

Forgiveness: A Comprehensive Literature Review

Riya Shah^{1*}, Archi Dhakan², Sakshi Sanghavi³, Shreya Juthani⁴, Yashvi Savla⁵

ABSTRACT

Forgiveness is an important trait that every individual ought to possess in today's world. Forgiveness encourages compassion. To highlight important findings, an overview of recent research on forgiveness is offered in this study. The research was conducted through a detailed review of the literature of different research done on the variable "Forgiveness", in the last five years. The research articles demonstrate the correlation between forgiveness and various areas like love, crime, covid, well-being, work outcomes, self-forgiveness, divine forgiveness, sports, gender differences, cross-cultures, suicidal survivors' trauma, young adults, as well as adolescents. The review article also presents the relationship between forgiveness and religion, forgiveness therapy, emotional forgiveness, and brand forgiveness. The conclusion encompasses together all the major findings of the literature reviewed. The topics needed for future research, the limitations, and the strengths have also been included in the conclusion.

Keywords: *Forgiveness, Self-Forgiveness, Overall Well-Being, Children, Intimate Relationships, Cross-Cultural*

Forgiveness is a complex and multifaceted concept that has been explored by philosophers, theologians, and psychologists alike. At its core, forgiveness involves letting go of negative emotions, thoughts, and actions towards someone who has wronged us, and cultivating a sense of empathy, compassion, and understanding. Since the late 1990s, scholars have studied how forgiveness—forgiveness of others, forgiveness of oneself, and divine forgiveness—enhances the well-being of both victims and perpetrators of wrongdoing. Numerous lines of research have shown forgiveness to be related to physical and psychological well-being as well as relational and spiritual well-being (Maddux, 2018).

¹SVKM's Mithibai College of Arts, Chauhan Institute of Science & Amrutben Jivanlal College of Commerce and Economics (Autonomous), Vile Parle (West), Mumbai

²SVKM's Mithibai College of Arts, Chauhan Institute of Science & Amrutben Jivanlal College of Commerce and Economics (Autonomous), Vile Parle (West), Mumbai

³SVKM's Mithibai College of Arts, Chauhan Institute of Science & Amrutben Jivanlal College of Commerce and Economics (Autonomous), Vile Parle (West), Mumbai

⁴SVKM's Mithibai College of Arts, Chauhan Institute of Science & Amrutben Jivanlal College of Commerce and Economics (Autonomous), Vile Parle (West), Mumbai

⁵SVKM's Mithibai College of Arts, Chauhan Institute of Science & Amrutben Jivanlal College of Commerce and Economics (Autonomous), Vile Parle (West), Mumbai

*Corresponding Author

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Definitions:

Scholars have varied in their definitions of forgiveness:

- **Thompson & Colleagues:** “In the theory espoused by Thompson and her colleagues, forgiveness is a freeing from a negative attachment to the source that has transgressed against a person.”
- **McCullough and Colleagues:** According to McCullough, “Forgiveness reflects increases in prosocial motivation toward another such that there is (1) Less desire to avoid the transgressing person and to harm or seek revenge toward that individual, and (2) increased desire to act positively toward the transgressing person.”
- **Enright and Colleagues:** According to Robert Enright, forgiveness is defined as “a willingness to abandon one’s right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior towards one who unjustly hurt us while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, or even love towards him or her”. (Shane J Lopez et al., 2018).

Charles Griswold proposed a theory on “Forgiveness: Philosophical Exploration” arguing the conditional nature of forgiveness. He put forth 6 conditions that the offender must go through to seek forgiveness from the victim. The offender must "1) take responsibility for their act, 2) repudiate that act, 3) repent; they must experience and communicate contrition, remorse, and regret to the victim, 4) commit to self-transformation, to becoming a different person, 5) understand the injury, and give an account of their actions" (Charles Griswold, 2007). Finally, according to Griswold, forgiveness is the result of a reciprocal moral transaction that takes place over time rather than being given as a gift or all at once. (Ball, A. J., 2019)

But, according to Jankélévitch, who disputes Griswold's assertion that forgiveness forgives ‘because of’ or on specific grounds, states that the forgiveness of love, in its boundless generosity, indiscriminately forgives no matter what, as it forgives no matter whom, It is unconditionally forgiving. (Vladimir Jankélévitch, 2005)

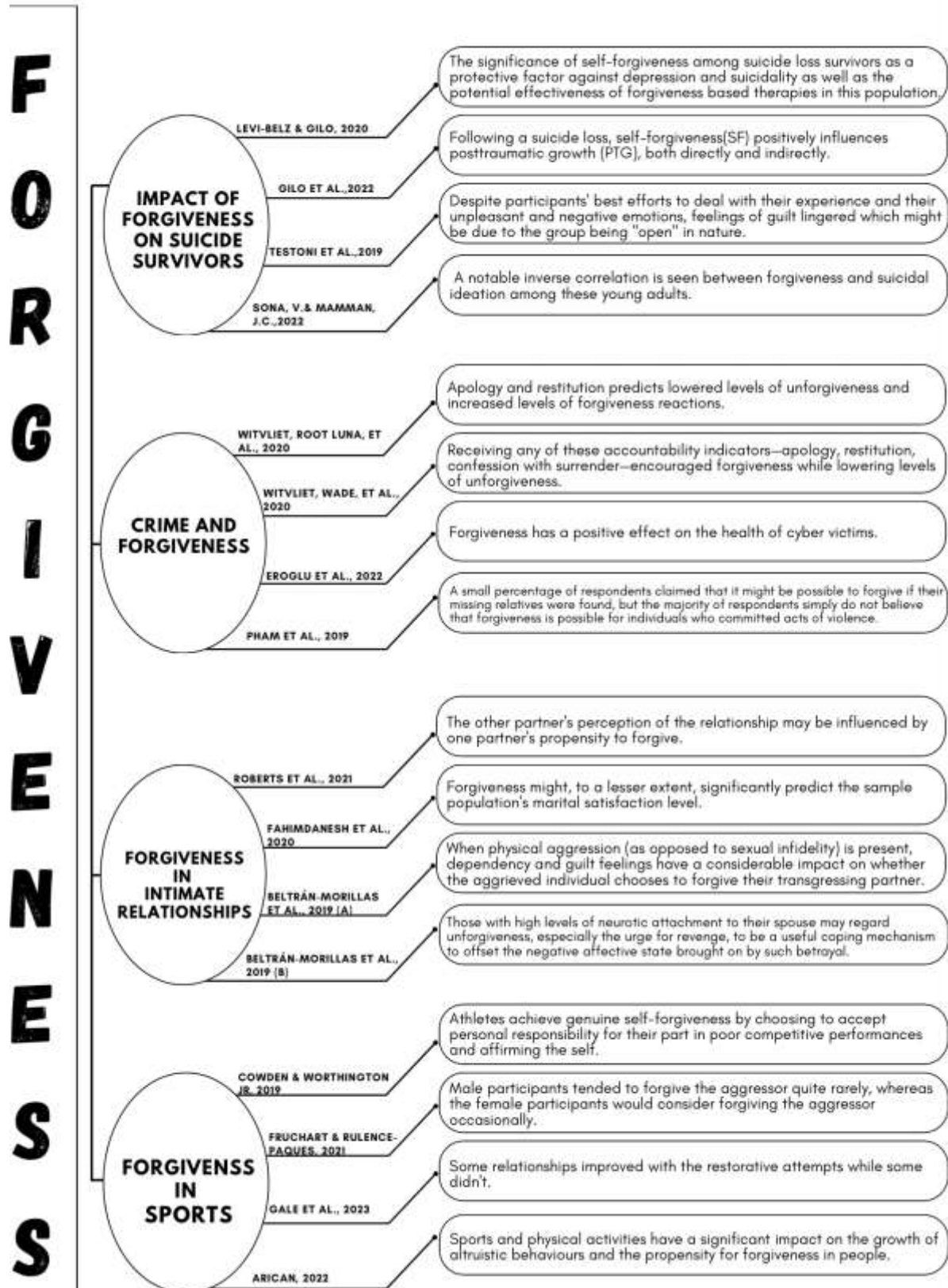
Even though his entire body of work is founded on the unconditional nature of forgiveness, Jankélévitch asserts that the offender must first complete the first three steps of Griswold's "contrition essential to a convicting request for forgiveness" before forgiveness can be granted. She must, then, "understand the hurt," "accept responsibility for her act," "repudiate her act," and "repent" (Charles Griswold, 2007). We, as humans with complex emotions majorly and unknowingly tend to favor and follow Jankélévitch’s theory where true forgiveness is flowing as an expression of grace and something that is quite nonrational and unnatural

