accelerating, increasing and unexpected events and including violence events like wars and weaponed disputes. During these changes individual still striving to fulfil their needs, when he fails to meet it, it can lead to feeling of isolation. For example, in the job context The emergence of intrinsic motivation, which is thought an opposite case of alienation, is explained by the satisfying of the intrinsic needs for competence, autonomy, and social relatedness (Kanungo, 1979) (Vroom, 1962). According to Maslow's Hierarchy the satisfying of psychological needs starts from the lowest stage then the highest. Because of this, individuals who feel unsafe—whether as a result of crime, economic instability, or health issues—may avoid social situations, which makes them disconnect from society.

We draw the conclusion that psychological alienation is an obstacle to satisfying personal needs, in parallel with the investigation of societal constraints, economic circumstances, cultural norms, and personal experience as contributing factors. In accordance with Maslow's theory of motivation (Maslow's hierarchy of psychological needs) to build a comprehensive picture of the nature interaction between desires, needs and behaviours, we should consider the human needs and motivations for behaviour, since individuals may eat because for physically hunger, fears, loneliness or unloved, pleasure or self-esteem, or for all of those reasons at once. So, the one behaviour able to satisfy multiple needs.

Psychological alienation causes several threats to society, including increased perceptions of intergroup competition and threat, heightened psychological distress, and widespread cynicism towards social roles and institutions. While resilience can buffer some negative effects, particularly in socio-economic contexts, the overall impact of alienation underscores the need for interventions that address its root causes and promote social cohesion. the study of Einas (2021) referred to the manifestation of alienation among youth are evident in their feeling of low self - esteem, their motivation to achieve and sometimes social isolation.

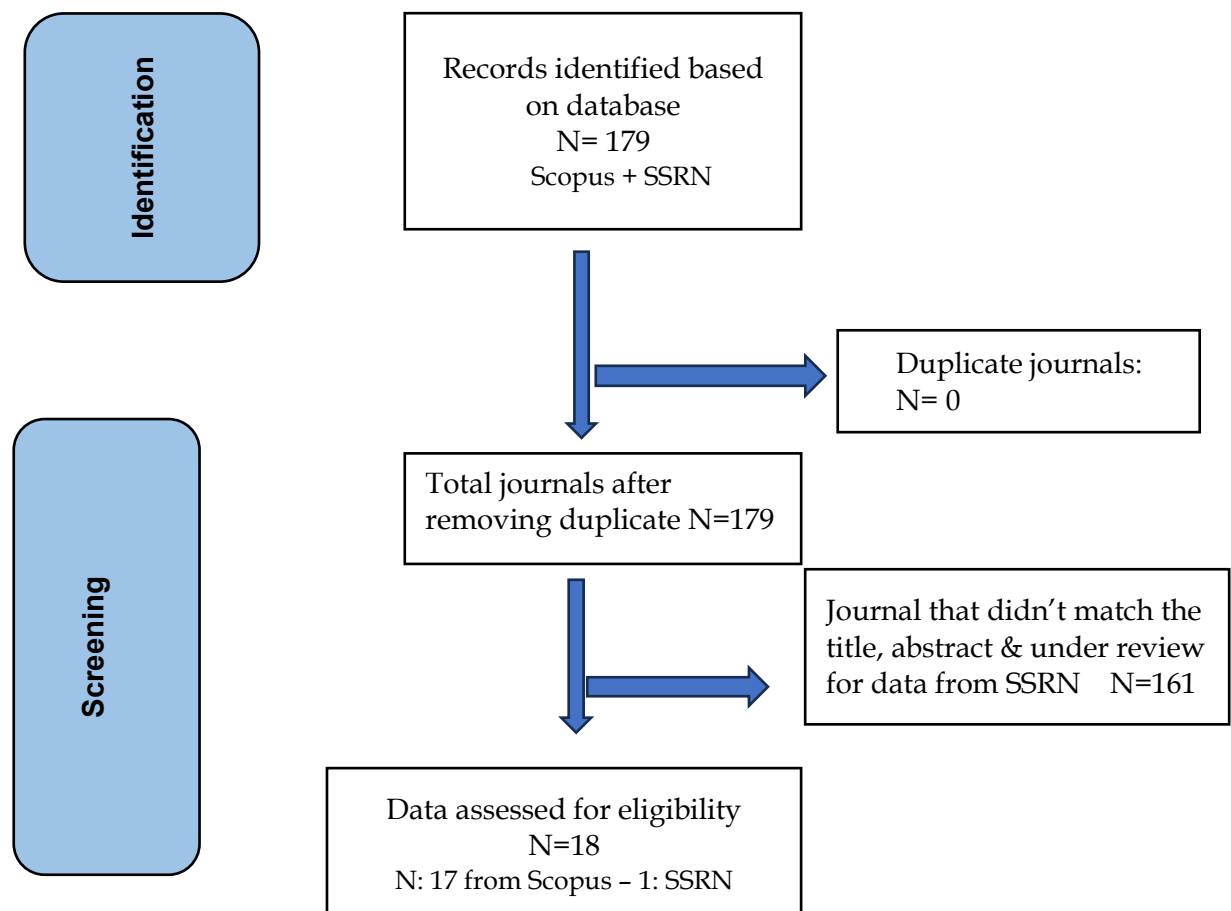
Adulthood is a critical stage from life stages, is described as the stage of human development when men's and women's physical, cognitive and psychological growth slows and reaches its peak. psychologically, adulthood is a stage of human development that occurs after the stage of adolescence and

