

## **Relationship between Forgiveness, Gratitude & Psychological Well-being among Young Adults**

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### **Abstract**

The pursuit of well-being, happiness, and the good life has been one of humanity's most persistent goals throughout its entire existence (Peterson, 2008). The purpose of the study was to analyze the relationship between Forgiveness, Gratitude and Psychological well-being among young adults. A total of 226 samples was collected that comprised of both males (n=111) and females(n=116) through convenient mode of sampling and the variables were measured using tools like Heartland's Forgiveness Scale, The Gratitude Questionnaire and Psychological well-being questionnaire respectively. The data was analyzed using statistical techniques like descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation & Independent sample t-test. The results showed that there was significant and positive correlation among Forgiveness, Gratitude and Psychological well-being. It was also found that there were significant gender differences among the scores of Forgiveness, Gratitude and Psychological well-being, where females exhibited high levels of Forgiveness, Gratitude and Psychological well-being compared to the males of the study.

**Key words:** Forgiveness, gratitude, psychological well-being, young adults

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With rising mental health concerns among young adults, there is a growing need to identify protective psychological factors that can enhance well-being and prevent the onset of psychological distress. Among the various positive psychological constructs, forgiveness and gratitude have been consistently associated with enhanced mental health outcomes, including reduced negative affect, better interpersonal relationships, and improved overall well-being.

Given that young adulthood is a period of heightened emotional vulnerability as well as growth potential, examining these positive traits during this stage is both timely and necessary. With a focus on strengths rather than weaknesses, creating the good in life rather than fixing the bad, and elevating the lives of average people to "great" rather than just bringing those who are struggling up to "normal," positive psychology is a science that studies human thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. (Peterson, 2008). The study of positive qualities was encouraged by proponents of positive psychology because they lead to pleasant experiences of "well-being, contentment, and fulfilment, hope, optimism, flow, and happiness. (Seligmann & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, Peterson & Park, 2009).

By emphasising people's strengths and virtues, positive psychology ensures a paradigm shift by emphasising the positive aspects of human life and aims to increase well-being. (Kardas et al., 2019). The focus of positive psychology has always been on happiness, attention-demanding positive traits and activities, and deep, fulfilling relationships. (Carr, 2013).

Young adulthood is a distinct developmental stage that takes place between the ages of 18 and 25 years, at the time when adolescence and adulthood are merging. In its Healthy People 2020 goals, the United States Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

(2018) defines adolescents as those between the ages of 10 and 17 and young adults as those between the ages of 18 and 25.

Due to societal changes over the past few decades, young adulthood is now recognised as a separate stage of adulthood that is between adolescence and middle age. It is understood that the young adult will undergo more psychological, cognitive, and emotional growth during this time, enabling the young adult to create an identity, take part in meaning-making, and become more independent.

The majority of psychologists concur that good psychological functioning and life experiences are indicators of well-being. Ryff CD (1989) put up a theoretical model of psychological well-being that includes six different facets of positive functioning: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, life purpose, positive relationships with others, and self-acceptance. Aspects like forgiveness and gratitude are more studied among middle aged to old aged population, but the present study aims to study the positive effects of them among young adults.

In recent decades, forgiveness gained popularity in the field of psychology (Reik and Mania 2012). Since then, many academics have attempted to define forgiveness, but there is still no agreement on a single concept (Reik et al., 2012). Forgiveness, according to Peterson and Seligman (2004), is a virtue and strength that is crucial for maintaining relationships, resolving disputes, and promoting one's own wellbeing. The process of forgiving involves turning one's negative thoughts into neutral or good ones. It has been demonstrated that forgiveness of situations is far more closely linked with psychological well-being than forgiveness of others (Thompson et al., 2005).

