

Lonely students at TU/e?

A summary of the research in which the loneliness problem among students among the Eindhoven University of Technology is mapped out.



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Place and date:	Eindhoven, 1 November 2019
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Summary

TINT Eindhoven has developed a program in the past two years in which the emphasis was on connecting students. During this program it appeared that there were students who experienced loneliness. TINT wants to investigate why these students feel lonely and which factors play a role in their loneliness. This research was used to map the extent, severity and nature of loneliness on the Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e) campus. The factors involved in experiencing loneliness have also been investigated. Thanks to this research, TINT can organize events on the theme of loneliness, but it can also increase the bond between students.

There are different types of loneliness, with social, communicative and spiritual loneliness at the center of this research. Students can experience these forms of loneliness. In addition to loneliness, a social network has an influence on experiencing loneliness, in which size and frequency, but also the ideal image of their social network play a role. This would occur more often with international students. However, experiencing social support would be a protective factor against loneliness.

To answer the research question: "How do TU/e students feel about loneliness in 2019?" a survey has been created. This survey contains questions from UCLA 3 with additional questions about factors from literature which play a role in loneliness. This survey was distributed via TINT social media channels. The survey had 117 respondents (N = 117), about half of whom were female (N = 66) and the other half were male (N = 51). Slightly more than half of the respondents were international students (N = 64) and the rest were Dutch students (N = 53). 47% of the students live independently in student houses, but a small proportion (N = 8) live on the TU/e campus itself, in one of the student towers. Moderate and moderate high loneliness is the most common among students. A high degree of loneliness or a low degree of loneliness is less common in this group of students. The results show that half of the students in this study experience loneliness. The students view social support from friends, close relationships and connectedness as factors that play a part in experiencing loneliness. Where social support from friends occurs more often than social support from family. Students who live on campus experience on average a moderately high amount of loneliness, although this is slightly lower for students who live elsewhere.

Difference in degree of loneliness under living situation

Living situation	Average on UCLA	Standard deviation
Living on campus	53.50	13.99
Living elsewhere	47.93	11.89
Significant	0.20	

Furthermore, no difference was found in the perceived loneliness between Dutch and international students. Both groups experience moderate loneliness on average. However, in this group of men, on average, experience moderate high loneliness, while for women this is moderate loneliness.

Average degree of loneliness among students

Students	Average on UCLA	Standard deviation
Dutch students	47.66	12.43
International students	48.86	11.81
Gender		
Male	50.37	12.16
Female	46.73	11.83

In this study, both Dutch students and international students experienced loneliness. Males in this study also experience more loneliness than females. It can therefore be concluded that loneliness is present among the subjects of this study. A follow-up study is recommended, which relates to the experience of loneliness.