**Interpersonal Experiences of Students with Friendship Formation;
A Case Study of FCCU**

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Table of Contents

Abstract

This study investigates the process of friendship formation among students in multicultural university campuses. By examining students' conceptions of friendship, their experiences with diversity, and the role of personality traits in the process, the research aims to shed light on the dynamics of friendship formation in higher education. Drawing on the Symbolic Interactionism Paradigm, particularly Goffman's theory of impression management, the study explores how personality traits are perceived and utilized as verbal symbols in the formation of friendships. Through qualitative methods such as interviews and observations, the research seeks to identify valued traits, understand their influence on friendship formation, and explore strategies employed by students to establish themselves as "worthy of friendship." The findings contribute to a better understanding of the process of friendship formation, highlighting the significance of friendships in fostering social support, well-being, and academic success among students. This research has implications for creating inclusive and engaging campus environments that promote diverse peer networks and enhance students' overall university experience; this study provides literature on the cause of the low enrollment rate, and high dropout rate in higher education in Pakistan and provides possible strategy to overcome this problem.

Keywords: friendship formation, Perceived Personality Traits, impression management, multicultural university

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Introduction

The number of students in higher education is steadily rising around the world. The number of students enrolled in HIE by 2030 is estimated to be 377.4 million (Calderon, 2018). As stated in Sustainable Development Goal 4, Higher education institutions are required to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." However, it has been noted that the experience of higher education varies among students based on their gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and ability/disability. Several challenges exist in achieving the SDG 4 goal. According to 2019-2020 HEC Statistics, there are 1,066,405 Male and 862,299 Female Students, and overall, 1,928,704 students enrolled in the Higher Education Sector of Pakistan in 2019-20. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan have been facing various challenges in recent years, including low enrollment rates, poor academic performance, and inadequate teaching resources. According to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, in 2019, the enrollment rate for higher education in the country was only 10%, and the degree completion rate was 15.3%. These statistics indicate that a significant proportion of students in Pakistan drop out before completing their degrees. The major obstacles to successful degree completion in Pakistan, as identified by HEC, include financial constraints, poor academic performance, lack of guidance, inadequate teaching resources, social and cultural barriers, and a weak job market. (HEC Annual Report 2019; HEC Vision 2025; HEC Education Statistics 2018-19; HEC Policy Guidelines for Students' Societies, 2019).

According to Brooks (2007), The boundaries of heterosexuality, as well as the social divisions of class, gender, and ethnicity, continue to limit friendship in practice, critics have noted, far from giving us new freedoms to choose when, how, and with whom we form

relationships (assumptions that support notions of the pure relationship). One of the main factors about friendship with Peers in Higher education is "disclosing intimacy". The significance given to this "disclosing intimacy" in modern relationships stems from the idea that how you interact with others depends on how much you reveal about yourself to them. Friendship formation with peers in higher education is the one of social factors behind Student Satisfaction. Student satisfaction has been identified as a crucial factor in predicting student enrollment, drop-out rates, and degree completion in higher education (Coates, 2007; DeShields Jr., Kara, & Kaynak, 2005; Tinto, 1975). Satisfied students are more likely to carry on their studies, leading to higher retention rates and increased enrollment (Braxton et al., 2011). Conversely, dissatisfied students may choose to transfer or drop out, negatively affecting enrollment. Furthermore, student satisfaction is closely linked with drop-out rates, with dissatisfied students being more likely to discontinue their studies (Braxton et al., 2011). Satisfied students are more likely to complete their degree requirements, leading to higher degree completion rates (DeShields Jr. et al., 2005). Considering these findings, friendship formation in Higher education is directly proportional to student satisfaction which is a critical factor in determining the success of higher education institutions in terms of enrollment, retention, and degree completion.

Friendship is defined as a close relationship between two individuals that is characterized by mutual trust, understanding, and support (Rawlins, 1992). According to Rawlins (1992), friends share common interests, experiences, and emotions, and they provide each other with companionship, empathy, and a sense of belonging. The quality of friendship varies widely, depending on factors such as the duration of the relationship, the level of intimacy, and the degree of reciprocity (Rawlins, 1992). University life is a critical period for friendship formation in the lives of university students. University setup and culture promote and require the

formation of peer social networks through various means such as student clubs, dormitories, and extracurricular activities. These social networks provide opportunities for students to establish friendships with their peers, which can have a significant impact on their academic performance (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Research has shown that students who have a strong network of friends tend to perform better academically than those who do not (Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2009). This is because friends can provide academic support, such as studying together or sharing notes, as well as emotional support during times of stress like stress before performing a new role or stress before an important competition or Exam. Furthermore, the quality of peer social networks is crucial in determining their impact on academic performance. High-quality networks, characterized by trust, reciprocity, and intimacy, are more likely to provide the necessary support and resources for academic success (Rawlins, 1992). Therefore, universities should strive to promote and foster a culture that values the formation of high-quality peer social networks among students to enhance their academic performance.

Friendship formation is a complex process that is influenced by various factors. One of the significant determinants of friendship formation is similarity. Research has shown that individuals tend to form friendships with people who are like them in terms of demographic characteristics, interests, and attitudes (Newman & Newman, 2018; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). For instance, individuals who share the same ethnicity, race, or religious affiliation are more likely to become friends (Leszczensky & Pink, 2015). Personality traits are also relevant to the formation of friendships. People who share similar personality traits are more likely to become friends (Selfhout et al., 2010).

Friendship formation is considered one of the important parts of our society as it connects individuals of a society. It is seen that there is a communication gap between youth and

older people which is contributing to a lack of personality development in youth. Friendship has become an integral part of personality development nowadays, yet it is seen that educational institutions like universities are making it difficult for students to make friends in multicultural environments That contain diversity. Perceived Personality traits are an important dimension for friendship formation among students at Multicultural University campuses as they assist them in their Personality development, social networking, and Academic pursuits. According to (Burger (1997) citation from (Maltby et al., 2017)), 'A trait is a dimension of personality used to categorize people according to the degree to which they manifest a particular characteristic'. Personality traits indicate the behavior of an individual which can vary from situation to situation. For example, If a person is introverted, the degree of introversion will vary in different situations if he is playing the role of teacher there will be a low degree of Introversion as compared to playing the role of Student. Mischel (1999) defines it traits as the 'conditional probability of a category of behaviors in a category of contexts. (Maltby et al., 2017; Mischel 1999)

According to Ali Rattansi (2011), Multiculturalism is defined as "a body of thought in political philosophy about the proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity", Multiculturalism means shared values of individuals of a society as a whole and appreciation for its diversity which includes religious, cultural, racial, and ethnic background. (Moawad & Shoura, 2017) A Multicultural University can be defined as a University that has a Multicultural Environment where Students from different religious, cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds have intercultural interactions.

This paper aims to examine the interpersonal experiences of undergraduate students with the process of forming friendships on multi-cultural university campuses.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate the prevalent conceptions and patterns of friendship among students in the university.

2. To explore student's interpersonal experiences with friendship formation in the university.

3. To examine the strategies students, use for maintaining and expanding relations and networks of friendship in the university.

Research Questions

The research questions in this study are as follows:

1. What are the common personality traits students at Multicultural University Campuses in Pakistan value in other students during friendship formation?

2. How does the valuation of personality traits in other students affect the process of friendship formation on campus?

3. What strategies do students employ to present personalities that are considered "worthy of friendship" during interactions on campus?

4. How do the process of friendship formation and maintenance affect the feelings of connectedness with the campus community?

Significance of the Study

Research has also found that students who have positive peer relationships and feel socially connected at school are more likely to engage in pro-social behaviors and have a greater sense of belonging (Wentzel & Wigfield, 2009). The significance of personality factors or types in friendship formation has been widely recognized in the literature, as individuals tend to seek out

and form friendships with others who possess similar personality traits (Berscheid, Dion, Walster, & Walster, 1971). Understanding the role of personality in friendship formation is essential for identifying the factors that contribute to the formation and maintenance of close relationships, which are critical for well-being across the lifespan (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

The lack of literature on friendship and personality in HEIs both globally and locally underscores the need for further research on this topic. Understanding how personality traits influence friendship formation and maintenance among students in HEIs is critical for promoting social support and well-being among this generation. This thesis seeks to address this gap in the literature by exploring the relationship between personality and friendship formation among multicultural university students in a local context.

