

Relationship between Forgiveness and Happiness in Context with Gender among Adults

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ABSTRACT

Adults who have the ability to forgive things that hurt their feeling can have a prosperous psychological impact and be happy. The purpose of this article is to find out the association between gender, forgiveness, and happiness among adults. **Method:** Study was conducted on 240 Indian men and women age ranging from 21-40 years on their forgiveness and Happiness. The purposive sampling method was used to select the sample. **Result and Conclusion:** Gender has a positive and significant relationship with forgiveness and happiness. There was significant gender difference found on forgiveness and happiness among adults.

Keywords: *Forgiveness, Happiness, Gender, Adults*

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a kind of conduct or act in which an individual letting go of the feeling of hurt or loathed towards the offender and transgression. It's an act of benevolence, where an individual willingly letting go of the feeling of unpleasantness towards the offender. This act of forgiveness is a process of getting freedom from inner pains, fears, and rejoicings and moving towards a target of comfort, and freedom, it's a posture of detachment, expectation, and self-realization. It involves cognitive, affective, behavioral, motivational, decisional, and interpersonal rudiments. It's important in restoring interpersonal connections.

According to McCullough, forgiveness is defined as an individual condition to succumb, fix the relationship, and rebuild it with people who have hurt them and make better surroundings, as it was prior to the conflict/issues (Setyawati & Rahmandani, 2017). Predicated on that description, it can be concluded that forgiveness is an individual condition to be more open-minded to what has betided in his or her life, chorus from outrage and make him or her feel more as well as leave the burden that might obtrude and meliorate relations with the bully in the future.

Recent studies have shown that people who forgive feel happier, less anxious, and more positive, both about themselves and about the person that hurt them, than do people who aren't as forgiving. Forgiveness is a process that rewires both, emotional and behavioral change

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towards the miscreant or offender and can be understood as an act of benevolence, wherein one willingly lets go of their displeasing feelings towards the malefactor.

Happiness

Happiness is a positive emotional state that's subjectively defined by each person. Buddha left home in quest of further meaningful existence and ultimately constitute enlightenment, a sense of peace, and happiness. Aristotle believed that eudaimonia (human flourishing associated with living a life of virtue), or happiness based on a lifelong pursuit of a meaningful, good life (Waterman, 1993). America's establishers reasoned that the pursuit of happiness was just as important as our inalienable rights of life and liberty.

Lyubomirsky (2005) considers happiness as the experience of joy, gratification, and meaningfulness of life, too (Lyubomirsky, 2001). By this definition, happiness is an abstract and subjective phenomenon, and each person has a unique pattern by which to interpret their experiences in way that keeps them happy (Lyubomirsky, 2001). Piqueras, Kuhne, Vera-Villaruel, Van Straten, Cuijpers. (2011) stated that happiness was associated with the increment of behaviors relating to mental health in students (Piqueras, Kuhne, Vera-Villaruel, Van Straten, Cuijpers, 2011). Veenhoven (2008) indicated that happiness prolongs the lifetime of healthy people in the society, in addition to improvement and decrease mental problems along with increasing the mental health (Veenhoven, 2008). The results of the research by Lyubomirsky (2001) indicated that happiness is able to predict changes associated with psychological health and well-being (Lyubomirsky, 2011). Asady, Tasaddoghiz, Tavakoli (2013) showed that there was a positive and meaningful relationship between self-concept and self-esteem in athlete students (Asady, Tasaddoghiz, Tavakoli, 2013).

Gender

Western studies in the past have found that women forgive more than men as it is their expected mode of behaviour (Harris, 2002; Mellor, Fung, & Binti Mamat, 2012; Miller, Worthington, & McDaniel, 2008) but such gender differences may also be attributed to the differences in socialization. Women are usually socialized to place more emphasis on emotions (e.g., expressive) and relationships (e.g., nurturing) (Bakan, 1966; Taylor et al., 2000) resulting in identity becoming closely tied to social roles and commitments during midlife.

