

## Forgiveness in Romantic Relationships: A Comparison Across the Genders

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to see whether there exist gender differences in forgiveness in romantic relationships. The study also explores the reasons for forgiveness between males and females in romantic relationships. The study has made use of a mixed approach, employing both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The study was conducted in two phases. Phase I used the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory 18-Item Version (TRIM-18) developed by McCullough, Root and Cohen (2006) on a sample size of 60 (30 males and 30 females) participants. Phase II was the qualitative part, and thematic analysis was used to analyze the semi structured interview sessions of 5 males and 5 females from the original sample of 60 participants. The results showed that there was no significant gender difference in forgiveness in romantic relationships. However, there was a difference in how both the genders perceived each other to be more forgiving as shown through the thematic analysis. An additional t test showed there is a significant difference in forgiveness levels of employees and students of the same age group.

*Keywords: Forgiveness, Romantic relationships, Gender differences*

Because of the very ambiguity of Forgiveness, a complex construct, it has not been easy to pinpoint a single definition. Most psychological approaches towards forgiveness look at it as an action or an attitude from the part of the person who has been offended and hence, forgives. Psychologist Dr. Robert Enright, pioneer as agreed by many in the scientific study of forgiveness and founding member of the International Forgiveness Institute, has tried to look at what we humans go through emotionally when we forgive those who have caused us harm or difficulty. Forgiveness, as put forward by this institute, is a paradox—something that may sound illogical but still works, is the foregoing of resentment or revenge when the wrongdoer's actions deserve it, is giving the gifts of mercy, generosity and love when the wrongdoer's actions indicate that he/she does not deserve them and as we give the gift of forgiveness, we ourselves are healed (“What is Forgiveness”, n.d., para. 3).

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## **Forgiveness in Romantic Relationships: A Comparison Across the Genders**

The concept of forgiveness has been emphasized over and over again by spiritual and religious leaders from time immemorial. Many religions sought to instill in us the deep rooted values of forgiveness as strongly even before as clearly observed now. Even in the Indian religious perspective, it has been given great noteworthiness. The Mahabharata has hymns glorifying forgiveness. In Sikhism, Guru Nanak's sayings teach us that forgiveness is equivalent to love taken at its very highest power. Islamist teachings enjoin forgiveness as an important value. In Christianity, the Bible emphasizes forgiveness as divine.

### ***Forgiveness in Relationships***

People often struggle to find the right things to do in a relationship. There are times we wonder why some relationships have a happy ending and why some others don't. Research has shown that forgiveness plays a crucial role in helping different groups of individuals live together with a greater degree of interpersonal accord and stability (Snyder & Lopez, 2007). Forgiveness is also rightly seen as a human strength. It is not a sign of weakness as is wrongly perceived by many and emphasized by Nietzsche. It is what leads to a continuity that is most commonly seen in interpersonal relationships, by fixing the inevitable wrongs that are often inflicted and the transgressions that take place in social interactions (McCullough, 2000). His take on forgiveness is that it is more of a prosocial change that occurs in one's motivation as a result of a committed offense, rather than a motivational force per se.

Forgiveness isn't something that happens at the spur of the moment for most individuals. Worthington et al. (2000) says it takes its due course of time. They might be referring to true forgiveness here. While it's easy to forgive someone superficially, or forgive someone without truly meaning to forgive, the same doesn't apply to the actual process of forgiving.

Different researchers have tried to see what factors influence or motivate forgiveness or unforgiveness in relationships. McCullough (2000) summarizes some of them as being empathy, perspective taking, rumination, relational closeness/commitment/satisfaction and the offender's repentance. Other studies have also found sincere apology is a primary predictor of forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1997; Bachman & Guerrero, 2006). This maybe stands out as the most significant factor. When the offender apologizes or repents, forgiveness comes much easier to the other person than if the partner fails to acknowledge their mistakes, or even fails to communicate something as simple as 'I am sorry'. This is because apologies can indeed heal great wounds. But we often see this is exactly where the problem lies. People sometimes can't bring themselves to admit their wrongs, and hence to apologize which probably can act as the saving grace in the relationship. Without a sincere apology, it can lead to an irreparable and irreconcilable gap between the two partners. The more the victims felt that their partners wanted forgiveness, the more they worked towards forgiving them (Gunderson, 2009).

