

# **Narcissistic Tendencies, Forgiveness and Empathy as Predictors of Social Connectedness in Students from Universities of Lahore**

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## **Abstract**

*The objective of the study was to infer whether narcissistic tendencies, forgiveness and empathy are predictors of social connectedness among university students. Another objective was to investigate the moderating role of low level of narcissistic tendencies between forgiveness and social connectedness and also between empathy and social connectedness. Sample drawn through multistage sampling included (N=280) university students (male= 134 and female=146). The Hyper sensitivity narcissism scale (HSNS); Interpersonal reactivity index (IRI), the Heartland forgiveness scale (HFS) and Social connectedness scale (SCS), were used to infer the proposed hypotheses. Results generated through moderated regression analysis revealed that narcissism is a significant negative predictor of social connectedness. Forgiveness of others and empathy positively predict social connectedness, when controlling for (gender and family system). Narcissism did not moderate between empathy and social connectedness and also between forgiveness and social connectedness. College and University counselors' can facilitate students to build "social capital" by helping them develop empathy and forgiveness and making them learn strategies for management of narcissistic tendencies to enhance social interactions.*

**Keywords:** Mediator, Buffering role, Clinical interventions.

## **Introduction**

In order to gain an insight into the physical and psychological world of human beings it is extremely pertinent to gain an understanding into their social world. The idea that social world is

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a reflection of one's psychological world is gaining attention of researchers and scholars all over the world. An important component of the social world is connectedness, how people tend to relate and interact with each other. Research on social connectedness has proved that it has a buffering role and acts as a protective factor for psychological and physical problems.

Social connectedness refers to as how one views oneself in relation to the outer world<sup>1</sup>, as stated in.<sup>2</sup> Social connectedness (SC) acts as a stable characteristic and is extremely essential in every essence of life, especially for college and university students. Humans are social beings and tend to live within societies. To live a happy life one should enhance social bonding and social connectedness.<sup>3</sup> Social connectedness is fundamental to wellbeing and health of individuals.<sup>4</sup> SC is positively connected with social ability and many positive aspects like optimism, hope, and self-esteem.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary lack of social connectedness is likely to lead to distress, depression and feelings of ill-being.<sup>6</sup> Positive communications are part of what makes up one's sense of social connectedness.<sup>7</sup> It reflects all aspects of social interaction that include family, friends, and the society; and refers to one's relationship with 'others' in general.

According to self-psychology theory<sup>8</sup> in early life a feeling of social connectedness develops and encompasses throughout the life span. During childhood, for example, primary sense of safety, security and likeness with others comes from parent-child attachments. People who experience narcissistic wounds to the self during early life possibly manifest low connectedness in adulthood. They are likely to experience severe and recurrent interpersonal failures in life (e.g., peer rejection, isolation and criticism) and end up in more destructive relationship experiences.

Narcissism is an unnatural emphasis on self that affects oneself and others in unhealthy ways. Association between narcissistic tendencies and the failure to endure close relationships has been investigated in the past<sup>9</sup> reflected that those with narcissistic tendencies lack intimacy and prefer relationships that are based on self-enhancement and lack emotional and social connectedness. People who have narcissistic tendencies tend to score low on measures of social connectedness.<sup>10</sup> In addition,<sup>[11]</sup> proposed that, narcissists are inclined to be emotionally isolated, escape from relationships that involve closeness and warmth.

