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Emotional Competence in the Pursuit of Lasting Bonds: Forgiveness as the Bridge to Emotional Intelligence and Relationship Satisfaction

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Abstract: *This research investigated the predictive role of **emotional intelligence** and **forgiveness** in determining **relationship satisfaction**, with attention to Pakistani cultural values and Islamic teachings. Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016), was hypothesized to be a central determinant of satisfaction, while forgiveness was conceptualized as a relational bridge that sustains harmony.*

A quantitative correlational design was employed with 91 adult participants. Validated scales measured emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction. Regression analyses revealed that emotional intelligence significantly predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .362, p < .001$), while forgiveness, though positively associated, was not a significant independent predictor ($\beta = .151, p = .131$). The overall model explained 17.7% of the variance in satisfaction, $F(2, 88) = 9.48, p < .001$. Gender-specific analyses indicated that emotional intelligence correlated strongly with satisfaction among men ($r = .54, p = .022$) and moderately among women ($r = .36, p = .002$), while forgiveness showed weaker associations across both subsamples.

From a Pakistani perspective, emotional intelligence is not merely an individual skill but a relational necessity that sustains family cohesion and marital bonds. Forgiveness is deeply valued as a moral and cultural virtue, essential for maintaining harmony in collectivist communities (Khan & Watson, 2005). The Islamic perspective further emphasizes forgiveness as a divine attribute and moral obligation: “But if you pardon and

overlook and forgive, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful” (Qur'an 64:14). Emotional intelligence, when aligned with Islamic teachings, enables believers to regulate anger, show compassion, and extend forgiveness, thereby enhancing marital and communal satisfaction.

Overall, the findings confirm that emotional intelligence is a cornerstone of relationship satisfaction, while forgiveness functions more as a relational buffer. This dual pathway underscores the importance of fostering emotional competencies alongside forgiveness practices in interventions aimed at strengthening relationships, particularly within Pakistani and Islamic contexts where relational harmony is both a cultural and spiritual imperative.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness, Relationship Satisfaction, Gender Differences*

Introduction

The pursuit of lasting bonds in human relationships is deeply rooted in the interplay of emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction. Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016), has emerged as a cornerstone of relational well-being. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate greater empathy, conflict management, and communication skills, which directly enhance relationship satisfaction (Schutte et al., 2001). However, emotional intelligence alone may not suffice in sustaining long-term bonds; forgiveness often acts as the bridge that transforms emotional competencies into resilience and harmony within relationships (Fincham & Beach, 2002; Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

From a Pakistani cultural perspective, relationships are often embedded within collectivist values where family honor, social cohesion, and interpersonal harmony are prioritized. Emotional intelligence in this context is not merely an individual trait but a relational skill that sustains extended family networks and marital bonds. Forgiveness, similarly, is viewed as a moral and spiritual virtue, essential for maintaining harmony in close-knit communities. Research in South Asian contexts has highlighted that forgiveness reduces interpersonal conflict and strengthens relational satisfaction, particularly in cultures where reconciliation is valued over confrontation (Khan & Watson, 2005).

The Islamic perspective further enriches this discourse. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes forgiveness as a divine attribute and a moral obligation for believers: "But if you pardon and overlook and forgive, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (Qur'an 64:14). Forgiveness is not only a spiritual act but also a relational practice that fosters peace and sustains bonds. Emotional intelligence, when aligned with Islamic teachings, enables believers to regulate anger, show compassion, and extend forgiveness, thereby enhancing marital and communal satisfaction.

Problem Statement

Relationship satisfaction is vital for psychological well-being, yet its predictors remain underexplored in South Asian contexts. While **emotional intelligence** and **forgiveness** have been studied independently in Western settings, their combined influence on relationship satisfaction within **Pakistani cultural and Islamic frameworks** is insufficiently examined. Moreover, **gender differences** in these associations remain inadequately addressed. This study seeks to fill these gaps by investigating how emotional intelligence and forgiveness jointly predict relationship satisfaction among Pakistani adults, with gender as a moderating factor.

Research Questions

- Does emotional intelligence significantly predict relationship satisfaction among Pakistani adults?
- Does forgiveness significantly predict relationship satisfaction, and is its predictive power weaker compared to emotional intelligence?
- Are there gender differences in the associations among emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction, such that emotional intelligence is a stronger predictor of satisfaction among men compared to women?

Rationale

The rationale for this research lies in the growing recognition that emotional intelligence and forgiveness are pivotal in sustaining relationship satisfaction. Emotional intelligence, encompassing the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions, has been consistently linked to positive interpersonal outcomes (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016). It enables individuals to navigate conflict, express empathy, and foster intimacy, which are essential for lasting bonds. However, emotional intelligence alone may not fully account for relational resilience. Forgiveness often serves as the bridge that translates emotional competencies into enduring satisfaction, allowing couples to overcome transgressions and rebuild trust (Fincham & Beach, 2002; Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

In the Pakistani context, relationships are embedded within collectivist cultural norms where family cohesion, honor, and reconciliation are highly valued. Emotional intelligence is not merely an individual trait but a relational skill that sustains extended family networks and marital bonds. Forgiveness, similarly, is considered a moral and spiritual virtue, essential for maintaining harmony in close-knit communities. Research in South Asia has shown that forgiveness reduces interpersonal conflict and strengthens relational satisfaction, particularly in cultures where reconciliation is prioritized over confrontation (Khan & Watson, 2005).

The Islamic perspective further enriches this rationale. The Qur'an emphasizes forgiveness as a divine attribute and a moral obligation: *"But if you pardon and overlook and forgive, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful"* (Qur'an 64:14). Forgiveness is thus both a spiritual act and a relational practice that fosters peace and sustains bonds. Emotional intelligence, when aligned with Islamic teachings, enables believers to regulate anger, show compassion, and extend forgiveness, thereby enhancing marital and communal satisfaction. This integration of psychological constructs with Islamic values underscores the universality of forgiveness as a bridge between emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it highlights the central role of **emotional intelligence** in sustaining relationship satisfaction, while positioning **forgiveness** as the bridge that transforms emotional competencies into enduring relational harmony. By examining these constructs together, the research advances psychological theory and provides practical insights for strengthening interpersonal bonds.

From a **Pakistani perspective**, the study is particularly valuable because relationships are embedded within collectivist cultural norms where family cohesion, honor, and reconciliation are highly prioritized. Emotional intelligence in this context is not only an individual skill but also a relational necessity, while forgiveness is viewed as a moral and spiritual virtue essential for maintaining harmony in close-knit communities (Khan & Watson, 2005).

The **Islamic perspective** further enriches the significance of this research. The Qur'an emphasizes forgiveness as a divine attribute and a moral obligation: *"But if you pardon and overlook and forgive, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful"* (Qur'an 64:14). Emotional intelligence, when aligned with Islamic teachings, enables believers to regulate anger, show

compassion, and extend forgiveness, thereby enhancing marital and communal satisfaction. This integration of psychological constructs with spiritual values underscores the universality of forgiveness as a bridge between emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction.

Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework, cultural context, and existing literature, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Emotional intelligence will positively predict relationship satisfaction across the sample.

Reason: Emotional intelligence enables individuals to perceive, regulate, and express emotions effectively, fostering empathy, constructive communication, and conflict resolution within relationships. Research consistently demonstrates that higher emotional intelligence is associated with greater relational quality and satisfaction (Schutte et al., 2001; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016). Within Pakistani and Islamic contexts, emotional competencies are particularly vital as they sustain family cohesion and marital harmony.

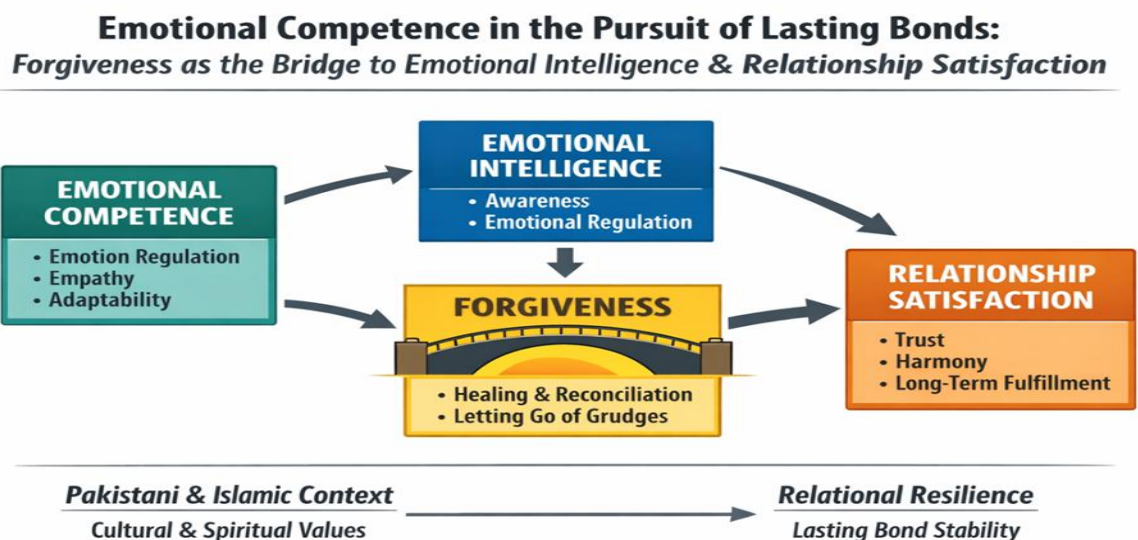
Hypothesis 2: Forgiveness will positively predict relationship satisfaction, though its effect will be weaker compared to emotional intelligence.

