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Estrangement, Attachment, and Narcissistic Tendencies in Young Adults: A Correlation Study

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Abstract
The main aim of the study was to find the relationship between the main variables. The study included 300 university students ranging in age from 18 to 25 years (M =21.1, SD = 2). The measures included in the study were estrangement scale, attachment scale, and narcissistic scales. Estrangement, attachment, and narcissistic tendencies were significantly related to each other. Whereas, estrangement has a negative relationship with narcissistic and positive with attachment. Also, narcissistic tendencies and attachment have a negative association with each other. The findings will help in awareness session among young adults, aid in development of effective techniques and interventions employed in reducing narcissistic tendencies. The limitations and future suggestions are given at the end of the study.

Keywords: Estrangement, Attachment, Narcissistic Tendencies, Young Adults.

Introduction
Young adulthood starts from the age of eighteen years old. Beginning at age 18, young adulthood brought about numerous physiological changes in both men and women. A person has completed full physical and mental development when they are considered to be adults. During this stage, a person considers his or her early years and gets ready for old age. Adulthood is a journey of adjustments, issues, and difficulties that have an impact on an individual. Actually, everyone is entering an era of responsibility. Societal pressure, strategic attention, interpersonal challenges, poverty, parental involvement, abuse, isolation, and miscommunication are just a few of the issues that young adults today confront. Young adults make decisions that will affect their health, pleasure, and prosperity for the entire lives (Morris et al., 2020; Taris, 2002).
Young adults' main focus is the educational institution which faces many problems in and outside the institutions. Estranged young adults who have irregular, limited, or no contact with their parents or extended family networks. Educational institutes are main points where young adults interact more with others. Here many problems were started which leads to them Estrangement.

Young adults' values, believes and authority structure of the school may be a reason for being a student rejected the others which may be leads them toward estrangement (Carr et al., 2015; Levinson, 1980).

There are common themes in the experiences of estranged individuals, with many experiencing homelessness, significant financial difficulties, mental health issues, disrupted studies, and so on. Within the contexts of further and higher education, experiences of estrangement can lead to a strong sense of distinctiveness and isolation. Young adults face many problems in their early adulthood. During adulthood a person deals with many difficulties which were above mentioned, may be resulted as estranged feelings. Those estranged feelings make emotional disturbance in the young adults as shame, low self-esteem, withdrawal from social relationships, a reluctance to do anything (job, school, etc.), anxiety, stress, substance abuse, and even absolute isolation are common among young adults (Aaron et al., 2022; Taylor & Costa, 2019).

Estrangement is separation of a person from oneself and others, estrangements result from the activities that men and women engage in and are reflections of feelings of human endeavor dissatisfaction, familiarity with astonishment, feeling undervalued, and desolation (Carr et al., 2015; Neal, 2013). According to American Psychological Association (APA), a disconnection of a person from the people whom he/she was previously attached they can be spouse friends or family members (APA, 2022). It is assumed that adults and caregivers will have long-lasting, profound, and caring interactions, estranged family connections that are inactive, distant, or broken are widespread, between parents and their children (Rittenour et al., 2018).

Estrangement can be predominantly emotional, when one or more members of the family have minimal, unpleasant, and emotionally withdrawn or stressful interaction, or it can be primarily physical, where there is little or no touch among two or more relatives' members (Agllias, 2017). Emotional estrangement refers to a more widespread and persistent loss of intimacy, such as when unmarried people lack emotional connection and a sense of importance these tendencies begun from adulthood (Conti, 2015). Several researchers claim as labelling individuals who are estranged as abnormal and disordered just serves to exacerbate the issue (Canton et al., 2022; Rittenour et al., 2018). Although it is assumed that parents and children will have long-lasting, significant, and attentive interactions, estranged family ties those that are inactive, distant, or ruptured, even between parents and their children (Blake, 2017; Rittenour et al., 2018). Parental estrangement frequently results from the child wishing to lessen their parent's intrusive participation, even though estrangement is a continuous process in which one or both sides are actively talking to alter and renegotiate intimate limits. With certain connections comprising abuse, these adult child estrangers list rejection, parental apathy, and an inadequate level of support, participation, and acceptability as causes for their distance (Rittenour et al., 2018).

