Development and Validation of an Estrangement Scale for Young Adults

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Estrangement is naturally a progression of feelings that may shift between different parts of an experience. The current study aims to develop and validate the estrangement scale for young adults aged 18 to 25 years in order to provide significance for the nonmonotonic effects of estrangement. Initially, 45 items were generated utilizing the inductive and deductive item-generating approaches. In phase I, generation of items, expert validation and a pilot study were carried out; consequently, the number of items was reduced to 35. In phase II, the scale was administered to a sample of 300 university students for psychometric analysis. The exploratory factor analysis revealed a 5-factor solution with 27 items labeled as culture estrangement, social estrangement, self-estrangement, emotional estrangement, and cognitive estrangement. The results suggested a satisfactory alpha coefficient (.83) and significant concurrent validity ($p < .01$) with the Measure of Alienation. Thus, findings suggest that ES is proven to be a reliable and valid measure. The study's implication indicated that the Estrangement Scale could be helpful in assessing the estranged feelings of young adults.

Keywords. Estrangement, young adults, culture, social, cognitive

Estrangement, defined as the separation of a person from himself and others, is a result of the activities that both men and women engage in and is a reflection of sentiments of discontent with human activity, familiarity with amazement, feeling unappreciated, and despair (Carr et al., 2015; Conti & Ryan, 2013; TenHouten, 2016). A person can become disconnected from the people to whom they were previously attached, including their spouse, friends, or family (American Psychological Association, APA, 2022). Estranged family relationships between parents and their children that are inactive,

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remote, or broken are common (Rittenour et al., 2018). It is believed that adults and caregivers will have long-lasting, significant, and compassionate interactions. Estrangement may appear to be primarily physical, where there is limited or no physical contact between two or more relatives or it can be primarily emotional, where there is an insignificant, unpleasant, and emotionally draining or stressful connection between one or more family members (Agllias, 2017). When unmarried individuals lack emotional connection and a sense of value, for example, these inclinations start in maturity, this is referred to as emotional alienation (Conti, 2015).

The term "estrangement" may be utilized to refer to cognitive mapping patterns, societal scenario significance, and individual views of the interconnection of the events in which people are involved when referred to in the context of heterosexual relationships. When two people get intimate, questions like: Who is in charge? Represent a distance. Is the behavior of the other person predictable? Is he or she trustworthy? Do the collective efforts yield intrinsic rewards? This lack of an individual's influence, a lack of cohesion, skepticism and mistrust-based mindsets, and a feeling of loneliness can all contribute to alienation in particular gender partnerships (Conti & Ryan, 2013). Social isolation is the term used to describe the artificial meanings and incentives that people bestow upon their friends, coworkers, or spouses when referring to heterosexual people. This aspect of alienation reflects the extent to which people feel differences between themselves and other people to whom they have developed close attachments. Isolation can manifest as feelings of unlove, unappreciation as a person, or all three. Social isolation may also take the shape of other forms of isolation as a result of the loss of social links, such as those brought on by separation, unemployment, or the death of a partner (Conti & Ryan, 2013; Fakoya et al., 2020).

One crucial component of self-estrangement seems to be an underlying absence of desire or a subconscious source of motivation. The prevailing belief among youth is "if it's too hard, don't try it." The young adults primarily have a passive, limited, and evaluation-focused worldview, where involvement in distinctive activities and comprehensive research for personal development, education, and experimentation are often considered improper. Young individuals who experienced family issues including divorced parents, parent deaths, or someone else's death also experienced family alienation. Family alienation has long been recognized by counselors as a problem that is intimately linked to worries about divorce, custody disputes, homelessness, dependency, and end-of-life judgment (Agllias, 2017). Family estrangement happens when a person

distances themselves from their loved ones. Complete breakdown of family communication, indicating that estranged parties are unable to get in touch with one another. At least one member of the family intentionally or actively maintains the communication severance (Conti, 2015).

Estrangement has been a long-term process that has probably been influenced by a variety of causes. Individual experiences of past and present parental neglect and disinterest were frequently included in participant testimonials. Estrangement is multifaceted and culturally ingrained. Origin tales occasionally included phases of estrangement and reconciliation during which adult children felt obligated to sustain the relationship due to distant aspirations or strong attachments to their parents. Estrangement can be the result of a deliberate decision to withdraw oneself or an external occurrence that acted as the breaking point (Agllias, 2015; Scharp & Dorrance, 2017). Youngsters who experienced inadequate care and attention are more likely to have bad internal practical applications as well as negative attitudes of themselves and society. By engaging in ineffective interpersonal behaviors, these adolescents learn to regulate their emotions and eventually engage in problematic interpersonal relationships (Jones, 2015).