The covert narcissistic personality, like the over narcissist also lacks morality and conscience. The covert narcissistic personality is often anxious, doubtful, apathetic, and blames his or

her past for uncertainties and shortfalls. Covert narcissism is negatively correlated with self-esteem and these individuals are prone to anxiety, stress and depression.<sup>11</sup> Overt narcissism is the actually the obvious of narcissistic personality disorders. The overt narcissistic personality is: egotistical, arrogant and demanding and fail to keep good relationships with those around.<sup>12</sup> Narcissism is known to be characterized with lack of forgiveness, as narcissistic individuals exhibit a higher level of interpersonal conflict and aggressive behavior and tend to respond more aggressively to insults in their daily communication.<sup>13</sup>

People with narcissistic personality characteristics want to be known for their exceptional abilities and distinctiveness, as well as thinking process which they are likely to consider superior to others. Narcissists are scared and disgraceful in situations where they sense a lack of endorsement, approval, admiration, care and settlement.<sup>14</sup> Such individuals like to be a public figure and secure authority, money and material needs, but are mostly dependent on other's to seek social approval.<sup>15</sup>

Narcissism is known to be characterized with lack of forgiveness, as narcissistic individuals exhibit a higher level of interpersonal conflict and aggressive behavior and negatively react than other people in their daily communication,<sup>16</sup> however, there are many characteristics of narcissistic people; one of these is that they do not forgive people and have lesser ability to feel pain for others, lack empathy, and are only connected to others for gaining praise and attention.<sup>17</sup>

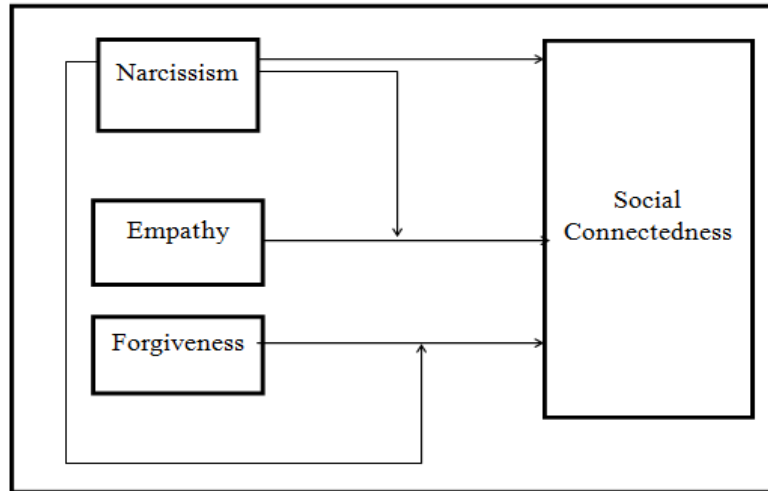
Forgiveness is an integral part of social connectedness, it has been shown that the people, who forgive, are less motivated to revenge the transgressor and show more kindness towards them.<sup>18</sup> According to self-determination theory, forgiveness might gain its relationship to well-being by influencing the forgiver's viewpoint of his or her relationship with the sinner because sustaining a proper level of bonding to others is a basic and vital psychological desire.<sup>19</sup> Empathetic people are usually forgiving, children have found to have higher levels of optimism, self-esteem as well as empathy.<sup>20</sup> People, who forgive transgressor, have improved interpersonal relationships and sense of connectedness.<sup>21</sup>

Empathy is the ability to feel other people's emotions and includes the ability to perceive what someone else might be experiencing or thinking. Emotional identifications and feeling of intimacy and social connectedness are positively related to empathy.<sup>22</sup> Positive feeling to be connected to others increases psychological and physical wellbeing and lowers down the rate of

depression and physical ailments. Social connectedness increases empathetic view, trust and collaboration with others present in the social world around.<sup>23</sup> A study found that empathy has positive and narcissism has negative relationship with the quality of interpersonal relationships, respectively.<sup>24</sup> Empathy is also claimed to be central in promoting pro-social behavior through increasing positive, helping and thoughtful actions.<sup>25</sup> Empathy has positive relationship with social connectedness.<sup>26</sup>

Hatcher, et al.,<sup>27</sup> highlighted the development and progression of empathy in relation to its four dimensions with personal distress and fantasy developing in early life through to adolescence and perspective-taking and empathic concern emerging in later years. Ristovski, and Wertheim<sup>28</sup> confirmed an association between empathy and hypothetical forgiveness in imagined scenarios, other researchers have found a similar links between empathy and forgiveness in the perspective of real events. In fact, a study indicated that empathy was “the only psychological variable that has been revealed to assist people to forgive particular real-life transgressions when manipulated experimentally.”<sup>29</sup>