Parent child estrangement a process of decreasing dependency in which at least one of the relational parties actively and voluntarily removes themselves lead to a failed relationship (Scharp et al., 2015; Scharp, 2016). When a family member (parent, kid, or both) no longer desires a relationship and/or seeks to limit connection (i.e., set boundaries) with another family member as a result of a bad relationship, this is known as child estrangement (Scharp & Hall, 2017). Family

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estrangement is the state of becoming emotionally and/or physically separated from one or more family and friends, either out of choice or at the someone else's desire or determination. It is typically implemented to lessen stress, anxiety, or disagreement between the individuals, whether it be implicit or explicit. It is attributed to lack of emotional trust and intimacy, conflicting values, and the conviction that reconciliation is highly improbable, pointless, or unattainable. It entails at least one side being somewhat unhappy. It's crucial to remember that unhappiness does not necessarily imply a desire for a reconciliation (Agllias, 2017). Child whose mother father had frequent clashes or who had divorced parents may face parent child estrangement (Scharp et al., 2015).

Estrangement between parents and children, or the choice to stop communicating by one or both parties, happens when the parent-child relationship has been severely harmed (Carr et al., 2015). Family is a group of people who had biological connections with each other, who relates and cares about each other. The connection between the parent and child is unconditional love (Morris et al., 2020; Scharp, 2016). Obedience to society standards is seen as vital for the durability of relationships between group members, they are prone to believe that deviants should be punished, which is one of such violations frequently result in estrangement (Gilligan et al., 2015).

In this respect, family estrangement is frequently viewed as a type of deviation and disruption with both unchallenged presumptions and the cultural ideal that "a family is forever" (Sharp, 2016). Despite the fact that in modern society family estrangement is a more common reality (Conti 2015), dealing with it in higher education presents a number of difficulties for young adults who don't fit into the usual patterns of popular understanding about family membership. The ones who are estranged run the danger of losing out on the advantages that familial ties are expected to bring, particularly the capital accumulation and transference that allow adults to hold places in the educational system (Costa et al., 2020).

When referring to heterosexual individuals, social isolation is used to describe the arbitrary meanings and rewards that people give to their mates, colleagues, or spouses. The degree to which people sense divides between themselves and other persons with whom they have established strong attachment is reflected in this element of estrangement. Feelings of unloved, unappreciated as a person, or can all be symptoms of isolation. As a result of the loss of social ties, such as those caused by separation, unemployment, or the loss of a mate, social isolation can also manifest as forms of isolation (Morris et al., 2020; Neal, 2013; Taris, 2002).

Young adults who had problems in their family like divorced parents/death of the parents or someone else also faced the family estrangement. Counsellors have widely known family estrangement as a problem that is closely related to concerns about separation, custody battles, homelessness, dependency, and end-of-life judgement (Agllias, 2017). According to developmental and social psychology, attachment refers to defining structures of relationship experience which comes through childhood development ideas about oneself as well as others. According to attachment theorists, a child's future close relationships as a teenager and beyond are greatly influenced by the strength of their early tie with their primary caregiver (Smolewska & Dion, 2005; Waddel, 2006). The closest bonds among family members are often those between parents and their children, and it is expected that these bonds will last a lifetime and be extremely

fulfilling for both duo individuals. The connection, encouragement, and engagement between parents and adult children can vary significantly, even within the same family (Gilligan et al., 2015).

According to Pistole, the several types of insecure attachment, which are each characterized by different extents of rejection and/or anxiety, may really serve the same function since they are expressions of narcissistic vulnerability-related defense mechanisms. Parents response that is weak in warmth and attention may gradually impair a child's naturally healthy narcissistic potential and cause them to stay stuck at a young phase of development where they are overly self-absorbed and needy of attention (Smolewska & Dion, 2005).