When people decide to become estranged, it usually happens when they are teenagers or young adults. Information from other close relatives, along with sporadic or unintentional communication, usually reinforces the decision to become estranged. People who had frequent encounters finally came to the opinion that their attachment with the parent was irrevocably broken and that nothing will ever be able to mend it. Estrangement frequently resulted from a small mishap or act of betrayal that made it evident the link was unalterable. According to study findings, young adults generally decided to take control of the relationship even when this realization did not help them decide to entirely cut off the link or perhaps once they failed to start the estrangement. They set boundaries, extended the family's separation, or reduced or stopped having physical contact (Agllias, 2015). As a result, they become permanently cut off from both their friends and their parents.

A widespread issue among young adults is that when they reveal that they are estranged, friends alongside other family members, or entire family, react harshly and unsupportively. As per several studies, a person who is estranged from one caregiver may also be estranged from the other parent or even from the entire family (Agllias, 2015; Scharp, 2016; Scharp & Thomas, 2016). The decision to break off contact with either parent or both parents was

primarily prompted by "abuse." They discussed serious physical, emotional, and sexual abuse that they experienced as children as well as adults from their parent(s). Adults commonly linked betrayal to abuse. They claimed that the parent disregarded them by trying to safeguard their children from being abused, as well as by negating, neglecting, or partaking in the abuse. In certain instances, the disclosure of molestation was overlooked by the parent or adhered to by an inadequate response, resulting in estrangement (Agllias, 2015; Ferguson et al., 2018).

Estrangement was characterized in the current study as a person becoming disconnected from the people to whom they were formerly attached, such as their spouse, friends, or family (American Psychological Association, 2022). Researchers discovered deception as a factor that contributes to adult estrangement. According to the findings of the study, deception is typically accompanied by familial lies and deception, which, when disclosed, contributed to the victim's doubt, anguish, and humiliation. Subtle rejections, long-hidden secrets, and large-scale subversive activities were all manifestations of treason. When critical information was withheld from adults and children, they appeared astonished (Agllias, 2015; Krizan & Herlache, 2018). Estrangement does not only affect children and parents, but it also affects other relationships such as husband and wife or any other connection. When we discuss relationships based on estrangement, multigenerational connections come to mind, which have been studied by others who discovered that multigenerational connections frequently become stressful as a result of relationship status transitions such as detachment, separation, or death of a spouse (Agllias, 2018; Kim & Koh, 2018; Meier, 2009; Scharp & Thomas 2016). Consequently, a result, the current study addresses this gap by investigating the experience of estranged feelings in culture of Pakistan. The results of this study will assist therapists in optimizing alienation, which will promote hopefulness, life fulfillment, and purpose of life in young adults. Therefore, development and validation of an estrangement scale to measure the tendencies of estranged feelings in young adults was aimed by the researcher with the following objectives:

1. To develop an Estrangement Scale for young adults.
2. To find out the reliability and validity of the Estrangement Scale for young adults.

Method

Phase I: Generation of Items

Firstly, the current study was approved from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for further exploration. After that phenomena of estrangement were explored with the intent to develop a reliable and valid scale to measure estranged tendencies. Individual interviews of 50 young adults (25 males and 25 females) aged ranging from 18-25 years ($M = 21.82$, $SD = 1.87$) were carried out through convenient sampling. Each participant was asked open-ended question, "Which thoughts cause you to feel alienated and separated from others (in Urdu)" to explore recurring feelings associated with young adults' estrangement. Following the exploration phase, the repetitive or inconsistent items were excluded from the final item list. Subsequently, a list of 45 estranged tendencies was submitted to a panel of six experts (comprising of two assistant professors, two lecturers, and two psychologists) for content validity evaluation. After empirical validation, 35 of the preliminary 45 items were determined to be appropriate for retention in the finalized Estrangement Scale (ES).

Phase II: Pilot Study

The primary objective of the pilot study was to establish the feasibility and initial reliability of the construct, as well as the responsiveness of this newly developed "Estrangement Scale (ES)". For that purpose, after the expert validation, the ES was piloted on 30 (17 males and 13 females) young adults from private and public institutes with an age range from 18-25 years ($M = 21.67$, $SD = 1.95$). The participants finished the scale in roughly 10 minutes. The results of the pilot study revealed that the scale was user-friendly and that the items were easily understood with reliability .89.

Phase II: Development and Validation of an Estrangement Scale

This phase comprises of scale development and validation, particularly the exploratory factor analyses (EFA), construct validity, and concurrent validity of the Estrangement Scale (ES).