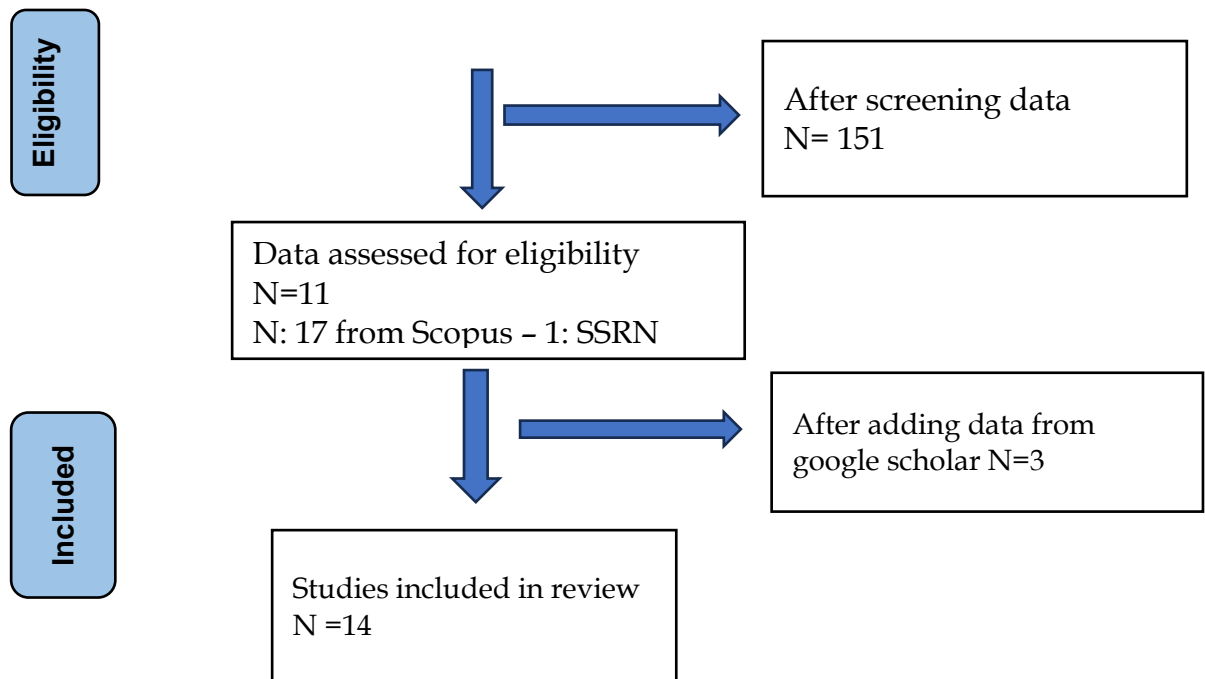
puberty (approximately 13–19 years of age) (Klimczuk, 2016). After reviewing literatures, it's been indicated that psychological alienation has been addressed through its association with different variables. Therefore, this review aims to reveal the psychological factors that contribute to state of psychological alienation among adults. This review provides a better comprehension of psychological Alienation from psychological standpoint.

METHODOLOGY

It's notable that most of studies investigate the psychological alienation among adults, therefore, we put a limit to the search through searching in this stage of life. This review aims to investigate the status of alienation among adults. PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews) was used to gather data for the study and the database was used to search data was Scopus, SSRN (social science Research Network). Key words are used are "Alienation" AND "Psychological alienation". The total articles were identified through the databases are 179. After filtering based on the criteria that include eligibility and remove the non-included and duplicated articles. We get the 11 articles form the main database and subsequently 3 articles are added through google scholar.