Estrangement within the family had an impact on the nature of other blood connections and fostered estrangements between the tertiary and hereditary families. Wellness and health may be impacted by ancestral estrangements (Agllias, 2017). Emotional and physical abuse, forced marriage, violence, separation, mismatched expectation regarding family responsibilities are all reasons why a student/young adult become estranged from their family (Blake, 2017). Adults see their parents' treatment/ behavior with them differently. They judge their closeness and care with their other siblings or friends. Individual adjustment has been associated to reduced self-esteem, negative emotionality, and depressive symptoms, and has effects for the quality of the sibling relationship. Equal treatment is impossible due to the child's developmental needs (Scharp & Dorrance, 2017).

Cultural estrangement is a key component of the alienation construct, which has sparked a lot of sociological and philosophical debate. A student who feels estranged from established principles or disassociated from mainstream cultural standards seemed to be culturally estranged. Traditional essential principles such as democracy, freedom, and independence when these values are absent from a culture, then people may feel estranged from their culture, which, among other things, can be a source of anguish and sadness for some (Bernard et al., 2006). Disconnection from social settings is referred to as social estrangement. Personal, situational, and environmental factors influence the motives of homeless young people to engage in formal jobs and informal forms of income generation. Homelessness creates hopelessness and low self-esteem which leads to the social estrangement (Ferguson et al., 2015).

Social estrangement is perceived lack of relatedness to the social environment, while emotional estrangement is perceived lack of intimacy. The social estrangement leads towards estrangement which makes the individual more vulnerable for depression and personality disorders most likely narcissistic personality disorder. times of social disturbance might end or threaten important social connections, which would then lead to unfavorable feelings. Therefore, economic and social changes that disrupts established social contact patterns has a negative impact on social integration, which in turn heightens population feelings of social isolation that cause psychological distress (Solmeyer & McHale, 2017).

Researchers predict increased stereotypes of estranged adolescents becoming tough, brave, or possessing other much more admirable qualities in this situation. However, because households and the parent-child relationship are so well-known, we expect that society will want to separate itself from these situations, which will result in more unfavorable than positive stereotypes

altogether (Agllias, 2013; Hess, 2000; Rittenour et al., 2018). Some contact involving estranged people may discuss the failed connection and parent' shortcomings, and this communication regarding the estranged connection may indicate that perhaps the estranged adult children's self-efficacy would not decrease as significantly as its recognized warmth and perhaps warmth would be less low (Fiske et al., 2007; Oakes., 2001; Rittenour et al., 2018).

The attachment theory of Bowlby states that, young adult is came to this world including a behavioral framework for attachment also known as some psychopathological mechanism energies individuals actively sought out or sustain nearly connection such an attachment figure (Bowlby, 1988). The attachment behavioral model is based on a number of vital declarations: Predominantly in tough periods, the young adult desires closeness towards the secure attachment. The secure attachment offers the young adult safety and security. Whenever the person who is not around the child with which the child's attachment was linked, the child resists. While response of both the close figure's ongoing reactions towards the children's suffering, the attachment system starts to progress from the age of 6 months and evolves as time goes on. The child's response gave rise to form what are known as cognitive or psychological working models of their selves and other people. When a child gets enough care and protection it is more likely that child internal working model will also be fine (Jones, 2015).

Narcissist tendencies and estrangement seemed to had link with each other. According to the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) is characterized by a pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in actions or fantasy), need for appreciation, and lack of empathy. The ability to control one's self-esteem via age-appropriate ways of fulfilment is seen as normal narcissism. Inability to maintain self-esteem and self-cohesion results in pathological narcissism, which causes misery to the individual and others by resorting to maladaptive methods of pleasure such aggressiveness and narcissistic defenses (Day et al., 2019). Pathological narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). In young adults, narcissistic features that are resilient can lead to stress, fear, negative self, suicidal ideation, and interactions of poor quality. When narcissism becomes pathological, it can contribute to depression, anxiety, low self-worth, suicide attempts, and poor-quality relationships (Winner & Nicholson, 2018).