Sandilya and Shanawaz (2014) notes that the willingness to forgive in relationships depends on three factors namely, the characteristics of the offender, characteristics of the offended, and the nature of the offense. Another commonly seen factor is that sometimes individuals tend to forgive their wrongdoer because it gives them an inner peace. People tend to feel at ease with themselves the most, thus serving them a personal purpose. So here, it's not something they are doing for the person that hurt them, but rather to alleviate their own level of hurt that has been caused by the offender.

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Of the studies conducted to find out what factors play a role in forgiveness, Michalica (2005) found out that how people perceive themselves to be forgiving is not a strong predictive of forgiveness in specific situations. The study also found out that people who are more forgiving are more empathic, agreeable and honest.

A significant predictor of forgiveness in relationships has been relationship satisfaction (Allemand et al., 2007; Trevino, 2011). The more satisfied people are in their relationship, higher are the chances that they will forgive their partner for their offenses.

### ***Models of Forgiveness***

Although there are around sixteen or more models of forgiveness that have been developed, there are primarily three well-accepted psychological models of forgiveness that are still widely looked upto today.

As Rev. Celestin Musekura (2007) has assessed in his paper, the three models give us an insight into the importance that forgiveness holds. In McCullough's model, he asserts how it is indeed a psychological process and how there are different benefits to forgiving. Forgiveness has to occur as a result of the act of reasoning, and only then will someone be able to purely forgive.

The second model of forgiveness that is often cited by psychologists is the Pyramid model of Worthington also called the Pyramid model to REACH forgiveness. For Worthington, the pyramid model is for individuals who have a need or wish to forgive others, but for some reason has not been able to do so (Musekura, 2007).

The third model of forgiveness by Enright gives us the four phases involved in forgiveness. The first phase is the Uncovering Phase, the second is the Decision Phase, the third phase is the Work Phase, and the final one the Deepening Phase (Enright & North, 1998). When forgiveness takes place, there is a change that takes place inside of the individual who is forgiving.

### ***Gender and Forgiveness***

The issue of gender has been an unending source of debate in Forgiveness. Gender has not been an explicit focus of Forgiveness related studies in the past. As Miller, Worthington, Jr & McDaniel in their 2008 paper put it, people tend to believe that women are more forgiving than men. When looking at Kohlberg and Gilligans theories that emphasize on moral reasoning, we can see how there is support for men being expected to be less forgiving than women (Miller et al., 2008). Some investigators have noted how there are indeed gender differences when it comes to overall forgiveness. However, Fehr et al. (2010) study insisted that gender had no significant relationship with forgiveness.

There is no single theory which offers a concrete explanation for why gender differences may be present in forgiveness. There are however some possible explanations that can be explored. One of reasons may be that both the genders have a difference in their moral reasoning, and hence how they reason about forgiveness in general as purported by many. Gender difference in this area was studied by a number of researchers, including the two famous psychologists Kohlberg and Gilligan who theorized about the topic. While Kohlberg placed her emphasis on justice-based morality, Gilligan did on relationship-based morality (Lerner, 2003). Jaffee and Hyde's found out in the year 2000 that there is a difference in how both the genders reason out when it comes to transgressions that have occurred.

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Women are more inclined to preserving relationships when compared to men. Men on the other hand, are more directed towards seeking justice than women are. This can mean females are encouraged to forgive more than men when a dilemma occurs. Miller et al. (2008) also found that vengeance is the one moderator from among eight other methodological moderators that has been observed to have influenced gender differences in forgiveness significantly unlike the others. The authors have reported how women are seen to be less vengeful than men. And hence they are seen to be more forgiving too. However we see how there is no consensus on this topic. Particularly because Kohlberg and Gilligan's theories come from a westernized perspective, there is no evidence that the same holds true elsewhere.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### *Objectives of the study*

- To compare the level of Forgiveness in males and females who are involved in Romantic Relationships.
- To explore the reasons for Forgiveness among males and females in Romantic Relationships.

#### *Hypothesis*

There is no gender difference in the level of Forgiveness in Romantic Relationships. The review of literature shows that the relationship between gender and forgiveness is not definite. Different studies show contrary results and thus are inconclusive. Furthermore, the researcher was not able to find any Indian studies on the topic of the study which looked at dating relationships, while setting married couples aside, which provides any base for setting a directional hypothesis. Hence, a null hypothesis has been formulated.

