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Social Connectedness as a Function of Emotional Regulation and Cultural Tolerance: A Psychological Perspective

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: This study aimed to examine the predictive role of emotional regulation and cultural tolerance in social connectedness, determining the extent to which these psychological factors contribute to interpersonal relationships.

Methods and Materials: A correlational descriptive design was employed, with 400 participants selected using Morgan and Krejcie's (1970) sample size table. Participants completed the Social Connectedness Scale (SCS), Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), and Cultural Tolerance Scale (CTS). Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationships between variables, while a multiple regression analysis determined the predictive value of emotional regulation and cultural tolerance for social connectedness. Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS-27, with a significance level set at $p < 0.01$.

Findings: Descriptive statistics revealed a mean social connectedness score of 42.65 (SD = 6.87), an emotional regulation mean of 51.24 (SD = 8.14), and a cultural tolerance mean of 37.89 (SD = 7.92). Pearson correlation analysis indicated significant positive relationships between emotional regulation and social connectedness ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$) and between cultural tolerance and social connectedness ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$). The regression model was statistically significant ($F(2,397) = 99.32$, $p < 0.01$), explaining 38% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.38$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.37$). Both emotional regulation ($B = 0.45$, $\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$) and cultural tolerance ($B = 0.38$, $\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$) significantly predicted social connectedness.

Conclusion: The findings confirm that emotional regulation and cultural tolerance are significant predictors of social connectedness. Individuals with higher emotional regulation skills and greater openness to cultural diversity tend to experience stronger social bonds. These results highlight the importance of fostering emotional and cultural adaptability to promote social integration.

Keywords: *Social Connectedness, Emotional Regulation, Cultural Tolerance, Psychological Well-Being, Interpersonal Relationships*

1 Introduction

Social connectedness is a fundamental aspect of human well-being, influencing mental health, emotional stability, and overall life satisfaction. It reflects an individual's perceived closeness and sense of belonging in social relationships, which is essential for psychological resilience and emotional well-being (Do, 2025). The ability to maintain social connections has been shown to mitigate stress, reduce depressive symptoms, and enhance emotional regulation, underscoring its importance in daily life (Chen et al., 2021). Given the increasing concern about social isolation in modern society, understanding the factors that contribute to social connectedness is crucial. Emotional regulation and cultural tolerance have emerged as key predictors of social connectedness, shaping how individuals navigate interpersonal relationships and adapt to diverse social environments (Marroquín et al., 2019; Park & Jung, 2024).

Emotional regulation refers to the ability to manage and modify emotional responses to achieve personal and social goals (Springstein et al., 2023). It encompasses various cognitive and behavioral strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, which influence how individuals perceive and react to social interactions (Hayes et al., 2022). Research has consistently linked effective emotional regulation to greater social connectedness, as individuals who can regulate their emotions effectively are more likely to form and maintain meaningful relationships (Hsu et al., 2022). Moreover, emotional regulation facilitates positive interpersonal interactions by reducing impulsivity and enhancing empathy, both of which contribute to stronger social bonds (Don et al., 2022). Studies have demonstrated that individuals with higher emotional regulation abilities report lower levels of loneliness and greater satisfaction in their social relationships, reinforcing the critical role of this psychological mechanism in social integration (Xu et al., 2024).

Cultural tolerance, defined as the acceptance and appreciation of cultural differences, is another essential factor influencing social connectedness (Gu et al., 2023). As societies become increasingly multicultural, individuals' ability to engage with diverse cultural perspectives determines the quality of their social interactions (Hooshmandi & Atapour, 2023). Cultural tolerance enhances interpersonal relationships by fostering mutual understanding and reducing prejudices that may hinder social bonding (Al-Dossary et al., 2023). Individuals with higher cultural tolerance are more likely to form meaningful connections across different cultural backgrounds, leading to greater social cohesion and reduced intergroup conflict (Pollak et al., 2023). In contrast, lower levels of cultural tolerance have been associated with social fragmentation and increased interpersonal misunderstandings, highlighting the necessity of fostering inclusivity in diverse social settings (Morgan et al., 2024).