Unlike pardoning, tolerating, excusing, or reconciling, forgiveness is not always accompanied by an apology (Freedman, 1998). After analysing the literature on forgiveness,

Sells & Hargrave (1998) came to the conclusion that it involves components of "letting go over time", whether it involves wrongdoings (DiBlasio, 1992), wrath (Davenport, 1991), or "past hurts and bitterness" (Berecz, 2001.). Forgiveness was found to be favourably associated to psychological health and social adjustment by Tse and Yip (2009). According to Worthington, forgiving others can help people reduce undesirable behaviours including wrath, vengeance, hostility, resentment, and disliking individuals who have wronged them (Damayanti & Sandjaja, 2012). In a study conducted by Kaleta, K., & Mróz, J. (2021) depicted the gender differences on the dispositional forgiveness and its affective correlates. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between men and women in the positive aspects of the tendency to forgive, but men had a higher level of general forgiveness and a stronger desire to overcome unforgiving nature. Positive affect and dispositional forgiveness were positively correlated in both sexes, but negative affect, anxiety, and control of anger and despair were adversely related. Control of anxiety was adversely correlated with forgiveness in women, while it was positively correlated with forgiveness in men.

A correlational study conducted by Brose et.al(2005) on the relationship between forgiveness of others and the five-factor model of personality among 275 US college students revealed that all indicators of forgiveness had a negative relationship with neuroticism and a positive relationship with agreeableness.

The disposition toward gratitude was first described by McCullough et al. (2002) as " as a generalized tendency to recognize and respond with grateful emotion to the roles of other people's benevolence in the positive experiences and outcomes that one obtains'. According to McCullough et al. (2002), there are four aspects of gratitude: density, span, frequency and intensity. . As an emotive quality, gratitude shields people from unpleasant feelings like resentment and melancholy (McCullough et al., 2002, McCullough et al., 2004). The results indicated that there was no significant difference between men and women in the positive

aspects of the tendency to forgive, but men had a higher level of general forgiveness and a stronger desire to overcome unforgiveness. Positive affect and dispositional forgiveness were positively correlated in both sexes, but negative affect, anxiety, and control of anger and despair were adversely related. Control of anxiety was adversely correlated with forgiveness in women, while it was positively correlated with forgiveness in men.

McCullough et al. (2002) discovered that appreciation had a poor relationship with anxiety and despair in a non - patient sample. Additionally, Watkins et al. (2003) deduced from clinical samples that persons who are extremely appreciative are less prone to harbour grudges against the past and, as a result, are less likely to experience depression. There is evidence that thankfulness can lessen the detrimental impacts of materialism on wellbeing. People who feel grateful report being less materialistic and are less prone to view success in terms of material items and achievements (McCullough et al., 2002). Furthermore, thankfulness develops trust (Gino & Schweitzer, 2008), in addition to fortifying and maintaining existing links (Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008) which plays key role in improving one's well-being. A Longitudinal study conducted by Bosacki, et.al (2018) among grade 9 students The results showed that Teenagers' feelings of gratitude, sense of self-worth, and emotional and spiritual wellbeing were all found to be significantly positively correlated.

Based on the literature review and taking in to account the sub components of each variable based on the operational definition the following hypotheses were proposed.

H1. There is no significant relationship between forgiveness and psychological well-being among young adults

H1.1 There is no significant relationship between Forgiveness of Self and psychological well-being among young adults

H1.2 There is no significant relationship between Forgiveness of others and psychological well-being among young adults

H1.3 There is no significant relationship between Forgiveness of situations and psychological well-being among young adults

H2. There is no significant relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being among young adults

H3. There is no significant relationship between forgiveness and gratitude among young adults

H3.1 There is no significant relationship between forgiveness of self and gratitude among young adults

H3.2 There is no significant relationship between forgiveness of others and gratitude among young adults

H3.3 There is no significant relationship between forgiveness of situations and gratitude among young adults

H4. There is no significant difference between males and females on the scores of forgiveness among young adults

H5. There is no significant difference between males and females on the scores of gratitude among young adults

H6. There is no significant difference between males and females on the scores of psychological well-being among young adults

## **Sample**

The total number of samples collected was N=250, in person which consisted of both males and females from the Chennai city. The age of the participants ranged between 18 and

25 years old, with a mean age of 20.15 years. Most of the participants in the study are college going students & the remaining participants were working in various sectors. The participants were selected through convenient sampling. Participants who were between the age group 18-25 & those who can read and understand English language were only included in the sample. A total of 226 forms were retained which included all the information.