Theoretical Framework

When understanding the relationship between friendship formation and perceived personality traits, the Symbolic Interactionism Paradigm gives us insight into the domain of Social Psychology and Personality Psychology.

From the Symbolic Interactionism Paradigm, this research is going to use Erving Goffman's theory of Impression management. According to Goffman (1959), an individual maintains his impression in front of others by playing a role that is expedited of him, others are interested in knowing about information that individual like his conception of self, his competence, and his attitude towards other to define the situation and to know in advance that what he is expecting from other, If they somewhat know that individual by any previous experience they use perceived personality traits of that individual to predict his current and future behavior. (Goffman, 1959)

Impression management theory is best suited to see the relation between friendship formation and perceived personality traits, this theory talks about how an individual of a society manages to maintain his personality by self-regulating his personality traits while others are more likely to form friendships with that specific person if they perceive the same personality traits as their own. (Goffman, 1959; Vohs et al., 2005)

Impression management theory in this research is used to see how student at Multicultural University campuses perceive others' personality traits to form friendships and do they use personality traits as verbal symbols to express themself to form friendship. This theory indicates if forming friendships by perceived personality traits instead of ethnicity, Race, and Religion is beneficial among students from different cultural backgrounds.

Literature Review

One of the most important developmental tasks in adolescence is friendship formation and maintenance. Supportive and high-quality friendships have been linked to positive developmental outcomes and mental health, both concurrently and over time. Friendships also guard against the negative effects of negative experiences, such as peer victimization and internalizing behaviors (Güroğlu, 2022).

According to Lu et al. (2021), placing a high value on friendship is generally associated with better health, well-being, and happiness. In many cases, placing a high value on friendship was particularly important for health and well-being in settings typically associated with lower well-being (e.g., countries high in income inequality and individualism); significant to consider not only how much people value friendships but also how social relationships are situated within larger cultural and personal contexts.

The Research of Allan and Adams (2007) indicates there is not much empirical research done to see if friendship always remains better for health, well-being, and happiness among individuals while going through different age and life courses. According to Miething et al. (2016), The diminishing correlation between network quality and happiness in young adulthood suggests that the value of friendships for happiness declines as one enters young adulthood. One of the reasons behind this can be young adults leaving their previous friends as they move to colleges for higher education and there, they face a high level of loneliness and find it hard to form new friendship networks especially if the College/University is too diverse.

As individuals transition to college, they may experience a shift in the dynamics of friendships, with younger adolescents more likely to end friendships if their friends make new friends, while older adolescents recognize the importance of having other relationships. This transition can also lead to new friendship development and possible pre-college friendship loss,

along with loneliness and social anxiety (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995; Rubin et al., 1998; Selman & Schultz, 1990; Owens & Strough, 2002; Paul & Kelleher, 1995; Larose & Boivin, 1998; Fisher & Hood, 1987).

It is observed that students who form friendship networks in university have better health, a sense of purpose, and effective coping with stress as friends provide Socio-economic support like money and emotional support which leads to Academic Success. (Friendship Features Associated with College Students' Friendship Maintenance and Dissolution Following Problems, 2003). There is a huge stratification when we talk about friendship networks in diverse universities as students form friends according to similarities and differences concerning their gender, class, and ethnicity. Students from different Classes and socioeconomic statuses impact friendship patterns, with middle-class people having more extensive networks, when it comes to gender differences in friendship formation there is a limitation of culture and religious context involved which forces some students to form friendships with opposite gender easily while for other it is difficult to form such friendships. (Friendship Formation and Maintenance: Examining Friendship Patterns of Homosexual Men and Heterosexual Women in Close Relationships, 2003) According to Maknin (2018), Most students prefer to choose friends with a similar ethnicity and are less open-minded to accept friends with different ethnicities or tribes.

It is noted that Friendship is an essential aspect of human life, and in the university environment, it plays a critical role in shaping students' academic and personal experiences. The advantages of friendship in the university are vast and have been the focus of several studies. Scholars have noted that friends can provide emotional support, offer opportunities for socializing and networking, enhance collaboration on academic projects, promote exposure to diverse perspectives, and help in personal growth and development. The diversity of the

university environment offers an ideal platform for students to form friendships with individuals from different backgrounds and cultures, leading to a richer university experience. Moreover, studies have suggested that the friendships formed in university can have long-lasting benefits that positively impact students' personal and professional lives.

However, there are many challenges that University students face to form friendships and then to maintain them. For students, making and keeping friends can be difficult, especially as they approach adulthood and the importance of social connections increases. Peer pressure is a problem that students deal with since it can affect how they choose who to befriend and how to keep those connections going. Students may struggle to maintain connections with others who do not belong to those groups and may feel pressured to fit in with those groups, even if it means compromising their beliefs or interests (Collins & Laursen, 2004; Cillessen & Rose, 2005; Underwood & Rosen, 2013, pp. 153–179).

Social anxiety can make it challenging for students to start conversations or approach others and is another obstacle to forming and maintaining friendships (Leary & Kowalski, 1995). According to Beidel and Turner (1998), socially anxious students are more prone to feel lonely and isolated and may find it challenging to build trusting relationships with their peers. Finding common ground can also be challenging since students may find it difficult to become friends with others who have diverse interests or hobbies (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995).

In short, forming and maintaining friendships can be challenging for university students, but it's an essential aspect of their social development and well-being. Also, if these challenges are overcome it is assisting students in personality development which is one of the main goals of higher education.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used an Inductive qualitative research design with semi-structured interviews for the data collection from respondents. Semi-structured interviews are used as a method of data collection because the study is exploratory as the questions asked are open-ended, general in nature, and ability to ask further questions on interesting replies. Qualitative exploratory research helps researchers explore the respondent's experiences and interpretations through their own words and meaning. This research approach puts respondents as the center of the data source which is also what the symbolic interactionism perspective talks about (Byrne, 2004).

To find an extensive and meaningful understanding of the perceptions of undergraduate students about personality traits and their relation to friendship formation among multicultural university students, a descriptive and exploratory qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews is used as the primary method of data collection. This method helped understand the perceptions of personality traits and friendship formation from the perspective of multicultural university students while identifying common patterns and themes across the interviews. This qualitative research approach is fundamental in the symbolic interactionist perspective, which helps researchers to understand the conceptualization and experiences of participants in their own words, without imposing preconceived ideas or theories (Babbie, 2020).

Conceptualization

Friendship formation

This research conceptualizes friendship formation as Harry Stack Sullivan understood that friendship provides the environment for the development of respect for one another, teamwork, and interpersonal sensitivity (Sullivan, 1953 as cited in Fiebert & Fiebert, 1969).

The nature of friendship is multidimensional. Two dimensions of friendship are there in the form of the cluster for understanding friendship: 1. Commitment and loyalty, may be viewed and ultimately assessed, as a continuum of resistance to the dissolution of the relationship. 2. Mutual willingness and desire to explore intra-individual behaviors as well as vital aspects of the interaction. (Fiebert & Fiebert, 1969). The second dimension is going to be used in this research, which includes the following variables: 1. A tendency to accept aspects of the negative self-concept to the other, 2. A willingness to risk self-disclosure, 3. An attempt to fulfill needs mutually, needs in a state of deprivation, and needs currently met by other people or other circumstances and 4. A mutual modification of constructs, attitudes, and values. (Fiebert & Fiebert, 1969)

There are four models of friendship formation according to Fiebert and Fiebert (1969), Incremental Model, Share-Stress model, Perceived-similarity model, and Perceived Need-complementarity Model. This research is more focused on the Perceived-Similarity model as it resembles the research question.

Multiculturalism

According to Ali Rattansi (2011), Multiculturalism is defined as "a body of thought in political philosophy about the proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity", Multiculturalism means shared values of individuals of society as a whole and appreciation for its diversity which includes religious, cultural, racial, and ethnic background. (Moawad & Shoura, 2017) A Multicultural University can be defined as a University that has a Multicultural Environment where Students from different religious, cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds have intercultural interactions.

Accessing and Sampling

The unit of analysis for this study is undergraduate students at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University). To select the participants for this study a criteria is made which describe the eligible students:

1. The participant should be enrolled as an undergraduate student at Forman Christian College University.
2. The participants should be between the ages of 18-26.
3. The participant should be in their Sophomore, Junior, or Senior year.

"Purposive Sampling" (Babbie, 2020, p. 193) is used to conduct interviews, I used this sampling as it helped me conduct more interviews as I selected participants according to the criteria mentioned above.