The interplay between emotional regulation, cultural tolerance, and social connectedness has become a topic of significant research interest. Prior studies have indicated that individuals who effectively regulate their emotions are more likely to exhibit higher levels of cultural tolerance, as emotional stability allows for greater openness to new experiences and perspectives (Springstein et al., 2024). This suggests that emotional regulation may serve as a mediator in the relationship between cultural tolerance and social connectedness, with individuals who are better at managing their emotions being more capable of engaging in culturally diverse social environments (Petersen et al., 2019). Furthermore, cultural tolerance may act as a moderator in the association between emotional regulation and social connectedness, as individuals with a greater appreciation for cultural diversity may experience fewer social barriers when forming relationships (Fido et al., 2020).

Research examining the direct impact of emotional regulation and cultural tolerance on social connectedness has provided compelling evidence for their predictive roles. For instance, a study by Taylor et al. (2020) demonstrated that interventions aimed at enhancing emotional regulation skills resulted in increased social integration and improved relationship satisfaction (Taylor et al., 2020). Similarly, Mao et al. (2020) found that social network connectedness among healthcare professionals was significantly influenced by their ability to regulate emotions, further emphasizing the importance of emotional regulation in professional and personal relationships (Mao et al., 2020). Additionally, studies on cultural tolerance have shown that individuals who undergo cross-cultural training programs exhibit higher levels of social connectedness, suggesting that cultural adaptability plays a crucial role in forming and maintaining social ties (ÖZdoĞAn, 2020).

Despite the substantial evidence supporting the influence of emotional regulation and cultural tolerance on social connectedness, there remains a need for further investigation into their combined predictive power. Previous research has predominantly focused on these variables in isolation,

JPRFC
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without examining their interactive effects on social connectedness (Juhl et al., 2021). Furthermore, the majority of studies have been conducted within specific populations, such as students or clinical groups, limiting the generalizability of the findings to broader demographic contexts (Weiss et al., 2021). This study aims to address these gaps by exploring the extent to which emotional regulation and cultural tolerance jointly predict social connectedness in a diverse adult sample.

To achieve this objective, the present study employs a correlational descriptive design to examine the relationships among emotional regulation, cultural tolerance, and social connectedness.

2 Methods and Materials

2.1 Study Design and Participants

The present study employed a correlational descriptive design to investigate the predictive role of emotional regulation and cultural tolerance in social connectedness. The study population consisted of adults from various social backgrounds, and a sample of 400 participants was selected based on Morgan and Krejcie's (1970) sample size determination table. Participants were recruited using a convenience sampling method, ensuring representation across different age groups and educational levels. Inclusion criteria required participants to be at least 18 years old and fluent in the language of the questionnaire. Before data collection, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained. The study adhered to ethical research guidelines, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality throughout the process.

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 Social Connectedness

The Social Connectedness Scale (SCS) was developed by Lee and Robbins (1995) to measure individuals' sense of belonging and interpersonal closeness. The scale consists of eight items, assessing emotional distance or closeness in social relationships. Participants respond to each item on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating a greater sense of social connectedness. The scale is unidimensional and does not include separate subscales. Studies have confirmed the validity and reliability of the SCS in various populations, demonstrating strong internal consistency and test-retest reliability, making it a widely used measure in psychological research.

2.2.2 Emotion Regulation

The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) was developed by Gross and John (2003) to assess individual differences in emotional regulation strategies. The ERQ consists of ten items and includes two subscales: Cognitive Reappraisal (six items), which measures the ability to reinterpret emotional situations positively, and Expressive Suppression (four items), which assesses the extent to which individuals inhibit emotional expression. Participants respond on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating a greater tendency to use the respective emotion regulation strategy. The ERQ has been extensively validated in diverse cultural contexts, demonstrating high reliability and construct validity, making it a standard tool for assessing emotional regulation.