#### *Operational Definitions*

**Forgiveness** - The reduction of negative motivational tendencies (avoidance and revenge) and an increase in positive motivational tendencies (benevolence) towards the offender (McCullough et al, 2006).

**Romantic Relationship** – The state of being emotionally and physically involved or attached to a partner.

#### *Variables*

*Independent variable* - Gender

*Dependent variable* – Forgiveness in Romantic Relationships

#### *Sample*

##### Phase I

Purposive and Snowball sampling method was used to choose 60 participants (30 Male and 30 Female). It was a mixed sample, consisting of an equal number of students and employees of the same age group.

##### Phase II

Random Sampling method was then used to choose 5 Male and 5 Female from the initial sample of 60.

#### *Instruments*

1. A demographic and relationship information measure created by the researcher to collect the relevant details of the participants.

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It asks the participants to list down their name (optional), age, gender, highest level of education attained, whether a student or employed, number of months/years in the relationship and how satisfied they are in their current relationship (on a scale of 0-10). It does not contain any other information that can reveal the identity of the participants.

*2. Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory 18-Item Version (TRIM-18) developed by McCullough, Root and Cohen in 2006.*

The three motivational states which underlie interpersonal forgiving are Revenge and Avoidance motivation (negative) and Benevolence motivation (positive). There are 7 items under the Avoidance subscale (e.g., "I am trying to keep as much distance between us as possible"). The Revenge subscale has 5 items and it contains questions to identify the motivation to seek revenge (e.g., "I'll make him/her pay"). The newly added Benevolence subscale has 6 items and it measures the benevolence motivation towards the transgressor (e.g., "Even though his/her actions hurt me, I have goodwill for him/her"). All the items are rated on a 5-point Likert type scale from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. Higher the obtained TRIM score, lower is the forgiveness level.

The psychometric properties of TRIM-18 have been tested. It has been found to have elicited a high internal consistency of 0.85, a moderate test retest reliability score of 0.50, and also confirmation of construct validity.

The TRIM-18 has been used in studies where forgiveness has become one of the variables of assessment/testing. E.g. Rijavec, Jurčec & Mijočević (2010) have used TRIM in their study to find out the gender differences in the relationship between Forgiveness and Happiness / Depression.

*3. An open ended semi structured survey with 6-10 items developed by the researcher. This consisted of probe questions to better understand the reasons of forgiveness among the two genders and was formulated based on the results obtained from the quantitative data.*

### ***Procedure***

#### ***Phase I***

Prior consent was taken from the participants to ensure that they are willing to take part in the present study. They were informed that confidentiality is maintained by all means. Following this, they were given a demographic and relationship measure created by the investigator in which basic details relevant to the study were required to be filled in. The next step involved telling the participants to recall the most recent memory of an offense their partner had committed which had hurt them. To collect background information, two questions pertaining to the offense were asked. Along with that, TRIM-18 questionnaire was administered on the participants.

The participants weren't told that the study was intended to check gender differences, so as to minimize the Hawthorne Effect, i.e. to ensure that participants do not modify their answers just because they know they are being tested. From the data collected, analysis was done.

#### ***Phase II***

Using simple random sampling, 5 males and 5 females were later chosen from the total sample who were then interviewed by the researcher. This was done for an in-depth

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exploration of reasons which males and females attribute to forgiveness. Participants were debriefed about the study after the interview sessions. From the data collected, analysis was done.

### *Summary of results using descriptive statistics*

This section provides information related to sample characteristics based on the demographic and relationship variables.

- Most number of participants were of the age 22, followed by the age of 21.
- Majority of the sample have either attained their post-graduation or are pursuing their post-graduation, while the rest have attained their graduation. This shows that they are an educationally qualified group of the society.
- More than half of the participants are currently in a relationship for 12 – 35 months.
- Most number of participants reported a satisfaction level of 10. This means that the participants are highly satisfied in their current relationships.
- Almost half of the participants reported that the offense based on which they were answering the questionnaire occurred about a month ago.
- Most number of participants reported that the level of hurt that they experienced because of the offense mentioned was moderate to high.

### *Results using inferential statistics*

An alpha level of 0.05 was used for all statistical tests.

The hypothesis that was put forward states that- ‘There is no gender difference in the level of Forgiveness in Romantic Relationships’. Independent sample *t* test was utilized to test the significance of the results for this hypothesis.