METHODOLOGY

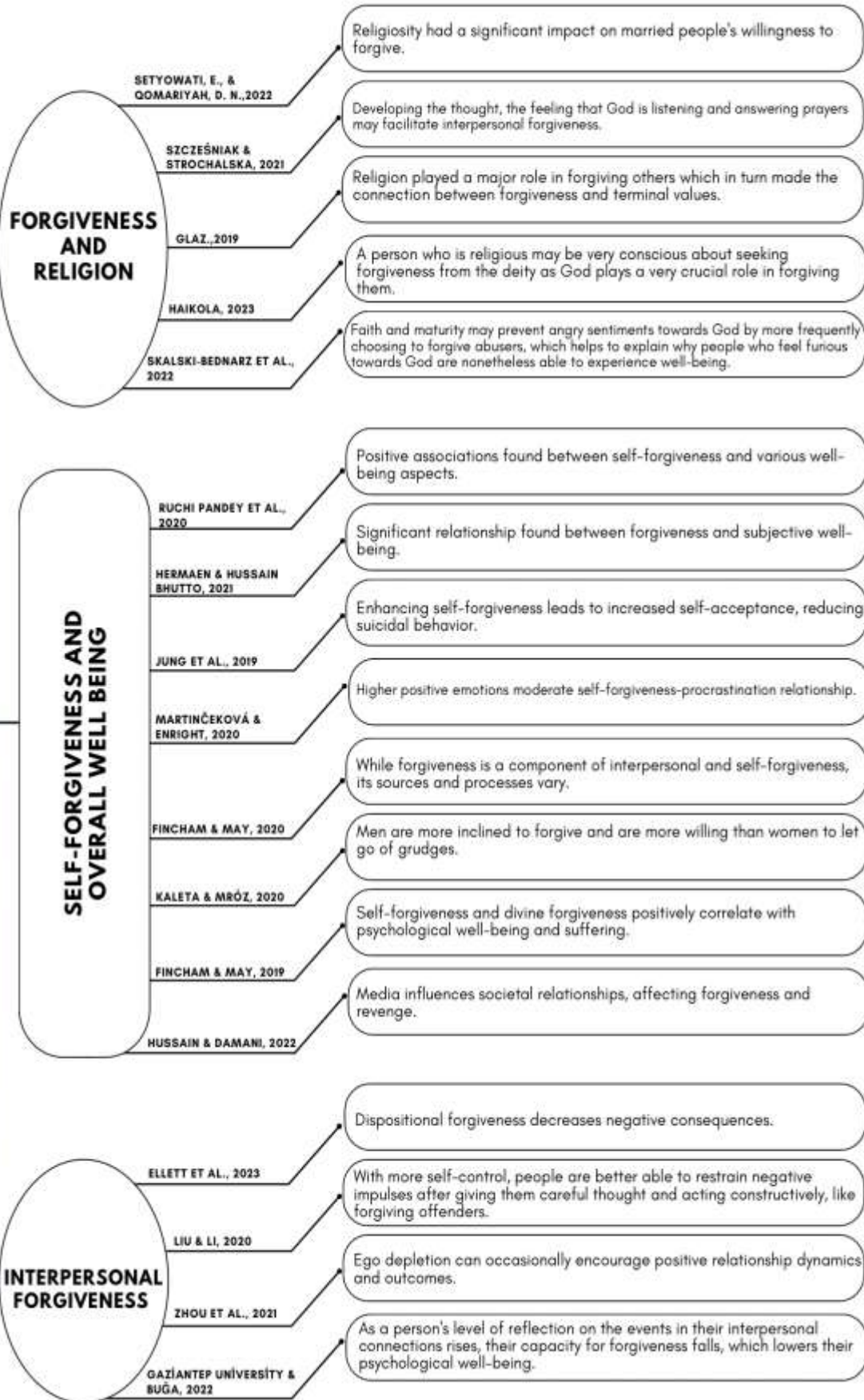
The literature articles were undertaken from major renowned electronic research databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and the college e-library. To find the relevant literature articles, keywords like “forgiveness”, “psychology”, “self-forgiveness”, and “forgiveness therapy” were considered. Finally, words related to forgiveness such as “adolescence”, “well-being”, “divine forgiveness”, “suicide”, “depression”, “work outcomes”, " love", " covid", "crime", " sports", "religion", were added to ensure a variety of conditions were inculcated in our review. Once the articles were selected, themes, date of publication, and the name of the author of all pertinent papers were scrutinized to avoid duplication. Only the articles which were published after the year 2018 were included.