Kahn inferred that people with low social connectedness fail to gain suitable interpersonal behaviors essential to maintain healthy relationships later in life or many a times tend to progress towards dysfunctional interpersonal behaviors.<sup>30</sup> Low social connectedness is related to low levels of wellbeing and ill health.<sup>31</sup> People with low connectedness frequently experience loneliness, anxiety, jealousy, anger, depression, low self- esteem, and a host of other negative emotions.<sup>32</sup> The sample for our study was recruited from college and university students because of the significance of social interactions and connectedness on campus and the implications the study findings may have for this age group. If an individual is unable to build social connectedness during childhood or early adulthood the possibility that the development of an internalized sense of SC in adulthood will be difficult. It is important that students improve their ability to understand others, to get involved in social activities, to develop sense of closeness to their family and peers as well as empathize with them in order to enhance their sense of wellbeing.

*Proposed Hypothetical Model of the study**Objectives*

The aim of the study is to investigate whether social connectedness can be predicted by low level of narcissistic tendencies, forgiveness and empathy among university students. Furthermore the research aims to investigate whether narcissistic tendencies moderate the relation between empathy and social connectedness as well as that between forgiveness and social connectedness.

*Hypotheses*

- Social Connectedness is likely to be predicted by low level of narcissistic tendencies, empathy and forgiveness
- Low level of narcissistic tendencies are likely to moderate the link between empathy and social connectedness as well as the link between forgiveness and social connectedness
- There are likely to be gender difference between narcissistic tendencies, forgiveness, empathy and social connectedness.

**Method***Research Design*

Correlation research design was employed in this research to infer the predictors of social connectedness among university students.

### *Sampling Strategy*

Multistage sampling was used in this study. First the list of all private universities situated in the city of Lahore were collected, latter five universities were randomly selected from the list of universities in Lahore. Three departments from each of these selected universities were randomly drawn. In the final stage of the sampling process the students who were willing to participate in the study and were fulfilling the inclusion/ exclusion criteria were recruited.

### *Sample*

The sample (n=280 comprised of 134 boys and 146 girls falling within age range of 20-25 years (studying in BS Hons and Master programs) were recruited in this study. Students having physical disabilities eg.amputation were not employed in the study (as these conditions are likely to affect social connectedness).

### **Instruments**

#### *Social Connectedness Scale*<sup>33</sup>

The tendency to be socially connected to others was measured using SCS. This is an 8-item scale measuring how connected/disconnected individuals feel from the world and people that surround them. It seeks to measure the level of interpersonal closeness one is experiencing such statements as, “I feel disconnected from the world around me” and “I don't feel related to anyone” are included in this scale. All statements are worded negatively, and individuals chose from responses 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree), with higher scores indicating more connectedness. The scale has been employed by other researchers.<sup>34</sup> The reported reliability from the scale (computed in previous research) is  $\alpha = 0.91$  for internal item consistency and  $\alpha = 0.96$  for test-retest over a two-week period.<sup>35</sup>

#### *The Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale (HSNS)*<sup>36</sup>

HSNS is used to measure narcissistic tendencies. This is the 10 item, single dimension measure of covert narcissism. It was shortened by Hendin, and Cheek<sup>37</sup> from Murray<sup>38</sup> “Narcissism” longer scale. It is a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from (1=Not at all True of me Through 5= Very True of me). Sample items are “I can become entirely absorbed” and “I dislike being with a group”. The final score is calculated by summing the each item score. The HSNS can give a minimum score of 10 and a maximum score of 50, higher score means greater hypersensitive narcissism. This

scale has been used in previous studies.<sup>39</sup> Alpha reliability is  $\alpha = 0.75$ .

