

## The Mediation Role of Loneliness in the Relationship between Interpersonal Trust and Empathy

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**Abstract :** Aim: This research aimed to investigate the relationship between empathy and interpersonal trust and recognize the mediating role of loneliness between them in both genders. Methods: With a correlational descriptive design, 192 university students (130 female and 62 male) responded to the questionnaires on "empathy quotient," "loneliness," and "interpersonal trust" tests. These tests were designed and validated by experts in the field. Data were analysed using Pearson correlation and path analysis, which is a statistical technique that uses standard linear regression equations to determine the degree of conformity of a theoretical causal model with reality. Results: The data analysis showed that there was no significant correlation between interpersonal trust, both with loneliness ( $t=0.169$ ) and empathy ( $t=0.186$ ), while there was a significant negative correlation ( $t=0.359$ ) between empathy and loneliness. This means that there is an inverse correlation between empathy and loneliness. The path analysis confirmed the hypothesis of the research about the mediating role of loneliness between empathy and interpersonal trust. But gender did not play a role in this relationship. Conclusion: As an outcome, clinical professionals and education trainers should pay more attention to interpersonal trust as a basic need and try to recreate and shape it to prevent people's social breakdown, and on the other hand, self-disclosure training (especially in Men), expression of feelings and courage should be given double importance to prevent the consequences of loneliness.

**Keywords :** empathy, loneliness, interpersonal trust, gender

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