Pathological narcissism is characterized by an inability to depend on oneself or others to uphold strong but accurate self-esteem and identity. These are difficult to change to a more realistic self-view despite the cost of retaining these pathological self-views. Furthermore, increased narcissism throughout adolescence may obstruct identity development, which occurs during this adolescent age (Van Schie et al., 2020). Overparenting, or excessively getting involved in a person's life to keep them safe and make sure they reach particular goals, has connection with larger sense of self-importance and narcissism in broad sense (Winner & Nicholson, 2018; Van Schie at al., 2020).

The growth of an adaptable identity may be hampered by aloof and uncaring parenting. It has been proposed that an absence of reflection through cold parenting is to blame for the child's inability to learn a usual growth trajectory whereby the grandiose self is exchanged to a more truthful image of the self. However, excessive mirroring caused by being highly attuned to child's

necessities (such as helicopter parenting or spoiling) is also believed to arise harmful. Overparenting and too indulgent parenting prevent children from using their encounters to rectify a grandiose ego and may increase their dependence on other people for advice and input (Zhang & Han, 2022).

Research Question
What is the relationship between attachment, narcissistic personality, and estrangement in university students?

Main Hypotheses
There would be a relationship between Estrangement, Attachment, and Narcissistic tendencies in young adults.

Method
Research Design
Cross-sectional research design was used to find out the association between Estrangement, Attachment, and Narcissistic Tendencies in Young Adults. Cross-sectional survey is indeed a research methodology; wherein, the researchers gather information from a large number of participants all at once. The possibility of a major connection between estrangement, attachment, and narcissistic tendencies in young adults was hypothesized.

Sampling Strategy
Stratified sampling was used to collect data for the present research. Age was one of the criteria used to justify this method as we needed only young adults. Therefore, only university students with the age range of 18-25 years were selected for this research.

Participants and Setting
The data were collected from Government and Private Universities of Lahore, Pakistan. The total 300 university students were selected (150 males and 150 females) with the age range of 18-25 years. The demographic information was collected comprising age, gender, marital status, educations, and socio-economic.

Measures
These following measures were used for the present study:

Estrangement Scale (ES)
The Estrangement Scale (ES) was developed by Ejaz and Sana (2023). There were 27 items in this scale with five factors, namely cultural estrangement, social estrangement, self-estrangement, emotional estrangement, and cognitive estrangement. It is a 5-point Likert scale as (0= Disagree Strongly) to (4= Strongly Agree). It has high internal consistency as Cronbach's alpha was .83.

Attachment Scale (AS)
In order to assess the parental attachment in young adults, Adult Attachment Scale (Hazan & Shaver, 1992) was used. It is a three-item questionnaire, specifically designated to assess attachment styles (avoidant, anxious/ambivalent, and secure) of adults.

Narcissistic Tendencies Scale (NTS)

In order to assess narcissistic tendencies in young adults, a subscale of Short Dark Triade Scale (Nida & Sara, 2017) of 9 items was used to measure the narcissistic tendencies in young adults. It is a 5-point Likert scale as (0= *Disagree Strongly*) to (4= *Strongly Agree*). It has high internal consistency as Cronbach's alpha was .76.

Ethical Consideration

The permission of data collection was taken from the Department of Clinical Psychology, School of Professional Psychology, University of Management and Technology, Lahore and from the authors of measures to use their scales in present research. The participants' responses were anonymous and on voluntary basis. Further, the participants were briefed and then debriefed about research protocol, their rights of withdrawal from the study, and ensured the confidentiality of every participant's information.

Procedure

The data was collected from pertinent private and government colleges and universities after every participant's consent. The participants were briefed and then debriefed about research protocol, their rights of withdrawal from the study, and ensured the confidentiality of every participant's information. After that each participant was given complete research protocol including Estrangement Scale (ES), Adult Attachment Scale, Narcissistic Tendencies Scale (NTS), and Alienation Scale (AS). The research protocol containing all the scales and demographics form was completed by each participant in 10 to 15 minutes. Total 300 participants were interviewed from government colleges and universities.