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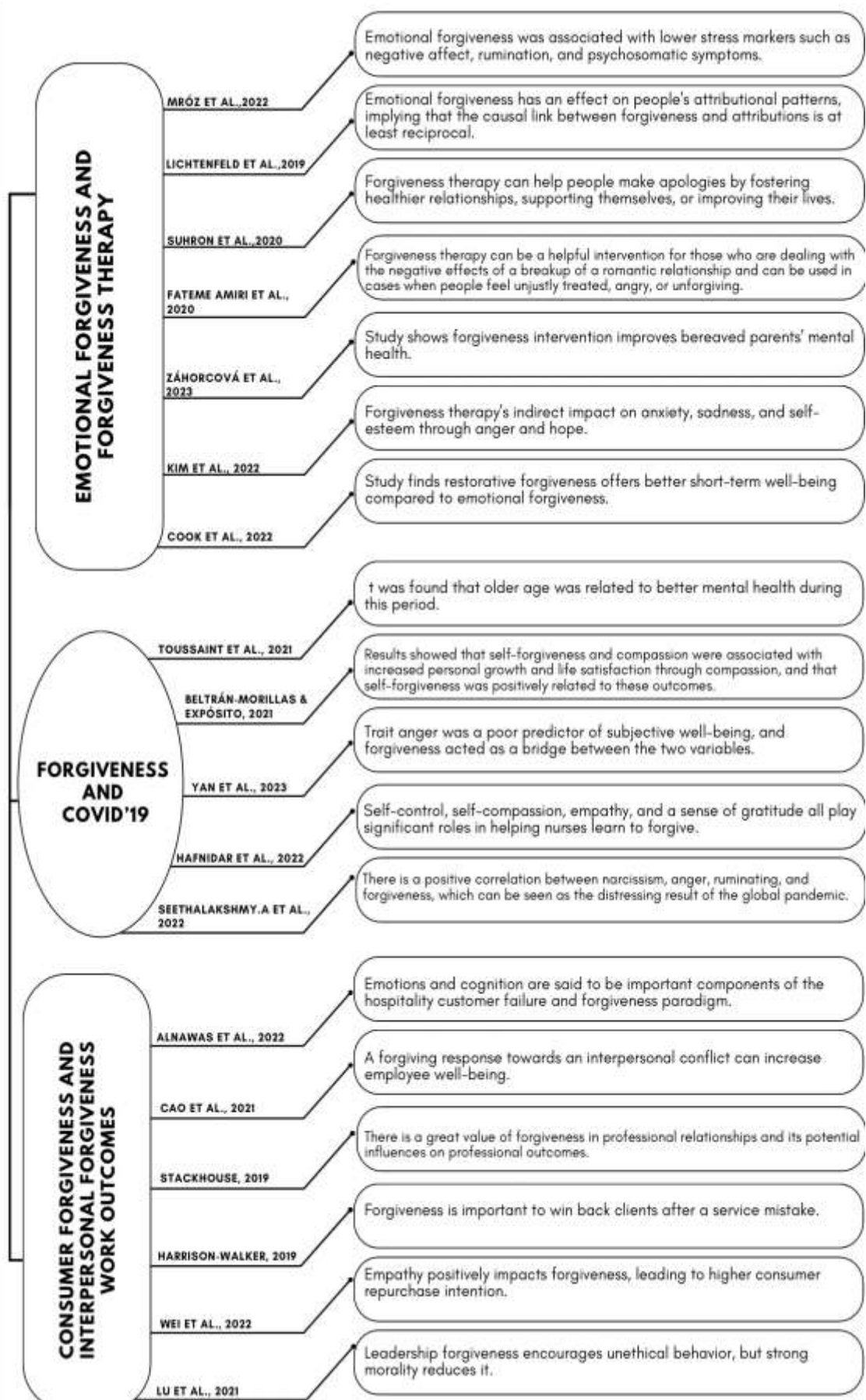
Although the participants could vary in gender, race, age, nationality, and both mental and physical health. Review articles were not reviewed again for this literature review. 91 articles were identified out of which 67 were reviewed. There is a pictorial representation below.