**Table No. 1.a TRIM scores of Males and Females**

#### **Group Statistics**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TRIM Score	male	30	32.4333	9.01984	1.64679
	female	30	31.6000	10.93113	1.99574

**Table No. 1.b**

#### **Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
TRIM Score	Equal variances assumed	.435	.512	.322	58	.749	.8333	2.58745
	Equal variances not assumed			.322	55.982	.749	.8333	2.58745

From table 1.a we can see that males ( $M = 32.43$ ,  $SD = 9.02$ ) and females ( $M = 31.6$ ,  $SD = 10.93$ ) have differed in their TRIM scores. This means that women are slightly more forgiving than males, but this difference is not statistically significant as the *t* test revealed. From table 1.b we can see that  $t(58) = 0.32$ ,  $p = 0.75$ . Thus, the null hypothesis which states

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‘There is no gender difference in the level of Forgiveness in Romantic Relationships’ is accepted.

The researcher also sought to investigate if significant differences existed between the genders on revenge, avoidance and benevolence scores independently. The results are presented in the table below.

**Table 2 Showing mean, standard deviation, and significant score of males and females on Avoidance, Revenge and Benevolence subscales.**

	Mean		SD		<i>t</i>	df	Sig (2-tailed)
	Male	Female	Male	Female			
<b>Avoidance</b>	11.5	11.1	5.59	5.89	-0.56	58	0.80
<b>Revenge</b>	9.1	9.5	3.02	2.51	0.25	58	0.57
<b>Benevolence</b>	24.1	24.6	3.88	5.12	-0.43	58	0.67

From the table above, we can see that males ( $M = 11.5$ ,  $SD = 5.59$ ) and females ( $M = 11.1$ ,  $SD = 5.89$ ) haven't differed much in their Avoidance score. On the Revenge subscale, males ( $M = 9.1$ ,  $SD = 3.02$ ) and females ( $M = 9.5$ ,  $SD = 2.51$ ) haven't differed much either. The same trend has been observed for the Benevolence scores of males ( $M = 24.1$ ,  $SD = 3.88$ ) and females ( $M = 24.6$ ,  $SD = 5.12$ ).

These differences are not statistically significant as the  $t$  test revealed. For avoidance, we can see that  $t(58) = -0.56$ ,  $p = 0.80$ . For revenge, the results give us a  $t(58) = 0.25$ ,  $p = 0.57$ . For benevolence, from the table we can see that  $t(58) = -0.43$ ,  $p = 0.67$ . These results indicate that the two genders don't differ significantly when it comes to avoidance, revenge or benevolence motivation.

### **Results using thematic analysis**

Through random sampling method of the sixty participants from phase I, 10 participants (5 males and 5 females) were chosen to be a part of the semi structured interview sessions. For the purpose of convenience all were phone interviews, and were recorded with the consent of the participants before proceeding with the sessions. Thematic analysis was then employed to derive the results for this discussion.

Different themes have been identified based on the responses given by the participants and they have been placed under the following sections:

- Definition of forgiveness
- Most important reason to forgive their partner
- Whether they blame the person or the situation and why
- Whether situational offenses are easier to forgive
- Whether they tend to avoid their partner/the situation or talk about it following an incident that hurt them and why
- Whether they think their partner or they themselves are the more forgiving one in their relationship and why
- Whether they forgive their partner even when they are not fully ready to forgive and why

**Section 1: Definition of forgiveness**

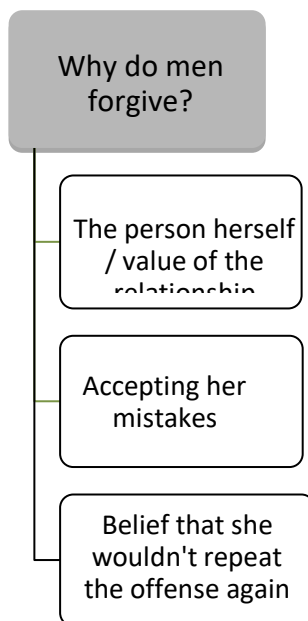
*Figure 1 Showing an overall representation of how the participants defined forgiveness*



Unlike definitions given to us by scholars, laypeople define forgiveness in much simpler terms. They mostly made use of the phrase “letting go” to define the term. Though researchers have clearly demarcated forgiveness from forgetting, it was interesting to note how the participants used the word *forgetting* to define forgiveness. Other phrases the participants used were “moving on” or “seeing past something” or “overlooking the bad and seeing the good”.