Results
Hypothesis I: Attachment, Estrangement, and Narcissistic Tendencies

The primary hypothesis of main study that stated that there will be a significant relationship between Attachment, Estrangement, and Narcissistic Tendencies, was tested using correlation analysis in order to get correlation matrix of Attachment, Estrangement, and Narcissistic Tendencies. That hypothesis was crucial for the present study, as it gave the overall structure for further study. Thus, Pearson Product-moment correlation was computed (see Table 7).

Table 1: Summary of Pearson correlation, Means, and Standard Deviations for Scores of Estrangement, Narcissistic Tendencies, and Attachment(N=300)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*1*	*2*	*3*
1.ES	47.31	10.92	-	-.17**	.17**
2. NTS	25.08	4.96	-	-	-.16**
3. AQA	1.95	.82	-	-	-

*Note. **p* < .01 ES= Estrangement Scale; NTS= Narcissistic Tendencies Scale;

AQA = Attachment Questionnaire-Adult.

As shown in Table 1, the summary of Pearson correlations, means, standard deviations of attachment, estrangement, and narcissistic Tendencies. The results suggested a significant correlation between attachment, estrangement, and narcissistic tendencies (**$p < .01$) that is supporting the first hypothesis of the main study. Furthermore, Estrangement and Narcissistic tendencies have a significant negative correlation (-.17**), meaning higher estranged patterns are associated with lesser narcissistic tendencies in young adults. While estrangement has a significant positive correlation with attachment (.17**), meaning higher estranged patterns are associated distorted attachment styles. Finally, the narcissistic tendencies and attachment have a significant negative association with each other (-.16**), meaning higher narcissistic tendencies are associated with distorted attachment styles.

Discussion
In order to see relationship between attachment style, Estrangement and Narcissist tendencies correlation through Bivariate was computed. Results indicated a significant relationship between Attachment, Estrangement, and Narcissistic Tendencies that is supporting the first hypothesis of the main study. While the estrangement has a significant positive correlation with attachment, meaning higher estranged patterns are associated distorted attachment styles. It was evident that estrangement could developed in young adults due to poor parenting which leads to unhealthy attachment (Arránz Becker & Hank, 2021; Smolewska & Dion, 2005; Waddel, 2006). Estrangement and Narcissistic tendencies have a significant negative correlation, meaning higher estranged patterns are associated with lesser narcissistic tendencies in young adults. It was also evident that Lower levels of lack of care for others' emotions, eagerness to defend one's opinions in public, authentic living, and Self-others interaction are associated with higher levels of vulnerable narcissism. Additionally, it was revealed that pathological vulnerability narcissism was negatively correlated with accepting extraneous influence, self-alienation, and self-consistency (Di Pierro & Fanti, 2021).

Conclusion
Estrangement is feeling in which a person cutoff him/her self from the family or friends. This estrangement takes place due to the many reasons like, ineffective parenting others, reflections of feelings of human endeavor dissatisfaction, familiarity with astonishment, feeling undervalued, and desolation in young adults. Narcistic tendencies developed in a person when their attachment style is not secure. This shattered attachment develops emotional disturbance in a person by the help of cognitive dissonance. This study reveals that that attachment is significantly linking estrangement to narcissistic tendencies. The findings will help in awareness session among young adults, aid in development of effective techniques and interventions employed in reducing narcissistic tendencies.

Limitations and Further Suggestion
Every study has limitations, so this does not necessarily require that they will

have an impact, but they will drive more investigation and work on other potential contributing factors. There are a number of aspects involved that should be taken into consideration significant when evaluating the constraints related to the estimation and generalizability of the results. The data was collected only from the young adults so further studies should gather data from parent's and address their views about their estrangement or their young adults. This study was only focused on the young adults which is not enough because parents' attitude or concern about their young adult is also important to keep in view which is only be possible by adding the parents in the study.

Declaration

Ethical Approval. This study was conducted following the ethical guidelines provided by the American Psychological Association and the ethical committee of the University of Management and Technology, School of Professional Psychology..

Conflict of Interest. The authors have no conflicts to declare.

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