For assessing the unit of analysis; I took help from various FCCU faculty members to allow me to introduce my topic to their class and if some students are interested, they can proceed with the interview process. On the other hand, I reached the relevant population of my study through social media, personal contacts, and FCCU student WhatsApp groups. The participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix A) outlining the aims of the study so they may make a well-informed choice.

Tools

A 10-item survey is conducted for participants to record their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics (see Appendix B) to better understand any intersectional link between friendship formation and perceived personality traits of university students. This survey

was solely used to keep demographic records of participants before the interviews and to provide context for the outcomes of the semi-structured interview.

The semi-structured interview guide is used which contains a list of questions related to the definition and experience of friendship formation, common perceived personality traits, and the relation between friendship formation and perceived personality traits (see Appendix C).

Ethics

According to the British Sociological Association (2017), researchers must anticipate any harmful consequences for the respondents and safeguard them to the best of their ability. For this reason, only students currently enrolled at FCCU are chosen in the sample.

Due to the Interactive nature of the topic, I took an empathic approach toward the participants keeping in mind their comfort and emotional state as research can be compromised if the respondent is not comfortable. I used easy wording language to prevent chances of distress while providing appropriate check-ins and breaks to assess the respondent's well-being and willingness to go on (Egan, 2007). Participants were asked if they wanted to continue their participation in the research or end the interview at any point.

According to Grey (2014), doing research at one's university might compromise the study's validity since respondents could not be genuine due to the researcher's affection for them. To counter this, I gave a verbal and written explanation of how confidentiality will be upheld. By using aliases or a serial/code number/name, the respondents' identities are kept private while the interviews are being transcribed. In addition, participants were given a softcopy of the consent form (see Appendix A) explaining their right to withdraw from the research at any time and were asked if they wanted to get a hardcopy of the consent form. I provided potential participants with

comprehensive information about the study's objectives and how the data would be utilized before conducting interviews (see Appendix A).

Despite any possible ethical concerns, my goal was to do transparent research that put the respondents at the center of the research. My goal was to try my best to prevent the harm that occurred by giving an extensive explanation of the experiences and perceptions of multicultural university students regarding friendship formation and perceived personality traits, This will support the students in forming and maintaining friendships as well as help them understand oneself and others based on personality and its relation with social factors such as gender, class, religion, or ethnicity when engaging in intercultural interactions. If any ethical questions or concerns emerged during the study, I consulted my thesis supervisor for guidance on how to handle my response to the incoming data. (Babbie, 2020; ESRC, 2005).

Data Analysis

I used Braun and Clarke's (2012) Thematic Analysis Method which consists of six steps. The six steps are following:

1. becoming familiar with the data

2. generating codes

3. generating themes

4. reviewing themes

5. defining and naming themes

6. Making report

The main two reasons for thematic analysis is because of its accessibility and flexibility; Thematic Analysis is being used because of its flexibility among a wide range of qualitative

analytic approaches. Thematic Analysis is a process for methodically discovering, organizing, and providing insight into meaning patterns (themes) in a data collection. Thematic analysis is a method of discovering and making sense of what is similar to the way a topic is discussed or written about. (Braun & Clarke, 2012)

It provides a way to get into qualitative research by teaching the process of methodically coding and analyzing qualitative data, which may subsequently be related to larger theoretical or conceptual issues. (Braun & Clarke, 2012)

Findings

This section discusses the findings of the study. The study respondents included 9 undergraduate students of FCCU. The findings of this study were based on Student experiences related to Friendship formation. The analysis of interview data reveals that friendship is an important aspect of the university experience for university students. As a result, students attach significant importance to both, the notion of "friend" and the process of "friendship" during their higher education. Importantly, evaluation of and presentation of *desired* personality traits among students in the process of friendship formation was identified as a key element of university social life.

The socio-demographic characteristics of the 9 respondents can be seen in Table 1. Appendix D is formed to provide fact sheet information of each respondents which were interviewed.

The overall finding of this study revolves around these four major themes:

1. Socio-cultural Definition of Friend
2. Personality Traits and Friendship Formation
3. Strategies to from friends
4. Factors affecting friendship formation among university students

Table 1

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Sociodemographic Characteristic	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age		
19	2	22.2
21	1	11.1
22	4	44.4
23	1	11.1
24	1	11.1
Gender		
Female	3	33.3
Male	5	55.6
Prefer not to say	1	11.1
Student Year		
Junior	3	33.3
Senior	5	55.6
Sophomore	1	11.1
Major		
CS	2	22.2
Economics and Mass Communication	1	11.1
Economics and Political Science	1	11.1
Education	1	11.1
Psychology	2	22.2
Sociology	1	11.1
Sociology and Political Science	1	11.1
Living Arrangement		
Hostel	1	11.1
Joint family	3	33.3
Nuclear family	4	44.4
Single parent household	1	11.1
Monthly Income		
Above 240,000	2	22.2
Between 120,000 and 240,000	2	22.2
Between 60,000 and 120,000	2	22.2
Prefer not to say	3	33.3

Province			
	Punjab	9	100.0
Religion			
	Christianity	1	11.1
	Islam	8	88.9
Marital Status			
	Committed	1	11.1
	Single	8	88.9
Any Student you know interested in this study			
	Cannot say	2	22.2
	No	3	33.3
	Yes	4	44.4

Socio-cultural Definition of Friend

Overall students defined friends as individuals who were similar to each other. It was this sense of similarity that was believed to produce a sense of connection among students during academic life. However, students identified different parameters of similarity including sharing similar academic backgrounds, religious affiliations, class, ethnicity, or shared interests. The majority of the students defined friends as people who are similar some students said, "Same way of looking at things", "Having the Same Vibe", "Common Interest", "Same Ideas", "Similar Value"," same attitude; a company of similar mindset" and 4 out of 9 students said that understanding is must in friendship. The statement of one of the Psychology students was:

> "For me friendship formation is more like the people that you connect with people who share the same values as you. I found something very striking in the past few days and I am not able to digest it but I think to some extent if you want your friendship to go a long way and have a good friendship I think it is important for you to have not the same but the similar social background because I was totally against it now that it is my last semester I have seen this yes to some extend it does matter it makes a difference not for you but maybe for another person. I think these few things your level of connection, level of understanding each other, and how well you have the same way of looking at things I think those things are really important in friendships if you want the friendships to go a long way otherwise you have different kinds of friends with whom you just hang out and stuff." (23 years old, Female, Senior)

Disciplinary Similarity

One of the students from Political Science and Sociology majors defined friends in terms of

sharing the same academic disciplines and pointed out that similarity in terms of social class

allowed students to exchange privileges among themselves. The student described the

transactional nature of this relationship as follows:

> "I perceive it in terms of class, gender, and social status as well as your economic class to
> be specific. So friendship is very much the exchange of privileges among people who
> also share similar privileges. Ya, friendship formation I believe is centric to economic
> class and extending opportunities to people who don't match the behavior of your
> economic class." (22 years old, Senior)

Religious Similarity

One of the students from a religious background defined friends in religious terms by using

words like faith and moral values.

> "The way I perceive friendship formation is when you talk about friends I believe that
> friends are never made they are born, that is an answer which is spiritual but I think even
> that the case depends on you how you form a relationship with your friend even if we
> believe in that narrative that friends are born that is upon you how you form a friendship
> with them you can say that we built relationship is based on our moral value so I think
> yes you have to meet people according to your faith and it is in your jurisdictions to form
> a healthy friendship and relationship that can be based on moral values extract from
> society and religion; it is all about mutual respect and understanding and acknowledging
> other people differences that are friendship formation." (22 years old, Male, Junior)

One of the students implied the variable of respect as the form of defining friends.

> "With Respect, when I respect them until this day either if we are friends for 10 years I
> will have respect with them it is because it is my personality." (19 years old, Male,
> Sophomore)

It is seen that it was easier for seniors to understand the nature of the question and they were able

to define friends by using different terms and perspectives while Sophomores and some of the

juniors did not understand the nature of the question so their answers were short and used simple

definitions. This may point out that the notions of friendship become more complex with time spent in the university.