**Section 2: Most important reason to forgive their partner**

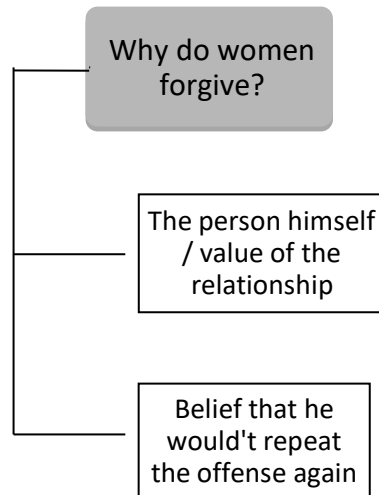
*Figure 2 Showing what male participants consider the most important reason for forgiving their partner is*





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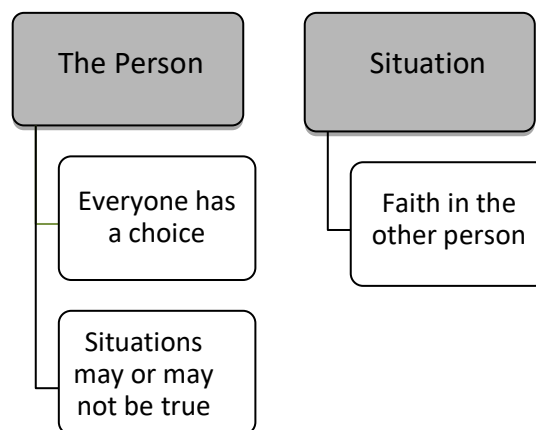
*Figure 3 Showing what female participants consider the most important reason for forgiving their partner is*



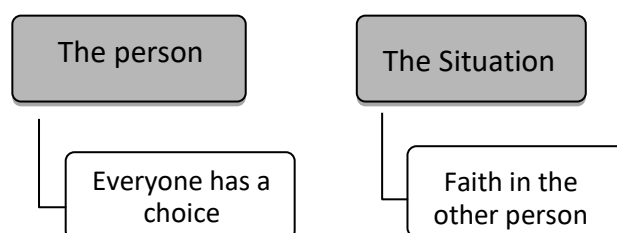
There was consensus among both male and female participants that people in a relationship forgive their partners for their offenses because they weigh and value the relationship too much to let an issue that has cropped up undermine its strength. The men especially pointed out that it was important that their partner was accepting of the wrongs they had done.

### **Section 3: Whether they blame the person or the situation if their partner has hurt them**

*Figure 4 Showing the responses given by the male participants on why they blame the person or the situation.*



*Figure 5 Showing the responses given by the female participants on why they blame the person or the situation.*



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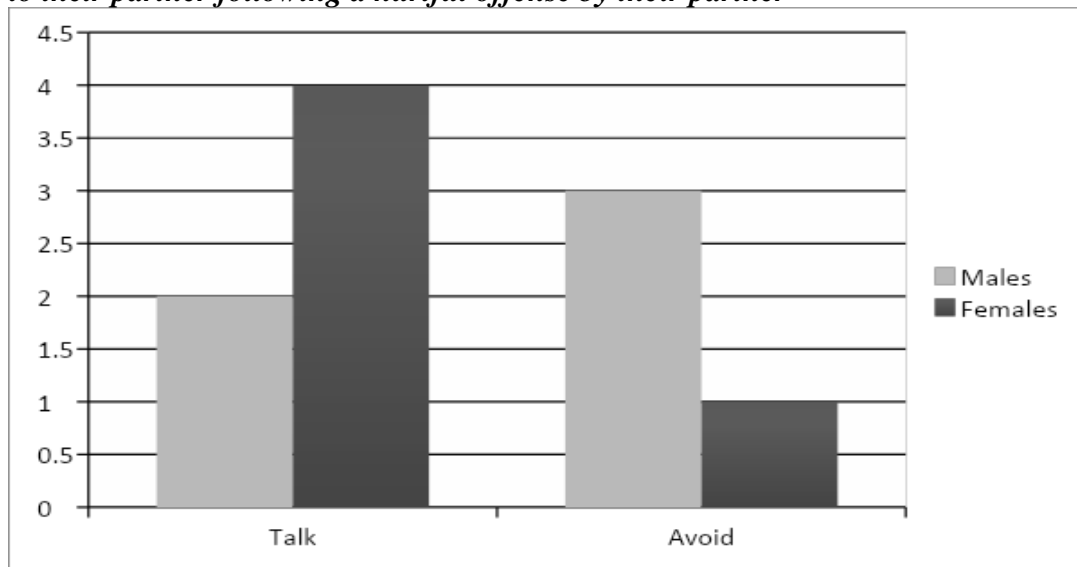
Of the participants who said they would blame the person rather than the situation, the major theme that emerged for the male and female participants was that to a certain extent, everything is under your control and you yourself are responsible for what you bring about. Of the participants who said they would blame the situation rather than the person, the theme that emerged for both the male and female participants was that they don't blame the person because they have faith in them and their actions.