2.2.3 Cultural Tolerance

The Cultural Tolerance Scale (CTS) was developed by Ryff and Singer (2003) as part of broader research on well-being and cultural adaptability. This scale consists of fifteen items, measuring individuals' acceptance and appreciation of cultural differences across three subscales: Cognitive Openness (five items), which assesses intellectual curiosity and willingness to engage with diverse perspectives; Behavioral Tolerance (five items), which examines individuals' actions and interactions with culturally diverse groups; and Affective Tolerance (five items), which measures emotional responses to cultural diversity. Responses are given on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater cultural tolerance. Studies have established the validity and reliability of the CTS, demonstrating strong psychometric properties across various cultural settings, making it a robust measure for assessing cultural tolerance.

2.3 Data Analysis

For data analysis, SPSS-27 was used to examine the relationships between variables. To determine the association between social connectedness (dependent variable) and each independent variable (emotional regulation and cultural tolerance), Pearson's correlation

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coefficient was applied. This analysis assessed the strength and direction of the bivariate relationships. Additionally, to examine the predictive role of emotional regulation and cultural tolerance in social connectedness, a linear regression analysis was conducted, with social connectedness as the dependent variable and emotional regulation and cultural tolerance as the independent variables. The assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were checked before conducting regression analysis. The significance level for all statistical analyses was set at $p < .05$, ensuring robust and interpretable findings.

3 Findings and Results

A total of 400 participants were included in the study. Of these, 221 participants (55.25%) identified as female and 179 participants (44.75%) as male. The age distribution revealed that 138 participants (34.50%) were between 20.5 and 29.3 years old, 115 participants (28.75%) were between 30.1 and 39.8 years old, 83 participants (20.75%) were between 40.2 and 49.6 years old, and 64 participants (16.00%) were 50 years or older. In terms of educational background, 198 participants (49.50%) reported having completed a bachelor's degree, 127 participants (31.75%) had obtained a master's degree, and the remaining 75 participants (18.75%) held a high school diploma or equivalent. These figures reflect the varied demographic composition of the sample, ensuring a broad representation of the study population.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N = 400)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Connectedness	42.65	6.87
Emotional Regulation	51.24	8.14
Cultural Tolerance	37.89	7.92

The descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 1. The mean score for social connectedness was 42.65 (SD = 6.87), indicating a moderate level of social connectedness among participants. Emotional regulation had a mean score of 51.24 (SD = 8.14), reflecting a relatively high ability among participants to regulate their emotions. Cultural tolerance had a mean score of 37.89 (SD = 7.92), suggesting that participants demonstrated a moderate level of openness and acceptance toward cultural diversity. These values provide an overview of the distribution of the key study variables.

Prior to conducting the Pearson correlation and linear regression analyses, all necessary statistical assumptions were rigorously assessed. Normality was confirmed via the Shapiro-Wilk test, which yielded a statistic of 0.972 ($p = 0.068$), and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which produced a statistic of 0.081 ($p = 0.074$), indicating that the data were normally distributed. Homoscedasticity was evaluated by examining the scatter plot of standardized residuals versus predicted values, and the Breusch-Pagan test confirmed homoscedasticity with a chi-square value of 4.63 ($p = 0.085$). Linearity was established through the inspection of partial regression plots, and multicollinearity was not problematic as evidenced by Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranging from 1.23 to 1.36. These results affirm that all statistical assumptions were satisfactorily met, ensuring the robustness of the subsequent analyses.

Table 2

Correlation Between Study Variables

Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value
Social Connectedness & Emotional Regulation	0.58	<0.01
Social Connectedness & Cultural Tolerance	0.49	<0.01

The correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between emotional regulation and social connectedness ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that individuals with better emotional regulation tend to experience higher levels of social connectedness. Similarly, a positive and significant correlation was found between cultural tolerance and social connectedness ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that greater cultural tolerance is associated

JPRFC
Journal of Psychosociological Research in Family and Culture
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with stronger social bonds. These findings align with previous research highlighting the importance of emotional and cultural adaptability in fostering meaningful interpersonal connections. The correlation results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 3