Figure 1: PRISM flow diagram for journal selection





The above figure demonstrates step by step process to select the identified research articles. In the first step, 179 articles were identified and after check the duplication in the second step through the main database that the researchers used it. In the second step, after removing 161 articles according to incompatibility with the criteria and under review the final articles are 18. In the third step, those articles were screened and 7 are excluded because of they weren't open access. In the fourth step the final articles were 14 after adding 3 articles from google scholar.

RESULTS

Psychological Alienation is one of the most adverse psychological disorders that affects society's existence and cohesiveness. This adverse emotional state indicates a feeling of alienation and disconnection from one's social circle, which includes friends and relatives, causing a bunch of distressing feeling encompasses feeling of isolation, uncontrollability and some of non-adaptive behaviours.

Two groups of researchers were formed based on the causes of estrangement. Some people think that psychological issues induce alienation, while others argue that a person's social conditions make it harder for them to overcome life's challenges. (Mousa a & Khayyat S, 2022). Psychological alienation has several forms and dimensions, and its intensity rises as contributing variables and causes are identified (Kim, Chen, Wang, Shen & Orozco-Lapray, 2013).

Figure2

No	Author	The title	The population	The objective	outcomes of study
1	Huda Gaber Hamzaa , Mohamed Hussein Ramadan Atta , Mai Elghareap Hassan Elmetwally Omar , Eslam Reda Fathy Abdel Majeed Machaly, Shaimaa Mohamed Amin and Nadia Mohamed Ibrahim Wahba (2024)	Analyzing the Frequencies of Psychological Alienation and Nomophobia in Nursing Students and How They Connect to FOMO Out: A Survey of Multiple Sites	Between June 2023 and November 15, 2023, 1,273 undergraduate nursing students from six Egyptian universities participated in the study.	The purpose of this study is to present the frequency of FOMO and nomophobia while illuminating the function of psychological alienation between them.	1. Nomophobia and psychological estrangement were moderate to severe among nursing students. 2. Nomophobia was significantly positively correlated with both psychological estrangement and fear of missing out. 3. The association between nomophobia and FOMO was also revealed to be mediated by psychological estrangement.
2	Feras Ali Al- Habies, Alean Al- Krenawi , Somaya Abdel-Hameed Al-Ja'afreh, Wafa Ali Mahmoud Alwani, ,Omar Ismail Hamzeh Alorani, Diya Ahmad Al-Jaloud (2025)	Impact of a Training Program on Foreign Students' Social, Cultural, and Psychological Alienation	Seventy-three undergraduate students of various nationalities make up the sample.	evaluating how well an educational training program works to lessen international students' social, cultural, and psychological alienation.	The program's effectiveness in promoting social ties and cultural awareness was highlighted by the results, which showed a notable decrease in social and cultural alienation. Nonetheless, a surprising rise in psychological alienation was seen, underscoring the necessity of

					better addressing psychological issues.
3	Chao Wu, Chun-yan He, Jia-ran Yan, Hong-li Zhang, Lu Li, Ci Tian, Nana Chen, Qing-yi Wang, Yu-hai Zhang and Hong-juan Lang. (2023)	Alienation and psychological capital in COVID-19 patients	The average age of the 259 COVID-19 patients in the sample was 41 years old.	Examine how psychological capital affects alienation in COVID-19 patients and how social support functions as a mediator in this relationship.	There was a substantial and negative correlation between psychological capital and social alienation among COVID-19 patients. Furthermore, social support acted as a partial mediating factor in the association between patients' psychological capital and social alienation.
4	<u>Jiahao Wei, Ziye Bai, Mengru Bu, Guining Dang, Xiumei Wu and Jin Zhou. (2025)</u>	Social alienation and symptom burden in chemotherapy-treated lung cancer patients: the chain mediation role of positive psychological capital and perceived social support.	378 LC patients receiving chemotherapy between September 2022 and December 2023 made up the sample.	Examine the connections between perceived social support, social alienation, symptom burden, and positive psychological capital, with the latter two acting as mediators.	greatly worsens social alienation. In addition, the weight of symptoms subtly reduces positive psychological capital and the perception of social support. Notably, PSS and PCC both significantly influence the relationship between symptom load and social alienation.