Personality Traits and Friendship Formation

The findings of this study suggest that while socio-cultural and utilitarian factors formed the background determinants of the friendship formation process among university students on campus, personality factors related to university students were key in influencing the process of making friends. Most of the students (7 out of 9) said that through their actions and behavior (Physically) they present their personality traits to other students to form friends and they don't present their personality traits verbally to other students; Less than two-thirds students (4 out of 9) said they don't verbally present their personality traits to other student but they do share about their personality traits verbally to their close friends or the students who they trust. On asking the students if they thought similar personality traits or similar social factors played an important role in friendship formation and maintaining it in multicultural university students; Most of the students (4 out of 9) said that Similar personality traits are more helpful in friendship formation and maintenance.

Most of the students (7 out of 9) said that personality-related factors were important in determining who was considered friendship-worthy among students. For this reason, the majority of the students, recognizing the importance of their personalities to their peers, focused on the overt presentation of desirable personality traits in their interactions with other students on campus. According to students, the individuals who appeared to be open-minded, and dependable, with a mix of personality traits related to extroversion were considered as ideal friends. This was because

young students displaying these traits were seen as more likely to be successful in achieving both, academic and social goals associated with student life in university.

Overall Common personality traits that students value in another student while forming friendships are "Authenticity", "Loyalty", "Supportiveness", "Open-mindedness", "Social", "intellectual", "Understanding", "kindness", "Honesty", "Empathy" and "Humor".

Most of the students (5 out of 9) said that the personality trait they value in another student for friendship is "Open-mindedness". One Sociology Student shared:

> "Someone open-minded I would say in a way they are willing to listen to others' opinion/other ideas." (22 years old, Female, Senior)

Half of the students (4 out of 9) said the personality traits they value in another student for friendship are "Authenticity and Genuineness" which are the same personality traits. One Psychology student said:

> "I like people who are Genuinely good people, Who don't lie to others" (21 years old, Female, Senior)

Another Student of Sociology said:

> "I prefer someone to be authentic, I sometimes can tell that there are some people who are putting on a façade for me so I feel like they (Asad: Acting not the way they are, they have put on a mask that is different showing) There is a much harsher word that is Fake but I am not going to say that but yes they are trying to be pleasing to you or try too hard to please others, I don't like that much I feel like I want someone authentic, have their views and have their ideas rather than them changing it for others try to just seem good for you and all that. So I prefer authenticity in someone's personality." (22 years old, Female, Senior)

Another student of Political Science and Economics said:

> "Not always putting a face, try to be genuine as possible, Yes you have to put a face, there are instances where you have to be genuine, you can't play games all the time." (22 years old, Male, Senior)

One-third of the students (3 out of 9) said the personality traits they value in other students for friendship are "Loyalty", "Supportiveness", "Confident, Social and Extrovert", "Smart, good in academics and Intellectual", "Understanding and giving value" and "Honesty and Trustful". One Student of Sociology commented related to "loyalty" as:

> "Loyalty as well, if that person is willing to be there for you that is a make or break for most friendships for when you realize that this person is willing to be there you know that this friendship is going to last a lot longer." (22 years old, Female, Senior)

One Student of Education related to personality traits of "Supportiveness" as:

> "The first thing I value for friendship formation is being available at the right time not all the time but yes when you need someone (Asad: Being Supportive) Yes, this is the right word." (19 years old, Male, Junior)

Another Student of Economic and Mass Communication commented related to personality traits of "Supportiveness":

> "They should support you (they have the personality trait of supporting someone) and they stick your side through thick and thin of life no matter what the situation is" (22 years old, Male, Junior)

One student of Computer Science said about the valuation of "Extrovert" personality trait in friendship:

> "When they are extroverted getting a lot of people together getting them to talk." (24 years old, Male, Junior)

One Student of Education related to the personality trait of "Intellect" as:

> "I think more I like to see in my friends is that they should be good in academics as well" (19 years old, Male, Junior)

One Student of Education related to the personality trait of "Understanding" as:

> "I think about what personality traits I would like to see in my friends [..] they should be understanding your mental health, your availability, your time and should not be over expecting that you are always there." (19 years old, Male, Junior)

One-third of the students (3 out of 9) while agreeing on the impact of Perceived Personality traits talked about "Intuition" in perceiving any student personality traits while forming friendships.

One of the Senior students of Psychology said:

> "Ok, I am a very intuitive person, I take my time I am getting my intuition I would not like oh I am feeling this (no no no no) I take my time and explore if my intuition is right which is 99 percent right, being 99 percent right is a lot. I think it is something about women I don't know if it is about women or is it about me that you can just sense something is wrong. My perception like I said whatever I perceive is mostly true and I have learned it, it did not come to me I have learned it through my experiences I would say that I can see what I have not seen before so I think those experiences have made my perception very accurate I can just tell even if I have not met that person [just by seeing that person] if somebody tells me about them I would be like it is not a good idea to be friend with them because you can see those patterns it is no longer my perception because my perception has turn into reality." (MR3, 23, Female, Senior)

Two of the students out of nine said "Kindness" and "Empathy" or "Compassion" which are similar personality traits; One of the students talked about "Funny" as the personality trait that he values in another student while making friendships that comes in personality trait of Humor.

Strategies to from friends

The findings of this study show that students considered the presentation of specific personality traits as an important way of forming and maintaining friends on campus. These students engaged in different strategies using which they presented desired personality traits in their interactions with their peers.

Faking

Most of the students shared that "Faking" was a commonly practiced strategy among students who were trying to make new friends or maintain existing friends on campus. Faking was defined as presenting a personality that was not original or authentic. Students used phrases like "Acting different than they are", "Presenting different personality traits" or "Hiding their original self" to describe the practice of faking. Most of the students (9 out of 9) talked about the talked about the negative way of faking friendship. One Student of computer science said:

> "When we don't possess respective personality it is like first we talk to a person for two or three days with a very good heart then we back towards our original personality which is not so kind" (19 years old, Male, Sophomore)

More than one-third of students (5 out of 9) talked about putting an act of friendliness as a positive way of faking friendship. One student from Economics and Mass Communication majors said:

> "I think the positive act is when you are not faking something let's suppose I am nice to you, I am respectful to you that does not mean I am faking it. There are different ways I will not be friendly at the start with strangers I will show my other personality traits like respect you know formal type which is what we call a positive act." (22 years old, Male, Junior)

One of the Senior sociology students talked about friendship formation as a neutral way of faking oneself to see if others are worthy of friendship. She said:

> "Yes, I do think to some extent when you are a freshman in university you are not entirely sure how authentic you should be, some people do become unapologetically honest about themselves but I think people do kind of are cautious about what they are going to say, when they do meet with people they gel well with/they do very well with then they are honest about themselves. I do think that there is a slight it is not a fake personality it is just them observing and checking the environment" (22 years old, Female, Senior)

The student talked about the reasons behind student faking, which are "Students are Confused (No Direction/Guidance)", "to fit in", "to win friends", "to learn and develop", "to get

benefit/façade", "Defense Mechanism", "to fulfill needs/Motivation", "to Compliment

Loneliness", "to gain friends" and "to make contacts".

One of the Senior Psychology Students talked about Relation between Mental illness and

Faking. She said:

> "We are so disconnected and alienated from not just each other but also ourselves that we
> don't know which direction to go, for me specifically I don't know what personality I am
> going to take up in the morning. Like you said Vibes that whatever energy I have now
> specifically is how I determine what personality I am going to perform but I am also
> neurodivergent that my answer may just be specifically to me. I have ADHD and I may
> also be on the Autism spectrum so my self-perception and body awareness are very
> minimal so me navigating social interaction is very much through how much self-
> awareness I have on that day." (22 years old, Senior)

One of the Senior sociology students talked about "Sudden Personality Change" which is due to

some traumatic event taking place in a person's life. She said:

> "I would say maybe to a certain extent someone might change their personality because
> of some certain event that happened in their life that is a very rare case I don't think it's
> that often but it is also something to look into, certain friendship break because of sudden
> changes so personality does make or break a friendship I would say that is why I said it."
> (22 years old, Female, Senior)

Spontaneity and Mutual friends

Most of the students (4 out of 9) said that they formed friends naturally i.e. for them

friends are made Spontaneous.

> "No no no, there is not a specific pattern, in every university first-year people do make
> groups enjoy with each other but not a simple pattern like they form groups from the
> department, from their classes, and other courses no such pattern." (19 years old, Male,
> Sophomore)

One other student showed the pattern of the natural process of friend formation in religious

terms.