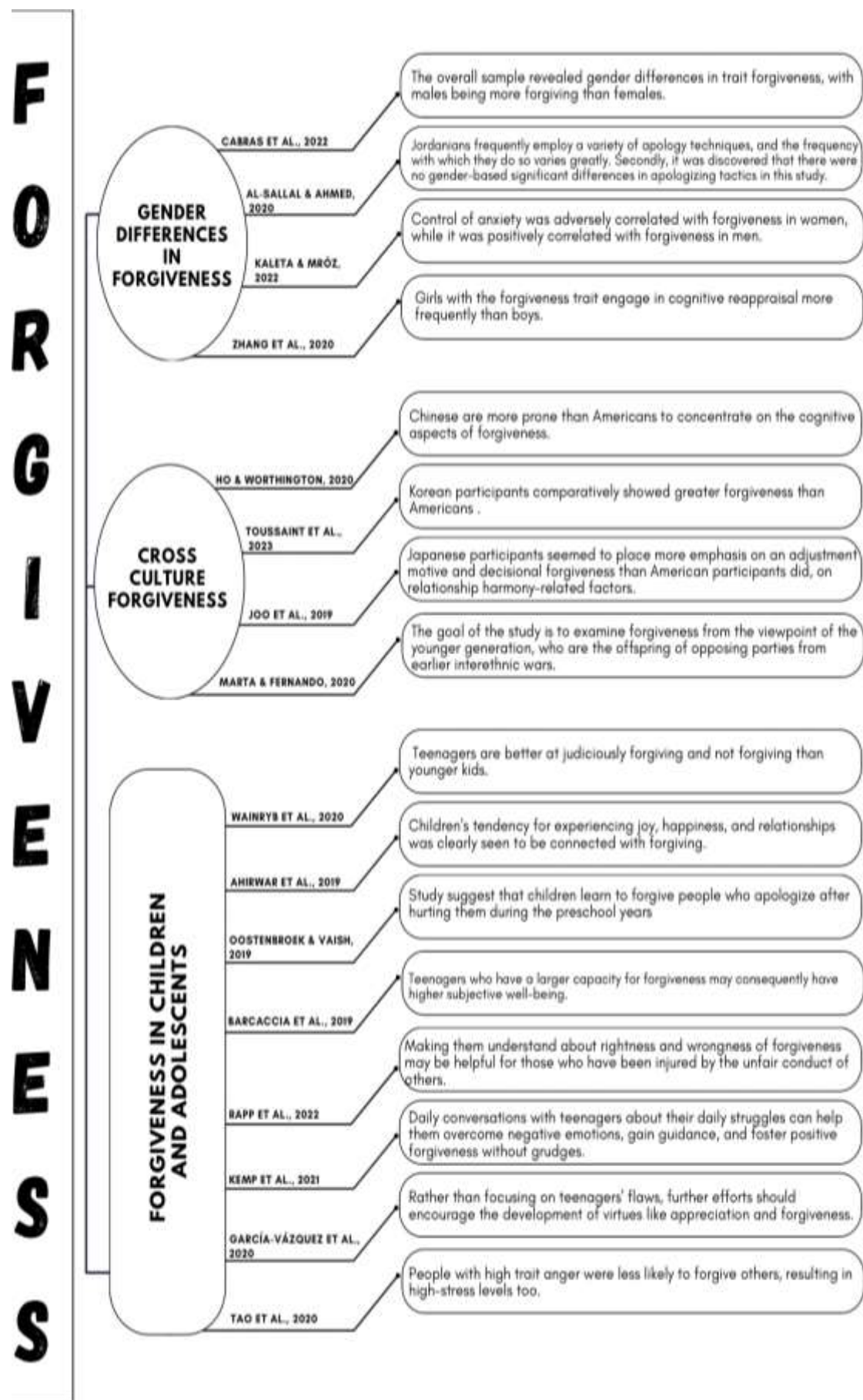


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DISCUSSION

The selected reviewed articles have been summarized under several categories below:

Emotional Forgiveness and Forgiveness Therapy

Emotional forgiveness is negative, unforgiving feelings or emotions being replaced with pleasant, other oriented positive emotions. Many times, emotional and decisional forgiveness is considered two similar facets in the forgiveness process, but results show that, unlike decisional forgiveness, emotional forgiveness affects cognition, and hence emotional and decisional forgiveness should be treated separately in the forgiveness process. (Mróz et al., 2022). Another study conducted on 969 individuals by (Lichtenfeld et al., 2019) with the help of a paper-pencil questionnaire inferred that emotional forgiveness is also considered to affect people's attributional tendencies, and therefore there is at least a reciprocal causal relationship between emotional forgiveness and attributions. However, in the same study, Emotional forgiveness, solely in terms of negative emotion reduction, was associated with lower stress markers such as psychosomatic symptoms, rumination, and negative effects.

On the other hand, a comparative scientific study, predominantly on young 585 Indonesian adults suggests that in a collectivistic cultural context such as Indonesia, restorative forgiveness (decisional forgiveness) following a transgression, where a decision is made to forgive, rather than seeking retribution or holding grudges may offer greater short-term benefits for well-being compared to emotional forgiveness (Cook et al., 2022). Another research was done by (Suhron et al., 2020) on 52 schizophrenia patients with violent behavior with a sampling technique. The findings concluded that forgiveness therapy is more effective in lowering the violent behavior of individuals with schizophrenia than emotion-focused therapies. According to another literature on 3 females experiencing adverse effects of a breakup in a romantic relationship, forgiveness therapy can help people make apologies by fostering healthier relationships, supporting themselves, or improving their lives. Using empathy and reframing techniques used in forgiveness therapy, the individual can free themselves from the victimizing cycle and ultimately can develop a new sense of identity and life. Forgiveness Therapy can be used in instances where people experience feelings of unforgiveness, anger, or injustice (Fateme Amiri et al., 2020).

In another study by (Kim et al., 2022) the impact of forgiveness therapy on anxiety, sadness, and self-esteem was investigated, and it was discovered that anger and hope, not only by themselves but also concurrently work with an equivalent amount of influence, mediate the effect of forgiveness on tension, sadness, and self-esteem. Hence, the indirect impact of forgiveness on psychological well-being through anger and hope, and the two mediators had a similar amount of magnitude. Similarly, another study was done among 21 grieving parents who experienced the loss of a child. This pilot study research suggests that using a forgiveness intervention with bereaved parents may have potential benefits for their mental health. The results were such that in the post-test and follow-up test, they attained statistically greater improvements in self-forgiveness, forgiveness toward others, and a greater decrease in depression; in the post-test, they attained a greater decrease in anxiety and anger; and in the followup test, four months after the intervention's conclusion, they attained statistically greater improvements in post-traumatic growth. (Záhorcová et al., 2023).

Impact of Forgiveness on Suicide Survivors

A suicide survivor is an individual who is a friend or family of someone who has died due to suicide. According to the findings of the study conducted by (Gilo et al., 2022), self-

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forgiveness both directly and indirectly contributes to Post Traumatic Growth following a suicide loss. Self-Forgiveness involvement in suicide bereavement goes beyond reducing pain and suffering; it also acts as a foundation for encouraging adaptive internal processes and personal growth. In another research, it was found that Self-forgiveness also protects suicide loss survivors from depression and suicidality, suggesting the effectiveness of forgiveness-based therapies in this population. In this very study, according to clinicians, identifying self-unforgiving tendencies in suicide-loss survivors during therapy may indicate a warning sign, alerting them to their level of suicide risk. (Levi-Belz & Gilo, 2020)

In contrast to the above studies, the study conducted by (Testoni et al., 2019) on 10 individuals who are part of a self-help group revealed that despite participants' best efforts to cope with their experience and unpleasant emotions, the feelings of guilt never went away, resulting in the absence of self-forgiveness. The reason for this can be due to the nature of the self-help group being 'open', hence undoubtedly whenever a new participant entered the group, the feelings of guilt resurfaced. Even though self-forgiveness was not demonstrated, general forgiveness was seen once the self-blame stopped.

A present study consisting of 279 emerging adults, indicated a notable inverse correlation between forgiveness and suicidal ideation among these young adults, thus pressing need for the creation and implementation of diverse policies and programs aimed at reducing the suicide rate and fostering forgiveness among young adults since forgiveness may serve as a contributing factor in overcoming suicidal ideation (Sona, V.& Mamman, J. C.,2022)

Gender differences in forgiveness

Despite the widespread belief that women are more forgiving than males, various research comparing the two has produced contradictory findings. A study conducted by (Kaleta & Mróz, 2022) on 625 individuals through a survey method concluded that there were no appreciable differences between men and women in the favorable aspects of the inclination to forgive, but men demonstrated a higher level of general forgiveness and a stronger willingness to overcome unforgiveness. It also inferred that control of anxiety was adversely correlated with forgiveness in women, while it was positively correlated with forgiveness in men. Similar findings were found in a study conducted by (Cabras et al., 2022) on 1957 individuals from Poland and Italy through a cross-sectional survey, and findings showed that there were no differences in forgiving tendencies between these respondents. The overall sample revealed gender differences in trait forgiveness, with males being more forgiving than females.