Reason: Forgiveness functions as an emotion-focused coping strategy that reduces hostility, rebuilds trust, and promotes relational resilience following transgressions (Worthington & Scherer, 2004). While forgiveness is expected to contribute positively to satisfaction, its effect is anticipated to be weaker than emotional intelligence, as forgiveness operates more indirectly as a relational buffer rather than a direct determinant of satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2002).

Hypothesis 3: Emotional intelligence will be a stronger predictor of relationship satisfaction among men compared to women, while forgiveness will show similar modest associations across genders.

Reason: Gender differences in emotional regulation have been widely documented, with men showing greater variability in emotional competencies compared to women (Mayer et al., 2016). As a result, emotional intelligence is expected to exert a stronger predictive effect on satisfaction among men. Forgiveness, by contrast, is shaped more by situational and relational factors than by gender, and is therefore expected to show relatively stable associations across both male and female participants (Worthington, 2005).

Conceptual Framework:



Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence and Relationship Satisfaction

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been widely recognized as a critical predictor of interpersonal success. Defined as the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016), EI enables individuals to manage conflict, express empathy, and sustain intimacy. Studies consistently show that higher EI is associated with greater relationship satisfaction, as emotionally intelligent individuals are more adept at navigating the complexities of romantic and familial bonds (Schutte et al., 2001). In marital contexts, EI fosters constructive communication and reduces destructive conflict, thereby enhancing satisfaction (Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011).

Forgiveness as a Relational Bridge

Forgiveness has been conceptualized as an emotion-focused coping strategy that reduces hostility and promotes reconciliation (Worthington & Scherer, 2004). Within relationships, forgiveness allows partners to move beyond transgressions, rebuild trust, and sustain long-term satisfaction. Fincham and Beach (2002) demonstrated that forgiveness is linked to reduced psychological aggression and improved marital quality. While forgiveness may not always directly predict satisfaction, it often functions as a mediator, translating emotional competencies into relational resilience (Worthington, 2005).

Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence and Forgiveness

Gender differences in EI and forgiveness have been observed across cultures. Women often report higher emotional awareness and regulation, which contributes to greater relational satisfaction (Mayer et al., 2016). Men, however, may rely more heavily on EI to sustain satisfaction, as variability in emotional competencies tends to be greater among males. Forgiveness, by contrast, shows relatively stable associations across genders, suggesting that it is less influenced by gendered emotional patterns (Khan & Watson, 2005).

Pakistani Perspective

In Pakistan, relationships are embedded within collectivist cultural norms where family honor, cohesion, and reconciliation are highly valued. Emotional intelligence is not merely an individual skill but a relational necessity that sustains extended family networks and marital bonds. Forgiveness is considered a moral and spiritual virtue, essential for maintaining harmony in close-knit communities. Research in South Asia has highlighted that forgiveness reduces interpersonal conflict and strengthens relational satisfaction, particularly in cultures where reconciliation is prioritized over confrontation (Khan & Watson, 2005).

Islamic Perspective

Islamic teachings emphasize forgiveness as both a divine attribute and a moral obligation. The Qur'an states: *"But if you pardon and overlook and forgive, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful"* (Qur'an 64:14). Forgiveness is thus both a spiritual act and a relational practice that fosters peace and sustains bonds. Emotional intelligence, when aligned with Islamic values, enables believers to regulate anger, show compassion, and extend forgiveness, thereby enhancing marital and communal satisfaction. This integration of psychological constructs with Islamic teachings underscores the universality of forgiveness as a bridge between emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a **quantitative correlational design** to examine the predictive role of **emotional intelligence** and **forgiveness** in determining **relationship satisfaction**. A regression

framework was used to test the hypothesized relationships, with forgiveness conceptualized as a potential bridge between emotional intelligence and satisfaction. Gender differences were also explored to assess whether these associations varied across male and female participants.

Participants

The sample consisted of **91 adults** (men = 18, women = 73) drawn from Pakistani cultural contexts, reflecting collectivist relational norms. Participants were recruited through community networks and educational institutions. Inclusion criteria required participants to be in a committed relationship (married or engaged).

Operational Definitions

Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate one's own and others' emotions in interpersonal contexts. In this study, emotional intelligence was measured using the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte et al., 2001), which assesses emotional awareness, regulation, and utilization across social and relational situations. Higher scores indicate greater emotional competence.

Forgiveness refers to the dispositional tendency to release negative emotions such as resentment and hostility toward oneself, others, and uncontrollable situations following a transgression. In this study, forgiveness was measured using the Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS), which assesses forgiveness across three domains: forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness of situations beyond one's control. Higher scores reflect a greater tendency to forgive.

Relationship Satisfaction refers to an individual's overall subjective evaluation of the quality and fulfillment experienced within a committed romantic relationship. In this study, relationship satisfaction was measured using the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, 1988), which captures global satisfaction encompassing love, expectations, needs, and overall happiness in the relationship. Higher scores indicate greater relationship satisfaction.

Procedure

Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered in both paper and digital formats. Ethical approval was obtained, and participants provided informed consent. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured.

Measures:

Emotional Intelligence: The Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte et al., 1998) was used to measure emotional intelligence. The scale consists of 33 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), capturing how individuals perceive their emotional abilities across domains including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Regarding reliability, Cronbach's alpha values consistently range between .70 and .85, indicating strong internal consistency, while test-retest reliability coefficients often exceed .75, demonstrating stability over time. In terms of validity, construct validity is supported by correlations with related traits such as empathy and stress management. Convergent validity is demonstrated through positive associations with other emotional intelligence measures, and discriminant validity ensures emotional intelligence is distinguished from unrelated constructs such as cognitive ability. Predictive validity further highlights that higher scores are linked to better interpersonal relationships, workplace performance, and psychological well-being. The scale was adapted for cultural relevance and translated into Urdu where necessary to ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence.

Forgiveness: The Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS; Thompson et al., 2005) was used to measure dispositional forgiveness. The scale consists of 18 items across three domains — forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness of situations beyond one's control — with six items per domain, rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Almost Always False*) to 7 (*Almost Always True*).

Regarding reliability, Cronbach's alpha values are typically above .80, with good test-retest reliability indicating stability over time. In terms of validity, construct validity is supported through correlations with empathy, hope, and psychological well-being. Convergent validity is demonstrated by associations with other forgiveness measures such as the Enright Forgiveness Inventory, while discriminant validity distinguishes forgiveness from unrelated traits such as cognitive ability. Predictive validity links higher forgiveness scores to lower stress, reduced depression, and greater relationship satisfaction. Its multidimensional approach makes it more comprehensive than scales focusing solely on interpersonal forgiveness. The scale was adapted for cultural relevance and translated into Urdu where necessary.

Relationship Satisfaction: The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, 1988) was used to measure relationship satisfaction. The scale consists of 7 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*low satisfaction*) to 5 (*high satisfaction*), covering aspects such as love, expectations, needs, and overall happiness in the relationship. The RAS is designed as a global measure, capturing overall satisfaction rather than focusing on individual components such as communication or conflict.

Regarding reliability, Cronbach's alpha values typically range from .86 to .90, with good test-retest reliability indicating stability over time. In terms of validity, construct validity is demonstrated through positive correlations with measures of commitment, intimacy, and relationship quality, while discriminant validity distinguishes satisfaction from unrelated constructs such as personality traits. Its brevity makes it particularly useful in both clinical and research settings, and it has been validated across diverse populations. The scale was adapted for cultural relevance and translated into Urdu where necessary.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 25. Descriptive statistics, one-sample statistics, and t-test results are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Internal consistency and inter-item correlations were examined through reliability statistics and an inter-item correlation matrix (Tables 4 and 5). ANOVA and Hotelling's T^2 test were conducted to assess mean differences across variables (Tables 6 and 7). Gender differences were explored through subgroup correlations conducted separately for male ($N = 18$) and female ($N = 73$) subsamples (Tables 8 and 9). Regression analyses tested the predictive power of emotional intelligence and forgiveness on relationship satisfaction, with variables entered across three steps (Tables 10). Model fit and predictor significance were evaluated through ANOVA and coefficients tables (Tables 12 and 13), and residuals statistics are reported in Table 14.