> "Yes, we can say that. No, I will add one thing to that suppose you like a person and their
> personality traits if they are not destined to become your friend no matter how much

effort you both put into it, you can never that level of friendship; sometimes you do nothing and you become best friends with them that is the role of nature, allow the nature to play its role, we exhaust yourself in term of making people friend who are not destined to be because Allah knows which people are good for you, you just not they cannot create that kind of friendship that is my believe." (22 years old, Male, Junior)

One student talked about making friends by naturally interacting with others.

"first of all it was asking a lot of questions to show interest but I found that does not work in the long run as people do get annoyed actually from keep asking questions about why I am so interested without sharing about myself. Now I just say whatever comes into my mind I think that is what helps (Asad: to go with the flow and how nature wants it) Ya exactly. (Asad: How well it worked?) It went well." (24 years old, Male, Junior)

2 out of 9 Students talked about how having "Mutual Friends" is an important way of making

friends.

"Sometimes you get introduced to friends from some common friends so there are ways of forming friendships" (23 years old, Female, Senior)

"Yes, out of the three persons like I am close friends with one of them, I met through one of these friends the person I met through a first person so that is how I became friends." (SA6, 22, Female, Senior)

Adoption and Assistance

One of the students said that he did not have to initiate the friendship instead other

students adopted him as a friend because of the similarities, So here there is a pattern of forming

friendships by being adopted; The Same student also talked about his experience of making

friends by helping or assisting others.

"I don't think I made friends I think my friends adopted me [He laughed] in a sense that, I made a friend from some course groups we were doing some activity together and we found each other similar to another so we became good friends, other than that I am not a very talkative person but sometimes I am very welcoming and kind of chatterbox as well." (19 years old, Male, Junior)

"There is this friend of mine who became friends with me when I tried to boost her up for a course that she was intending to drop/withdraw from, she was on course with me and I helped her, I showed her that you should not drop it you will lose your four credits you may suffer in degree afterward whenever you need help you can come to me, don't drop

the course half of the course is gone and half is left so after she becomes friends with her; I make friends by helping them, by assisting them." (19 years old, Male, Junior)

It is observed that the Students of Social Sciences were better able to explain their experiences, give examples, and elaborate things than the students of sciences.

Maintaining Acquaintances

Half of the students (4 out of 9) shared that "Having more Acquaintances than friends" was an aspect of the friendship formation process at the university. Half of the students (4 out of 9) said that they had formed more acquaintances than friends in their university life. One of the Psychology majors said:

> "Now as a Senior I don't have any friends, I don't consider them my friends it is more like acquaintances. I know a lot of students but they are not my friends because I think to consider someone as a friend they should be close to you and should be the person you can trust. I don't have real friends but I have a lot of acquaintances." (21 years old, Female, Senior)

Another Student from Political Science and Sociology majors related to having a lot of acquaintanceships:

> "I went away in 6 Semester now that I am back I don't recognize most faces on Campus I used to be so active in politics even though they were very surplus-level acquaintanceships but I have a lot of time with a lot of people so I know most people across all batches in FC like I did meet hundreds of people." (22 years old, Senior)

Another Student from Psychology majors said about having more acquaintanceships:

> "And for me, I think there are levels and types of friendships I mean I have a lot of friends but I don't call all of them my friends I rather group into acquaintances people that I know just for work people that I would hangout with occasionally" (23 years old, Female, Senior)

Another student from Political Science and Economics majors said:

> "I would like to share my experience in a sense that in the process of this time, I thought I was making friends but they were not friends they were that you made to go through life, I would say a man is a social animal, you can't lock someone in their room and expected to work like a

robot (Asad: Can we say they were more of acquaintances!) Acquaintances would be the right word, they were acquaintances and contacts that is what they were so over the period I learned that I should not hold people back I should let go, who wants to be with me will always be with me regardless of whatever circumstance so I realized this process over my sophomore and junior years and as of now I would say I am mature in that process and I have like three friends (I have updated my radar); acquaintances list is very high but friend list is very low." (22 years old, Male, Senior)

Factors affecting friendship formation among university students

The students in the study defined friendship formation as a challenging experience that

was affected by several factors, even when students found individuals with whom they liked or

shared similar interests or traits.

Covid Struggle of friendship formation

Most of the Students (5 out of 9) talked about the struggle they faced during Covid to

form friendships. One of the Psychology majors said:

"Because of Covid, it became very hard as the classes were online as we only had that online classes to interact, Still despite that we were able to interact we were able to come on campus and meet students when blended classes were going on." (21 years old, Female, Senior)

Another Student from Political Science and Sociology majors said:

"because of COVID-19 in my second semester, I met few people online and they too were like in surface-level friendships these were new and exciting but again they were not the people I felt trusted and welcomed from. Freshman year was not the best but by the end of the year when school went online again because of COVID-19 I joined some student collectives on campus that were platforms for student upbringing I became very active in the activism scene during freshman to sophomore year." (22 years old, Senior)

Another Student from a Psychology major said about covid struggle:

"The COVID hit us I think I struggled a lot in COVID because my friendships I would say started forming post-Covid. It was just the start of university and the start of friendship then Covid hit us so how well do you think online friendship can be managed they can't they don't have common ground with what we talk about, I stayed friends with her throughout the whole period but it was just like okayish friend I was in touch with her, I will say that my friendship picked off [got stronger] with her this last year before that I was just friends with her, I will say our friendship survived but it bloomed last year.

So in freshman year, I did not have any friends, I did not have friends until my junior year." (23 years old, Female, Senior)

Another student from Computer Science said about covid as:

"In the freshman year, my first semester was online I talked to two people online but did not get along very well so I did not have any better options as I was limited to Univ100 class those were only two people I knew, one of them reached out to me it was kind of natural as I don't have to force it or don't have to try hard. I don't talk to those people anymore because I think they are not the people I would connect with if I had a choice." (24 years old, Male, Junior)

Another Student from Economics and Mass Communication majors said about covid struggle:

"On a scale of 1 to 10, I would say 6 because my first semester was entirely online due to covid so I interacted with one person only when physical classes started in the second semester I started building friends but the friendship formation in freshman in university very year the basis of friendship is very weak." (22 years old, Male, Junior)

Social Pressure to form friendship in freshman year

Another Half of the students (4 out of 9) talked about the Social pressure that is there in their freshman year first semester to form friendships otherwise they would be left alone which nobody wants and they talked about how this Social pressure forces you to make spontaneous friends and groups. One of the students of Psychology shared:

"You know when you come to university a group takes place which is your group even if you don't want to, I don't know for what reason I became part of a group, my friend whose name is Zaynaira, so there was this group and there was this guy he was like this guy he was like "You need to talk to everyone" I was like (Why) he was like "see you don't interact with everyone, you don't smile at them it is not good" and I was like (Why) he said "See University is all about connections, you need to build connections" and I think that was the first, I perceived it very negatively I was like (What), it was because he was saying it in a negative manner he was not nicely telling me (he was telling me to be Matlabi(Doing things like interaction and building connection for sake of Benefitting from it)), I was like (It is not for me, I don't feel comfortable). And I saw this pattern that students in my class even if they are not comfortable will still hang out with everyone why is that because nobody wants to feel left out, they don't want to feel left out and I did that too. So my experience of friendship in freshman year was like I was in a group suddenly and then I was part of this group and I stayed with them even though I was not

connected to them or relate to them they were very different from me and I was completely different I stayed with them for the sake of staying so my experience of friendship was not ideal I think I could have done better but our lives are not always ideal. (23 years old, Female, Senior)

Another student of Computer Science majors related to social pressure as:

"I talked to two people online but did not get along very well so I did not have any better options as I was limited to Univ100 class those were only two people I knew, and one of them reached out to me it was kind of natural as I don't have to force it or don't have to try hard. I don't talk to those people anymore because I think they are not the people I would connect with if I had a choice." (24 years old, Male, Junior)

Another student from Economics and Mass Communication majors said about Social

Pressure to form friendships:

"the basis of friendship is very weak you make friends just because you don't want to be alone, don't want to feel left alone in a very big setup of university so you try to accommodate with the first group you interact so we just want to enter into a group that is cool or maybe we can say they are outgoing; the way I formed friendship was not on very strong basis yes my initial concepts of friendship were clear and I wanted to offer like a proper form of friendship to other group members but the basis was very weak you know the whole group was formed because it was for formality they wanted to form a group as soon as possible" (22 years old, Male, Junior)

Another student from Political Science and Economics majors related to the social pressure

of forming friendships:

"So my experience of friendship was that me being more into the introverted side I did feel that culture shock in my first month but I was able to cope with it because of my A-level experience, the experience of all sorts of things so it was not a strange feeling to enter FC for me as it would be for someone coming outside of it or maybe perhaps another city, another province so what I can is I was pretty hopeless in FC perhaps doing my freshman year, I was afraid of asking something to people which they might mind or push myself out of comfort zone or pretty hopeless situations in a sense I was not confident enough, maybe I am not able to gel with people quickly I used to put them off. To be honest with you, I had you could say perhaps only one friend in the true nature/ in true sense of the word, not connections, connections are something else, PR/connection are very different from friendship, friendship is a whole ball game that you have to be there for your friends. [In Freshman year] I thought I was making friends but they were not friends they were that you made to go through life" (22 years old, Male, Senior)

Role of UNIV100 Course

It is found from the experiences of Students that most of the students (5 out of 9) think that the Univ100 Course of FCCU is playing a huge role in helping students in the initial stage of University to interact with each other as well as a place of Social Pressure that is forcing student socially to form friends spontaneously.