Participants

The participants ($n = 300$) including male ($n = 156$) and female ($n = 144$) students of age ranged from 18-25 years from private and government universities were recruited through stratified random and strata was made by male and female students with age range 18-25

years (M = 21.71, SD = 1.90). The physically or sensory disabled students were excluded from the study. Before, data collection, 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.

Instruments

Demographic Questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire gathered information on various demographic variables, including age, gender, education, university, background details, family system.

Estrangement Scale (ES)

The Estrangement Scale (ES) was developed particularly for the current research. ES consists of 35 questions about estranged tendencies in young adults. These questions are rated on a 4-point Likert scale, with responses that range from "Never" (0) to "Always" (4). An elevated level on this scale implies a stronger inclination of estranged traits.

Measure of Alienation

This measure was utilized to determine the Estrangement Scale's (ES) concurrent validity (Nayyer & Subhan, 2021). This measure was comprised of 42 positively words items with responses that range from "*Never*" (0) to "*Always*" (3). The overall Cronbach Alpha reliability of the measure was .86.

Procedure

Before starting data collection, permission was obtained from the Department of Clinical Psychology, School of Professional Psychology, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, as well as the authors of measures, to use the Measure of Alienation (Nayyer & Subhan, 2021) in the current study. The responses of the participants were anonymous and voluntary. In addition, the participants were briefed on the research procedure, right of withdraw from the research investigation, and the confidentiality of each participant's information. After that each participant was given complete research protocol including demographic questionnaire, Estrangement Scale (ES), and Alienation Scale (AS). In total, 300 young adults actively participated in the study while completing the research protocol that averagely took approximately 15 minutes to finish. Participants were then provided debriefing details and acknowledged for their significant contributions.

Results

Item Analysis. Only 27 of the 35 items in the Estrangement scale that were used for item analysis displayed a significant item-total correlation. Items with values below .40 were not kept or taken into account when determining the final factor structure. In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy, Bartlett's test of sphericity, and principal component analysis (PCA) were computed to identify the factor structure. KMO value (.82) and Bartlett's test (χ^2 (351) = 1686.44, $p < .001$) were found significant.
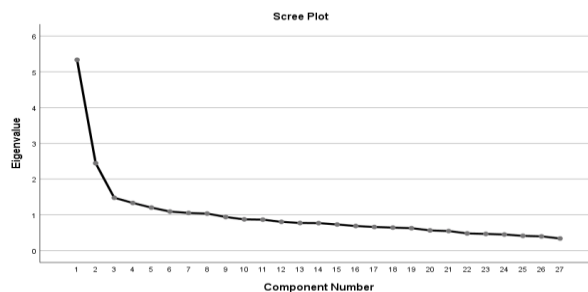
Table 1: *Factor Structure, Eigen Values, and Item-Total Correlations of 27 Items of Estrangement Scale With Varimax Rotation (N = 300)*

Sr. No	Item No	Factors				
		I	II	III	IV	V
1	2	**.70**	.06	.13	.11	.02
2	3	**.66**	.07	.18	.28	-.12
3	11	**.59**	.16	.09	.15	-.03
4	10	**.53**	.23	.19	-.17	.22
5	5	**.46**	.32	.25	.05	.15
6	15	.15	**.73**	-.18	-.02	-.01
7	14	-.02	**.66**	.22	.17	.07
8	25	.16	**.65**	.29	.08	-.04
9	9	.10	**.56**	.20	-.21	.16
10	26	.22	**.50**	.17	.14	-.02
11	34	.04	.17	**.64**	-.03	-.04
12	13	-.05	.28	**.59**	.20	-.15
13	20	.25	-.02	**.59**	.09	.16
14	7	.33	.07	**.57**	.09	.14
15	8	.34	.16	**.44**	-.06	.26
16	32	.35	.30	**.43**	-.11	.24
17	28	.04	-.02	.03	**.60**	.21
18	38	.00	-.05	.04	**.59**	.27
19	29	.11	.09	-.04	**.59**	.11
20	12	.23	.01	.34	**.53**	-.09
21	36	.19	.14	.05	**.44**	.21
22	33	.07	.06	.11	.09	**.64**
23	39	-.09	-.02	.17	.21	**.58**
24	40	-.17	-.04	.07	.35	**.51**
25	37	.10	.25	-.04	.35	**.45**
26	16	.33	.18	-.16	.14	**.43**
27	31	.31	-.12	-.09	.15	**.42**
Eigen Values		5.36	2.44	1.48	1.33	1.20
% Variance		19.77	9.05	5.48	4.94	4.46
Cumulative %		19.77	28.82	34.29	39.23	43.68

Note. Items with .50 or above loadings are boldfaced in the resultant factors. r = Item-total correlation .20 or above are significant at [*]$p < .01$.