5	Joseph Moffly-Kipp-Chase Gause- Joshua A. Hicks-Matthew Vess. (2022)	The moderating effect of self-alienation when life's purpose shields against death phobia.	The age range of the sample (N = 380) was 18-72 years old.	Examine how the relationship between MIL and death fear may be moderated by self-alienation, which is the experience of not knowing or being connected to one's self.	At low levels of self-alienation, MIL was most strongly linked to decreased death anxiety. Death was positively correlated with MIL. high levels of self-alienation anxiety. Although the strength of these effects varied, their direction was constant.
6	Danijela Zorcec, Tatjana Cepreganova-Cangovska , Tatjana Zorcec (2023)	Young Male and Female Adults' Psychological Alienation and Self-Efficiency Feeling	The sample was 167 young people.	Analyze the potential connection between psychological estrangement and the perception of self-efficiency of young male and female adults.	The results indicated a substantial negative relationship between self-efficacy and psychological alienation, indicating that self-efficacy decreases with increasing psychological alienation.
7	Niyati Thakur, Nicola Baumann. (2023)	Mindfully missing myself: Poor self-regulators who experience mindfulness become alienated	70% of participants in two trials reported having no prior experience with mindfulness activities; N1 = 126 / N2 = 108	Examine whether mindfulness encourages alienation from the self in state-oriented people, who have poor self-regulation	The findings showed that, in comparison to text reading, mindfulness dramatically reduced the consistency of preference judgments among

				skills, but not in people with good self-regulation skills.	state-oriented participants (Study 1) and the adoption of intrinsic over extrinsic goals (Study 2). Participants who were action-oriented did not experience the alienating impact. Therefore, practicing mindfulness could alienate those who are psychologically sensitive. individuals from themselves and obstruct their ability to access their own preferences and internal objectives.
8	Wan Wang, Yanyan Yang, Chunlan Song, Qi Liu, Ronghao Mu and Dongchuan Yu (2024)	Chinese parents of children with autism and their risk of suicide and its correlation with perceived prejudice, affiliation stigma and social alienation)	A total of 645 parents of autistic children were enlisted, comprising 117 men and 528 women. complete a series of scales.	The purpose of the study was to determine the incidence of suicidal risk among Chinese parents of autistic children and to ascertain whether social alienation and affiliate stigma could act as moderators in this relationship.	High SR was present in 34.6% of Chinese parents of autistic children. Suicidal risk was positively correlated with perceived discrimination ($r = .40, p < .01$); the relationship between perceived discrimination and suicidal risk was significantly mediated by

					affiliate stigma and social alienation.
9	Maria cristina, William Bernet, Amy Baker (2016)	Relationships among Anxiety, Depression, and Exposure to Alienating Behaviors in an Italian Adult Sample	The sample of this study 509 adults	Through psychological abuse and parental bonding, the study seeks to investigate relationships between exposure to alienating behaviors (ABs) and anxiety and depression.	Each of the three mental health outcomes – depression, state anxiety, and trait anxiety – was linked to parental bonding, which in turn was linked to psychological abuse brought on by exposure to ABs. The authors draw the conclusion that early exposure to ABs is a risk factor for later
10	Nihan Selin Soylu-Konak, Mustafa Engür, Erdiñç Demiray. (2022)	Habits and Perceptions as Differentiators: How Do Online Games Predict Emotional Intelligence, Aggression, and Alienation?	The sample of this study was 316.	The purpose of this study is to investigate potential predictions for the dimensions of aggression, alienation, and emotional intelligence based on online gaming behaviors and perspectives.	The findings showed that whereas perceptions of the games influenced feelings of helplessness and isolation, game behaviors did not predict any aspects of alienation. Additionally, it was mentioned that rather than just being exposed to online games, the interactions that have been found are based on how players view

					the game and the extent of their socialization inside it.
11	Matthew Vess, Stephanie A Leal, Russell T Hoeldtke, Rebecca J Schlegel, Joshua A Hicks (2016)	Reports of mental wandering are positively predicted by true self-alienation.	There are 93 people in the sample: 51 women, 39 men, and 3 unreported.	The study evaluates how genuine self-alienation and propensities to reflect mental disengagement from focal tasks relate to one another.	Results indicated a positive correlation between true self-alienation and mind-wandering reports; these findings also imply that subjective perceptions of mind-wandering are consistently linked to individual differences in true self-alienation.
12	Chuka Mike Ifeagwazi, Endurance Zacchaeus, JohnBosco Chika Chukwuorji (2015)	Resilience as a Moderator of Alienation and Psychological Wellbeing	337 undergraduate students took part.	Assess how resilience functions as a mediator in the connection between psychological estrangement and psychological well-being. Examine whether psychological discomfort can be predicted by socioeconomic, political, and interpersonal alienation.	The findings indicated that whilst resilience was inversely correlated with psychological discomfort, interpersonal, political, and socioeconomic estrangement were positively correlated with psychological distress. Resilience and estrangement also predicted psychological suffering. While resilience did not modify the association between political or interpersonal