## **Measures**

### ***Heartland's Forgiveness Scale***

The Forgiveness levels was measured by Heartland's Forgiveness Scale. This scale is based on 7-point Likert type scale ranging from "almost always false of me" to "almost always true of me" and it has got 18 items. The scale has three subscales, each with six items, that assess forgiveness of oneself, forgiveness of others, forgiveness of situations, and dispositional forgiveness as a whole. Higher score indicates higher levels of Forgiveness. (Thompson, et.al, 2005). The reliability value for the full scale was 0.78 and for the HFS self, HFS others and HFS situations were 0.69, 0.69, 0.68.

A study conducted by Rinki Dahiya & S. Rangnekar (2020) examined the psychometric properties of Heartland Forgiveness Scale in the Indian settings. The results of their study indicated the validation of a three-factor model of HFS in the Indian context and suggested its feasibility to be used as a tool to measure the level of forgiveness in employees.

### ***The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six-Item Form (GQ-6)***

The gratitude was measured using the Gratitude Questionnaire-Six-Item Form (GQ-6). This scale measured the general type of gratitude one would have towards daily events and other individuals. The total no. of items were six and analyzed aspects pertaining to experiences and expressions of gratefulness, appreciation in daily life activities, and feelings

about receiving benefits from other individuals. The questionnaire adopted a 7-point Likert-type scale with a response format ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The reliability for the GQ-6 is Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.82$ . Higher scores indicated higher levels of gratitude. (McCullough et al., 2002).

### ***Psychological well-being Questionnaire by Carol Ryff***

The levels of Psychological well-being was measured using 'Psychological well-being questionnaire by Carol Ryff'. The scale consists of 18 items based on 7 point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The scale has got six dimensions namely autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, the purpose in life and self-acceptance. Higher scores indicate higher levels of psychological well-being. (Ryff & Keyes, 1995) The reliability value for the scale was 0.82.

This scale was used in the study conducted by Dilkirat Sarna, Neeta Mhavan (2025) titled An Empirical Study on Emotional and Psychological Well-Being among Indian Adolescents.

### **Procedure**

Prior to starting data collection, participants were briefed about the study. Individuals who fulfilled the specified inclusion and exclusion criteria were invited to provide written consent to participate, with assurances of confidentiality. Participants could withdraw from the study at any stage without any reasons. Participants were given detailed instructions about the psychological tests as per the respective manuals of the tests

### **Statistical Analysis**

After collecting the data, scoring of the questionnaires was done according to the instructions provided in the user manuals of the respective questionnaires. Subsequently, the

data were analyzed using SPSS. Shapiro Wilk test was run to check for normality. The results indicated that forgiveness did not significantly deviate from normality  $p = .052$ . Similarly, gratitude was found to be normally distributed  $p = .054$ . psychological Well-Being also met the assumption of normality  $p = .186$ .

Pearson's PMC was used to evaluate relationships between variables and psychological well-being.

## Results

**Table 1**

*Descriptive statistics for demographics*

| Variable            | Category        | n(Total=226) | Percentage | M     | SD    |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|-------|-------|
| Gender              | Male            | 111          | 49.1       | 1.5   | 0.5   |
|                     | Female          | 115          | 50.9       |       |       |
| Sibling status      | Single child    | 34           | 15         | 1.15  | 0.358 |
|                     | Have siblings   | 192          | 85         |       |       |
| Relationship status | Single          | 200          | 88.5       | 1.14  | 0.4   |
|                     | In relationship | 20           | 8.5        |       |       |
|                     | Married         | 6            | 2.7        |       |       |
| Occupation          | Student         | 205          | 90.7       | 1.09  | 0.333 |
|                     | Employed        | 18           | 8          |       |       |
|                     | Non-employed    | 2            | 0.9        |       |       |
| Age                 | -               | 226          | -          | 20.12 | 1.93  |

Table 1 depicts the descriptive statistics for the demographic variables. The total no. of individuals participated in the research study was (N=226). Young adults whose ages ranged between 18-25 years were included to participate in the study, with a mean age of 20.12. The

samples consisted of both males and females, where 49.1% were males ( $M=1.5$ ,  $SD=0.5$ ) and 50.9% of samples were females ( $M=1.5$ ,  $SD=0.5$ ). Among the 226 samples, 15% were single child and 85% of the samples had siblings. 8.5% of the samples reported to be in relationship, 88.5% as singles and 6% being married. The highest group of people who participated in the research study were college students with a percentage of 90.7%, 8% of employed samples and 0.9% of non-employed samples.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive statistics for the variables*

|                           | n   | M    | SD    |
|---------------------------|-----|------|-------|
| Forgiveness               | 226 | 80.4 | 11.49 |
| Forgiveness of self       | 226 | 26.5 | 5.14  |
| Forgiveness of others     | 226 | 27.8 | 5.66  |
| Forgiveness of situations | 226 | 26.0 | 4.97  |
| Gratitude                 | 226 | 29.9 | 5.32  |
| Psychological well-being  | 226 | 84.4 | 12.27 |