#### *Interpersonal Reactivity Index<sup>40</sup>*

The subscale “empathetic concern” of IRI was administered to measure empathy. The IRI is a questionnaire consisting of 28 questions divided equally among four distinct subscales; “Perspective taking, “empathic concern”, “personal distress and “fantasy”.<sup>41</sup> For present study the subscale of “empathic concern” was used. The IRI was originally validated in college student populations but has been widely used across many populations, including medical professionals. It uses a 5-item Likert scale with two anchors (A=Does not describe me well; E=Describes me very well). Sample items are “I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel” and “I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision”. This scale has been used in other studies.<sup>42</sup> Reliability of empathetic concern,  $\alpha = .80$ . Test retest reliability of all subscales ranges between .62 - .71.

#### *The Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS, [32])*

To measure the tendency to forgive HFS was administered. The Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) is an 18-item, self-report questionnaire that measures a person's dispositional forgiveness (i.e., the general tendency to be forgiving), rather than forgiveness of a particular event or person. The HFS consists of the Total HFS and three six-itemed subscales (Forgiveness of Self, Forgiveness of Others, and Forgiveness of Situations). Item scores are summed to calculate the total HFS score and each of the three subscale scores. Participants are asked to respond in such a way that it would reflect how they typically respond to transgressor by using 7- point rating scale. The answer ranges from 1 as almost always false of me to 7 as almost always true of me. Sample items include “If I am disappointed by uncontrollable circumstances in my life, I continue to think negatively about them” and “I eventually make peace with bad situations in my life”. The scale has been used in other studies.<sup>43</sup> Test retest reliability is .82, cronbach alpha reliability is between .84 - .87 for the overall scale.

## **Results**

The research aimed to investigate the relationship between narcissistic tendencies, forgiveness, empathy and social connectedness among university students. The data analytic strategy involved performing; (i) Descriptive statistics (ii) Pearson

product correlation to analyze relationship between narcissistic tendencies, forgiveness, empathy and social connectedness; (iii) Moderated regression analysis to find out whether low level of narcissistic tendencies act as a moderator between empathy and social connectedness and secondly between forgiveness and social connectedness (iv) independent sample *t*-test to find out gender differences on all four variables.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=280)

Variable	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )
Age		20.80(1.66)
Gender		
Male	134(47.9)	
Female	146(52.1)	
Major subject		
Years of education		
12 years	39(13.9)	
14 years	145(51.6)	
16 years	96(34.3)	
Siblings		
No	4(1.4)	
1 or 2	63(22.4)	
3 or above	213(76.1)	
Birth order		
First born	91(32.5)	
Middle born	122(43.6)	
Last born	67(23.9)	
Mother's education		
Matric/below	110(39.3)	
Inter	51(18.2)	
Graduation	84(30.0)	
Masters and above	35(12.5)	



Father's education	
Matric/ below	69(24.6)
Inter	37(13.2)
Graduation	96(34.3)
Masters/above	78(27.9)
Father's occupation	
Business	109(38.9)
Job	162(57.9)
Late	9(3.2)
Mother's occupation	
House wife	242(86.4)
Business	4(1.4)
Job	32(11.4)
Late	2(.7)
Father's income (rupees)	114628.57(896001.14)
Mother's income (rupees)	7432.14(23917.92)
Family system	
Joint	91(32.5)
Nuclear	189(67.5)
Family structure	
Intact	263(93.9)
Non intact	17(6.1)
Marital status	
Single	251(89.6)
Engaged	25(8.9)
Married	4(1.4)

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Study Variables (N=280)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1 Narcissism	-	-.25**	-.02	-.31**
2 Forgiveness		-	.12*	.20**
3 Empathy			-	.17**
4 S-connectedness				-

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 3: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Social Connectedness