But in some studies, it was shown that there were more similarities than differences between females and males in the use of apology strategies as in a study conducted by (Al-Sallal & Ahmed, 2020) on two groups of native speakers of Jordanian Arabic, wherein 20 were females and 20 were males. According to the study's findings, Jordanians frequently employ a variety of apology techniques, and the frequency with which they do so varies greatly. Secondly, it was discovered that there were no gender-based significant differences in apologizing tactics in this study.

In another study conducted (Zhang et al., 2020) on 1127 high school students through a survey method inferred cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression served as partial mediators between trait forgiveness and sadness. The results showed primary evidence that forgiveness is associated with lower levels of depression when it involves more cognitive reappraisal and less expressive suppression techniques. Girls were much more affected by

cognitive reappraisal's mediating effect than boys were. As a result, it appears that girls with the forgiveness trait engage in cognitive reappraisal more frequently than boys.

Forgiveness in children and adolescents

Forgiveness in children at different levels of growing inferred various outcomes such as the results in the study suggest that children learn to forgive people who apologize after hurting them during the preschool years (Oostenbroek & Vaish, 2019). Another study by (Ahirwar et al., 2019) on the mother of 8 children revealed that children's social, emotional, and interpersonal development is also influenced by forgiveness. It was also noted that forgiveness had the power to explain people's behavior and different life situations. Children's forgiveness was significantly influenced by their play, social, emotional, and affiliation needs. Their tendency for experiencing joy, happiness, and relationships was seen to be connected with forgiving.

Teenagers are better at judiciously forgiving and not forgiving than younger kids are. We observed that the effects of damaging exchanges require more psychological control to forgive since older children have longer memory horizons and a more developed sense of self. In situations where letting go and forgiving are not appropriate or in their best interests, those same capacities may also enable them to make more objective assessments; in these cases, non-forgiveness is evaluated more favorably or as justifiable. (Wainryb et al., 2020) Forgiveness is different at different ages, especially during adolescents when the child is going through a major "teen phase". During this phase, teenagers experience a lot of changes and mood swings with major growth physically as well as in thinking capacity. Learning about forgiveness can be difficult as ego plays a major role during this period. In a study, forgiveness and depression were examined in 773 teenagers, it was seen that teenagers who have a larger capacity for forgiveness may consequently have higher subjective well-being because they have efficient cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes for controlling their anger. (Barcaccia et al., 2019)

In another study including 1472 young people, teaching kids and teenagers about the forgiving process, making them understand about rightness and wrongness of forgiveness may be helpful for those who have been injured by the unfair conduct of others. Being mistreated by others might cause them mental health issues but teaching them about forgiveness may help them get over the unjust and live a positive and healthy life. (Rapp et al., 2022)

A different study on 148 Australian kids concluded that the Children's Forgiveness Card Set (CFCS) would be a good tool for kids to convey their emotional reactions to wrongdoing without verbal or written reporting. Speaking to them daily about their experiences and struggles in day-to-day life can help them overcome their negative feelings and help them understand the situation with some guidance leading to positive forgiveness, one without grudges. (Kemp et al., 2021)

One more study found a positive correlation between bystander prosociality and happiness in a sample of 1000 adolescents of both sexes. Forgiveness, appreciation, and joy are valuable regardless of a person's gender or stage of adolescence. Rather than focusing on teenagers' flaws, further efforts should encourage the development of virtues like appreciation and forgiveness. Adults should create systems that will motivate teenagers to engage in prosocial activities like volunteering, charitable giving, community service, etc. In general, a loving and moral environment continues to be a crucial factor in how teenagers

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develop into successful adults and how they learn to let go and healthily forgive people. (García-Vázquez et al., 2020) One more study was conducted whose intervention program was based on the framework of the Enright Forgiveness Intervention Model (FI) which emphasizes four key phases: (1) the phase where the consequences of being offended are uncovered (2) the decision phase, which one decides to commit to forgiveness; (3) the work phase, in which one actually works on forgiving and practices empathy and compassion for the offender; and (4) the deepening phase, in which one deepens one's will and ability to forgive, overcoming obstacles standing in the way of forgiveness.

Researchers in this study found that people with high trait anger were less likely to forgive others, resulting in high-stress levels too. The current study says that FI helps adolescents with high-trait anger reduce their negative attitudes and develop a positive outlook towards the offenders. This study suggests that even though forgiving a serious offender is difficult the FI program can help people precisely in forgiving. (Tao et al., 2020)

Forgiveness in Intimate Relationships

In the context of romantic relationships, different forms of infractions with varying degrees of severity may occur. In this sense, the capacity to forgive might be one of the most crucial elements in preserving a positive relationship.

A study conducted by (Roberts et al., 2021) on 219 couples showed a strong correlation between female partner forgiveness and male partner relationship satisfaction, and similarly, males who were inclined to forgive partner infractions were likely to have female partners with greater levels of relationship happiness. Together, these two interpersonal relationships imply that the other partner's perception of the relationship may be influenced by one partner's propensity to forgive. Similarly, in another article that consisted of the groups of married men and women, self-compassion and forgiveness within the family were discovered to be the important predictors of marital satisfaction. However, in this study, regression analysis revealed that forgiveness might, to a lesser extent, significantly predict the sample population's marital satisfaction level. (Fahimdanesh et al., 2020)

On the contrary, two studies were conducted by (Beltrán-Morillas et al., 2019b) wherein the findings of study 1 demonstrate that, because of their overt and severe nature, sexual behaviors are thought to be the most symptomatic of infidelity when compared to technical, emotional/affectionate, and isolated behaviors. The findings of study 2 further demonstrate that those with high levels of neurotic attachment to their spouse may regard unforgiveness, especially the urge for revenge, to be a useful coping mechanism to offset the negative affective state brought on by such betrayal. The therapeutic approach to infidelity, however, considers the possibility of forgiving as a way to reestablish the couple's physical and emotional well-being as well as the well-being of the person who is betrayed. Unforgiveness is a major cause of stress and anxiety. Similarly, a study on 169 women demonstrated that when physical aggression (as opposed to sexual infidelity) is present, dependency and guilt feelings have a considerable impact on whether the aggrieved individual chooses to forgive their transgressing partner. This can also be very destructive to the person who grants it, especially if it forces them to continue living in a partnership with someone who abuses them in some way, as is the situation with victims of intimate partner violence. As a result, occasionally asking for forgiveness may not be the best thing for the relationship which creates a challenge for the offended party to overcome. (Beltrán-Morillas et al., 2019a)

Cross-cultural forgiveness

The fundamental presumptions of forgiveness do not differ across the two cultural groups; hence, people from the same culture can hold the same presumptions regarding the cognitive aspects of forgiveness. But according to a study conducted by (Ho & Worthington, 2020) proved that Chinese are more prone than Americans to concentrate on the cognitive aspects of forgiveness. Therefore, this study found that the higher cognitive processes required to understand forgiveness can vary among cultures.