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the variables like Forgiveness, Forgiveness subscales, Gratitude and Psychological well-being. The overall mean score for total forgiveness is 80.4, with a standard deviation of 11.49. The highest mean score was obtained for the subscale “Forgiveness of others” ( $M=27.8$ ,  $SD=5.66$ ), which shows that participants are more likely to forgive the wrongdoings of significant others of their life than compared to their “self” and the “situations”. From the table it could be seen that the mean score of gratitude was 29 with a standard deviation of 5.32. It is also observed that participants mean score for psychological well-being was  $M=84.4$ ,  $SD=12$

**Table 3***Correlation of Forgiveness and Psychological well-being*

| Variable                 | N   | M     | SD    |        | r      |
|--------------------------|-----|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| Forgiveness              | 226 | 80.48 | 11.49 | 1      | .451** |
| Psychological well-being | 226 | 84.49 | 12.27 | .451** | 1      |

\*\* . Significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 3 shows the data, representing the relationship between Forgiveness and Psychological well-being among 226 young adults. Based on the results obtained from Pearson product moment correlation it was found that, the coefficient of correlation value between these variables were found to be 0.451. It is interpreted that there is a moderate positive correlation between forgiveness and psychological well-being and this correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). This implies that, as one variable increases the other variable also increases. Thus, the Hypothesis 1 that stated “There is no significant relationship between forgiveness and psychological well-being among young adults” was rejected.

**Table 4***Correlation of subscales of Forgiveness and Psychological well-being*

|                           | N   | M     | SD   | r      |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|------|--------|
| Forgiveness of Self       | 226 | 26.58 | 5.14 | .298** |
| Forgiveness of Others     | 226 | 27.88 | 5.66 | .306** |
| Forgiveness of Situations | 226 | 26.01 | 4.97 | .384** |

|                          |     |       |       |   |
|--------------------------|-----|-------|-------|---|
| Psychological Well-being | 226 | 84.49 | 12.27 | 1 |
|--------------------------|-----|-------|-------|---|

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\*\*Significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 4 shows the data, representing the relationship between subscales of Forgiveness and Psychological well-being among 226 young adults. Based on the results obtained from Pearson product moment correlation it was found that, the coefficient of correlation value between “Forgiveness of self” and “psychological well-being” was 0.298, which depicted a weak, positive and significant (at 0.01 level, two-tailed) correlation. This implies that an individual’s psychological well-being was weakly associated with the person’s tendency to forgive oneself. Thus, the Hypothesis 1.1 that stated “There is no significant relationship between Forgiveness of Self and psychological well-being” was rejected.

Similarly from the table it was evident that the coefficient of correlation value between “Forgiveness of others” and “psychological well-being” was 0.306, which was interpreted as weak, positive and significant (at 0.01 level, two-tailed) correlation. This shows that an individual’s tendency to forgive others was weakly related to their psychological well-being. Thus, the Hypothesis 1.2 that stated “There is no significant relationship between Forgiveness of others and psychological well-being” was rejected.

The coefficient of correlation value between “Forgiveness of situations” and “psychological well-being” was 0.384, which was interpreted as weak, positive and

significant (at 0.01 level, two-tailed) correlation. It was inferred that the ability of an individual to forgive the situational aspects was weakly associated with their psychological well-being. Thus, the Hypothesis 1.3 that stated “There is no significant relationship between Forgiveness of situations and psychological well-being” was rejected.