Predictor	Block 1			Block 2			Block 3		
	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$
Constant	27.8			23.5			28.97	3.05	
Gender	-1.32	.85	-.09	-.63	.82	-.04	-.51	.83	-.04
Family system	1.60	.90	.10	1.13	.80	.07	1.05	.88	.07
Siblings	1.63	.91	.10	1.04	.87	.06	-.15	.55	-.02
Birth order	-.07	.57	.00	-.14	.64	-.01	1.20	.86	.08
Empathy				.20	.08	.13*	.20	.09	.14*
Self-forgive				.02	.10	.01	.08	.10	.05
Other forgive				.17	.07	.14*	.20	.08	.16*
Situation forgive				.01	.08	.01	-.01	.08	-.01
Narcissism				.42	.09	-.26*	-.43	.09	-.28*
Narcissism x self							-.03	.02	-.09
Narcissism x other F							-.01	-.02	.02
Narcissism x Situation F							.03	.02	.08
Narcissism x Empathy							.02	.02	.07
$\Delta R^2$		.02			.12***			.01	

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 4: Gender Differences in Narcissism, Empathy, Forgiveness and Social Connectedness

Variable	Male (n=134)		Female (n=146)		t(280)	p	95% CI		
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	d
Narcissism	30.47	4.47	31.90	4.40	-2.68	.00	-2.47	-.37	-.32
Forgiveness	80.91	8.85	78.36	8.93	2.39	.01	.45	4.65	.32
Empathy	24.88	4.53	25.00	5.00	-.20	.83	-1.24	1.00	-.02

Social connectedness	33.37	6.91	32.22	7.16	1.35	.17	.51	2.80	.13
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### Discussion

Social connectedness is an important factor as it affects student's activities on campus. It helps in maintaining lower blood pressure, better immune response and lower level of stress hormones that help reduce the risk of.<sup>44</sup> Social connectedness helps improve psychological adjustment and well-being.<sup>45</sup> It was important to study social connectedness among university students as students studying in colleges and universities need social interactions, social competency, positive perception and healthier relationships with their peers and family.<sup>46</sup> In terms of one's social environment, lack of social connectedness can be a social stigma making socially isolated people being perceived as loners and inefficient, social isolation leads to depression and other psychological problems. Connectedness may also be linked to the way one views his or her social settings including friends, roommates, and people in general. Socially connected people are extroverts and maintain healthy relationships with the world around and have a greater sense of wellbeing.<sup>47</sup> Low connected people may see their environment as negative and cold though people high in social connectedness perceive it as friendly and positive.<sup>48</sup>

Keeping in mind the psychological and physical benefits of social connectedness we inferred to find out the predictors of social connectedness among university students. We proposed that social connectedness is likely to be positively predicted by empathy. The findings of our study highlighted that empathy is a strong positive predictor of social connectedness; individuals who are empathetic are more extroverts and easily develop social connectedness. Empirical studies establish that SC is has a positive association with many positive psychological factors like social competence, hope, and self-esteem.<sup>49</sup> The results of our study are in line of previous literature. Researchers have found out a positive association between empathetic behavior and social connectedness.<sup>50</sup> People who are empathetic tend to stable in their social relationships as they to understand others perspective and relate with them.<sup>51</sup>

Another proposed predictor of social connectedness in our study was forgiveness. It was assumed that social connectedness is positively predicted by forgiveness for others. This hypothesis of the study was proved and also supported by previous literature. In our study forgiveness for others was found to be positively

associated with empathy. Research found that individuals who possess higher levels of trait empathy easily work toward forgiveness than do those individuals with lower levels of empathy, and individuals who are incapable to empathizing, feel very difficult in forgiving.<sup>52</sup> Empathetic people are usually forgiving. In a research it was observed that forgiving children have higher levels of optimism, self-esteem as well as empathy.<sup>53</sup> Ristovski, and Wertheim confirmed association between empathy and hypothetical forgiveness in imagined scenarios, other researchers have detected similar links between empathy and forgiveness in the perspective of real events.<sup>54</sup> In fact, empathy was “the only psychological variable that has been revealed to assist people to forgive particular real-life transgressions when manipulated experimentally”.<sup>55</sup> McCullough examined empathy and forgiveness of oneself and others in British undergraduates. Empathy was positively associated with forgiveness of others but not with forgiveness of oneself.<sup>56</sup> People who are forgiving tend to have more supportive relationships and are more socially connected with the world around.<sup>57</sup>

