

# Nature Connection: A Source of Restoration

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**Abstract:** Psychological well-being is of vital significance to every individual. Though, people are usually conscious that their behavior plays a key role to achieve and maintain better psychological well-being whereas the exposure to nature may direct towards nature association and this might also turn up as positive consequences for one's welfare. The present investigation was intended to study the interrelationship between nature connection and psychological well-being. The sample for the present investigation consisted of 300 young adult students from age of 20-25 years and all of them were taken out from colleges and universities of NCR region on the basis of availability. For this purpose; The connectedness to nature scale was used to assess nature connection and Psychological Well-Being scale was administered to assess psychological well-being. Inter-correlation analysis was used to see the associations between the two sets of the variables. Results were discussed in terms of its implications.

**Keywords:** Nature Connection, Psychological Well-being.

## INTRODUCTION

Psychological Wellbeing put forward the individualistic understanding of two ideas of one's emotional know-how's (Pavot & Diener, 1993). The first one is psychological or poignant understanding which includes both encouraging and depressing behaviours and the second is theoretical or abstract understanding which includes meaning in life, exertion, recreation and societal relations. Therefore, two essential elements of psychological well-being are the individualistic approach of being blissful by doing something which one cherishes a lot and the same adds a sense of worth and rationale in one's life. The psychologist "Carol Ryff" industrialized an incredibly apparent model which measures psychological well-being as a whole and by its six components and these are "Self-acceptance, Positive relations with others, Autonomy, Environmental mastery, Purpose in life, and Personal growth." There are many factors that influence psychological wellbeing and nature connection is one of them.

Psychological well-being can be explained as "positive mental health" (Edwards, 2005). The studies have been indicating "psychological well-being" as basically the complex multifaceted conceptualization (MacLeod & Moore, 2000; Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002) that flourishes constantly with a blend of "emotional regulation, personality characteristics; identity and life experience" (Helson & Srivastava, 2001). "Psychological well-being" can amplify by way of maturity, enlightenment, sociability & awareness and reduces through instability (Keyes, Schmotkin and Ryff, 2002).

Nature connection is basically an extent when people start involving nature as an element of their individuality (Schultz, 2002). It involves the comprehension of nature and bit of every aspect which makes nature even if that is not satisfying (Nisbet, Zelenski & Murphy, 2009). Features of connection to nature are identical to the individual's personality attributes: nature connection is steady with time and in different conditions (Nisbet, Zelenski & Murphy, 2010). Schultz (2002) identified "three components that make up the nature connection construct:

- The cognitive component is the core of nature connection and refers to how integrated one feels with nature.
- The affective component is an individual's sense of care for nature.
- The behavioral component is an individual's commitment to protect the natural environment."

Above mentioned constituents' forms nature connection and are necessary for sound relation with ecology. When, one experiences a rhythm with nature, one tends to stay more careful, cautious and protective towards surroundings (Schultz, 2002). Latest researches have exhibited that individuals can be benefitted in aspects like well-being, once individual gets vulnerable towards nature (Mayer, Frantz, Bruehlman-Senecal & Dolliver, 2009). Studies in "environmental psychology" recommend that individual's wishes to interact with green spaces act as a significant factor in rejuvenating oneself, that is, "psychological restoration." As of now, it exhibits fact such as physiological and psychological issues of metropolis lifestyle may lead to the requirement of restoration which constantly sustain and strengthen inclination towards nature (Van Den Berg, Hartig & Staats, 2007). The most significant facet of ecology is restoration; it has the possibility to produce attraction among individuals towards nature; it is also capable of mesmerizing that ultimately deplete one's desire of reflexive attentiveness and in a way restoration can be achieved. Furthermore, it should produce the experience of running away from definite surroundings or circumstances; specifically, pointing towards the associative attributes

and availability of natural settings and harmony among the environmental attributes with the objectives and choices of the individual (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).

De Vries, Verheij, Groenewegen & Spreeuwenberg (2003) reported the association among nature connectedness and enhanced psychological well-being. The individuals who go out in green environment and prefer to involve in green therapeutic exercise means any task performed by the individuals in the green settings or natural environment experiences benefits. People who live in green environment reported fewer symptoms of ill health and greater perceived general health. Nisbet (2005) explained the potential effect of environmental education in increasing the nature relatedness, environmental concern and well-being. Outcomes are explained as how increase in nature connection can be achieved through environmental education and it leads to the improvement in psychological wellbeing and it also motivates environmental responsible behaviour. Dutcher, Finley, Luloff & Johnson (2007) connectedness to nature is an affective individual experience that tends to influence one's well-being. Such an individual is better able to associate and relate with both natural and social surroundings and derive accurate meaning out of it. Nisbet (2011) concluded that nature connection is increased with the more exposure in nature and it finally leads to increase in happiness and psychological wellbeing and it becomes the source of inculcating the environmental concern in the individual.