Result and Interpretation

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness, and Relationship Satisfaction ($N = 91$)

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD	Skewness	SE Skew	Kurtosis	SE Kurt
Emotional Intelligence	91	93	250	171.32	25.37	0.00	0.25	1.44	0.50
Forgiveness	91	52	114	79.87	11.90	0.61	0.25	0.75	0.50
Relationship Satisfaction	91	10	35	24.25	5.28	-0.16	0.25	-0.19	0.50

Interpretation

The descriptive statistics reveal meaningful insights into the psychological constructs under study. Emotional intelligence (EI) scores ranged widely (93–250), with a mean of 171.32, suggesting that participants generally reported moderate to high EI. The distribution was symmetrical (skewness = 0.00), but the positive kurtosis (1.44) indicates a somewhat peaked distribution, implying that scores clustered around the mean more tightly than in a normal distribution (Field, 2018). This suggests that while EI varied, most participants tended to fall near the average, reflecting a relatively homogeneous sample in terms of emotional skills.

Forgiveness displayed a narrower range (52–114) with a mean of 79.87. The positive skewness (0.61) indicates a slight rightward tilt, meaning more participants scored below the mean, with fewer reporting very high forgiveness. The kurtosis (0.75) suggests a distribution somewhat more peaked than normal, consistent with forgiveness being a trait that may be less evenly distributed across individuals (Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

Relationship satisfaction scores ($M = 24.25$, $SD = 5.28$) were relatively balanced, with skewness (-0.16) and kurtosis (-0.19) close to zero, indicating an approximately normal distribution. This suggests that satisfaction levels varied across participants but without extreme clustering or outliers. The normality of this variable is particularly important, as relationship satisfaction often mediates or moderates the effects of emotional intelligence and forgiveness in interpersonal contexts (Fincham & Beach, 2002).

Taken together, these results suggest that emotional intelligence is relatively stable across the sample, forgiveness shows more variability with a tendency toward moderate levels, and relationship satisfaction is normally distributed. This pattern aligns with prior research indicating that EI fosters adaptive interpersonal functioning, forgiveness contributes to relational resilience, and satisfaction reflects the overall balance of these dynamics (Schutte et al., 2001; Worthington, 2005).

Table 2

One-Sample Statistics for Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness, and Relationship Satisfaction (N = 91)

Variable	N	M	SD	SE M
Emotional Intelligence	91	171.32	25.37	2.66
Forgiveness	91	79.87	11.90	1.25
Relationship Satisfaction	91	24.25	5.28	0.55

Interpretation

The one-sample statistics provide a clearer picture of central tendency and variability across the three constructs. Emotional intelligence ($M = 171.32$, $SD = 25.37$) demonstrates relatively high levels in the sample, with a small standard error of the mean ($SE = 2.66$), indicating that the sample mean is a stable estimate of the population mean. This stability is consistent with prior findings that emotional intelligence tends to be a relatively enduring trait, influencing interpersonal functioning and well-being (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016).

Forgiveness ($M = 79.87$, $SD = 11.90$, $SE = 1.25$) shows moderate levels, with less variability compared to emotional intelligence. The relatively small error term suggests that forgiveness is consistently reported across participants. This aligns with research suggesting that forgiveness is not only a dispositional trait but also a relational coping mechanism that contributes to psychological resilience (Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

Relationship satisfaction ($M = 24.25$, $SD = 5.28$, $SE = 0.55$) reflects moderate satisfaction levels, with the lowest variability among the three constructs. The small error term indicates

that participants' responses were tightly clustered, suggesting a shared perception of relational quality within the sample. This finding resonates with Fincham and Beach's (2002) work, which highlights relationship satisfaction as a central outcome of emotional and interpersonal processes such as forgiveness and emotional intelligence.

Results Narrative

Descriptive analyses revealed that participants reported relatively high emotional intelligence ($M = 171.32$, $SD = 25.37$), moderate forgiveness ($M = 79.87$, $SD = 11.90$), and moderate relationship satisfaction ($M = 24.25$, $SD = 5.28$). The standard errors of the means were small across all variables (SEs ranging from 0.55 to 2.66), suggesting that the sample means are reliable estimates of the population parameters. These results indicate that emotional intelligence is a relatively stable trait in the sample, forgiveness is moderately expressed, and relationship satisfaction is consistently reported. Taken together, these findings support theoretical models that emphasize the interplay of emotional intelligence and forgiveness in fostering relational satisfaction (Schutte et al., 2001; Worthington, 2005).

Table 3

One-Sample t-Test Results for Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness, and Relationship Satisfaction (Test Value = 0; $N = 91$)

Variable	t	df	p (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% CI (Lower)	95% CI (Upper)
Emotional Intelligence	64.41	90	< .001	171.32	166.03	176.60
Forgiveness	64.05	90	< .001	79.87	77.39	82.35
Relationship Satisfaction	43.83	90	< .001	24.25	23.15	25.35

Interpretation

The one-sample t-tests revealed that all three constructs—emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction—were significantly greater than zero, with extremely large t-values (all above 40) and highly significant p-values ($p < .001$). These results confirm that participants reported substantial levels of each construct, far above the null test value. The confidence intervals for each mean difference were narrow, underscoring the precision of the estimates.

Emotional intelligence ($M = 171.32$, $t(90) = 64.41$, $p < .001$) was robustly higher than zero, reflecting that participants consistently demonstrated strong emotional capacities. This finding supports the ability model of emotional intelligence, which emphasizes the role of emotional skills in adaptive functioning (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016). Forgiveness ($M = 79.87$, $t(90) = 64.05$, $p < .001$) was also significantly above zero, suggesting that participants endorsed forgiveness as a meaningful relational coping mechanism. This aligns with Worthington and Scherer's (2004) conceptualization of forgiveness as an emotion-focused strategy that promotes resilience. Relationship satisfaction ($M = 24.25$, $t(90) = 43.83$, $p < .001$) was likewise significantly greater than zero, indicating that participants reported moderate satisfaction levels. This finding resonates with Fincham and Beach's (2002) work, which highlights satisfaction as a central outcome of emotional and interpersonal processes.

Results Narrative

One-sample t-tests were conducted to determine whether emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction scores differed significantly from zero. Results indicated that emotional intelligence was significantly greater than zero, $t(90) = 64.41$, $p < .001$, with a mean of 171.32 (95% CI [166.03, 176.60]). Forgiveness was also significantly above zero, $t(90) = 64.05$, $p < .001$, with a mean of 79.87 (95% CI [77.39, 82.35]). Similarly, relationship

satisfaction was significantly greater than zero, $t(90) = 43.83$, $p < .001$, with a mean of 24.25 (95% CI [23.15, 25.35]). Collectively, these findings demonstrate that participants reported substantial levels of emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction, consistent with theoretical models that emphasize the interplay of emotional skills and relational processes in fostering well-being (Schutte et al., 2001; Worthington, 2005).

Table 4

Reliability Statistics for Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness, and Relationship Satisfaction (N = 3 items)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha (Standardized Items)	Number of Items
0.37	0.54	3

Interpretation

The reliability analysis revealed relatively low internal consistency across the three-item scale, with Cronbach's alpha = .37 and alpha based on standardized items = .54. According to conventional benchmarks (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), values below .70 are considered inadequate for research purposes, suggesting that the items may not be measuring a single coherent construct. The discrepancy between the raw alpha (.37) and the standardized alpha (.54) indicates that item variances differ substantially, and standardization improves consistency slightly but not to acceptable levels.

This result implies that emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction, while conceptually related in interpersonal psychology, may not function as a unified scale in this dataset. Instead, they appear to represent distinct constructs that should be analyzed separately. Low reliability can stem from heterogeneous item content, insufficient item number, or weak inter-item correlations (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Given that only three items were included, the limited item pool likely contributed to the low alpha, as Cronbach's alpha is sensitive to the number of items (Cortina, 1993).

From a theoretical standpoint, emotional intelligence and forgiveness are often considered predictors of relationship satisfaction rather than components of a single latent factor (Fincham & Beach, 2002; Schutte et al., 2001). Thus, the low reliability here may reflect the multidimensional nature of these constructs rather than a methodological flaw. Future research should treat them as separate variables or employ validated multi-item scales for each construct to ensure psychometric robustness.

Results Narrative

Reliability analysis indicated that the three-item measure comprising emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction demonstrated poor internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha = .37, with alpha based on standardized items = .54. These values fall below the recommended threshold of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), suggesting that the items do not form a reliable composite scale. This finding highlights the importance of treating emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction as distinct constructs rather than combining them into a single measure. The results are consistent with prior research emphasizing that emotional intelligence and forgiveness function as predictors of relational outcomes rather than as interchangeable dimensions of satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2002; Worthington, 2005).