As shown in Table 1, the threshold for keeping items in factors was .50 or higher. Six, five, four, and three factor solutions were tested in an effort to find the best fit model; however, the five-factor solution was the best match with the fewest questionable items and a well-defined factor structure. Items with factor loadings below .50 were eliminated from the final structure, while items with questionable loadings were evaluated for retention in the proper factor based on their content. Five factors together explained a total variation of 39.23%. Additionally, each element has a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 6 items.

Figure 1: *Scree Plot Showing Extraction of Factors of Estrangement Scale*

As shown in Figure 2, the Eigen values and number of factors that could be kept for the scale's final structure.

Factors Description

After thoroughly analyzing the objects, researcher assigned a label to each associated factor by taking into account common themes that each item revealed.

Factor 1: Cultural Estrangement. There were five items in the first factor. The maximum score in this factor indicate that the person is more toward cultural Estrangement. This factor items included "I feel discomfort in society", "I boycott people" "I feel disgust" etc.

Factor 2: Social Estrangement. There were five items in the second factor. The maximum score in this factor is related to the person's estrangement related to their society. The items included in this factor, like "My friends didn't give importance to my point", "people make me feel inferior", "people did boycott me", etc.

Factor 3: Self-Estrangement. There were six items in the third factor. The maximum score in this factor indicates that people had traits of self-estrangement. The items in this factor are "I don't want to

talk to anyone", "I don't like to meet people", "I feel lonely among people", etc.

Factor 4: Emotional Estrangement. There were five items in the fourth factor. The maximum score in this factor highlights that people might have traits of emotional estrangement. The items of this factor are "Bitter language turns people away", "I think differently compared to others", "I find it difficult to share my thoughts with others", etc.

Factor 5: Cognitive Estrangement. There were six items in the fifth factor. The maximum score in this factor refers to a feeling of cognitive estrangement. The item of this factor is "People are mean," etc.

Psychometric Properties of Estrangement Scale (ES)

Construct Validity

The ES showed a significant positive correlation with its sub-factors along with satisfactory internal consistency (α = .73 to .83), as detailed in Table 2.

Concurrent Validity

Correlation was calculated to assess the concurrent validity of the Estrangement scale. For determining the concurrent validity, the Measure of Alienation (Nayyer & Subhan, 2021) was used with the currently developed Estrangement Scale (ES). The results revealed a significant positive correlation between the overall ES scores and those of the Measure of Alienation (Nayyer & Subhan, 2021) (r = .61, p < .01). This correlation suggests that young adults exhibiting higher levels of estranged tendencies tend to show elevated levels of alienation, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: *Summary of Inter-correlations, Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach Alphas of ES, Subscales, and MAS (N = 300)*

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	MAS T
1. Cultural Estrangement	-	.43**	.54**	.31**	.26**	.74**	.51**
2. Social Estrangement		-	.45**	.15**	.17**	.68**	.41**
3. Self-Estrangement			-	.29**	.23**	.75**	.49**
4. Emotional Estrangement				-	.49**	.61**	.34**
5. Cognitive Estrangement					-	.61**	.29**
6. ES Total						-	.61**
M	8.77	8.01	10.11	9.42	10.98	47.31	67.00
SD	3.02	3.60	3.56	2.66	3.10	10.92	16.11
α	.73	.74	.72	.75	.75	.83	.77

*Note. M*AS T = Total of Measure of Alienation Scale, ES = Estrangement Scale.
** p < .01.

Table 2 demonstrates correlation coefficients between estrangement and measure of alienation. The results show that all the factors of estrangement scale, such as cultural estrangement ($r = .51$, $p < .01$), social estrangement ($r = .41$, $p < .01$), self-estrangement ($r = .49$, $p < .01$), emotional estrangement ($r = .34$, $p < .01$), and cognitive estrangement ($r = .29$, $p < .01$), have significant positive relationship with MAS. Overall, it indicates that ES factors are reasonably consistent with MAS.

Discussion

Estrangement is defined as a process in which at least one family member actively and voluntarily creates or maintains distance from another because of a persistently bad connection. It's crucial to note that Scharp does not view estrangement as a binary state but rather as a continuum and a communication process with a number of different elements, including: communication quality, presence or absence of emotion, positive or negative affect, physical distance, reconciliation or a desire to be a family, communication quantity role reciprocity, and legal action (Agllias, 2015; Scharp & Hall, 2017). Nowadays Estrangement is a disconnection of a person from the people whom he/she was previously attached they can be spouse friends or family members or a 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; American Psychological Association, 2022).