**Table 5**

*Correlation of Gratitude and Psychological well-being*

|                          | N   | M     | SD    |        | r      |
|--------------------------|-----|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| Gratitude                | 226 | 29.9  | 5.32  | 1      | .471** |
| Psychological well-being | 226 | 84.49 | 12.27 | .471** | 1      |

\*\* . Significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 5 represents the relationship between Gratitude and psychological well-being of 226 young adults, inclusive of both males and females. After the data had been analysed through Pearson product moment correlation, it was found that there was a moderate correlation between Gratitude and Psychological well-being. The coefficient of correlation (r) value was 0.471 and the correlation was positive, and significant (at 0.01 level, two-tailed). Thus, the Hypothesis 2 that stated “There is no significant relationship between Gratitude and psychological well-being” was rejected

**Table 6**

*Correlation of Forgiveness and Gratitude*

|             | N   | Mean  | SD    |        | r      |
|-------------|-----|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| Gratitude   | 226 | 29.91 | 5.32  | 1      | .374** |
| Forgiveness | 226 | 80.48 | 11.49 | .374** | 1      |

\*\* . Significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 6 shows the data, representing the relationship between Forgiveness and Gratitude among 226 young adults. Based on the results obtained from Pearson product moment correlation it was found that, the coefficient of correlation value between forgiveness and gratitude was found to be 0.374. This was interpreted as a weak, positive and significant correlation (at 0.01 level, two-tailed). It could be inferred that there was minimal association between an individual’s tendency to forgive and be grateful for things in life. Thus, the Hypothesis 3 that stated “There is no significant relationship between Gratitude and Forgiveness” was rejected.

**Table 7**  
*Correlation of subscales of Forgiveness and Gratitude*

|                           | M   | SD    | Gratitude |        |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|-----------|--------|
| Forgiveness of Self       |     |       |           | .221** |
|                           | 226 | 26.58 | 5.14      |        |
| Forgiveness of Others     | 226 | 27.88 | 5.66      | .339** |
| Forgiveness of Situations | 226 | 26.01 | 4.97      | .250** |
| Gratitude                 | 226 | 29.91 | 5.32      | 1      |

\*\* . Significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 7 shows the data, representing the relationship between subscales of Forgiveness and Gratitude among 226 young adults. Based on the results obtained from Pearson product moment correlation it was found that, the coefficient of correlation value between “Forgiveness of self” and “Gratitude” was 0.221, which depicted a weak, positive and significant (at 0.01 level, two-tailed) correlation. This implies that an individual’s

gratefulness was weakly associated with the person’s tendency to forgive oneself. Thus, the Hypothesis 3.1 that stated “There is no significant relationship between Forgiveness of Self and Gratitude” was rejected.

Similarly, from the table it was evident that the coefficient of correlation value between “Forgiveness of others” and “Gratitude” was 0.339, which was interpreted as weak, positive and significant (at 0.01 level, two-tailed) correlation. This shows that an individual’s tendency to forgive others was weakly related to their tendency to be grateful. Thus, the Hypothesis 3.2 that stated “There is no significant relationship between Forgiveness of others and Gratitude” was rejected.

The coefficient of correlation value between “Forgiveness of situations” and “Gratitude” was 0.250, which was interpreted as weak, positive and significant (at 0.01 level, two-tailed) correlation. It was inferred that the ability of an individual to forgive the situational aspects was weakly associated with their tendency to be thankful. Thus, the Hypothesis 3.3 that stated “There is no significant relationship between Forgiveness of situations and gratitude” was rejected.

**Table 8**

*Independent sample t-test for males and females on Forgiveness*

| Variable    | Gender | Mean  | SD    | t     | df  | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
|-------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|
| Forgiveness | Male   | 77.89 | 9.96  | -3.47 | 224 | .001            | -5.09           |
|             | Female | 82.98 | 12.32 |       |     |                 |                 |

Table 8 shows the scores statistically analysed through the independent sample t-test for the levels of forgiveness among male and female samples of the study. From the table, it

was observed that there was as a significant gender difference in the scores of Forgiveness among 226 young adults. This shows that males and females differ significantly in their tendency to forgive themselves, others and situations as a whole, where women are more forgiving ( $M=82.98$ ,  $SD=12.32$ ) compared to the males ( $M=77.89$ ,  $SD=9.96$ ). Thus, the Hypothesis 4 that stated “There is no significant difference between males and females on the scores of Forgiveness” was rejected.

