

# ROOTED IN NATURE: Exploring the Interplay of nature Connectedness and optimism

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“In nature’s presence, we find solace, a harmony that soothes the soul and renews the spirit”

“Tintern abbey“ by William Wordsworth

**Abstract-** The aim of this study was to gain insight about the kind of relationship between nature connectedness, optimism and hope 250 respondents took part in the study this will be purely Correlation study the sampling used will be simple stratified sampling. The purpose of this study is to get a glimpse of how optimism and hope which are psychological construct are indirectly connected to nature connectedness. And how this underlying construct can be strengthened via strengthening nature connectedness.

**Keyword-** Nature-connectedness, biophilia, optimism and hope.

## INTRODUCTION

Despite evidence of nature’s benefit people are spending less time interacting with the natural environment .Many elements of the nature have indirect and direct benefit for humans the importance of nature extends from providing valuable resource for a sustainable life to regulating overall health. According to Robins nature is not only nice to have but is a must have for efficient physical and cognitive functioning evidence regarding the positive effects of nature connectedness to well-being is so strong that it has led researcher to argue that this is a basic psychological need this research aims to study whether any relationship exist between connectedness to nature and optimism and hope Today when the world is battling mental health crisis , finding meaning and building positive process and capacity can help strengthen future mental health . Existential perspective use this basic insight to advocate that suffering is an inherent part of life that must be confronted .The urgency for mental health programs that are focused on hope and provide accurate information about disorder and recovery. Positive expectation for the future, commonly conceptual as hope and optimism can act as potential mechanism towards achieving positive mental Health. Hope and optimism although often used interchangeably in clinical discourse are in fact distinct construct , corresponding to distinct mechanism by which expectation shape human behavior and produce positive outcomes whether optimism and hope can affect physical and mental health has been discussed among academics evidence supporting the notion that both attitudes contribute to positive outcomes. In this context optimism is defined as a cognitive favorable view about their future optimism generally have more positive than negative expectations and tend to report less distress in their daily lives even in the face of challenges what is expected to happen in the future can affect how people experience situation in their daily lives their health and how they deal with emotions and stress. Optimists are more focused on generalized and expectation rather than how and why the goal is achieved studies have found that Optimism is related to fewer symptoms of depression , Higher levels of well-being lower attrition rates and stranger perception of social support.

The positive repercussions of optimism may be related to greater probability of adopting health and promoting behavior and coping strategies than enables better psychic adjustment recent evidence reveals that optimism is modifiable and associated with better cardiovascular health and increased likelihood of healthy aging. Snyder has suggested that hope is a state of positive motivation based on three components Hope theory emphasizes the presence of personal agency related to goals and the recognition of strategies to achieve those goals therefore .This theory suggest that a hopeful person would endorse statement such as I WILL ACHIEVE MY GOALS

Optimism also contributes to enhanced psychological well-being. Research shows that people with dispositional optimism are more likely to use reappraisal problem focused coping and adaptive emotion focused coping at the time of stressful situation .Looking at the positive outcomes of optimism in different sphere of persons life It is crucial that optimism can be developed from childhood. Programs have been developed by research practices.

The concept of connectedness with nature, also referred to as self-nature connection or nature connectedness is defined as “the extent to which an individual includes nature within his/her cognitive representation of self” (Schultz, 2002, p. 67). It is embedded within the broader research paradigm of individual environmental identity, which investigates how