In the current research, the estrangement was explored, collected, gathered, and transformed into a 5-point self-report inventory (ES). The principal component factor analysis of ES consisted of 40 items revealed 5-factors, namely *Cultural Estrangement, Social Estrangement, Self-Estrangement, Emotional Estrangement,* and *Cognitive Estrangement.* Two studies contributed to the development and validate the indigenous instrument used to measure the estrangement thought patterns used by Pakistani People. To establish the construct validity, the EFA was computed after the items for the scale were produced empirically. According to (Fleming, 2003), the Varimax rotation method is the simplest way that helps in the prediction of the accuracy and accurate knowledge of every aspect. As a result, five significant factors developed. Hence, the reliability coefficient of all the five factors of the ES showed satisfactory internal consistency and each factor was significantly correlated to each other (See Table 2).

The subfactors of ES consisted of Cultural Estrangement Which refers to the rejection of popular culture as well as disassociation from its norms (Zhang & Lee, 2022). Social Estrangement refers to the dearth of social interaction or real social support (Thomas et al., 2020). Self-Estrangement refers to the separation from one's true self (Smith & Victor, 2019). Emotional estrangement refers to a more widespread and pervasive absence of intimacy outside of marriage, such as when single people have no significant others to offer emotional support and a sense of significance (Wang et al., 2018), and cognitive estrangement refers to cognitive sense of separation (Golden & Veiga, 2015).

The first factor Cultural Estrangement Which refers to the rejection of popular culture as well as disassociation from its norms (Zhang & Lee, 2022). It defines those people who felt more culturally isolated were those who observed less self-transcendence and more self-enhancement in their society. They think that their cultural values do not belong to them. They feel discomfort in their own culture and mostly have of boycott.

The second factor, Social Estrangement refers to the dearth of social interaction or real social support (Thomas et al., 2020). Which indicates that a person's perception of being cut off from a group, such as their friends, family, or the larger community, with whom they identify. The person thinks that his/her connected people boycott with them and makes them feel inferior and less important. Social estrangement was found corelated with Cultural estrangement as their items had intercorrelation (See Table 2). According to a study's findings, differences in personal and societal values are more directly associated to cultural estrangement than differences in political attitudes and differences in commonplace attitudes. Particularly when people think their values are more concerned with the welfare of others than with societal ideals, cultural estrangement is more likely to occur (Zhang & Lee, 2022).

The third factor Self-Estrangement refers to the separation from one's true self (Wang et al., 2018). People who had this type of estrangement didn't want to be a part of anything. They had feeling of self-disconnectedness when around with friends and family. Self-estrangement and social estrangement also had high intercorrelation. Moreover, self-estrangement and cultural estrangement are also found to be highly intercorrelated with each other as their items had high internal consistency (See Table 2).

The fourth factor Emotional estrangement refers to a more widespread and pervasive absence of intimacy outside of marriage,

such as when single people have no significant others to offer emotional support and a sense of significance (Wang et al., 2018). The person with this type of estrangement had feelings of stressful relationship with their friends or family. They are not far physically but emotionally. Cognitive estrangement (Fifth factor) refers to Cognitive Sense of Separation (Golden & Veiga, 2015). Cognitive and emotional estrangement had high intercorrelations as their items showed high internal consistency (See Table 2).

The psychometric properties of ES were satisfactory and acceptable. The internal consistency of ES was established using Cronbach's Alpha, which ranged from .73 to .83. As far as the convergent and concurrent validities were concerned, Alienation Scale (Aamina & Sara, 2021) to determine the concurrent validity of scale.

In view of all this it was clearly demonstrated that Estrangement is not a disorder, it's a feeling which is later developed in alienation. A person's thinking pattern or his cognitive dissonance leads him towards the emotional disturbance which develop estrange feeling in a person. Pertaining to prediction, attachment plays a vital role in young adults' lives because it will create chances of feeling estrangement if it is not secure. A person's thinking pattern or internal working model based on this factor. This internal working model makes a person develop cognitive dissonance which leads to emotional disturbance. This emotional disturbance makes a person feel estranged and then alienates him or herself from the world.

Conclusion

Estrangement is a feeling in which a person cutoff him/herself from the family or friends. This estrangement takes place due to 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 with the help of cognitive dissonance. Narcissism didn't have any direct connection with estrangement but it its self-developed by ineffective parenting. This study reveals that attachment is not significantly linking estrangement to 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 significantly 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 parents also 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 possible by adding the parents in the study.

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