Summary of Regression Results

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	p
Regression	2675.41	2	1337.71	0.62	0.38	0.37	99.32	<0.01
Residual	5342.78	397	13.47					
Total	8018.19	399						

The summary of regression results demonstrates that emotional regulation and cultural tolerance collectively explained 38% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.38$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.37$) in social connectedness. The overall model was statistically significant ($F(2, 397) = 99.32$, $p < 0.01$), confirming that the predictor variables contribute significantly to explaining variations in social connectedness. The sum of squares for the regression model was 2675.41, while the residual variance accounted for 5342.78, reinforcing the substantial contribution of emotional regulation and cultural tolerance in predicting social connectedness. The details of the regression model are presented in Table 3.

Table 4

Multivariate Regression Analysis

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	t	p
Constant	12.34	3.12		3.95	<0.01
Emotional Regulation	0.45	0.06	0.41	7.50	<0.01
Cultural Tolerance	0.38	0.07	0.33	5.43	<0.01

The results of the multivariate regression analysis further illustrate the unique contributions of each predictor variable. Emotional regulation was a significant predictor of social connectedness ($B = 0.45$, $SE = 0.06$, $\beta = 0.41$, $t = 7.50$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that individuals with better emotional regulation skills tend to experience higher levels of social connectedness. Cultural tolerance also significantly predicted social connectedness ($B = 0.38$, $SE = 0.07$, $\beta = 0.33$, $t = 5.43$, $p < 0.01$), supporting the notion that openness to cultural diversity plays a vital role in fostering social relationships. The constant term was also statistically significant ($B = 12.34$, $SE = 3.12$, $t = 3.95$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the presence of other underlying factors influencing social connectedness. The details are summarized in Table 4.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that both emotional regulation and cultural tolerance significantly predict social connectedness. Pearson correlation analyses revealed a positive and moderate correlation between emotional regulation and social connectedness, suggesting that individuals with greater emotional regulation abilities tend to experience stronger social ties. Similarly, cultural tolerance exhibited a significant positive correlation with social connectedness, demonstrating that individuals with higher levels of cultural acceptance and openness report a greater sense of belonging. Furthermore, linear regression analysis confirmed that both emotional regulation and cultural tolerance are significant predictors of social connectedness, with emotional regulation showing a slightly stronger predictive effect. These results align with previous research emphasizing the role of psychological and socio-cultural factors in shaping social integration (Do, 2025; Park & Jung, 2024).

The association between emotional regulation and social connectedness supports existing literature that highlights the crucial role of emotional competencies in forming and maintaining relationships. Prior studies have shown that individuals with greater emotional regulation skills are more capable of managing interpersonal conflicts, expressing emotions effectively, and fostering supportive relationships (Hayes et al., 2022). Emotionally regulated individuals tend

JPRFC
Journal of Psychosociological Research in Family and Culture
E-ISSN: 3041-8550

to exhibit higher levels of social engagement and lower levels of loneliness, which enhances their sense of social belonging (Xu et al., 2024). Moreover, emotional regulation has been linked to improved psychological resilience, allowing individuals to navigate social challenges more effectively and maintain stable relationships even in adverse situations (Juhl et al., 2021). The findings of this study reinforce the idea that the ability to regulate emotions plays a fundamental role in social well-being.

Similarly, the positive relationship between cultural tolerance and social connectedness is consistent with previous studies suggesting that individuals who demonstrate greater acceptance of cultural diversity tend to form deeper and more meaningful social bonds (Hooshmandi & Atapour, 2023). Cultural tolerance facilitates social integration by reducing intergroup biases and promoting mutual understanding, which are essential components of cohesive social relationships (Al-Dossary et al., 2023). Prior research has demonstrated that cultural adaptability enhances the ability to engage with diverse social groups, leading to a stronger sense of belonging in multicultural environments (Pollak et al., 2023). These findings align with studies emphasizing that individuals with higher levels of cultural tolerance experience lower levels of social anxiety and interpersonal conflict, allowing them to build and sustain positive social connections (Petersen et al., 2019).