Similarly, another study conducted by (Toussaint et al., 2023) on 204 & 297 healthy young adults that were addressed from Korea and the United States respectively through an online survey inferred that Korean participants comparatively showed greater forgiveness than Americans. Hence, the understanding of forgiveness can vary from culture to culture. On the contrary, this study also revealed that the impact of forgiveness on depression was almost the same in nearly all cultures. The fundamental presumptions of forgiveness do not differ across the two cultural groups; hence, people from the same culture can hold the same presumptions regarding the cognitive aspects of forgiveness. But according to a study conducted by (Ho & Worthington, 2020) proved that Chinese are more prone than Americans to concentrate on the cognitive aspects of forgiveness. Therefore, this study found that the higher cognitive processes required to understand forgiveness can vary among cultures.

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Another comparative study was conducted between two cultures by (Joo et al., 2019) where that study examined Japanese ideas of forgiveness in Studies 1a and 1b. In Study 2 it was shown that the forgiveness features that participants from the United States and Japan generated, differed in a significant way. Japanese participants seemed to place more emphasis on an adjustment motive and decisional forgiveness than American participants did, on relationship harmony-related factors. Comparatively to Americans, they also place less value on affection and emotional forgiveness. Findings suggest that different perspectives on forgiveness are a result of Japan's strong emphasis on maintaining relationships.

A study was conducted wherein children from West Kalimantan Children's Forum were interviewed by (Marta & Fernando, 2020). The goal of the study is to examine forgiveness from the viewpoint of the younger generation, who are the offspring of opposing parties from earlier interethnic wars. The community's forgiveness process does not seem natural because of the reconciliation process, which has been in place for about 20 years. When there is a collaborative activity of planting shared ideals of harmony, peace, non-discrimination, and togetherness from diverse organizations, which can lead to individual forgiveness, the encouragement from the collective community to provide forgiveness emerges. The entire procedure is known as "forgiveness dialectics."

Self-forgiveness and overall well being

Self-forgiveness is the act of accepting and letting go of negative feelings towards oneself for past mistakes and failures. A study suggests that the positive relationship between self-forgiveness and human flourishing is partly explained by the fact that individuals who forgive themselves tend to experience higher levels of self-esteem, psychological well-being, and resilience. Self-Forgiveness shows a positive relationship with all the aspects of human flourishing (Ruchi Pandey et al., 2020) There is a statistically significant association between forgiveness and subjective well-being, implying that a rise in forgiveness levels led to an increase in subjective well-being (Hermaen & Hussain Bhutto, 2021). Self-forgiveness has been found to have a negative correlation with depression, meaning that as levels of self-forgiveness increase, levels of depressive symptoms tend to decrease. This very study highlights the importance of self-forgiveness in reducing the risk of suicidal behavior among individuals with depression. It also suggests that self-forgiveness interventions may be a useful addition to depression and suicide prevention treatments because as self-forgiveness enhances, self-acceptance also increases which is crucial to reducing suicidal behaviors. (Jung et al., 2019)

A study done by (Martinčková & Enright, 2020) who collected data from 217 university students showed that both self-forgiveness and shame-proneness were significant predictors of procrastination, with self-forgiveness being negatively related to procrastination. This research has shown that individuals who are more self-forgiving tend to experience less negative emotion and stress, which can help reduce the likelihood of engaging in procrastination. Another literature suggests that interventions aimed at promoting forgiveness may be effective in improving mental health outcomes as Self-forgiveness has a negative relationship with guilt and shame (Fincham & May, 2020). A similar study proposes that forgiveness can be seen as a coping mechanism for individuals facing challenging life circumstances. By forgiving those who have wronged them, individuals may be better able to move past negative experiences and find a sense of closure, which can ultimately lead to improved mental health outcomes. (Kaleta & Mróz, 2020).

Divine forgiveness refers to the act of a divine being forgiving individuals for their sins. A study by (Fincham & May, 2019) on 345 young adults revealed that belief in divine forgiveness moderates the relationship between self-forgiveness and well-being, such that individuals who believe in divine forgiveness experience greater well-being benefits from self-forgiveness. It suggests that belief in divine forgiveness may provide an additional source of support for individuals who struggle with self-forgiveness and may enhance the positive effects of self-forgiveness on well-being.

On the contrary, a recent study by (Hussain & Damani, 2022) on 101 Adolescents from Karachi has revealed that forgiveness is negatively associated with well-being, while vengeance is positively related to well-being One possible explanation for the prevalence of such revenge seeking behavior is the influence of media which impacts manner of relating and thinking of society, and often promotes revenge as a viable option which is hazardous in a long run.

Consumer forgiveness and interpersonal forgiveness: work outcomes

In a study conducted by (Alnawas et al., 2022) 11381 panelists demonstrate that holistic thinking reduced the unfavorable direct impact of service failure severity on brand forgiveness while analytic thinking enhanced it. Emotions and cognition are said to be important components of the hospitality customer failure and forgiveness paradigm. Actions

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made by service providers in the wake of a service breakdown are referred to as service recovery strategies. Hence, another study portrays how important forgiveness is to win back clients after a service mistake if you want them to use your establishment again, stop them from badmouthing it, and want to maintain a long-term connection with you. (Harrison-Walker, 2019). An empirical research study was carried out using the situational method to collect data, which resulted in the finding that empathy plays a positive role in fostering forgiveness, leading to higher consumer repurchase intention. Consumer forgiveness acts as an intermediary between empathy and repurchase intention in the context of online shopping service recovery. (Wei et al., 2022)

Just like how brand forgiveness is important, interpersonal forgiveness in colleagues is also important for the workplace to run efficiently. A forgiving response to an interpersonal conflict can increase employee well-being, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction with people resolving disputes which might enhance productivity, better work outcomes, and establish fruitful work relationships (Cao et al., 2021). In another article, a perceptual understanding of how trait forgiveness impacts state forgiveness and professional results is provided by the study. The research demonstrates that while trait forgiveness is negatively connected to leave intentions, it is favorably related to state forgiveness, work happiness, and affective commitment. Because it affects how victims see the offender, trait forgiveness is a crucial element in understanding the trajectory of responses to interpersonal offenses.