					alienation and psychological discomfort, it did mitigate the relationship between socioeconomic alienation and psychological distress.
13	Joep Hofhuisa, Katja Hankeb, Tessa Ruttenc (2019)	Social networking sites and the acculturation of foreign residents in the Netherlands: The role of online social support and psychological estrangement as mediators.	There were 126 people in the sample used in this study, ranging in age from 19 to 60.	the part Social Network Sites (SNS) play in international students' and expats' acculturation, as well as investigating online social support and psychological estrangement as potential mediators.	The findings indicated that: 1. Online social support is favorably correlated with SNS communication with home country relations. 2. It also has to do with psychological detachment, which has to do with cultural preservation.

14	Yue Zhu, Lihua Zhang, Xia Zhou, Chenxiang Li, Dong Yang (2021)	The effects of social distancing during COVID-19: A conditional process model of post-traumatic stress disorder, affective disorders, negative feelings, and alienation	The sample consisted of 6666, their age between 35-50	The purpose of the study is to investigate the connection between negative emotions and PTSD, taking into account the moderating influence of anxiety and depression as well as the mediation effect of estrangement.	Our theories that negative emotions and estrangement were predictors of PTSD symptoms and that anxiety level modulated both their direct and indirect effects were validated by the Conditional Process Model analysis results.
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DISCUSSION

This systematic review provide insight in multiple factors correlated with psychological alienation across different populations and contexts. These factors can be broadly categorized into: psychological, social, and technological determinants, each contributing to feelings of disconnection, estrangement, or powerlessness. The below is discussion of key findings:

Technological Influences

Technological development and digital transition changed the behaviour of individuals and influenced the perception of individuals social connectedness in different context. For instance, study 1 highlighted the phenomenon Nomophobia, FOMO and psychological alienation, indicating the role of digital technologies as a part of healthcare domain and referred to the impact of constant increase of using smartphones among nursing student has caused increase in Nomophobia, Fomo and referred to the positive relationship between psychological alienation as a result of the nature of academic life of nursing students, and Nomophobia.

In study 10 correlated between online games and dimensions of alienation highlighted the players' perception of the games and constitutes environment for emotional releasing and suggesting some patterns of playing and its correlation to Powerlessness, loneliness and isolation.

In study 13 emphasized on the role of SNS that play in maintain cultural heritage of sojourners and at the same context, highlighted the psychological alienation state that positively relate to SNS contact with home which explain the cultural maintenance between sojourners.

Dimension of Alienation

Psychological Alienation has been studied internationally with consideration its dimensions through different context. Study 2 despite shed light on the significance of providing the foreign students support environment and support environment and cultural educating which educate students about cultural differences and in turn influenced cultural and social alienation positively, but some increase is noted in psychological alienation and this result suggested identity conflict and academic stress.

Study 4 revealed that one of the main factors influencing social alienation based on by disease stress, which in turn causes social isolation, is the severity of symptoms experienced by lung cancer patients.

whereas, study 5 demonstrated that the relationship between death anxiety and the meaning of life is mediated by self-alienation.

In study 11 emphasized on self-alienation which refer to subjectively self-awareness and reflect individuals feeling like know who they really are, is reliably predict mind wandering.

In different context, Alienation was studied in radical perspective which study 12 shown resilience's protective function by reducing the negative effects of socioeconomic alienation on psychological distress

Psychological concepts

Study 7 explained the different influence of mindfulness and likely cause alienation between individuals with poor self- regulation. And study 14 revealed the influence of alienation that caused by social distancing during Covid-19 on mental health and linked alienation feeling to PTSD.

Thereby, this review shed light on a several reasons that lead to state of alienation and disconnect with self and others, it's a complex interplay of digital, social, and individual factors. Addressing it requires multifaceted strategies targeting social connectedness, emotional regulation, and systemic support. Future research should prioritize contextual and intersectional analyses to refine interventions.

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