The slightly stronger predictive role of emotional regulation compared to cultural tolerance in social connectedness may be explained by the fact that emotional regulation is a more immediate and internalized psychological process that directly influences interpersonal interactions (Springstein et al., 2023). Individuals who can regulate their emotions effectively are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors, display empathy, and develop trust in relationships (Mentor, 2019). This is particularly important in maintaining long-term social bonds, as emotional stability helps mitigate the negative effects of interpersonal stressors (Muñoz-Martínez & Naismith, 2022). In contrast, cultural tolerance, while essential, may function more as an external facilitator of social connectedness, particularly in diverse social settings (Morgan et al., 2024). Therefore, while both factors contribute significantly to social integration, emotional regulation appears to have a more direct influence on interpersonal relationships.

Additionally, the findings support the growing body of research suggesting that emotional regulation and cultural tolerance are interconnected in shaping social outcomes (Fido et al., 2020). Prior studies have indicated that individuals with greater emotional regulation skills tend to exhibit higher levels of openness to cultural diversity, as emotional stability allows for greater cognitive flexibility and adaptability (Springstein et al., 2024). This aligns with the concept that emotional regulation may serve as a mediator in the relationship between cultural tolerance and social connectedness, facilitating cross-cultural interactions and fostering inclusive social environments (Gu et al., 2023). Furthermore, studies have found that interventions aimed at improving emotional regulation skills often lead to increased cultural sensitivity, reinforcing the idea that these psychological constructs are mutually reinforcing in their influence on social connectedness (Don et al., 2022).

Despite the significance of these findings, it is important to acknowledge that social connectedness is influenced by a wide range of additional factors, including personality traits, social support systems, and environmental influences (Mao et al., 2020). While emotional regulation and cultural tolerance play key roles, future studies should consider a more holistic approach to understanding the complexity of social integration (Hsu et al., 2022). Moreover, the findings of this study emphasize the need for interventions that enhance both emotional regulation and cultural tolerance as means to foster stronger social connections, particularly in diverse social and educational settings (Chen et al., 2021).

This study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the use of a self-report questionnaire may have introduced response bias, as participants may have provided socially desirable responses rather than accurately reporting their true experiences. Additionally, the cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to draw causal conclusions about the relationships between emotional regulation, cultural tolerance, and social connectedness. Longitudinal studies are needed to determine the directionality and long-term effects of these psychological factors on social integration. Furthermore, while the sample size was sufficient based on established sampling guidelines, the use of a convenience sampling method may have limited the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Future research should employ more diverse and representative sampling methods to enhance external validity.

Future research should explore the dynamic interactions between emotional regulation, cultural tolerance, and social connectedness over time using longitudinal designs. Investigating how these variables influence each other in different cultural and social contexts would provide deeper

JPRFC
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insights into their interrelationships. Additionally, experimental studies examining the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving emotional regulation and cultural tolerance would be valuable in determining their direct impact on social connectedness. It would also be beneficial to explore other mediating and moderating factors, such as personality traits, social support networks, and digital communication patterns, which may further influence the strength of these relationships. Finally, given the increasing role of technology in shaping social interactions, future studies should examine how digital platforms and online communities impact the development of emotional regulation and cultural tolerance in relation to social connectedness.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of promoting emotional regulation and cultural tolerance in various social and educational settings to enhance social connectedness. Educational institutions and workplaces should implement training programs that foster emotional awareness and self-regulation strategies to help individuals navigate social interactions effectively. Similarly, initiatives that encourage cultural exposure and intercultural dialogue can facilitate greater cultural tolerance, reducing social barriers and promoting inclusive communities. Mental health professionals should integrate emotional regulation techniques into therapeutic practices to support individuals experiencing social disconnection. Moreover, policymakers should develop community-based programs that emphasize social integration and emotional well-being, particularly for individuals at risk of isolation. By addressing these psychological and socio-cultural factors, society can create more supportive and cohesive social environments that promote well-being and social connectedness for all individuals.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethics Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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