Collectively, these studies offer insightful understandings of the value of forgiveness in professional relationships and its potential influences on professional outcomes (Stackhouse, 2019)

A study that explored the dark side of leadership forgiveness, through a questionnaire survey collected data from 263 Chinese employees concludes that leader forgiveness is likely to encourage unethical pro-organizational behavior. However, employees with strong morality are less prone to engage in such behavior. (Lu et al., 2021)

Interpersonal forgiveness

A social attachment or connection between two or more individuals is referred to as an interpersonal relationship. Interactions with your companion, loved ones, acquaintances, close friends, and a wide variety of other people who make up your social network are all examples of various interpersonal interactions. A study conducted on 128 participants demonstrates that bad interpersonal interactions cause an increase in paranoia (Study 1), dispositional forgiveness decreases these negative consequences (Study 2), and that experimentally inducing high (as opposed to low) forgiveness causes a decrease in paranoia (Ellett et al., 2023).

Another comparison study was done on a total of 72 participants with a high self-control group and a low self-control group where it was concluded that people with high self-control are more tolerant of enemies who have offended them in the past than people with low self-control. It also reveals that participants with high self-control tended to respond more forgivingly to previously unfair opponents than those with low self-control. With more self-control, people are better able to restrain negative impulses after giving them careful thought and acting constructively, like forgiving offenders (Liu & Li, 2020)

According to Freud's theory of personality structure, ego depletion (ED) is a decline in one's ability or willingness to engage in volitional action as a result of a prior will exercise.

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Therefore, in this study, the interaction effect of Ego Depletion (ED) and an offending situation on forgiveness was also highly significant, demonstrating that the higher the degree of ED in the case of a serious offense, the lower the level of forgiveness; however, the higher the degree of ED in the case of a mild offense, the higher the level of forgiveness. Ego depletion can occasionally encourage positive relationship dynamics and outcomes. (Zhou et al., 2021). The goal of another study was to examine the mediating impact of forgiveness between university students' levels of rumination about interpersonal offense and psychological well-being where the participant group consisted of 342 students. It was found, as a person's level of reflection on the events in their interpersonal connections rises, their capacity for forgiveness falls, which lowers their psychological well-being. To improve psychological well-being, it is crucial to emphasize forgiveness in individual or group counseling and psycho-educational activities. Enhancing forgiveness might operate as a safeguard for psychological health (Gaziantep University & Buğa, 2022).

Forgiveness and religion

Religion plays a major role in a person's life, a person who is religious may be very conscious about seeking forgiveness from the deity as God plays a very crucial role in forgiving them. The life story interview method and narrative analysis developed by McAdams were used in another study where the results show that the interviewees valued God and felt that God helped them to forgive. For the participants, forgiving was a divine process, and several believed that they could not have forgiven apart from God. (Haikola, 2023)

Another data that was gathered from 464 participants concluded that positivity is not indifferent in the process of forgiving, especially when people are aware of God's presence in their lives. In other words, some religious beliefs (e.g., God's perceived engagement rather than disengagement) may evoke positivity, which, in turn, sustains a tendency toward forgiveness. Developing this thought, the feeling that God is listening and answering prayers may elicit a positive view of life, experiences, and oneself, and thus facilitate interpersonal forgiveness. Conversely, a perception of God as silent and disconnected from people (a marginal religious position) may induce less positivity, and therefore, impede forgiveness. (Szcześniak & Stochalska, 2021)

Another study with 368 kids found a statistically significant connection between forgiveness and terminal values (the desired end-states that a person strongly wants to achieve such as "a comfortable life", "freedom", or "salvation.") and meaning in the lives of the participants. Religion played a major role in forgiving others which in turn made the connection between forgiveness and terminal values as forgiving and reaching a state of mental peace became a major desire. (Glaz.,2019)

Similarly, a study with 111 participants came to the conclusion that religiosity had a significant impact on married people's willingness to forgive, with a 16.9% acceptance rate. Additionally, according to the study's findings, the research participants' religiosity and forgiveness levels were fairly high. (Setyowati, E., & Qomariyah, D. N.,2022) Another study gathered information from 243 religious participants. The findings lend support to the idea that faith and maturity may prevent angry sentiments towards God by more frequently choosing to forgive abusers, which helps to explain why people who feel furious towards God are nonetheless able to experience well-being. (Skalski-Bednarz et al., 2022)

Forgiveness in COVID-19

In 2020, Coronavirus hit the entire world. The first wave of covid-19 pandemic was at its peak from April 2020 to July 2020, people's both mental and physical health was concerned, and different people reacted differently despite their age or gender. A study conducted by (Toussaint et al., 2021) on a U.S. national sample of 1,382 respondents who completed a survey. It was found that older age was related to better mental health during this period. More COVID-19-related stress perceptions were linked to lower levels of sense of meaning, forgiveness of situations, and optimism while less emotional distress and hopelessness were linked to higher levels of forgiveness of situations. This situation also increased people's growth leading to better life satisfaction as discussed in a study (Beltrán-Morillas & Expósito, 2021) where individuals were questioned and its results showed that self-forgiveness and compassion were associated with increased personal growth and life satisfaction through compassion, and that self-forgiveness was positively related to these outcomes.

In another study by (Yan et al., 2023) on 1,274 respondents in China gave us the conclusion by revealing that trait anger was a poor predictor of subjective well-being, and forgiveness acted as a bridge between the two variables. In this situation, trait anger negatively predicted both forgiveness and subjective well-being. In another article where 5 nurses who work in hospitals and health centers in the cities of Medan and Jakarta were interviewed, it was discovered that self-control, self-compassion, empathy, and a sense of gratitude all play significant roles in helping nurses learn to forgive. As a result, resilient nurses become healthy, productive, and capable of managing their homes better and caring for their children. The forgiveness process had positive effects on oneself, others, and the environment. As a result, having the capacity to forgive helps people endure difficult situations like the COVID-19 epidemic and survive, adapt, and recover from them (Hafnidar et al., 2022).

Numerous studies show that narcissism, anger, and ruminating are related to bad interpersonal outcomes and a lack of forgiveness, but this research paper by (Seethalakshmy.A et al., 2022) shows that the opposite is true. There is a positive correlation between narcissism, anger, ruminating, and forgiveness, which can be seen as the distressing result of the global pandemic. Due to the knowledge that interpersonal contacts and relationship restorations were desperately needed during the COVID-19 epidemic, people are now more likely to facilitate and accept forgiveness.