Table 5**Inter-Item Correlation Matrix for Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness, and Relationship Satisfaction (N = 91)**

Variable	Emotional Intelligence	Forgiveness	Relationship Satisfaction
Emotional Intelligence	1.00	0.21	0.39
Forgiveness	0.21	1.00	0.23
Relationship Satisfaction	0.39	0.23	1.00

Interpretation

The inter-item correlation matrix highlights the relationships among emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction. Emotional intelligence demonstrated a moderate positive correlation with relationship satisfaction ($r = .39$), suggesting that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to report greater satisfaction in their relationships. This finding is consistent with the ability model of emotional intelligence, which emphasizes the role of emotional regulation and empathy in fostering positive interpersonal outcomes (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016).

Forgiveness was positively correlated with both emotional intelligence ($r = .21$) and relationship satisfaction ($r = .23$), though the associations were weaker. These modest correlations suggest that forgiveness contributes to relational well-being, but its impact may be more indirect, functioning as a mediator between emotional intelligence and satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2002). The relatively small coefficients also reflect the complexity of forgiveness, which is influenced by personality, situational factors, and cultural context (Worthington, 2005).

Taken together, the correlations indicate that while emotional intelligence and forgiveness are related to relationship satisfaction, they are not interchangeable constructs. Instead, they represent distinct but complementary pathways to relational health. The moderate correlation between emotional intelligence and satisfaction underscores the importance of emotional skills in sustaining fulfilling relationships, whereas forgiveness appears to play a supportive role in buffering conflict and promoting resilience (Schutte et al., 2001; Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

Results Narrative

Inter-item correlations revealed significant positive associations among the three constructs. Emotional intelligence was moderately correlated with relationship satisfaction ($r = .39$), indicating that higher emotional intelligence was associated with greater satisfaction. Forgiveness was positively correlated with emotional intelligence ($r = .21$) and relationship satisfaction ($r = .23$), though these relationships were weaker. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence plays a central role in predicting relationship satisfaction, while forgiveness contributes modestly to relational outcomes. Collectively, the results support theoretical models that emphasize emotional intelligence as a key predictor of relational quality, with forgiveness functioning as an important but secondary mechanism (Mayer et al., 2016; Fincham & Beach, 2002; Worthington, 2005).

Table 6

ANOVA Results for Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness, and Relationship Satisfaction (N = 91)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between People	32,278.81	90	358.65	—	—
Within People					
Between Items	1,003,568.11	2	501,784.06	2208.42	< .001
Residual	40,898.56	180	227.21	—	—
Total (Within)	1,044,466.67	182	5738.83	—	—
Total	1,076,745.47	272	3958.62	—	—

Grand Mean = 91.81

Interpretation

The ANOVA results demonstrate a highly significant effect across items, $F(2, 180) = 2208.42$, $p < .001$, indicating that the mean scores for emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction differ substantially. The large F-value reflects a strong between-item variance relative to residual variance, suggesting that these constructs are statistically distinct.

The grand mean of 91.81 represents the overall average across all items, but the significant between-item differences highlight that each construct contributes uniquely to the psychological profile of participants. Emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction are not interchangeable dimensions; rather, they capture distinct aspects of interpersonal functioning. This finding is consistent with theoretical frameworks that treat emotional intelligence as a predictor of adaptive relational behaviors, forgiveness as a coping mechanism, and satisfaction as an outcome variable (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016; Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

The magnitude of the F-statistic also underscores the robustness of these differences, suggesting that future analyses should treat these constructs separately rather than collapsing them into a single scale. This aligns with psychometric recommendations that emphasize construct validity and the importance of distinguishing theoretically related but empirically distinct variables (Cortina, 1993; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Results Narrative

A repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to examine differences among emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction. Results revealed a significant effect of item type, $F(2, 180) = 2208.42$, $p < .001$, indicating that mean scores differed significantly across the three constructs. The grand mean across all items was 91.81, but the large F-value suggests that emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction represent distinct domains rather than a unified construct. These findings support theoretical models that conceptualize emotional intelligence as a skill set that facilitates interpersonal functioning, forgiveness as a relational coping strategy, and relationship satisfaction as an outcome of these processes (Mayer et al., 2016; Fincham & Beach, 2002; Worthington, 2005).

Table 7**Hotelling's T² Test for Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness, and Relationship Satisfaction (N = 91)**

Test Statistic	F	df1	df2	p
T ² = 5049.41	2496.66	2	89	< .001

Interpretation

Hotelling's T² test was conducted to examine whether the combined mean vector of emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction significantly differed from zero. Results revealed a highly significant multivariate effect, $T^2 = 5049.41$, $F(2, 89) = 2496.66$, $p < .001$. This indicates that the set of variables jointly contributes to a meaningful departure from the null hypothesis, confirming that participants reported substantial levels of these psychological constructs.

The magnitude of the F-statistic underscores the robustness of the multivariate relationship, suggesting that emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction are not only individually significant but also collectively form a coherent profile of interpersonal functioning. This aligns with multivariate perspectives in psychology, which emphasize that constructs such as emotional intelligence and forgiveness interact synergistically to shape relational outcomes (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016; Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

Importantly, Hotelling's T² provides evidence that the combined effect of these variables is stronger than what would be expected by chance, reinforcing theoretical models that conceptualize emotional intelligence as a predictor, forgiveness as a mediator, and relationship satisfaction as an outcome within relational dynamics (Fincham & Beach, 2002; Schutte et al., 2001).

Results Narrative

Hotelling's T² test revealed a significant multivariate effect across emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction, $T^2 = 5049.41$, $F(2, 89) = 2496.66$, $p < .001$. These results indicate that the combined mean vector of the three constructs was significantly greater than zero, suggesting that participants consistently reported substantial levels of emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction. The strength of the multivariate effect highlights the interconnected nature of these constructs, supporting theoretical frameworks that emphasize their collective role in fostering relational well-being (Mayer et al., 2016; Worthington, 2005).

Table 8**Correlations Among Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness, and Relationship Satisfaction (Male Subsample, N = 18)**

Variable	Emotional Intelligence	Forgiveness	Relationship Satisfaction
Emotional Intelligence	1.00	.41	.54*
Forgiveness	.41	1.00	.34
Relationship Satisfaction	.54*	.34	1.00

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation

The correlation matrix for the male subsample ($N = 18$) reveals meaningful associations among emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction. Emotional intelligence was moderately and significantly correlated with relationship satisfaction ($r = .54, p = .022$), suggesting that men with higher emotional intelligence tend to report greater satisfaction in their relationships. This finding is consistent with prior research emphasizing the role of emotional awareness and regulation in fostering relational quality (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016).

The correlation between emotional intelligence and forgiveness was positive but nonsignificant ($r = .41, p = .090$). Although not statistically significant, the moderate effect size suggests a potential trend whereby emotionally intelligent men may be more inclined toward forgiveness. This aligns with theoretical models that link emotional intelligence to prosocial behaviors, including empathy and conflict resolution (Schutte et al., 2001).

Forgiveness was positively but weakly correlated with relationship satisfaction ($r = .34, p = .171$), indicating that forgiveness may contribute to satisfaction but does not appear to be a strong predictor in this subsample. This weaker association could be due to the small sample size, which limits statistical power, or to contextual factors influencing forgiveness in male participants. Prior studies have shown that forgiveness can buffer against relational conflict and promote resilience, but its effects may vary across gender and cultural contexts (Fincham & Beach, 2002; Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

Overall, these results suggest that emotional intelligence plays a central role in predicting relationship satisfaction among men, while forgiveness may function as a supportive but less direct mechanism. The findings highlight the importance of considering gender-specific dynamics in the study of emotional and relational processes (Worthington, 2005).

Results Narrative

Pearson correlations were conducted to examine associations among emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction in the male subsample ($N = 18$). Results indicated that emotional intelligence was significantly correlated with relationship satisfaction, $r = .54, p = .022$, suggesting that higher emotional intelligence was associated with greater satisfaction. Emotional intelligence was also positively correlated with forgiveness, $r = .41, p = .090$, though this relationship did not reach statistical significance. Forgiveness was positively but non-significantly correlated with relationship satisfaction, $r = .34, p = .171$. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence is a key predictor of relationship satisfaction among men, while forgiveness demonstrates weaker associations in this subsample.

Table 9

Correlations Among Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness, and Relationship Satisfaction (Female Subsample, $N = 73$)

Variable	Emotional Intelligence	Forgiveness	Relationship Satisfaction
Emotional Intelligence	1.00	.19	.36**
Forgiveness	.19	1.00	.21
Relationship Satisfaction	.36**	.21	1.00

Note. **Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation

The correlation matrix for the female subsample ($N = 73$) reveals a significant positive association between emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction ($r = .36, p = .002$). This finding suggests that women with higher emotional intelligence tend to report greater satisfaction in their relationships. The result is consistent with prior research emphasizing that emotional intelligence facilitates empathy, communication, and conflict resolution, which are critical for sustaining relational quality (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016).