### Section 4: Whether situational offenses are easier forgiven

As predicted, all the male and female participants agreed that if the situation is clearly to blame, then there is more chance they would forgive their partner. This leads us to the conclusion that situational offenses are in comparison easily forgiven and are less detrimental to an ongoing relationship, when compared to offenses where the person holds their partner responsible for what happened.

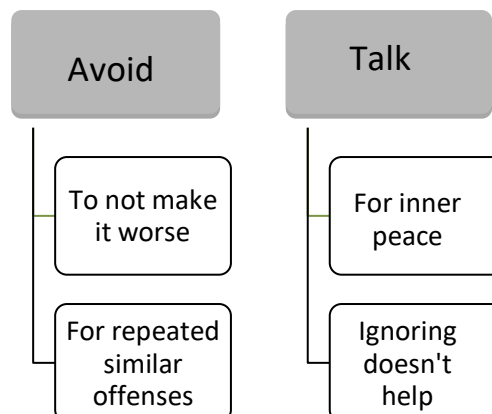
### Section 5: Whether they tend to avoid their partner/the situation or rather talk about it following an incident that hurt them

*Graph 1 Showing the distribution of the sample based on whether they prefer to avoid or talk to their partner following a hurtful offense by their partner*



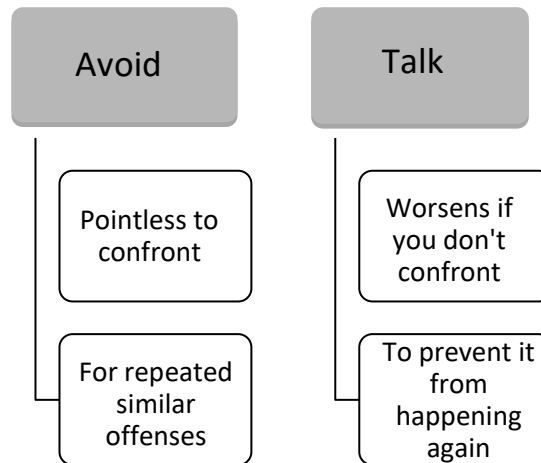
The figure below shows the major themes that emerged for why some people choose to avoid and some choose to talk.

*Figure 6 Showing the responses given by the male participants on why they choose to avoid or confront the partner / situation*



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**Figure 7** Showing the responses given by the female participants on why they choose to avoid or confront the partner / situation



It is interesting to note that while some participants choose to talk or confront their partner some choose to avoid the situation altogether for the one same reason, i.e. to not worsen things.

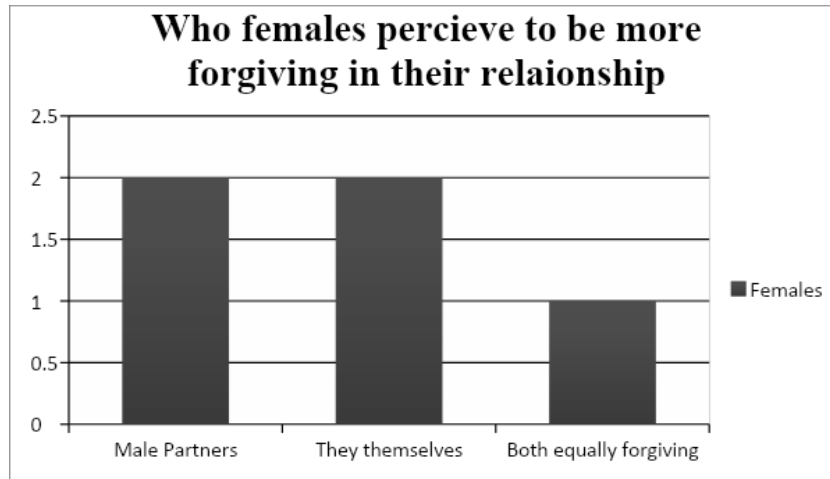
### Section 6: Whether they think their partner or they themselves are the more forgiving one in their relationship and why