Crime and forgiveness

In crime scenario research, both apologies and repayment are examples of wrongdoers' accountable repair responses that have encouraged victims' self-reported empathy and forgiveness.

A study by (Witvliet, Root Luna, et al., 2020) offers the first psychophysiological examination of the conditions—apology and restitution—that predict lowered levels of unforgiveness and increased levels of forgiveness reactions.

Similarly, another study conducted by (Witvliet, Wade, et al., 2020) demonstrated that victims' unforgiveness decreased with a complete apology and reparation and rose with an empathic and forgiving favorable response to the offender. These between-group experiments' findings showed that the impacts of an apology, restitution, and confession had separate yet complementary effects on measures of empathy, affirmative responses to the

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perpetrator, a measure of forgiveness, and unforgiveness. In other words, each of these responses to perpetrator accountability had its impact without abandoning or impeding the others. Receiving any of these accountability indicators—apology, restitution, confession with surrender—encouraged empathy, supportive reactions to the offender, and forgiveness while lowering levels of unforgiveness.

Another study conducted by (Eroglu et al., 2022) on 12,500 students studying in 46 high schools in Erzurum showed that forgiveness has a positive effect on the health of cyber victims. So, one of the key methods to improve well-being may be to enhance forgiveness. Programs for psychological education can aid in increasing forgiveness, which can improve well-being. On the contrary, a study by (Pham et al., 2019) was conducted on women who had survived the initial Sinjar attacks and subsequent captivity and were now refugees in Germany. Nearly all of the respondents agreed that it is impossible to pardon individuals who committed acts of violence. Few people responded when asked hypothetically what may occur that might make it possible for them to forgive. A small percentage of respondents claimed that it might be possible to forgive if their missing relatives were found, but the majority of respondents simply do not believe that forgiveness is possible. A few people made the connection between this impossibility and their inability to make amends.

Forgiveness in sports

Athletes achieve genuine self-forgiveness by choosing to accept personal responsibility for their part in poor competitive performances, affirming the self, and arriving at an end-state in which negative emotional experiences are reconciled, in contrast to common defensive reactions that restrict learning opportunities by shielding the self from stimuli that threaten self-integrity (Cowden & Worthington Jr, 2019). In this study of evaluating forgiveness, the participants did not make a distinction between shifting blame to the referee and dispersing blame to the aggressor's teammates or coach. Participants in contact or non-contact sports concluded they would be less likely to pardon the offender. The participants in contact sports, on the other hand, predicted that they would be more tolerant of the attacker. Also, it was found that the male participants tended to forgive the aggressor quite rarely, whereas the female participants would consider forgiving the aggressor occasionally (Fruchart & RulencePaques, 2021).

In another study, 18 community sports coaches participated in extensive, semi-structured interviews that provided rich insights into the participants' (transgressors') understandings of strained workplace relationships, remedial work used to repair and restore relationships, as well as desired and undesirable consequences resulting from these restorative efforts. These participants attempted to mend these relationships by offering corrective measures, such as accounts, apologies, and expressions of concern, after realizing the difficulty posed by significant individuals. These restorative attempts had varying degrees of success. Some relationships improved while some didn't (Gale et al., 2023). A similar study showed the gender variable and altruism were shown to differ significantly, with women exhibiting greater altruistic tendencies than males. In the athletic group, it was discovered that women made more forgiving decisions than men did. The amount of involvement in charitable activities, support, and support based on physical strength in response to traumatic events or situations was also higher than that of sedentary at significant levels when the changes in altruistic behaviors and forgiveness decisions were analyzed according to the group. Lastly, it was concluded that all sports and physical activities have a significant positive impact on people's mental and physical health, social interaction, problem-solving abilities, and ability to see things from other viewpoints. Because of this, the benefits of sports, exercise, and

physical activity are crucial for the growth of altruistic behaviors and the propensity for forgiveness in people (Arıcan, 2022).

CONCLUSION

There are many conclusions inferred from this review article. Some of them are that as compared to boys, girls have much more cognitive reappraisal. Forgiveness is important to win back clients after service mistakes. Interpersonal forgiveness enhances performance at work. Likewise, forgiveness plays a vital role in enhancing and maintaining the interpersonal-relationships. As to self-forgiveness, it is positively related to well-being and helps to overcome problems like depression, procrastination, and suicidal tendencies. On the other hand, divine forgiveness supports the journey of self-forgiveness and thus enhances well-being. Similarly, belief in God and religion makes it easier for people to forgive. Situations like COVID-19, help people understand each other better and makes them more resilient to forgive others building a sense of gratitude towards them and helping them come out from such drastic situations but at the same time understanding of forgiveness can vary from culture to culture but the effect of forgiveness on depression is almost similar in every culture. While children forgive easily, teenagers think more analytically as they have developed more sense of self.

Self-forgiveness protects suicide-loss survivors from depression and suicidality, and it contributes to Post-Traumatic Development either directly or indirectly. Emotional Forgiveness helps in the reduction of negative emotions and forgiveness therapy helps people make apologies by fostering healthier relationships, supporting themselves, or improving their lives. Forgiveness in intimate relationships is positively correlated with overall relationship satisfaction but when speaking in a crime scenario, if the offender apologizes, takes accountability, confesses, surrenders, or restitutes then the possibility of the victim or the victim's family to forgive or consider forgiveness will be high. In sports, the players who achieve genuine self-forgiveness are the ones who choose to accept their mistakes, agree to improve their poor sportsmanship and take accountability for their weak performance.

Accepting these leads to better performance in the future

Our research trumps others as the articles we've selected and reviewed are published only after 2018, hence the research conducted is fairly up-to-date. The criteria we've selected do not put any form of construct in terms of sample size and nature. It is such that it is inclusive in nature and hence, open to almost all sub-variables of forgiveness. The limitations of this review are that the 67 articles reviewed do not explain the concept of forgiveness as a whole as it is a very vast concept and understanding it completely through only these many articles is not possible and justifiable. Depression severity, suicidal traumas, divine forgiveness, self-forgiveness, and many more sub-variables have been measured as a quantitative concept that gives a distinct result rather than an actual one.

Further research needs to be done as forgiveness is a major and a vast concept and hence it needs to be studied from a much broader point of view. This can be possible by reviewing more articles with a larger sample size to have a better and clear understanding of forgiveness as a whole. More themes like role of age in forgiveness and many others needs to be further explored and reviewed.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this publication.

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