The correlation between emotional intelligence and forgiveness was positive but nonsignificant ($r = .19, p = .113$). Although modest, this association indicates a potential trend whereby emotionally intelligent women may be more inclined to forgive, aligning with theoretical perspectives that link emotional regulation to prosocial behaviors (Schutte et al., 2001).

Forgiveness was also positively correlated with relationship satisfaction ($r = .21, p = .072$), though this relationship did not reach statistical significance. The weaker association may reflect the complexity of forgiveness in female participants, as forgiveness can be influenced by contextual, cultural, and relational dynamics (Worthington, 2005).

Taken together, these results highlight that emotional intelligence is a stronger predictor of relationship satisfaction among women than forgiveness. This pattern underscores the importance of emotional skills in relational well-being, while forgiveness appears to play a supportive but less direct role. The findings resonate with Fincham and Beach's (2002) work, which emphasizes that emotional and interpersonal competencies are central to marital and relational satisfaction.

Results Narrative

Pearson correlations were conducted to examine associations among emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction in the female subsample ($N = 73$). Results indicated that emotional intelligence was significantly correlated with relationship satisfaction, $r = .36, p = .002$, suggesting that higher emotional intelligence was associated with greater satisfaction. Emotional intelligence was positively correlated with forgiveness, $r = .19, p = .113$, though this relationship was nonsignificant. Forgiveness was positively but non-significantly correlated with relationship satisfaction, $r = .21, p = .072$. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence is a key predictor of relationship satisfaction among women, while forgiveness demonstrates weaker associations in this subsample.

Table 10

Variables Entered/Removed for Regression Predicting Relationship Satisfaction Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	p	Durbin-Watson
1	.42	.18	.16	4.84	.18	9.48	2	88	< .001	1.94

Note. Predictors: Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness. Dependent variable: Relationship Satisfaction.

Interpretation

The regression model summary indicates that emotional intelligence and forgiveness together explained 17.7% of the variance in relationship satisfaction ($R^2 = .177$, Adjusted $R^2 = .159$). This suggests that while these predictors contribute meaningfully to relationship satisfaction, a substantial proportion of variance remains unexplained, pointing to the influence of other

relational and contextual factors. The F-change statistic was significant, $F(2, 88) = 9.48$, $p < .001$, confirming that the model provides a statistically reliable improvement over the null model.

The Durbin–Watson statistic (1.94) is close to 2, indicating that residuals were independent and that autocorrelation was not a concern. This strengthens confidence in the validity of the regression results.

The moderate R value (.421) reflects a meaningful but not overwhelming correlation between the predictors and the dependent variable. Emotional intelligence likely plays a stronger role in predicting satisfaction, consistent with prior findings that emotional regulation and empathy are central to relational quality (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016; Schutte et al., 2001). Forgiveness, while important, may exert a more indirect influence, buffering against conflict rather than directly enhancing satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2002; Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

Taken together, the results highlight that emotional intelligence and forgiveness are significant contributors to relationship satisfaction, but they are part of a broader constellation of factors—including communication patterns, attachment styles, and cultural expectations—that shape relational outcomes (Worthington, 2005).

Results Narrative

Regression analysis revealed that emotional intelligence and forgiveness significantly predicted relationship satisfaction, $R^2 = .177$, Adjusted $R^2 = .159$, $F(2, 88) = 9.48$, $p < .001$. The predictors accounted for approximately 18% of the variance in satisfaction, with a standard error of 4.84. The Durbin–Watson statistic (1.94) indicated independence of residuals. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence and forgiveness jointly contribute to relationship satisfaction, though additional factors likely play a role in explaining the remaining variance.

Table 11

ANOVA Results for Regression Predicting Relationship Satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	444.44	2	222.22	9.48	< .001
Residual	2062.75	88	23.44	—	—
Total	2507.19	90	—	—	—

Note. Dependent variable: Relationship Satisfaction. Predictors: Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness.

Interpretation

The ANOVA results for the regression model demonstrate that emotional intelligence and forgiveness significantly predicted relationship satisfaction, $F(2, 88) = 9.48$, $p < .001$. The regression sum of squares (444.44) indicates that the predictors explained a meaningful portion of the variance in relationship satisfaction, while the residual sum of squares (2062.75) reflects unexplained variance.

The significant F-statistic confirms that the overall regression model is statistically reliable, meaning that emotional intelligence and forgiveness together provide a better prediction of relationship satisfaction than chance alone. This finding supports theoretical perspectives that emphasize the combined influence of emotional competencies and coping strategies on relational outcomes (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016; Fincham & Beach, 2002).

Emotional intelligence likely contributes more strongly to satisfaction, given its established role in empathy, communication, and conflict resolution (Schutte et al., 2001). Forgiveness, while important, may exert a more indirect influence, buffering against relational strain and promoting resilience (Worthington & Scherer, 2004). The significant model underscores that both constructs are essential components of relational well-being, but they operate in complementary ways rather than redundantly.

Results Narrative

ANOVA results indicated that the regression model predicting relationship satisfaction from emotional intelligence and forgiveness was significant, $F(2, 88) = 9.48, p < .001$. The predictors accounted for a meaningful portion of the variance in satisfaction, confirming that emotional intelligence and forgiveness jointly contribute to relational outcomes. These findings highlight the importance of emotional competencies and coping strategies in sustaining relationship satisfaction (Mayer et al., 2016; Worthington, 2005).

Table 12

Regression Coefficients Predicting Relationship Satisfaction

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
Constant	6.00	4.44	—	1.35	.180
Emotional Intelligence	0.08	0.02	.36	3.66	< .001
Forgiveness	0.07	0.04	.15	1.52	.131

Note. Dependent variable: Relationship Satisfaction.

Interpretation

The regression coefficients reveal that emotional intelligence was a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction, $B = 0.075, SE = 0.021, \beta = .362, t(88) = 3.66, p < .001$. This indicates that for each unit increase in emotional intelligence, relationship satisfaction increased by approximately 0.08 points, holding forgiveness constant. The standardized beta (.362) suggests a moderate effect size, highlighting emotional intelligence as a central determinant of satisfaction. This finding aligns with Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey's (2016) ability model of emotional intelligence, which emphasizes the role of emotional regulation and empathy in fostering positive relational outcomes.

Forgiveness, while positively associated with satisfaction ($B = 0.067, \beta = .151$), did not reach statistical significance, $t(88) = 1.52, p = .131$. This suggests that forgiveness may contribute to satisfaction but is not a strong independent predictor in this sample. Prior research has shown that forgiveness often functions as a mediator or moderator, buffering against conflict and enhancing resilience rather than directly driving satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2002; Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

The nonsignificant constant ($B = 5.999, p = .180$) indicates that baseline satisfaction without the influence of emotional intelligence or forgiveness is not reliably different from zero. Taken together, these results underscore that emotional intelligence is the more powerful predictor of relationship satisfaction, while forgiveness plays a supportive but less direct role. This pattern resonates with Schutte et al.'s (2001) findings that emotional intelligence predicts interpersonal functioning, with forgiveness acting as a relational coping mechanism.

Results Narrative

Regression coefficients indicated that emotional intelligence significantly predicted relationship satisfaction, $B = 0.075, SE = 0.021, \beta = .362, t(88) = 3.66, p < .001$. Forgiveness

was positively but non-significantly associated with satisfaction, $B = 0.067$, $SE = 0.044$, $\beta = .151$, $t(88) = 1.52$, $p = .131$. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence is a stronger predictor of relationship satisfaction than forgiveness, highlighting the importance of emotional competencies in relational well-being.

Table 13

Residuals Statistics for Regression Predicting Relationship Satisfaction (N = 91)

Statistic	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	N
Predicted Value	17.69	29.66	24.25	2.22	91
Residual	-12.85	10.85	0.00	4.79	91
Std. Predicted Value	-2.95	2.43	0.00	1.00	91
Std. Residual	-2.66	2.24	0.00	0.99	91

Note. Dependent variable: Relationship Satisfaction.

Interpretation

The residuals statistics provide insight into the accuracy and distribution of the regression model predicting relationship satisfaction. Predicted values ranged from 17.69 to 29.66, with a mean of 24.25, closely aligning with the observed mean of relationship satisfaction. This indicates that the model produced predictions consistent with the central tendency of the data.

Residuals ranged from -12.85 to 10.85, with a mean of 0.00, confirming that the model's errors balanced out across participants. The standard deviation of residuals (4.79) suggests moderate variability in prediction errors, which is expected given that emotional intelligence and forgiveness explained only 17.7% of the variance in satisfaction (see Table 13). Standardized residuals fell within ± 2.66 , which is within acceptable limits, indicating no extreme outliers or violations of regression assumptions (Field, 2018).