Academic Level/ Description

One of the factors impacting friendship formation on campus is academic structure as Students move from freshman to Senior they have less support from Academics to form friendships. One of the Psychology Students talked about how her friendship experience was easier in freshman year as she got a lot of chances to interact with other students to form friendships but as time passed there were no such chances to interact with other students she said now she feels like it is hard to make friends; she describe this pattern of friendship experience in these set of statements:

> "I guess as come to freshman year, back then it was not that hard but now it's really hard to make friends, now that I am a Senior um it is just very hard, back then it was easy because we had Univ100 classes which made me able to make a lot of friends, was able to interact with lot of people, through those interactions I was able to make friends but now as a senior I only have few classes and even in them I am unable to interact with that many people, as a senior it is much harder to make friends than as a freshman." (21 years old, Female, Senior)

Identity Crisis

One student majoring in Economics and Mass Communication highlighted the concept of "Identity Crisis" as a significant social factor influencing friendship formation among university students. The student explained that an identity crisis can lead to forming friendships based on need rather than the purpose, resulting in a lack of clear direction and values, the importance of having a clear purpose and aligning friendships

with that purpose, as it can act as a driving force in fulfilling one's goals, The student also noted that identity crisis can lead to misconceptions and misperceptions about different social groups, such as ethnicities and genders; that addressing identity crisis and promoting character development is crucial for creating a healthier and more purposeful environment for friendship formation within and beyond the university; he described "Identity Crisis" as:

> "I think the social factor I want to address is Identity crisis the major social factor that affects the environment as well, especially in friendship formation, you get into friendships, you get into bad company, you form friendships on a need basis, lack of purpose because if you have a clear purpose if you make friends which compliment your purpose which will act like driving force in fulfilling it when you don't have a purpose like suppose I want to finish my degree in university I will make random friends ok you are somewhat compatible you come along with them you come along but the purpose if we say you are into co-curricular activities you are into research to improve yourself you make friends according to your purpose, purpose give you moral values, according to these values you form friends and then you can say that the phenomena of a social factor don't come into play that effectively. Yes, people form friendships have interaction even multicultural people interact with each other but back of their minds if you talk to them individually they still may have no sense they perceive I have given an example of people who have misperceptions about Pashtun people that they are some sort of extremist (extremist in a sense that they are always angry, judgmental) Many non-Pashtun people have this kind of misunderstanding about Pashtun people that is not correct as far as I have experienced it, they are sweet people and calm people and there are bad people in every community but there is perceive a set of behavior about every community specifically gender as well like girl perceive boy as always not disciplined, not serious people about their life; Guys perceived that girl lack purpose and are superficial. So these social factors come into play well with ethnicity, ethnicity is not a problem, character building a problem the lack of character building is a major problem in university and obviously outside of university." (MMS7, 22, Male, Junior)

Relation of friendship formation and its maintenance with Student feeling of University Connection

Most of the students (8 out of 9) accepted that friendships formed at university do connect them with the University Campus. In addition to that Half of the students (4 out of 9) said "No friends in university leads to form negative perspective of the University Campus" One student of Political Science and Economics said:

"Sir I see them every day, eat alone in café don't have friends, sit alone on benches, sit in the back of the class, every day I see people like these, neglected by everyone that is walking in front of them, nobody cares about them (Asad: it is affecting their university life, right!) Sir, it is affecting everything not only university life, it is also affecting their family life, it is hampering their approach toward life, nobody is willing to talk to them, to be friends with them because they are not opening up due to some issue that is of maybe psychological or economic whatever it is and to be honest nobody has the will to push themselves that is why one in a million people commit suicide (It is just some random statistics, there can be a change in number, there can be a change in number like 1 from fifty thousand) And those who are not willing to go to that end they will live a life of misery, hopelessness, fear, and narcissistic tendencies that they can't give up and that will hamper them in the later part of their life." (22 years old, Male, Senior)

On the other hand, One-third of students (3 out of 9) said "Friends in university lead to form positive perspective of University Campus", one student from Economics and Mass Communication majors said:

"You must know how to interact with people, how to make friends, how to be patient in terms of making friends, you can positively affect your connection to university because if we specifically will have a broader way in terms of that answer if we talk about Pakistan people don't believe in reputation of University they are just fulfilling the formality by coming to university for degrees so I think the only factor that will motivate to go to university is their friendship (Asad: that to continue their university) to continue is their friend because no other thing is driving them in university" (22 years old, Male, Junior)

One-third of the students (3 out of 9) said "No friends lead to alienation from University Campus" which means that the students who have no friends don't have any connection with the university so they just come to university for the sake of Academics only. One student of a Computer Science major said:

"I think the whole connection to your university is through the friends you make, if you don't have friends you are just taking classes and going home you don't even consider campus. A friend was going through a lot of problems in friendship, and they started to hate their campus they ended up withdrawing from their semester they did not want to come to campus anymore they started hating it" (24 years old, Male, Junior)

One of the Senior Psychology students talked about the "Maturity/Understanding level" of university students, according to her immature people will say "their friendship is equal to

University Connection meaning the friendship experience affects the university overall experience while on the other hand, mature people will say "their friendship is parallel to University Connection" meaning that "University overall experience" is a separate entity from the entity of "Friendship overall experience".

Discussion

This study on university students' experiences of friendship formation highlights the central role of similarity in defining and understanding friendships, with students valuing personality traits like authenticity, support, and open-mindedness in their friends. It also explores how students manage their impressions, sometimes presenting different personalities to make friends and the complex dynamics between acquaintances and close friends. The findings shed light on the impact of external factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the influence of academic level on support for friendship formation. It underscores the importance of universities and educators in creating supportive environments that foster meaningful and lasting friendships among students, especially during a critical phase of identity development.

The findings showed that Students define friendship as the person who is similar to them which is known as Homophily which is a sociological theory that states that "Similar individuals will move toward each other and act similarly" (McPherson et al., 2001). The study reveals that similarity is a central factor in how university students define and understand friendships. Students commonly view friends as individuals who share various aspects of similarity, such as academic backgrounds, religious beliefs, social class, ethnicity, or common interests (Block & Grund, 2014). This sense of similarity is seen as the foundation for forming connections and understanding among friends. This indicates that the concept of friendship may evolve and deepen as students spend more time in the university environment. Recognizing the role of similarity in friendship formation can contribute to building more inclusive and supportive university communities. The findings also suggest that seniors tend to have a more complex and nuanced understanding of friendship, while sophomores and some juniors often provide more straightforward definitions.