humans, in their daily lives, rely on identity-based motivations to manage their attitudes, relations, and behaviors toward the natural environment (Clayton, 2003, 2012). Researchers have developed several valuable scales for the assessment of relevant aspects of the connectedness with nature construct (e.g., Schultz, 2001; Mayer and Frantz, 2004; Martin and Czellar, 2016; Richardson et al., 2019). Its psychological and behavioral correlates have also received considerable scholarly attention in recent years. First-hand direct experiences with the natural environment seem influential in shaping individual connectedness with nature (e.g., Cheng and Monroe, 2012; Collado et al., 2015). The latter has been shown to meaningfully relate to the tendency to espouse biosphere motivations and values as well as pro-environmental attitudes (e.g., Mayer and Frantz, 2004; Martin and Czellar, 2017). If a person includes the natural environment as part of their self-view, they are more likely to engage in nature-protective behaviors as well (Schultz, 2002; Mayer and Frantz, 2004). Indeed, connectedness with nature is positively related to self-reported and actual pro-environmental behavior, as summarized in recent meta-analyses on the topic (Mackay and Schmitt, 2019; Whitburn et al., 2020). Additionally, empirical evidence shows that connectedness with nature is positively associated with subjective perceptions of happiness, well-being, and general satisfaction with life (e.g., Mayer and Frantz, 2004; lessons of miracle, hope and optimism are learned, Nature serves as a profound teacher of hope and optimism through its cyclic patterns and regenerative process observing the changing seasons from rebirth of spring to resilience of life amid harsh winter it instills a sense of continuity and optimism. Nature demonstrate that even after darkest nights there is the promise of a new day, The adaptability of flora and fauna to environmental challenges reflect the essence of hope – nature shows us that life persist and evolves despite adversity from seed germination to the growth of mighty trees there is an inherent optimism embedded in the natural world. Furthermore the interconnectedness of ecosystem exemplifies collaboration and mutual support each organism plays a role, relying on others for sustenance and contributing to the balance of the ecosystem. In moment of uncertainty observing nature's cycle and resilience can inspire a positive outlook the beauty of a sunrise the persistence of a blooming flower and the rhythmic that like nature we possess the capacity to adapt, grow and find hope even in challenging circumstances. Observing how plants and animals adapt and thrive in diverse environment highlights the resilience of nature this resilience serves as a powerful metaphor, encouraging us to navigate challenges with a hopeful mindset knowing that growth can emerge from adversity such as post traumatic growth. The interconnectedness reinforces the ideas that working together and supporting the idea that working together and supporting one another can lead to collective well-being and optimism hence the nature connectedness directly or indirectly infuses an element of hopefulness. Nature's enduring qualities and the sense of timelessness it imparts and provides us a comforting perspective. it reminds us that despite the transient nature of challenges there is a larger enduring context that can bring a sense of hope by immersing ourselves in nature and appreciating its inherent qualities we tap into wellspring of inspiration that nurtures a positive optimistic outlook in life.

**RATIONALE-** the rationale of this study is that as we all know that humans species are battling a mental health crisis and with the advancement of science people are losing their touch with mother nature which is the ultimate source of mental well-being and peace This study will help us to design a nature based positive mental health intervention which might help in changing the basic nature of intervention. Positive nature based intervention will not only alleviate mental health problems but will also help in promoting nature conserving habits. World is in dire need of hope and optimism & if nature can foster these construct in us it will be incredibly good Hypothesis – Nature connectedness will positively correlate with optimism score and hope score People scoring low on nature connectedness will score low on dimension of optimism and hope.

**METHODOLOGY-** this is a pure co relational study snowball sampling method was used 200 participants took part in this study which included 100 male 100 female age ranging from 18 to 30.

**TOOLS-** 3 major tools were used in this entire study which included

- 1- Nature connectedness scale
- 2- The optimism scale
- 3- The hope questionnaire

**Procedure-** The data was collected via using survey method through google forms. 100 male and 100 females respondent were randomly selected for the research study whose age ranged between 20-30, three validated scales were used for the study the first scale was CONNECTEDNESS TO NATURE SCALE developed by by MAYERS F.S and FRANTZ C.M (2004). its internal validity is high (0.84) and its test retest reliability  $r=0.79$ . second scale used was the Life

orientation test –revised Scale it is a 10 item measure of optimism versus pessimism, of the 10 items, 3 item measure optimism, 3 item measure of pessimism and 4 items serve as fillers. This test was developed by M.F CARVER AND Bridges.

**RESULTS-**

The result of this study suggests that there is high positive correlation between CNC score and LOTR score, The correlation coefficient for CNC score and optimism came out to be 0.698 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance, the correlation coefficient for CNC score and life orientation scale is also came  $r=0.734$  which is also significant at 0.01 level of significance. The regression analysis result indicated that the CNC score is good predictor of optimism as well the result of the following study are summarized below in the form of table and graph and scatter plot. These results clearly indicate that high CNC score can prove to be a valid predictor of optimism in simple words connectedness to nature makes a person feel nature connectedness can influence optimism by fostering positive emotions a sense of belonging and purpose, mindfulness resilience and environmental concern. These factors contribute to more optimistic outlook on life and a greater sense of well-being. Optimism also fosters peace mindset as optimistic individuals tend to believe in the possibility of positive outcome and are more likely to approach conflicts with a constructive and co-operative mindset. They are more willing to engage in dialogue, compromise and seek peaceful resolution to conflict rather than resorting to violence or aggression. Optimistic societies are better equipped to weather crises and conflict, as individuals and communities are more resilient and better able to bounce back from setbacks.