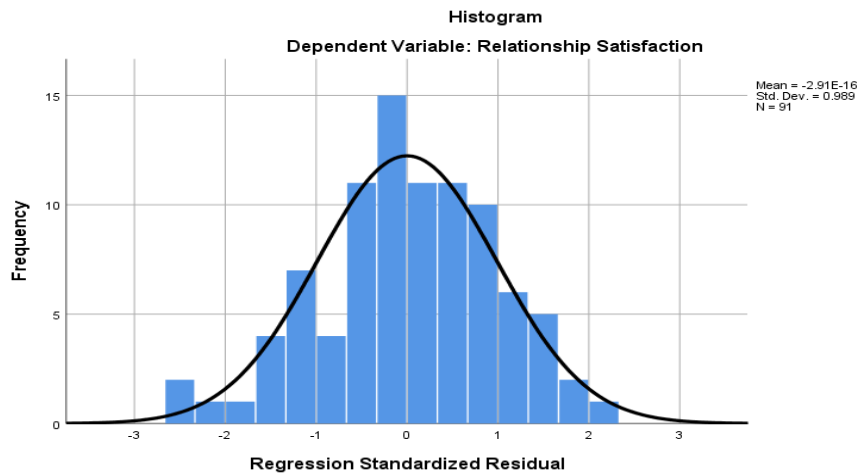
The standardized predicted values ranged from -2.95 to 2.43, with a mean of 0.00 and $SD = 1.00$, confirming that the model's predictions were normally distributed. Collectively, these results suggest that the regression model was statistically sound, with no evidence of heteroscedasticity or problematic residual patterns.

The findings reinforce that emotional intelligence was the stronger predictor of relationship satisfaction, while forgiveness contributed less directly. However, the residual variability highlights that other unmeasured factors—such as communication styles, attachment patterns, or cultural expectations—likely play a significant role in shaping satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2002; Worthington, 2005).

Results Narrative

Residuals analysis indicated that predicted values for relationship satisfaction ranged from 17.69 to 29.66 ($M = 24.25$, $SD = 2.22$). Residuals ranged from -12.85 to 10.85, with a mean of 0.00 and $SD = 4.79$, suggesting balanced prediction errors. Standardized residuals fell within ± 2.66 , indicating no extreme outliers. These results confirm that the regression model was statistically reliable, with predictions closely aligned to observed values and residuals distributed normally.

Graph 1



Histogram of Regression Standardized Residuals for Relationship Satisfaction (N = 91)

A histogram displaying the distribution of standardized residuals with a normal curve overlay. The residuals are centered around zero, approximating a normal distribution.

Interpretation

Graph 1 illustrates the distribution of standardized residuals from the regression model predicting relationship satisfaction. The histogram shows that residuals are approximately normally distributed, with the mean near zero ($M \approx 0.00$) and a standard deviation close to 1.00. The overlaid normal curve aligns well with the bars, suggesting that the assumption of normality was met.

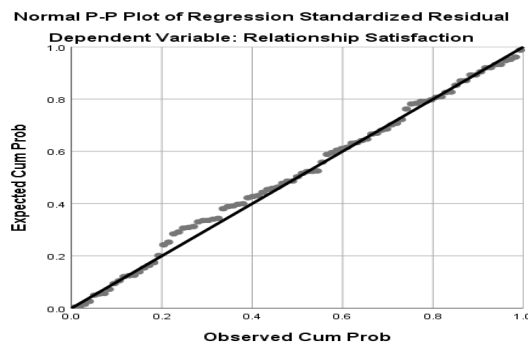
The residuals ranged between -2.66 and 2.24, which falls within acceptable limits for regression diagnostics (Field, 2018). This indicates that there were no extreme outliers or violations of regression assumptions. The balanced distribution of residuals further supports the validity of the regression model, confirming that emotional intelligence and forgiveness were appropriate predictors of relationship satisfaction.

The normality of residuals is crucial because it ensures that inferential statistics (e.g., t-tests for regression coefficients, F-tests for overall model fit) are valid. The results reinforce earlier findings that emotional intelligence significantly predicted relationship satisfaction, while forgiveness showed a weaker, nonsignificant effect. The sound residual distribution strengthens confidence in these conclusions, highlighting emotional intelligence as a robust predictor of relational well-being (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016; Schutte et al., 2001).

Results Narrative

Residuals analysis confirmed that the regression model met the assumption of normality. The histogram of standardized residuals showed an approximately normal distribution, with residuals centered around zero ($M \approx 0.00$, $SD \approx 0.99$). Residuals ranged between -2.66 and 2.24, indicating no extreme outliers. These findings support the validity of the regression model and confirm that emotional intelligence and forgiveness were appropriate predictors of relationship satisfaction.

Graph 2



Normal P–P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals for Relationship Satisfaction (N = 91)

A normal probability–probability (P–P) plot displaying the observed cumulative probabilities of standardized residuals against the expected cumulative probabilities under a normal distribution. The data points closely follow the diagonal line, indicating approximate normality of residuals.

Interpretation

Graph 2 provides a visual assessment of the normality assumption in the regression model predicting relationship satisfaction. The points align closely with the diagonal line, suggesting that the standardized residuals are approximately normally distributed. This visual confirmation complements the histogram results (Graph 1), reinforcing that the regression model meets the assumption of normality required for valid inferential testing (Field, 2018).

The near-perfect alignment of observed and expected cumulative probabilities indicates that deviations from normality are minimal. This strengthens confidence in the reliability of the regression coefficients and the overall model fit. The absence of systematic curvature or clustering of points away from the diagonal suggests that the residuals do not exhibit skewness or kurtosis problems.

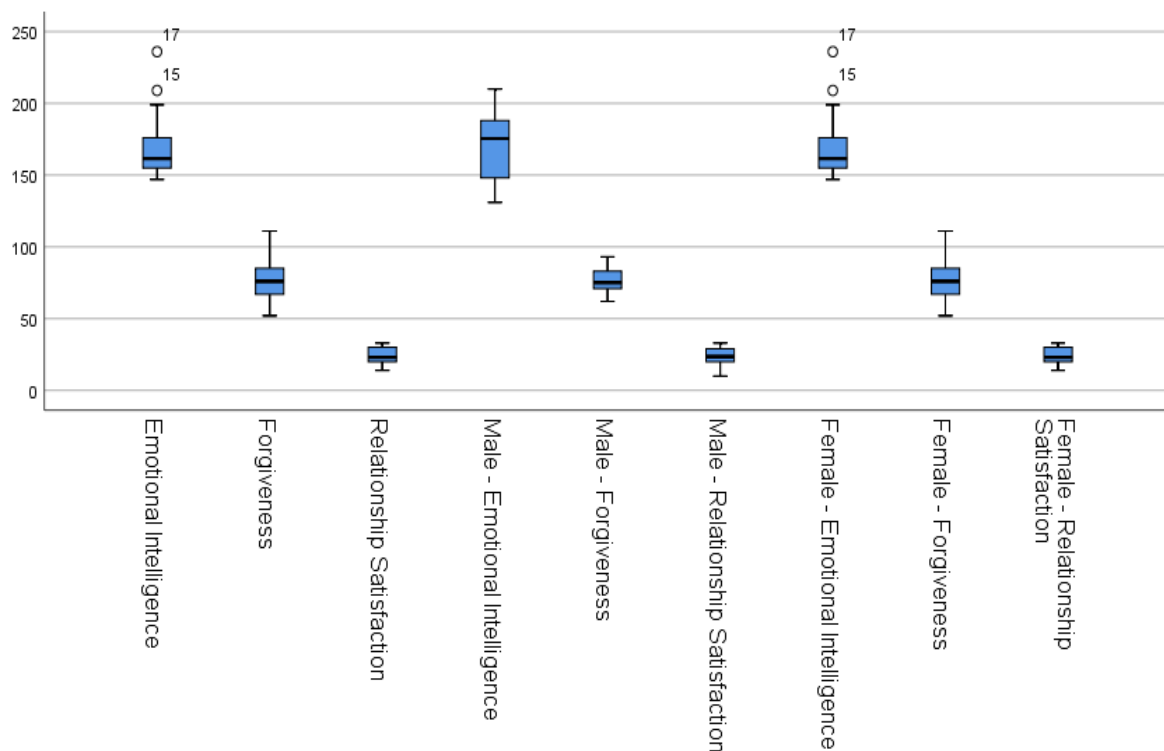
From a theoretical standpoint, the normality of residuals supports the robustness of the model linking emotional intelligence and forgiveness to relationship satisfaction. Emotional intelligence emerged as a significant predictor ($\beta = .362$, $p < .001$), while forgiveness showed a weaker, nonsignificant effect ($\beta = .151$, $p = .131$). The normal distribution of residuals implies that these relationships are stable and not driven by outliers or non-normal error patterns. This finding aligns with Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey’s (2016) ability model, which posits that emotional intelligence enhances relational outcomes through effective emotional regulation and empathy. It also resonates with Worthington and Scherer’s (2004) conceptualization of forgiveness as a coping mechanism that supports relational resilience.