It is found that Perceived personality traits play an important role during the friendship formation process. It is noted that the 4 most valued personality traits among students considered as worthy of friendship are "Authenticity" meaning that the person should have their views and ideas of life, "Open-mindedness" meaning that the person listens to others' opinions and ideas, "Support" meaning that the person should be available at the right time probably when you need someone, stick by your side in difficult times and "Extroversion" meaning an ability of a person to take initiative and socialize so they can develop in that process (Doroszuk et al., 2019). It was found that the words that students use to define friends are mostly the same words that they use to describe perceived personality traits like they used Authenticity and Understanding in both defining friends and perceived personality traits. This shows us the importance of perceived personality traits in the process of friendship formation so it's important for universities to spread awareness among students especially to Freshmans about the existence of different personality types and traits as it will contribute to helping students form friendships easily (Yan et al., 2022). It is also found that the most commonly valued traits in another student while forming friendship are "Authenticity", "Loyalty", "Supportiveness", "Open-mindedness", "Social", "intellectual", "Understanding", "kindness", "Honesty", "Empathy" and "Humor". It is found that most of the students think that Personality traits in comparison to social factors play an important role in maintaining friendship overtime as students look for the quality of friendship in the long term while half of the students said Personality traits in comparison to Social factors play important role in forming a friendship or initiating friendship (Clancy & Dollinger, 1993). This shows how crucial Personality traits play a role in students' lives as it is directly associated with friendship formation and maintenance over time. By using the Goffman theory of Impression management, we can look at the finding that is saying that most students don't like to verbally present their

perceived personality traits to maintain a good impression around other students to make friends on the other hand finding shows that student do verbally present their perceived personality traits to their close friends or the student they trust in University thus shows that students look forward to maintaining their impression around other students but they want their close friends or trusted students to know what they are actually to develop themselves. It is also found that students are seen physically, rather than verbally, presenting their personality traits through their actions, behavior, and body presentation like their dress or body posture, and is supported by literature (Jensen, 2016); finding that intuition plays an important role to note other person personality traits physically. This shows impression management is a very difficult process as one person can't continue an act for a longer period (Goffman, 1959).

It is found that most of the student present different personality of themselves to form friends, mostly named this term as "Faking" meaning that student act different then what they are or hiding their original self, Most of the student talked about Faking as Negative Act meaning that student intention is not to make friend in order to develop instead it is in order to win friends, to fit in, to get benefit or to fulfil needs (Cooley, 2002); Half of the student talk about faking as Positive Act meaning that student intention is to make friend in order to learn and develop and to make contacts/connections; while few students talked about faking as Neutral act which means that student do act differently as their defense mechanism meaning that they don't want to be vulnerable around other by exposing their real self instead they act differently to see if the other student is worthy of trust to be befriended, These finding perfectly match with Goffman theory of Impression management as both talk about act of people and different ways in which they maintain their act to benefit from it or to present themselves (Goffman, 1959). The findings from this study on university students' experiences of friendship formation reveal diverse

Strategies. While some emphasize the spontaneity and naturalness of friendships, others view them through the lens of destiny and shared beliefs. Mutual friends and common interests serve as important factors for some, while others mention being "adopted" by friends due to similarities or forming connections through assistance. Notably, there is a distinction between acquaintances and close friends, with many students having more acquaintances than friends in the multicultural university which means student maintain their acquaintances to make them friends in the future. These findings underscore the complexity of friendship formation in a university setting, influenced by individual beliefs, shared experiences, and the dynamics of mutual connections and acquaintanceships (Zhang & Van Der Schaar, 2017).

The findings delve into the intricate factors that shape friendship formation among university students. It reveals various external influences and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic as it disrupted traditional modes of social interaction, with many students experiencing difficulties in forming friendships due to online classes and limited in-person interactions, While some managed to create connections despite these challenges, the general sentiment was that online friendships were often more superficial and lacked common ground for meaningful interactions (Kulcar et al., 2022); the social pressures faced by freshmen to establish connections quickly, often spontaneously, to avoid feeling left out and the role of UNIV100 courses in facilitating interactions and exerting social pressure. Moreover, the study explores the influence of academic level on students' access to support for friendship formation as freshman students have more chances of Interaction in comparison to Senior Students; the link between friendships and students' connection to the university campus ("Friendship Supported Learning – the Role Of friendships in first-year students' university experiences," n.d.). Identity crises emerge as a significant social factor affecting friendship dynamics, leading to friendships driven

by needs rather than shared values or purposes, and this is supported by literature (Wu, 2006). Mature individuals tend to perceive their friendships and overall university experiences as parallel, recognizing the distinctness of these aspects of their lives. These findings provide a holistic understanding of friendship formation within the academic setting, with implications for universities and educators to create supportive environments that facilitate meaningful and lasting friendships among students.

Conclusion

This study expects to establish a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of Friendship experiences, Friendship formation strategies, and Relation between friendship formation and Personality traits showcasing undergraduate student perceptions under the context of Pakistani Multicultural University. The Symbolic Interactionism perspective and Impression Management theory are at the core of this qualitative research as Participants of this study were the primary source of Information and this is reflected in the findings of this study. Friendship formation and Perceived Personality traits are found to be fluid concepts, covering a range of definitions determined by the personal and perceived experiences of participants. By exploring students' conceptions of friendship, experiences with diversity, and the role of personality traits, this study deepens our understanding of the underlying dynamics. There is very little literature written and research done in sociology on Friendship, and its impact on social and personality development; This study has implications for understanding university students' friendship perception how they form friendships, and their perception of friendship formation impact on university campus connectedness.

The limitation of this study is that it doesn't have a large sample size as it is qualitative research, this research only includes multicultural university students, this study does not include freshman students, and the biggest limitation of this study is it is mostly beneficial for multicultural university students as my selected population for this study is multicultural university students.

Recommendations

Based on this study, we have some critical recommendations for the Higher Education Commission. Pakistan Higher Education Commission must ensure that they make policies for universities to give importance to the role of friendship formation and spread awareness among students especially to Freshmans about the existence of personality factors like different personality types and traits as it will contribute to helping students to form friendship easily which will eventually decrease the major challenges HEC faces like low enrollment rates, poor academic performance, and low degree completion rates. Higher Education Commission has to Increase the Identity Capital (Sense of who we are and who we want to be) of Students, to do so they should ask Universities to sync student academic studies and curricular activities with their religious teaching related to Personality/Character development to counter identity crisis in student as identity crisis leads to students faking (Presenting different personality) their personality to make friends as they don't know their true/original personality thus results in stagnant development (Inability to develop their personality/character further). The Higher Education Commission has to understand that Identity Crisis is one of the underlying problems behind low enrollment rates, poor academic performance, and low degree completion rates so HEC needs to address the identity crisis among students of Pakistan, To do so they spread awareness among students related to one's personality, different personality traits and about character development which are crucial for creating a healthier and more purposeful environment for friendship formation within and beyond the university; The Education sector should conduct workshops and intervention for friendship formation and Personality/Character development for the youth. By taking such measures HEC will be acting on Sustainable

Development Goal 4, which states that Higher education institutions are required to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."

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Appendix A: Information Sheet and Consent Form

Information Sheet

Title of Research: Interpersonal Experiences of students with Friendship Formation; A Case Study of FCCU

Researcher: Asad Javed

Institution: Forman Christian College (A Chartered University)

Researcher Contact: 241554476@formanite.fccollege.edu.pk

Supervisor: Shermeen Bano

Supervisor Contact: shermeenbano@fccollege.edu.pk

Invitation

You have been invited to participate in a study. Understanding the goal of the study and what is required of you is crucial before deciding whether you want to participate. It will be requested to you to take your time to carefully read this information sheet, and if you have any questions don't hesitate to ask the researcher. If anything is unclear or if you would like further information, don't hesitate to ask. Take your time to decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

What is the purpose of this study?

There has been lack of knowledge about what is the relation between friendship formation and perceived personality traits. For the scope of this study, undergraduate university students will be

studied to understand the unique ways in which students deal with challenge of friendship formation and how much they think that their perceived personality traits about others influence it. This study will use interviews with multicultural university students that fall between the age of 18 and 26, they will be asked about their experiences and perceptions of friendship formation and perceived personality traits to extract common themes and pattern from it.

Which person is eligible to participate in this study?

Participant eligible for this study are those student at Forman Christian College University which are currently in their Undergraduate degree, are not in freshman year and have general understanding of the topic variables under this study.

Is it compulsory to participate in this study?

Your participation in this study is voluntary, it is totally your choice to participate or not. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a copy of your consent form. After you sign the consent form, you will have the freedom to leave the study at any moment without any explanation. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

What procedure does the respondent have to go through?

Respondents will only be interviewed once according to their convenient time; a specific place will be selected for this interview and this interview will take between 30 minutes minimum and an hour maximum. This interview will be Audio recorded with the help of mobile. Several open-

ended questions will be asked relating to respondent perception of friendship formation, perceived personality traits, and the importance of friendship formation and perceived personality traits relation in multi-cultural setting. Respondents do not have to answer any of the questions if they don't want to answer it.

What is the benefits respondent will get?