We also inferred that narcissism is a negative predictor of social connectedness. Results of our study declared that narcissism was a significant negative predictor of social connectedness.<sup>[10]</sup>found that lack of intimacy is common among those with narcissistic tendencies, preferring relationships that include self-enhancement. People high on narcissistic tendencies are usually low on many positive traits like empathy and forgiveness, hence narcissistic tendencies were found to be a negative predictor of social connectedness. Our findings are much in line with the research conducted by Smolewsk, and Dion<sup>58</sup>, these researchers ascertained that narcissists tend to be emotionally detached, fleeing from relationships that lack closeness and hence land up being socially disconnected. People who have narcissistic tendencies tend to score low on measures of social connectedness.<sup>59</sup> In addition, Smolewsk, and Dion<sup>60</sup> proposed that, narcissists are inclined to be emotionally isolated, escape from relationships that involve closeness and warmth. Theories have suggested that people with high level of social connectedness associate themselves more with others, perceive others as friendly and participate in group activities. People who experience severe and frequent interpersonal failures in life (e.g., peer rejection, isolation and criticism) have experienced narcissistic wounds in the past to the self, and in adulthood these wounds are manifested in form of social aloofness and lack of social connectedness. Individuals with

narcissistic tendencies tend to incorporate in more destructive relationship experiences into their sense of self. People with narcissistic tendencies have low level of connectedness and are unfriendly with other people. They often perceive themselves as outsiders and many a times as superior, their feelings are usually misunderstood by others and hence they have trouble relating with the social world.<sup>61</sup>

Khodabakhsh and Besharat<sup>62</sup> tried to find out relationship between narcissism, empathy and the quality of interpersonal relationships in a sample of 609 university students. The findings of the study proved that empathy and narcissism have a direct relationship with interpersonal relationships and social connectedness. Empathy has a positive relationship whereby narcissism has a negative relationship with the quality of interpersonal relationships. Findings show that the mechanisms through which narcissism and lack of forgiveness are connected with each other can be well understood if we untangle admiration and rivalry and reflect both cognitive and affective antecedents of narcissist's unforgiving motivations.<sup>63</sup>

We also hypothesized that low level of narcissistic tendencies will moderate the relationship between empathy and social connectedness and that between forgiveness and social connectedness. However the results revealed that narcissistic tendencies did not moderate the relationship in either case. The direct relationship between the variables was stronger and significant. People with narcissistic traits lack empathy and are low on forgiveness.<sup>64</sup> Khodabakhsh and Besharat<sup>65</sup> conducted a study by employing a sample of students and found that narcissistic tendencies have a negative relationship with SC. The results of path analysis showed that the relationship between empathy and the quality of interpersonal relationships was mediated by high level of narcissism.

We also investigated gender differences on narcissism, empathy, forgiveness and social connectedness. Results of our study accentuated that women are more narcissistic as compared to men. Earlier researchers have found that men are more narcissistic than women. Kluger<sup>66</sup> concluded that men participants scored higher on personality test for narcissism than women participants in every age group. The difference in results of our study from the previous literature can be due to the difference in the study sample; we took a sample of students studying in colleges and universities. Most of the research conducted earlier that has signified that men are more narcissistic compared to women has recruited a sample of

men and women having a narcissistic personality disorder. In our study we have tried to investigate covert narcissistic tendencies among a sample of students free from psychopathology. Generally women seeking higher education tend to be different with regard to social and cultural values. They are considered more at par with men. Women are considered as the symbol of beauty in Pakistan, and especially women studying in colleges and universities are given lots of importance by their men counterparts.<sup>67</sup> This could be a reason why women students reported having more narcissistic tendencies. Cross cultural and longitudinal studies are needed to explore gender difference in narcissistic tendencies among a non-clinical sample.