**Graph 2** Showing the distribution of male participants based on who they perceive to be more forgiving



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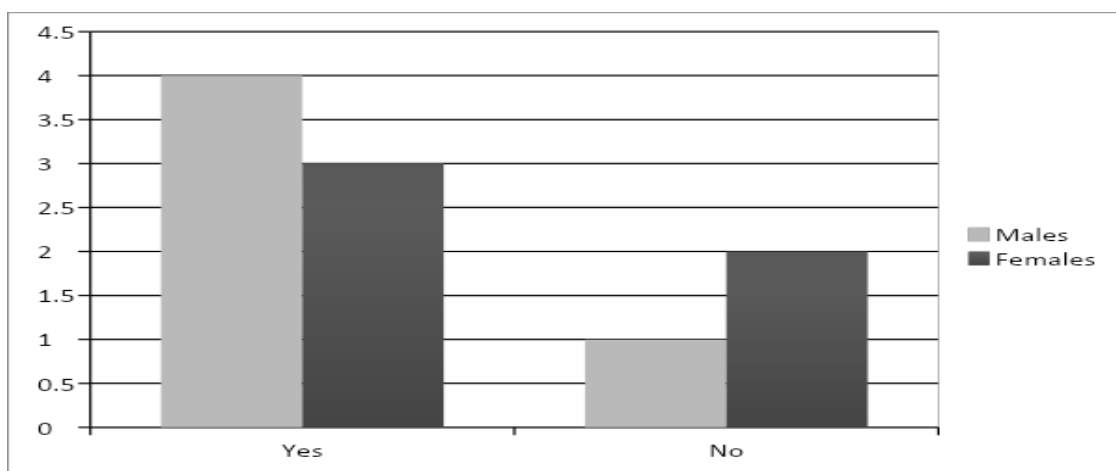
*Graph 3 Showing the distribution of male participants based on who they perceive to be more forgiving*



Contradictory to the results of phase I of the present study which said how there are no gender differences in forgiveness in romantic relationships, there is a difference in how men and women perceive each other to be forgiving. This is contradictory to what was expected since the statistics proved there was no significant difference. The distribution of the sample based on who they perceive to be more forgiving are presented in the graphs below.

### **Section 7: Whether they forgive their partner even when they are not fully ready to forgive and why**

*Graph 4 Showing the distribution of the sample based on whether they forgive their partner when they are ready or not ready to do so*



The themes that have emerged for the reasons for the graph above show that men and women don't have different reasons for forgiving. Both the genders agree forgiveness is given maybe when they themselves are not ready to let go of the hurt only because they weigh the relationship more. It is that faith that makes them believe they will forgive anyway, maybe not right then and there, but soon enough. Another point that emerged from the interview of the participants was that apology has a role to play in their partner's forgiveness.

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In the present study, the null hypothesis which states ‘There is no gender difference in the level of Forgiveness in Romantic Relationships’ is accepted. This is in accordance with the results obtained from the very few studies that have been conducted in parts of the world other than the West, which have observed no significant gender differences in Forgiveness (Magesh, Shruthi & Divya, 2014; Hussain, 2012).