It is hoped that this work will contribute to academic and sociological debates about relation of Friendship formation and perceived Personality traits. Will eventually help students to better understand themselves and others at micro level. In simple word students will get to know how students perceive and form friendships in multicultural university.

Will Respondent confidentiality be kept?

All the information will be kept strictly confidential. For the purposes of this research study, your comments/answers will not be anonymous. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

• Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents.

• The notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information will be stored in researcher primary records.

Respondent information will not be used or given for any other purposes without their consent.

Who is organizing the research?

Department of Sociology (Forman Christian College) is organizing this research.

Who will ethically review this study?

Internal Review Board (IRB) and Department of Sociology (Forman Christian College) will be ethically reviewing this research study.

Consent Form

1. I acknowledge that my participation in the research is entirely voluntary, and that I am free to leave at any time for any reason without explaining. I have the choice to reject or not respond to any questions that I do not feel like answering.

2. I agree that I read and comprehended the information sheet outlining the aim of the study.

3. I provide the researcher access to my anonymous responses.

4. I had the opportunity to inquire about the research study.

5. I acknowledge that my answers will be kept confidential, and that my identity will not appear in any study materials. My identity in any way will not be revealed in the research report.

6. I agree to participate in the study mentioned above.

7. I accept that a copy of every one of the filled papers, including the consent form and information sheet, will be given to me, and stored in the researcher's primary study record.

8. I accept that the information gathered from me may be utilized in future research after personally identifying information has been deleted.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix B: Socio-demographic Survey Instrument

1)	**What is your Age?** _____	6)	**What is your household/family income? (Per month)** ( ) Below 60,000, ( ) Between 60,000 and 120,000, ( ) Between 120,000 and 240,000, ( ) Above 240,000, ( ) Prefer not to say
2)	**What is your Gender?** ( ) Male, ( ) Female, ( ) Non-Binary, ( ) Prefer not to say, ( ) Other (Specify):	7)	**Which province you are from?** ( ) Punjab, ( ) Sindh, ( ) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ( ) Azad Kashmir, ( ) Gilgit-Baltistan, ( ) Baluchistan, ( ) Islamabad Capital Territory
3)	**Which year you are in?** ( ) Sophomore, ( ) Junior, ( ) Senior, ( ) Prefer not to say	8)	**Which Religion you belong from?** ( ) Islam, ( ) Christianity, ( ) Hinduism, ( ) Atheist, ( ) Agnostic, ( ) Prefer not to say, ( ) Other (Specify):
4)	**What is your Major?** _____	9)	**What is your marital status?** ( ) Single, ( ) Committed, ( ) Married, ( ) Divorced, ( ) Prefer not to say, ( ) Other (specify):
5)	**What is your current living arrangement?** ( ) Joint family, ( ) Nuclear family, ( ) Single-person household, ( ) Hostel, ( ) Prefer not to say, ( ) Other (Specify):	10)	**Do you know anyone in university who will be interested in being a part of this study?** ( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) Cannot say If you answered "Yes" please mention that student Name and Roll Number below (This question is optional) _____

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Section 1: Perception of Multicultural University, Friendship formation and Personality traits among students at multicultural university. (Warm-up Questions)
1. How do you perceive multicultural university as?
2. How do you perceive friendship formation?
3. How do you perceive personality traits?

Section 2: Exploration of Participant experience related to friendship formation.
1. How was your experience of friendship formation in freshman year? (Broad question + follow up questions)
2. How do you think other students formed friendships in their freshman year?
3. Do you think social factors divide students into group while forming friendship in multicultural university environment? How?

Section 3: Exploration of Participant perception of personality traits involvement in everyday life.
1. Do you describe yourself (verbally or physically) to other students in terms of personality traits?
2. How do you describe (verbally or physically) yourself in terms of personality traits? (Follow up question)
3. Do you think that your formation of friendship with other students is influenced by your personality traits?
4. Do you think that your formation of friendship with other students is influenced by your perception of their personality traits? (Follow up question)
5. Do you think perceived personality traits about other students help you to know them even before talking to them?

Section 4: Relation between Friendship formation and Personality traits
1. What are common personality traits that you value in other students during friendship formation?
2. Do you valuate the personality traits of other students while forming friendship and why?
3. Do you think students present different personality traits of them during interaction as strategy to form friendships? What Strategies do you use or how do you make form Friends?
4. Do you think that perceived similar personality traits about other are more helpful in friendship formation then having similar social factors like ethnicity, gender, class, or religion among multicultural university students?
5. Do you think friends with similar personality traits are more likely to maintain their friendship then friends with similar social factors like ethnicity, gender, class, or religion in multicultural environment?

6. Do you think the process of friendship formation and maintenance affect the feeling of connection with University Campus? How? (Follow on Questions)

Appendix D: Facesheet Information

Code Name	Age	Gender	Student Year	Major	Living Arrangement	Monthly Income	Province	Religion	Marital Status
RZ1	21	Female	Senior	Psychology	Nuclear family	120,000 - 240,000	Punjab	Islam	Single
MB2	22	-	Senior	Sociology and Political Science	Joint family	-	Punjab	Islam	Committed
MR3	23	Female	Senior	Psychology	Nuclear family	-	Punjab	Islam	Single
AA4	24	Male	Junior	CS	Nuclear family	>240,000	Punjab	Islam	Single
SA6	22	Female	Senior	Sociology	Single parent household	60,000 - 120,000	Punjab	Islam	Single
MMS7	22	Male	Junior	Economics and Mass Communication	Joint family	120,000 - 240,000	Punjab	Islam	Single
MR8	22	Male	Senior	Economics and Political Science	Nuclear family	>240,000	Punjab	Islam	Single
HA9	19	Male	Sophomore	CS	Joint family	-	Punjab	Islam	Single
FP10	19	Male	Junior	Education	Hostel	60,000 - 120,000	Punjab	Christianity	Single

Appendix E: Thematic Analysis (Themes, Sub-Themes, and Codes)

	Main Theme	Sub-Themes	Codes
1	Socio-cultural Definition of Friend	Defination of friend	Sense of Similarity/Homophily
		Disciplinary Similarity	sharing same academic disciplines, Similar social class and exchange privileges
		Religious Similarity	Faith, Moral values and Mutual Respect
2	Personality Traits and friendship formation	friendship formation and it maintenance	Social factors and Personality traits
		friendship-worthiness among students	Openminded, Authentic and Understanding
		Common valued Personality traits	Authenticity, Loyalty, Supportiveness, Open-mindedness, Social, intellectual, Understanding, kindness, Honesty, Empathy and Humor
3	Strategies to from friends	Faking	Defination of Faking
			Reasons behind Faking
			Relation between Mental illness and Faking
		Spontaneity	Spontanious friendship formation, Role of Nature (Religious Term), Natural way
		Adoption and Assistence	friendship by being adopted; friendship by helping or assisting others
		Maintaining Acquaintances	Having more acquaintances then friends
4	Factors effecting friendship formation among university students	Covid Struggle of friendship formation	Online Classes, Not Common ground to interact
		Social Pressure to form friendship in freshman year	Social Pressure to join Spontanious group/make random friends in freshman year
		UNIV100 as a source of Interaction and Social Pressure to form friendships	UNIV100 Course/Platform to interact/ Social Pressure to form friends
			Academic Level/ Description
		Identity Crisis	lack of self-knowledge and clear purpose; Lead to misperceptions
		Relation of friendship formation and it maintenance on Student feeling of Connection with University Campus	Friends do connect us with university campus
			No friends lead to build negative perspective of University Campus
			friends lead to build positive perspective of University Campus
			No friends lead to alienation from University Campus
			Maturity/understanding level

Appendix F: IRB Approval Certificate

FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

IRB Ref: IRB-451/6-2023

Date: 22-06-2023

Project Title: Interpersonal Experiences of Students with Friendship Formation in the University: A case study of FCCU

Principal Investigator: Asad Javed

Supervisor: Ms. Sharmeen Bano

The Institutional Review Board has examined your project in the IRB meeting held on 22-06-2023 and has approved the proposed study. If during the conduct of your research, any changes occur related to participant risk, study design, confidentiality or consent, or any other change then IRB must be notified immediately.

Please be sure to include the IRB reference number in all correspondence.

Dr. Sharoon Hanook
Convener – IRB
Chairperson, Department of Statistics
Forman Christian College
(A Chartered University)
Lahore