**Table 9**

*Independent sample t-test for males and females on Gratitude*

| Variable  | Gender | Mean  | SD    | t      | df  | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
|-----------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|
| Gratitude | Male   | 28.09 | 5.366 | -5.338 | 224 | .000            | -3.57           |
|           | Female | 31.66 | 4.676 |        |     |                 |                 |

Table 9 shows the difference in the scores of males and females statistically analysed through the independent sample t-test for the levels of Gratitude. From the table, it was observed that there was as a significant gender difference in the scores of Gratitude among 226 young adults. This shows that males and females differ significantly in their tendency to be thankful and express a grateful emotion in response to the influences of other people in their life. In accordance to the literature, women are more grateful ( $M=31.66$ ,  $SD=4.67$ ) compared to the men ( $M=28.09$ ,  $SD=5.36$ ). Thus, the Hypothesis 5 that stated “There is no significant difference between males and females on the scores of Gratitude” was rejected.

**Table 10**

*Independent sample t-test for males and females on Psychological well-being*

| Variable                 | Gender | Mean  | SD    | t     | df  | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|
| Psychological Well-being | Male   | 81.90 | 11.72 | -     | 224 | .002            | -5.08           |
|                          | Female | 86.99 | 12.32 | 3.173 |     |                 |                 |

Table 10 shows the scores statistically analysed through the independent sample t-test for the levels of psychological well-being among male and female samples of the study. From the table, it was observed that there was as a significant gender difference in the scores of Psychological well-being among 226 young adults. This shows that males and females differ significantly in terms of their well-being psychologically, where females have higher levels of psychological well-being (M=86.99, SD=12.32) compared to the males (M=81.90, SD=11.72). Thus, the Hypothesis 4 that stated “There is no significant difference between males and females on the scores of Forgiveness” was rejected.

### Discussion

Nearly 14% of Indians, according to the National Mental Health Survey of 2016, needed active mental health interventions. The pursuit of well-being, happiness, and the good life has been one of humanity's most persistent goals throughout its entire existence. Though there are many other factors that influences a person’s psychological well-being, the current study focused predominantly on two variables namely forgiveness and gratitude. The aim of the study was to assess the relationship between Forgiveness, Gratitude and Psychological well-being. For that purpose, young adults between the ages of 18-25 were selected as samples for the study. The reason for selecting this age range was, in young adults between the ages of 18 and 25, one in five have a mental health diagnosis (Stroud, 2014). Thus, there was a greater emphasis to prevent the mental illnesses among young adults and that can be done by understanding further about the role of positive emotions in promoting mental health.

The study adopted a correlational research design and convenient mode of sampling. Majority of the participants were college students (90.7%) with a mean age of 20.12. Most of the participants had siblings(85%) and were single in relationship (88.5%). The obtained data from the samples were subjected to statistical analysis such as descriptive statistics, Pearson product moment correlation and Independent sample t-test. Results from the descriptive statistics showed that the majority of samples (79.65%) are more likely to forgive the transgressions of the self, others and situations respectively. This shows that people have the general tendency to forgive. Since they are in the state of likely to forgive, appropriate techniques to enhance forgiveness further can benefit these individuals to forgive more adequately. This can help the individuals to stay away from the ill-effects of mental disorders. Practicing forgiveness regularly can act as protective factors against mental health disorders. Especially if the young adults are intervened for forgiveness techniques currently, there is an increased chance of them forgiving in their future and increased protection against mental disorders. From the analysis it was also found that 61.95% of participants had high levels of gratitude and 37.61% had moderate levels of gratitude. This shows that almost all participants (except 0.44%) had moderate to high levels of gratitude, where high levels dominated more. It could be inferred that participants are generally grateful for the acts and deeds of other people in their lives.

Descriptive statistics also showed that 51.2% of participants had moderate levels of psychological well-being and 48.2% had high levels of psychological well-being. This shows that majority of the participants had moderate-high levels of well-being which showed that they have good sense of autonomy, personal growth, good sense of environmental mastery, self-acceptance, positive relations with others and clear purpose of life.

Correlational analysis showed that there was a significant, positive and moderate correlation between Forgiveness and Psychological well-being( $r=0.45$ ). This shows that the

participant's psychological well-being was moderately associated with their forgiving tendency of self, others and situations. In accordance to the literature review, the current study's results also showed a positive and significant correlation between these variables. Thus, the Hypothesis 1 that stated "There is no significant relationship between forgiveness and psychological well-being among young adults" was rejected.