		CNC SCORE	WELL-BEING SCORE
CNC SCORE	Pearson Correlation	1	.698**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Life-orientation scale	Pearson Correlation	.698**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

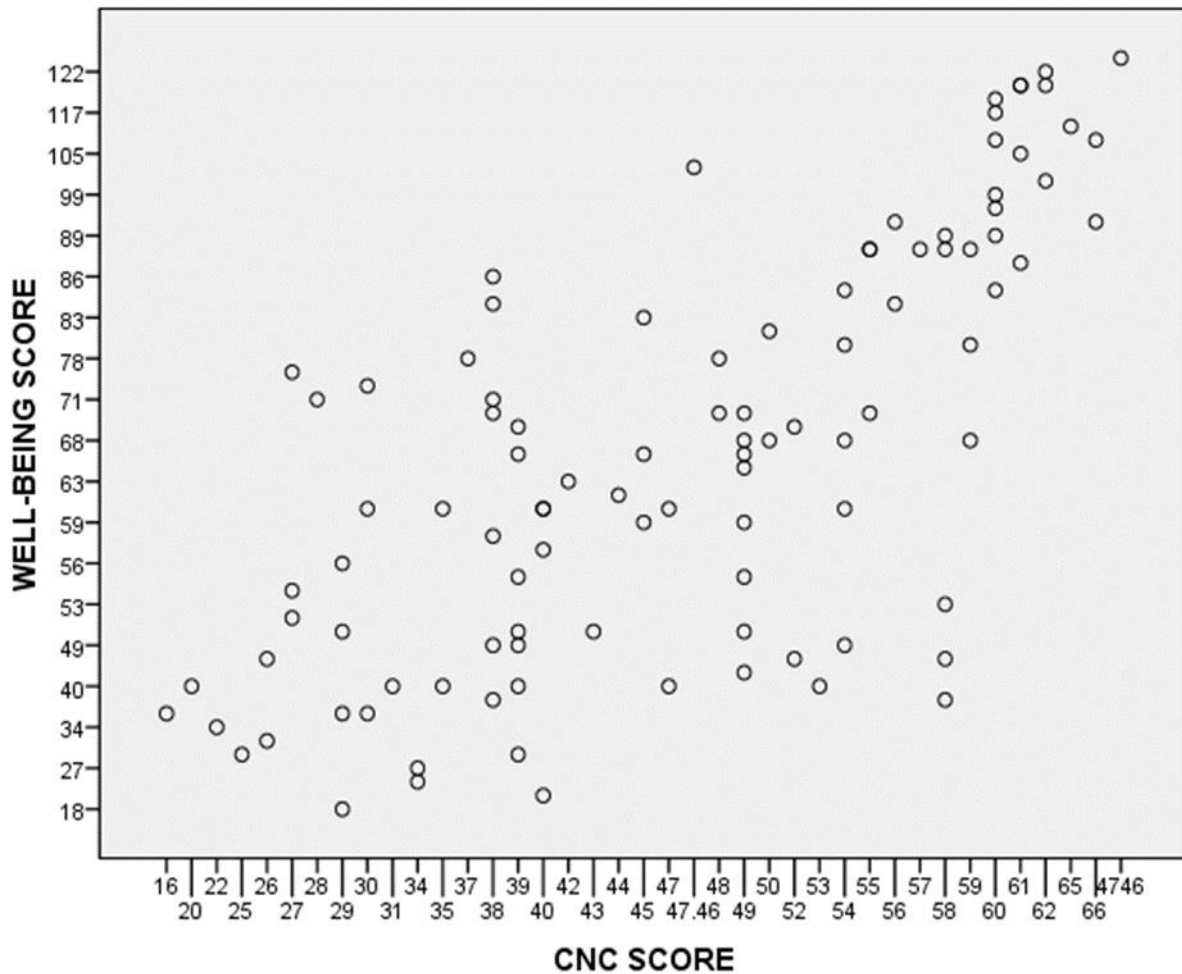
\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation between connectedness to nature and optimism****Model Summary**

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Table 2 showing regression analysis report

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.698 <sup>a</sup>	.487	.482	18.026