We were not able to find gender differences in empathy and social connectedness. Researchers have highlighted that gender differences in empathy usually point out that women have higher levels of empathy compared to men.<sup>68</sup> Further, research specifies the likelihood that these differences may be due to motivation rather than ability.<sup>69</sup> Women typically are more motivated to be empathic and therefore may express higher levels of empathy.<sup>70</sup> Inconsistent findings in our study can be attributed to the fact that the data was drawn from student population; during this stage of development gender difference on different personality traits and states are low as social and religious norms tend to remain stable during this period. Empathy is a construct that needs to be investigated with reference to a specific context, to gather a clearer picture as regard to gender differences. Like in a larger model studies<sup>71</sup> explored empathy and forgiveness in the context of marriage, and did find out that men were more empathetic compared to women. Keeping in mind this discussion we propose that in future, research on gender differences need to highlight empathy within a reference of context rather than as general construct.

We found no gender differences on social connectedness between men and women students. This finding is in line with an earlier study. Parks, and Floyd<sup>72</sup> established that college male and female students did not differ on their responses on a scale administered to measure social connectedness. Women and men both give importance to social connectedness, nevertheless there can be differences in the types of relationships that women and men pursue for development and sustenance of sense of connectedness. It is pertinent that researchers continue to highlight social connectedness as an interpersonal experience and, focus

specifically, how women and men may build and maintain their connectedness from prevailing relationships and associations.

It was found that forgiveness is high in men than in women in our sample. Research on gender differences in forgiveness has yielded different findings. Evidence supports higher forgiveness in men as compared to women.<sup>73</sup> However it needs to be noted that gender differences in forgiveness has been contextualized by other variables. Blanchon et al.,<sup>74</sup> highlighted that no gender difference in overall forgiveness exists. Though, when investigating forgiveness in a predominantly emotional context<sup>75</sup> found that higher levels of forgiveness were present in women than in men. Kadiangandu et al.,<sup>76</sup> disclosed that gender differences on forgiveness varied due to differences in nationality of the sample. Like in the French sample, gender differences did exist on forgiveness thought, such differences were non-significant for the Congolese sample.

### **Implications**

SC could be a main component to prevent psychosocial maladjustment in students. College and University students need supportive social environments for their well-being. If developmental needs for social connectedness are satisfied at an earlier stage the student are likely to become competent adult. Further research is needed to examine other factors and correlates of SC among student population. The information thus derived from the results of our study can facilitate in planning interventions for the prevention of psychological and physical problems associated with low social connectedness. Awareness regarding facilitation towards the improvement of social connections at the individual and community level can be addressed.

This study directs researcher's to explore the buffering role of social connectedness in relationship to stressful life events and health symptoms. Clinical interventions to reduce narcissistic tendencies among students can be helpful in improving and increasing social connectedness. Counselors can facilitate students to become more empathetic and forgiving, and can help them focus on improving their social skills. Parents can be psycho-educated to help train their children from the start to be socially connected, empathetic and forgiving. The study points towards accentuating the need for longitudinal and cross-cultural studies on social connectedness. Further research needs to explore the role of SC as a mediator or moderator with respect to different psychological and psychopathological outcomes.

**Limitations and Suggestions of the Study**

Current study has employed a co-relational research design that does not show causal relationship of study variables. In future these study variables should be studied within a frame work of longitudinal research design to get more precise understandability of cause and effect of the variables. The data was collected from universities situated in the city of Lahore and from students falling within age range 20- 25. To increase the generalizability of our findings, in future researchers should focus on students studying in different grades studying in private and public universities all over Pakistan. Another limitation of the study was that the measures used in the study were developed for the western culture; there is some possibility that some of the items might be culturally loaded. Recommendations to develop scales for our national population are hereby proposed. There may be other variables that could explain the variance in social connectedness like poverty, depression, subjective wellbeing, self-esteem, trust etc. these were not included in the present study.



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