Similarly, the correlation between the subscales of forgiveness such as forgiveness of self, others, situations with psychological well-being indicated a weak, positive and significant association ( $r=0.29$ ,  $r=0.30$ ,  $r=0.38$ ). Among the subscales, 'forgiveness of others' was associated more with psychological well-being compared to the other two subscales. Thus, the hypotheses 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 that stated "There is no significant relationship between Forgiveness of Self, others, situations and psychological well-being" was rejected.

Similarly, there was a positive, weak and significant correlation ( $r=0.374$ ) between Forgiveness and Gratitude. The reason for the relationship between these variables to be minimal is that, not every has the ability to grasp the positives and be grateful for a negative event of their life, though people tend to forgive, they may just forgive to make them free from the feelings of grudge & resentment but not necessarily be thankful for such acts. Apart from forgiveness, other factors could've influenced gratitude too. (Thompson, et.al, 2005) Thus, the Hypothesis 3 that stated "There is no significant relationship between Gratitude and Forgiveness" was rejected

The same trend was seen among the association between subscales of forgiveness and gratitude, which showed a weak, positive and significant relationship ( $r=0.221$ ,  $r=0.339$ ,  $r=0.250$ ), indicating the rejection of hypotheses 3.1,3.2,3.3 which stated "There is no significant relationship between Forgiveness of Self, others, situations and Gratitude"

The relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being was found to be positive, moderate and significant ( $r=0.471$ ), indicating that those who are grateful for the influence of others in their life have increased levels of psychological well-being. The current study's results also indicated the relationship in accordance to the earlier research studies, leading to the rejection of hypothesis 2 that stated. "There is no significant relationship between Gratitude and psychological well-being".

Results of Independent sample t-test indicated that there was significant gender differences in the scores of Forgiveness, Gratitude and psychological well-being. This showed that males and females differ significantly in their tendency to forgive their self, others & situations, indicating women tend to forgive more compared to men. The reason for women's high tendency to forgive was explained in a study conducted by (Miller et al.,2008), which indicated that women are generally tend to be more forgiving than men, was due to their personality traits such as agreeableness and empathy and their valuing relationships.

Similarly, women have higher tendency to be grateful for compared to men. Qualitative study conducted by Li.S (2022) showed the possible explanations of the increased levels of gratitude among women compared to men. The results of the study indicated that both social and biological factors influence a person's feelings of gratitude. According to the social factors, women are considered to be caring & nurturants, while men being brave & strong, thus men are less comfortable in expressing gratitude than women. Biological factors indicate that women's and men's experience of positive emotions are influenced by hormonal dispositions.

It was also found that there was a significant difference between males and females on the levels of their psychological well-being, where women had higher levels of psychological well-being compared to men. This result is in accordance with the study conducted by

Akhter.S (2015) which showed the significant gender difference in the levels of well-being, where women had higher levels compared to men.

### **Limitation**

The present study adopted a correlational research design, hence the cause-effect relationship could not be adequately traced. Future research can address this limitation through pre-test, involving administering an intervention for forgiveness & gratitude and then doing a post-test.

### **Conclusion**

From the present study it can be concluded that the participants of the study are more likely to forgive, have moderate-high levels of Gratitude and Psychological well-being. It was also found that there was significant and positive correlation between Forgiveness, Gratitude and Psychological well-being among young adults. There were significant gender differences in the scores of Forgiveness, Gratitude and Psychological well-being, indicating women have high scores in all of these variables compared to men.

### **Implications**

The positive association between forgiveness, gratitude, and psychological well-being suggests that these variables can function as protective factors against psychological distress. Mental health promotion programs for young adults can incorporate strategies that encourage forgiving attitudes and gratitude practices. Interventions such as forgiveness therapy, gratitude journaling, and strength-based counselling approaches can be effectively integrated into therapeutic settings for young adults experiencing emotional distress. Since the majority of the sample consisted of college students, the findings highlight the importance of incorporating positive psychology-based interventions in educational institutions through

workshops, life skills programs, and mental health awareness sessions focusing on forgiveness, gratitude, and emotional regulation. Such initiatives may help students cope better with academic stress, relationship difficulties, and life transitions.

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