**DISCUSSION**

Nature has long been revered for its ability to inspire awe, tranquility and a sense of interconnectedness with the world around us. In the midst of the hustle and bustle of modern life, the importance of nature in fostering positive psychological outcomes such as optimism has garnered increased attention from researchers and practitioners alike. Nature connectedness refers to an individual's subjective sense of being emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually connected to the natural world. It encompasses the feelings of awe, appreciation, and respect towards nature, as well as a sense of belongingness within natural environments. Optimism, on the other hand, is characterized by a general expectancy of positive outcomes and a tendency to attribute setbacks to external, temporary, and specific causes. It is a fundamental component of psychological resilience, enabling individuals to navigate life's challenges with a hopeful attitude and a belief in their ability to overcome adversity. Optimistic individuals tend to exhibit greater psychological well-being, improved coping strategies, and enhanced physical health compared to their less optimistic counterparts. The relationship between nature connectedness and optimism is multifaceted, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and physiological pathways through which nature exerts its influence on psychological well-being. Immersion in nature exerts its influence on psychological well-being firstly by immersing individuals in natural environments, which fosters a sense of awe and wonder, prompting individuals to adopt a broader perspective and see beyond their immediate concerns. This expansion of cognitive horizons encourages optimistic thinking by emphasizing the transient nature of setbacks and the abundance of opportunities for growth and renewal. The results of the study indicate that nature connectedness is positively correlated with optimism, hence recognizing the profound influence of nature connectedness on optimism holds important implications for promoting mental health and well-being in today's society. Incorporating nature-based interventions such as ecotherapy, wilderness retreats, and green exercise programs into clinical practice and public health initiatives can provide individuals with the opportunity to reconnect with nature and cultivate optimism as a coping resource. Moreover, fostering a deeper sense of environmental stewardship and conservation ethics can nurture a reciprocal relationship between humans and nature, promoting both individual and collective well-being. In conclusion, the relationship between nature connectedness and optimism underscores the transformative power of nature in shaping our psychological outlook and resilience. By immersing ourselves in the beauty and majesty of the natural world, we can cultivate a profound sense of optimism that transcends the challenges of everyday life, fostering a brighter and more hopeful future for ourselves and generations to come. Being in contact with nature serves as an adaptive function, namely psychological restoration. Nature

has potential to generate fascination to people, its able to captivate so that the demand for involuntary attention of the demand is lowered and the restoration can be performed. Exposure to nature can have humanizing effects fostering greater authenticity and connectedness. Motivating ecological behaviour by increasing the connection to the natural environment may be effective than establishing laws and rules that people have to follow. There are antecedents in the literature that have identified several benefits of connectedness to nature, including well-being ([Mayer and Frantz, 2004](#); [Nisbet and Zelenski, 2013](#); [Zylstra et al., 2014](#); [Olivos and Clayton, 2017](#)), health ([Nisbet and Zelenski, 2013](#)), happiness ([Nisbet and Zelenski, 2013](#); [Zylstra et al., 2014](#)), and a satisfying and meaningful life ([Zylstra et al., 2014](#)). Furthermore, [Olivos and Clayton \(2017\)](#) remark that connections with the natural environment can also have an indirect effect on well-being through pro-environmental behavior; on this matter, several studies expound that behaviors with a low environmental impact are related to happiness or satisfaction. Several investigations reveal significant relationships between connectedness to nature and pro-ecological behaviours among the adult population ([Olivos et al., 2013](#); [Geng et al., 2015](#); [Bruni et al., 2017](#)). On the other hand, some researchers suggest that connectedness to nature is also related to pro-social behaviours. [García et al. \(2016\)](#) explain that people with a strong sense of connectedness to nature carry out a greater number of pro-ecological, frugal, fair, and altruistic behaviours, which altogether compose SB. [Corral \(2011\)](#) define SB as a series of actions aimed at the preservation of natural resources considering the integrity of plant and animal species, as well as the individual and social well-being of present and future generations. So the results of this study suggest that there is a strong positive correlation between nature connectedness and well-being. And there is strong positive correlation between the nature connectedness score and pro-environmental behaviour score, which indicate that the how much a person is connected to a nature will predict their pro-environment behaviour. Therefore government should encourage such programme which promotes conservation and help them to revive their bond with the nature as its very common thing with human that they can go beyond limits only for those things that they love. Limitations of this study is that the A common aspect of co relational studies is that the direction of effect and causality remains unclear. Furthermore, a lack of representativeness of the study population could have resulted in bias.

## CONCLUSION-

This review has shown that nature connectedness is associated with OPTIMISM the correlation came out to be significantly positive These results signal the important role NC may play in contributing to positive psychological functioning and highlight the possibility that different aspects of well-being may relate to nature-connectedness to varying extents. Multiple pathways—perhaps mediated by a range of emotions and elicited by different aspects of nature—may be involved in the relationship between nature connectedness and life-orientation..

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