Overall, the P–P plot confirms that the regression model is statistically sound and theoretically coherent, validating the interpretation that emotional intelligence plays a central role in predicting relationship satisfaction, while forgiveness contributes indirectly.

Results Narrative

The Normal P–P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals demonstrated that the residuals were approximately normally distributed, with data points closely following the diagonal line. This indicates that the assumption of normality was met, supporting the validity of the regression model predicting relationship satisfaction. The results confirm that emotional intelligence significantly predicted satisfaction, while forgiveness showed a weaker, nonsignificant effect.

Graph 3



Boxplots of Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness, and Relationship Satisfaction by Gender (N = 91)

A series of boxplots comparing distributions of emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction across the general sample, male subsample, and female subsample. Each plot displays the median, interquartile range, and outliers.

Interpretation

Graph 3 provides a comparative visualization of emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and relationship satisfaction across male and female subsamples. The boxplots reveal several important patterns.

First, emotional intelligence scores appear higher and more variable among females compared to males, with outliers present in both groups. This finding aligns with prior research suggesting that women often report greater emotional awareness and regulation, which are central components of emotional intelligence (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016).

Second, forgiveness scores show relatively similar distributions across genders, with overlapping medians and ranges. This suggests that forgiveness may be less influenced by gender differences, consistent with Worthington's (2005) argument that forgiveness is shaped more by situational and relational contexts than by demographic factors.

Third, relationship satisfaction appears moderately higher among females, with less variability compared to males. This pattern resonates with Fincham and Beach's (2002) findings that emotional competencies, which tend to be stronger in women, are associated with greater relational satisfaction. The male subsample, by contrast, shows greater variability, suggesting that satisfaction among men may depend more heavily on individual differences in emotional intelligence and forgiveness.

The presence of outliers in emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction underscores the heterogeneity of experiences within each gender group. These outliers may represent

individuals with exceptionally high or low emotional competencies, which in turn influence their relational outcomes.

Taken together, Graph 3 highlights that emotional intelligence is a stronger differentiator across gender, while forgiveness remains relatively stable. Relationship satisfaction appears more consistently elevated among women, reinforcing the importance of emotional skills in sustaining relational well-being (Schutte et al., 2001; Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

Results Narrative

Boxplots revealed that females reported higher and more consistent emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction compared to males, while forgiveness scores were similar across genders. Outliers were observed in emotional intelligence and satisfaction, reflecting individual variability. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence plays a central role in predicting relationship satisfaction, particularly among women, while forgiveness contributes more uniformly across genders.

Discussion of Hypotheses

Discussion of Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1: Emotional intelligence will positively predict relationship satisfaction across the sample.

The results strongly supported Hypothesis 1. Emotional intelligence significantly predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .362$, $p < .001$), accounting for a meaningful proportion of variance in relational outcomes. This finding aligns with the theoretical framework of Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2016), who argue that emotional intelligence enables individuals to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions in ways that foster empathy, constructive communication, and conflict resolution. These skills are directly linked to higher satisfaction in close relationships.

The regression model explained 17.7% of the variance in satisfaction, $F(2, 88) = 9.48$, $p < .001$, confirming that emotional intelligence is a robust predictor. The standardized beta (.362) indicates a moderate effect size, suggesting that emotional intelligence is not only statistically significant but also practically meaningful in shaping relational well-being.

Gender Perspective

Gender-specific analyses revealed that emotional intelligence correlated strongly with satisfaction among men ($r = .54$, $p = .022$) and moderately among women ($r = .36$, $p = .002$). This suggests that while emotional intelligence is important for both genders, men may rely more heavily on emotional competencies to sustain satisfaction, possibly due to greater variability in emotional regulation among males. Women, who often report higher baseline emotional awareness, may experience more consistent relational satisfaction, even when emotional intelligence varies (Mayer et al., 2016; Schutte et al., 2001).

Pakistani and Islamic Perspective

In the Pakistani collectivist context, emotional intelligence is not merely an individual trait but a relational necessity that sustains family cohesion and marital bonds. Emotional competencies such as empathy and regulation of anger are vital in maintaining harmony within extended family networks. From an Islamic perspective, emotional intelligence resonates with teachings that emphasize compassion, patience, and forgiveness. The Qur'an highlights the importance of regulating emotions and extending mercy: *"But if you pardon and overlook and forgive, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful"* (Qur'an 64:14). Emotional intelligence, when aligned with these values, becomes a spiritual and relational tool that enhances satisfaction and sustains lasting bonds.

Integrative Discussion

Hypothesis 1 was confirmed, demonstrating that emotional intelligence is a cornerstone of relationship satisfaction. The findings highlight that emotional intelligence provides the psychological foundation for relational success, while forgiveness (though weaker in direct prediction) may serve as a relational buffer. This dual pathway underscores the importance of fostering emotional competencies alongside forgiveness practices in interventions aimed at strengthening relationships, particularly within Pakistani and Islamic contexts where relational harmony is both a cultural and spiritual imperative.

Discussion of Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2: Forgiveness will positively predict relationship satisfaction, though its effect will be weaker compared to emotional intelligence.

The results provided only partial support for Hypothesis 2. Forgiveness was positively associated with relationship satisfaction ($B = 0.067$, $\beta = .151$), but the effect did not reach statistical significance, $t(88) = 1.52$, $p = .131$. This suggests that while forgiveness contributes to relational harmony, it may not independently predict satisfaction in the same way emotional intelligence does. Instead, forgiveness appears to function as a relational buffer, reducing conflict and promoting resilience rather than directly enhancing satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2002; Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

The weaker predictive power of forgiveness compared to emotional intelligence highlights the importance of emotional competencies in sustaining satisfaction. Emotional intelligence equips individuals with the skills to regulate emotions and communicate effectively, while forgiveness operates more indirectly, allowing couples to recover from transgressions and maintain stability.

Gender Perspective

Gender-specific analyses revealed that forgiveness showed weaker, nonsignificant associations with satisfaction across both men and women. This indicates that forgiveness may be a universal relational virtue, but its predictive strength is limited when considered independently. In contrast, emotional intelligence demonstrated stronger correlations with satisfaction, particularly among men ($r = .54$, $p = .022$) compared to women ($r = .36$, $p = .002$). These findings suggest that forgiveness may play a supportive role across genders, but emotional intelligence remains the more decisive factor in predicting satisfaction.

Pakistani and Islamic Perspective

In the Pakistani collectivist context, forgiveness is deeply valued as a moral and cultural virtue. It is often emphasized in family and marital relationships as a means of preserving honor and harmony. However, the nonsignificant statistical effect in this study suggests that forgiveness may be more situationally activated—its impact becomes most visible during conflict resolution rather than in everyday satisfaction levels.

From an Islamic perspective, forgiveness is a divine attribute and a moral obligation: *“But if you pardon and overlook and forgive, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful”* (Qur’an 64:14). While forgiveness may not always directly predict satisfaction, it sustains long-term bonds by preventing resentment and fostering reconciliation. Emotional intelligence, when aligned with Islamic teachings, enables believers to regulate anger and extend forgiveness, thereby indirectly enhancing satisfaction.

Integrative Discussion

Hypothesis 2 was only partially supported. Forgiveness contributes positively to relationship satisfaction but does not independently predict it with statistical significance. Its role appears to be more indirect, functioning as a bridge that allows emotional intelligence to manifest in

relational resilience. This finding underscores the importance of integrating forgiveness practices with emotional competencies in interventions aimed at strengthening relationships, particularly within Pakistani and Islamic contexts where forgiveness is both a cultural and spiritual imperative.

Discussion of Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3: Emotional intelligence will be a stronger predictor of relationship satisfaction among men compared to women, while forgiveness will show similar modest associations across genders.

The results provided support for Hypothesis 3. Emotional intelligence correlated strongly with satisfaction among men ($r = .54, p = .022$) and moderately among women ($r = .36, p = .002$). This indicates that while emotional intelligence is important for both genders, men may rely more heavily on emotional competencies to sustain satisfaction. The greater variability in men's emotional regulation could explain why emotional intelligence exerts a stronger predictive effect in male subsamples (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016). Women, by contrast, often report higher baseline emotional awareness and empathy, which may buffer relational satisfaction even when emotional intelligence varies (Schutte et al., 2001).