In Indian collectivistic culture, for a married woman, the concept of *Jōdi* (as a couple) is of prime importance within matrimony, which is still considered a sacred institution connecting not just two individuals but two families (Sandilya & Shahnawaz, 2014). This societal concept is believed to be the reason behind why many women, despite their economic independence, choose to suffer in a bad marriage (Kakar & Kakar, 2007) and why forgiveness becomes the key to sustaining their relationship. On the contrary, for men, who are socialized to emphasize agency, action, and problem-solving (Baron-Cohen, 2002), thoughts of forgiveness or empathy may represent a major perspective shift, one in which attention is transferred from agency and justice concerns to relational concerns (Toussaint & Webb, 2005). Therefore, until about 40, men and women have concentrated on obligations to family and society, and have developed those aspects to personality that helped them reach external goals. It is only around late midlife, they both seek a 'union of opposites' by expressing their previously 'disowned aspects' and shift their preoccupation to their inner, spiritual selves (Jung, 1933). For example, men at this age show interiority (Neugarten, 1977) and tend to become more nurturing and expressive and less obsessed with personal achievement (Vaillant, 2000). Eventually, both begin to display higher levels of identity certainty, power, and a levelling off of generativity

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in their 60s (Miner-Rubino, Winter, & Stewart, 2004). Gilligan's (1982) approach to morality is yet another theoretical possibility, which the present study utilizes to examine the male and female notions of morality and their association with forgiveness.

Objectives of the study

1. To estimate the relationship between gender, forgiveness and happiness among adults.
2. To evaluate the effect of forgiveness and happiness among adults.

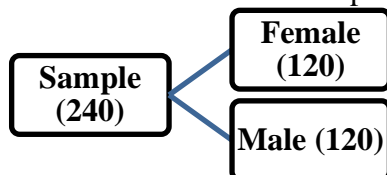
Hypothesis

1. There would be significant relationship among gender, Forgiveness and happiness among adults
2. There would be significant difference among adults male and female on forgiveness.
3. There would be significant difference on happiness scale among male and female adults.

RESEARCH METHOD

Sample

The sample would comprise of 240 (N=240) adult people of age ranging from 21 to 40 years. Sample would be drawn from different locations of Bihar. Purposive sampling methods will be used for the selection of the sample. The sample would be randomly selected.



Research design

Between-group design was applied in this present study.

Tools used

1. **Social Demographic Data Sheet:** This would be developed to investigate the socio-demographic variables for this study purpose only the following socio-demographic variables would be investigated: name, age, gender, religion, residential area, education, income, family type, occupation type, marital status, no. of siblings.
2. **Forgiveness Scale (FS-PSPS):** This scale was developed by Samani Shreyas Pragya and Samani Amal Pragya. This scale consists of 25 items. It can be administered on 18 above.
3. **Happiness scale:** This scale was developed by R.L. Bharadwaj and Poonam R. Das in 2017. It has 28 items. Its age range is 10 to 40 years of individuals. Reliability is 0.79 and validity is 0.84.

Procedure

The sample was collected through the Incidental-cum-Purposive Sampling technique with the help of structured questionnaires. Their responses were kept confidential. The ethical guidelines of APA were strictly followed while working with the human participants of the study. After data collection data were analyzed using SPSS.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result table 1. showing correlation between gender, forgiveness, and happiness

Variables	Gender	Forgiveness	Happiness
Gender	1		
Forgiveness	0.238*	1	
Happiness	0.303*	0.58*	1

Result table 1 illustrates that there was a positive and meaningful relationship between forgiveness and happiness ($r= 0.58, p<0.01$). this result indicates that if forgiveness of an individual is good then their happiness will eventually increase. From the above result table, it can also be observed that gender also has a significant positive association with forgiveness ($r=0.238, p<0.01$) and happiness ($r=0.303, p<0.01$).

Result table 2: showing descriptive and inferential statistics of happiness and forgiveness among male and female

Variables	Sample type	N (240)	Mean	SD	t-value
Forgiveness	Male	120	82.1	13.65	2.435*
	Female	120	86.44	16.88	
Happiness	Male	120	81.86	14.89	6.208**
	Female	120	90.70	17.74	

From the result that it can be said that on the forgiveness variable male adult counterparts scored higher (Mean=82.1, SD=13.65) than females (Mean=86.44, SD=16.88). the difference between the two means is statistically significant ($p<0.01$). Therefore, males have better forgiveness than females. On the happiness scale female scored more (Mean=90.70, SD=17.74) than male counterparts (Mean=81.86, SD=14.89). This result indicates that females are happier than males.

CONCLUSION

The present study has been undertaken on the relationship between gender, forgiveness, and happiness among the adult population.

A Psychometrically sound tool was used as per the need of the present study which included, a socio-demographic form was used and a forgiveness Scale and happiness scale used to measure forgiveness and happiness among adults.

Further appropriate inferential and descriptive statistics were applied to the data to test the hypotheses framed.

The discussion of the results has led to the following conclusions:

- There is a positive and meaningful relationship between forgiveness and happiness
- Gender also has a significant positive relationship with forgiveness and happiness.
- Females are happier than their male counterparts
- Male adults scored higher on forgiveness than female adults
- All three hypotheses had been accepted

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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