Kumar, Lal, Bansal and Sethi (2014) concluded that there exists a strong association among nature connection and subjective well – being. Association with physiological surroundings boosts human's positive experiences and reduces strains of life. Individual's linkages with natural surroundings ameliorate one's life quality. Zhang, Howell & Iyer (2014) concluded that the individual's should be motivated to build up nature connection and also motivation should be provided so that individual's can stay connected with the natural environment so as to enhance the individualistic well-being. Capaldi, Passmore, Ishii, Chistopolskaya, Vowinckel, Nikolaev and Semikin (2017) suggest that engaging with natural beauty may have an impact on well-being by promoting a stronger subjective connection with nature. Richardson, Hussain and Griffiths (2018) concluded that the more the individual feel connected to the nature; the more the aversion will be for smart phone usage and this will also direct towards the ways that helps in curbing the Smartphone addiction. The rising indication is that nature relatedness is really essential for individuals and global quality of life.

In every stage of life, nature connection appears to be an essential psychological characteristic of the individual and it has a wide scope in behavioural, emotional, attentional, social and psychological arenas. Nature connection can be understood in terms of close association with the natural settings in a "physical, cognitive and emotional manner." It is the new and emerging area for present day's research. There is a need to identify the association among nature connection and psychological well-being as these constructs may have significant role in one's life.

### **Problem**

Nature Connection as a correlate of Psychological Well-being.

### **Objective of the study**

To study the association between Nature Connection and Psychological Well-being.

### **Hypothesis of the study**

There would be positive association between Nature Connection and Psychological Well-being.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

The sample comprised of 300 young adult students from the age of 20- 25 years. The sample was selected from the NCR region.

### **Tests and Tools**

The following standardized tests were administered:

#### ➤ **The Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS; Mayer and Frantz, 2004):**

This scale comprised of 14 items. Response category for each statement is based on 5-point likert's scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree". Three statements (4, 12, and 14) are reverse scored to get the overall score of the scale. The total score of this scale can be obtained by aggregating the score of every item in this scale and then dividing it by total number of items in the scale. The scale only gives a global score. Scores range from one to five for the overall scale. The higher the scores on the nature connection; the higher will be the nature relatedness. Mayer and Frantz (2004) exhibited a strong internal consistency coefficient  $\alpha$  of 0.84 and test-retest reliability ( $r = .78, p < .001$ ) was reported to be stable across time. The substantial associations with ecological awareness support the validity of the scale.

➤ **Scale of Psychological Well-being (SPWB; Ryff and Keyes', 1995):** The SPWB consists of 42 items to evaluate psychological well-being and its dimensions. The SPWB has six subscales and these are "autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance." Each dimension has 7

items to measure specific domain of well-being. Response category for each statement is based on 6 point scale. The respondents respond the items ranging from 1 to 6 i.e. strongly disagree to strongly agree. The alpha coefficient values ranges from 0.86 to 0.93 (Ryff, 1989).

### Research design and analysis

The co-relational analysis was done for associative descriptions.

### Procedure

Participants were communicated personally or in a small group on the basis of convenience. After taking the consensus of the subjects, rapport was established and they were provided with the tests and the general directions were also provided to them. Participants completed measures on nature connection and psychological well-being. They were requested to answer frankly and honestly.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Nature Connection is experiencing an emotional association with nature and feeling nature as a part of one's own self. The present study highlights the association between nature connection and psychological well-being. For this purpose, Pearson product moment correlation has been applied. As per the requirement of the hypothesis, the data was processed yielding the following results shown in table 1.