This may be interpreted in the following manner. This study took samples from one of the most fast developing metropolitan cities of India. Culturally speaking, traditional India built up the stereotypical man to be the authoritative tough-seeming figure and the woman to be the submissive one. Hence according to traditional gender roles, this would indicate women to be (or better put, supposed to be) more forgiving of their partner’s mistakes and men to be less forgiving of their partner’s wrongdoings, But in today’s world, circumstances are changing where women are always the one forgiving and men are less sensitive and enforcing their power. Especially in the present study where the sample was considered, an urban area of Bangalore city, women are equally or more educated and hence in par with men than ever before. This extends to all areas including the area of forgiveness, wherein women no longer feel the need to forgive more than their counterparts. Or this may also indicate that men no longer fall into the closed gender stereotype wherein they believe they always have to have the upper hand and hence ought to be stringent in their forgiving measures. Two – Traditional India couldn’t think of men and women being with more than one partner. It still is unacceptable in many parts of the country and the rest of the world. But educated young men and women nowadays do not spend the rest of their lives with their partner just because they got into the relationship in the first place. Neither of the genders may necessarily feel the need to go out of their way to forgive their partners for the offenses they committed. Hence, gender differences may not exist in forgiveness because of these reasons.

The study also explored if significant differences existed between the genders on revenge, avoidance and benevolence scores independently. The results indicate that the two genders don’t differ significantly when it comes to avoidance, revenge or benevolence motivation. This is in contrast to previous studies which have found significant differences in revenge with men scoring higher in this parameter but not for avoidance or benevolence (Ghaemmaghami, 2011). Though men have a tendency to show overt aggression more than women, considering the sample that was chosen for the present study includes well educated young men and women from the urban part of the city, the concept of revenge might not be that prominent a factor in their relationship.

For Phase II of the study, with the help of thematic analysis, many different themes emerged.

Laypeople understand forgiveness in simpler terms, defining it as “letting go”, “forgetting”, “moving on”, “seeing past something” or “overlooking the bad and seeing the good”. Men and women forgive their partners for their offenses because they value their relationship and their partner, and because they believe their partner wouldn’t repeat the offense again. Few men also pointed out how their partners’ acceptance of their own mistake is also a key element.

Those participants who tend to blame the person is at fault for hurting them believe everyone has the choice to choose between right and wrong and how it’s not fair to blame it

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on the situation. Those who tend to blame the situation believe their partner wouldn't hurt them on purpose and it must be the situation that made them choose to behave so.

There was consensus among men and women that situational offenses will readily be forgiven.

Of the men who reported that they prefer to confront their partner following a situation where they have hurt them, they indicated it is for their own inner peace. They also believe ignoring their person or the situation doesn't help and it might even worsen things. Women mentioned how they confront the person because they want to ensure that the offense won't be committed again in the future. Men who prefer to avoid their partner or the situation believe if they don't do so, then it might worsen the situation. Women on the other hand avoid often because they feel it is pointless to confront them. Both men and women emphasized on how if the offenses are similar to those from the past, then they would definitely choose to avoid their partners.

There is a difference in the perception of who is more forgiving in their respective relationships, with the majority of the participants perceiving the women to be more forgiving. Considering how there is no significant difference between the genders, their differences in perceptions of forgiveness (pointing more towards women being more forgiving) emerged to be interesting.

Majority of the participants agreed that they do forgive their partner even when they are not fully ready to forgive them. This is primarily because they want to avoid immediate conflicts and because they believe they will forgive their partners eventually anyway. They choose to see the bigger picture rather than just the offense.

The participants hold sincere apologies from their partner as an important reason for their forgiveness.

### ***Limitations of The Study***

The present study has been performed on a limited time schedule and resources. Therefore, there are various limitations for this study. Some of the limitations are listed below –

- The sample size was not large enough to provide accurate results, and hence generalization to the population should be made with extreme care.
- The sample included participants from the urban part of the city, and therefore may have an impact on the external validity of the results.
- Snowball sampling technique was used for phase I of the study which may not be the most appropriate technique, and this may have an impact on the external validity of the results.
- As the quantitative part of the study used self-report questionnaires, the participants might not have been honest in their responses. Therefore, a social desirability bias may have been present in the sample chosen.
- For the qualitative part of the study, few of the participants weren't opening up as much as the other participants. This might be because the sample consisted of young unmarried men and women, who probably didn't feel comfortable enough disclosing everything about their relationship.
- Participants' forgiveness may be affected by other factors such as their disposition to forgive. This may have resulted in bias.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the results arrived through the current study, the following implications can be made –

- Helps couples in relationships identify the probable root of their problem
- Helps them to introspect about their own relationship and where it stands and where it is headed
- Can be helpful for conducting appropriate interventions
- There are cultural variations when it comes to gender differences in forgiveness
- Helps to build a culture specific model of forgiveness

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