Table – 1: Intercorrelation amongst Nature Connection and Psychological Well-being

Variables	A	EM	PG	PRWO	PIL	SA	PWB
NC	.20**	.16**	.35**	.29**	.29**	.30**	.38**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level

Where; NC – Nature Connection, A – Autonomy, EM – Environmental Mastery, PG – Personal Growth, PRWO – Positive Relations With Others, PIL – Purpose in Life, SA – Self Acceptance, PWB – Psychological Well-Being

The nature connection measures the relatedness of an individual to the nature whereas psychological well-being implies how an individual perceives and evaluates one's life. And, nature connection is significantly and positively associated with psychological well-being. As it is described in the methodology section that psychological well-being has six domains and these are “*autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance.*” So, from the table 1, there exists positive and significant correlation among nature connection and autonomy ( $r = .20, p < .01$ ), nature connection and environmental mastery ( $r = .16, p < .01$ ), nature connection and personal growth ( $r = .35, p < .01$ ), nature connection and positive relations with others ( $r = .29, p < .01$ ), nature connection and purpose in life ( $r = .29, p < .01$ ), nature connection and self-acceptance ( $r = .30, p < .01$ ), nature connection and psychological well-being ( $r = .38, p < .01$ ).

This is apparent from the above table that there exists positive and significant association between nature connection, all the domains of psychological well-being and overall psychological well-being too. The outcomes clearly exhibited that the people who stay connected with nature show higher psychological well-being means people with high scores on nature connection tends to experience more of psychological well-being. Nature connection helps in ameliorating “the immune system, decreasing blood pressure, maintaining blood sugar levels, restoring attention, reducing headaches, and fatigue, which contribute to improved sleep and much more.” Exposure to nature can considerably trim down despair, constant worries, daily hassles and disorders such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Nature connection also helps in restoring awareness; enhancing remembrance power and improving confidence, scholastic assessment, originality, decisiveness and efficiency. Association with nature is an incredible set up for societal associations as it encourages scope for socializing and also empowers society. Spending quality time in natural surroundings decreases cruelty, hostility and offense. Interacting with each other in natural surroundings enhances social associations, social bonds and relations and also improves altruistic behaviours like giving, kindness and serving. Nature connection facilitates individuals to efficiently utilize the possibilities and empower individuals with capability of handling ecological aspects and affairs inclusive of handling daily activities and generating conditions to fulfill individual requirements. Moreover, they spend a purposeful life because they carry a positive outlook towards themselves. So, in essence Vitamin – N is really beneficial for fostering one's psychological well-being.

At last, it can be concluded on the basis of statistical analysis based on intercorrelation explained in above cases; it is quite evident that the significant associations exist amongst nature connection and psychological well-being. The outcomes clearly revealed that individuals who spend quality time in nature tend to experience more psychological well-being.

Previous researches also highlight the supporting nature of nature connection in psychological well-being. Availability of ecological environment is essential for psychological well-being and is linked with prolonged existence

and reduced possibility of mental complaints (Takano, Nakamura and Watanbe, 2002). Dutcher, Finley, Luloff and Johnson (2007) revealed that nature relatedness is an emotional experience which enhances the individual's well-being. Spending time in ecological settings directs towards psychological well-being and cognitive, affective and behavioral improvements (Huppert, Baylis and Keverne; 2007).

People tend to experience positive emotions while interacting with the natural surroundings (Hinds and Sparks; 2008). O'Connor, Sanson, Hawkins, Letcher, Toumbourou, Smart & Olsson (2011) concluded that nature exposure was reported as a considerable source of meaning among adult population. Findings revealed that there exists a strong association among nature connection, meaningfulness, vitality and psychological well-being (Cervinka, Roderer and Hefler; 2012). A recent correlation study demonstrated that an individual who is greatly associated with nature extracts meaning out of life from one's affinity with green spaces and that ultimately enhances overall well-being (Howell, Passmore and Buro; 2014).

On the basis of obtained outcomes the objective; to study the associations between nature connection and psychological well-being and the hypothesis that there would be a positive relationship between nature connection and psychological well-being has been retained and verified for the same supporting evidences has been presented to support that psychological well-being is positively and significantly related with nature connection.

#### **IMPLICATIONS:**

The current study stress on the importance of being connected with nature for one's psychological well-being. The time spent in real natural settings tend to have positive effect on individual's overall well-being. Furthermore, the acquaintance to nature may direct on the road to nature connection and this might also turn up as positive consequences for one's welfare. Numerous programs could be commenced to bring individual closer to nature. Nature has a diversity of prominent restorative impacts that helps in altering frame of mind and performance consequently. Nature has potential of restoration. So, it is really very helpful for the individuals to make improvement with the help of essential and pleasing natural environments. Nature is amazingly vital for refining well-being in human beings.

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