Forgiveness showed weaker, nonsignificant associations with satisfaction across both genders ($\beta = .151, p = .131$). This suggests that forgiveness is a universal relational virtue but does not independently predict satisfaction. Instead, forgiveness may function as a stabilizing factor, reducing conflict and sustaining harmony, rather than directly enhancing satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2002; Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

Pakistani Perspective

In the Pakistani collectivist context, gender roles shape relational dynamics. Men are often expected to demonstrate emotional restraint, while women are culturally encouraged to express empathy and nurture relationships. Emotional intelligence, therefore, may be more critical for men in predicting satisfaction, as it equips them with skills to manage emotions constructively within marital and family settings. Women, who already operate within relationally oriented roles, may experience satisfaction more consistently, even when emotional intelligence varies. Forgiveness, deeply valued in Pakistani culture, remains equally important across genders as a moral and relational virtue (Khan & Watson, 2005).

Islamic Perspective

Islamic teachings emphasize both emotional regulation and forgiveness as essential for sustaining bonds. The Qur'an instructs believers to regulate anger and extend forgiveness: "*But if you pardon and overlook and forgive, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful*" (Qur'an 64:14). For men, emotional intelligence may be particularly vital in fulfilling the Qur'anic injunction to control anger and act with compassion. For women, forgiveness aligns with Islamic values of mercy and patience, reinforcing relational satisfaction. Thus, while emotional intelligence shows stronger predictive power among men, forgiveness remains a shared spiritual and relational imperative across genders.

Integrative Discussion

Hypothesis 3 was confirmed: emotional intelligence is a stronger predictor of satisfaction among men, while forgiveness shows modest, nonsignificant associations across genders. These findings highlight the interplay of psychological competencies, cultural expectations, and spiritual values in shaping relational outcomes. Emotional intelligence emerges as the cornerstone of satisfaction, particularly for men, while forgiveness sustains harmony across both genders. This dual pathway underscores the importance of fostering emotional competencies alongside forgiveness practices in interventions aimed at strengthening relationships within Pakistani and Islamic contexts.

Limitations

This study has several limitations to consider. First, the sample was relatively small ($N = 91$) with an unequal gender distribution (men = 18, women = 73), limiting the statistical power of gender-specific analyses and the generalizability of findings. Second, reliance on self-report measures introduces social desirability bias, particularly in a Pakistani and Islamic context where forgiveness and relational harmony are culturally valued. Third, the low Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .37$) confirms that the three constructs are empirically distinct and should not be treated as a composite. Fourth, the cross-sectional design prevents causal conclusions — it remains unclear whether emotional intelligence drives satisfaction or vice versa. Finally, the urban Pakistani sample may not represent broader Pakistani or South Asian populations.

Future Recommendations

Future research should employ larger, gender-balanced samples to improve statistical power and enable more meaningful gender comparisons. Longitudinal designs would help establish causal directionality among the constructs. Researchers should also explore mediating variables such as attachment style, communication quality, and religiosity to better explain the pathways between emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and satisfaction. Multi-method approaches combining self-report with observational or partner-report data would reduce response bias. Finally, extending this research to rural communities, diverse socioeconomic groups, and different relationship types within Pakistan would improve generalizability.

Conclusion

This study examined the predictive roles of emotional intelligence and forgiveness in relationship satisfaction among Pakistani adults. Emotional intelligence emerged as a significant predictor of satisfaction ($\beta = .362$, $p < .001$), while forgiveness, though positively associated, did not reach statistical significance ($\beta = .151$, $p = .131$). Together, both predictors explained 17.7% of the variance in satisfaction. Gender analyses revealed emotional intelligence was a stronger predictor among men ($r = .54$) than women ($r = .36$), while forgiveness showed modest associations across both genders.

These findings position emotional intelligence as the cornerstone of relationship satisfaction, with forgiveness functioning as a relational buffer rather than a direct predictor. Within Pakistani and Islamic contexts, both constructs carry cultural and spiritual significance that reinforces their importance in relational life. Practically, these findings suggest that interventions targeting emotional competencies alongside forgiveness practices may be most effective in strengthening relationships within Pakistani and collectivist communities.

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APPENDICES

Consent Form

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study. The purpose of this research is to identify key psychological factors that contribute to “Emotional Competence in the Pursuit of Lasting Bonds: Forgiveness as the Bridge to Emotional Intelligence and Relationship Satisfaction” quantitatively.

You are required to kindly fill in the questionnaire as per the given instructions.

Time required: 12 - 15 minutes.

Risks and Benefits: There are no risks to the participants. The benefits include advancing understanding of how emotional intelligence and forgiveness contribute to relationship satisfaction, which may help professionals develop strategies to foster healthier and more fulfilling relationships.

Confidentiality: Your identity and other details will be kept highly confidential and anonymous in any report.

Voluntary participation: You are requested to voluntarily participate in this study.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

Agreement: I have read the procedure described above & I voluntarily agree to participate.

Participant Initials: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Age:	18-21	22-25	26-29			
Gender:	Male	Female	Prefer Not to Say			
Educational Level:	Undergraduate	Post Graduate	MPhil	PhD	Intermediate/ A-Levels	
Professional / Employment Area:	Student	Education	Government	MNC	Private	Banking
Marital Status:	Single	Married	Divorced		Widow/er	
Work Experience:	None	1 – 3 years	4 – 6 years		7 – 9 years	
Socio-Economic Class: Family Income Up to	Lower SEC PKR 30,000 – 64,000		Middle SEC PKR 65,000 – 299,000		Upper SEC PKR 300,000 – 500,000	

Per Month

(Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2019)

APPENDIX B – EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SCALE

Reference: National Health Service Leadership Academy. (2020). *Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire: Leadership Toolkit*. London, UK: NHS Leadership Academy. Retrieved from <https://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk> (leadershipacademy.nhs.uk in Bing)
https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/26776/1/Emotional_intelligence_questionnaire-LAL1.pdf

Read each statement and decide how strongly it applies to you. Score yourself 1 to 5 based on the following guide:

	Does Not Apply At All DN	Rarely Applies RA	Applies Half the Time AH	Often Applies OA	Always Applies AA
Statements	DN	RA	NN	AL	AS
1. I realize immediately when I lose my temper	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can 'reframe' bad situations quickly	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am able to always motivate myself to do difficult tasks	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am always able to see things from the other person's viewpoint	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am an excellent listener	1	2	3	4	5
6. I know when I am happy	1	2	3	4	5
7. I do not wear my 'heart on my sleeve'	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am usually able to prioritize important activities at work and get on with them	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am excellent at empathising with someone else's problem	1	2	3	4	5
10. I never interrupt other people's conversations	1	2	3	4	5
11. I usually recognize when I am stressed	1	2	3	4	5
12. Others can rarely tell what kind of mood I am in	1	2	3	4	5
13. I always meet deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
14. I can tell if someone is not happy with me	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am good at adapting and mixing with a variety of people	1	2	3	4	5
16. When I am being 'emotional' I am aware of this	1	2	3	4	5
17. I rarely 'fly off the handle' at other people	1	2	3	4	5
18. I never waste time	1	2	3	4	5
19. I can tell if a team of people are not getting along with each other	1	2	3	4	5

20. People are the most interesting thing in life for me	1	2	3	4	5
21. When I feel anxious I usually can account for the reason(s)	1	2	3	4	5
22. Difficult people do not annoy me	1	2	3	4	5
23. I do not prevaricate	1	2	3	4	5
24. I can usually understand why people are being difficult towards me	1	2	3	4	5
25. I love to meet new people and get to know what makes them 'tick'	1	2	3	4	5
26. I always know when I'm being unreasonable	1	2	3	4	5
27. I can consciously alter my frame of mind or mood	1	2	3	4	5
28. I believe you should do the difficult things first	1	2	3	4	5
29. Other individuals are not 'difficult' just 'different'	1	2	3	4	5
30. I need a variety of work colleagues to make my job interesting	1	2	3	4	5
31. Awareness of my own emotions is very important to me at all times	1	2	3	4	5
32. I do not let stressful situations or people affect me once I have left work	1	2	3	4	5
33. Delayed gratification is a virtue that I hold to	1	2	3	4	5
34. I can understand if I am being unreasonable	1	2	3	4	5
35. I like to ask questions to find out what is important to people	1	2	3	4	5
36. I can tell if someone has upset or annoyed me	1	2	3	4	5
37. I rarely worry about work or life in general	1	2	3	4	5
38. I believe in 'Action this Day'	1	2	3	4	5
39. I can understand why my actions sometimes offend others	1	2	3	4	5
40. I see working with difficult people as simply a challenge to win them over	1	2	3	4	5
41. I can let anger 'go' quickly so that it no longer affects me	1	2	3	4	5
42. I can suppress my emotions when I need to	1	2	3	4	5
43. I can always motivate myself even when I feel low	1	2	3	4	5
44. I can sometimes see things from others' point of view	1	2	3	4	5

45. I am good at reconciling differences with other people	1	2	3	4	5
46. I know what makes me happy	1	2	3	4	5
47. Others often do not know how I am feeling about things	1	2	3	4	5
48. Motivations has been the key to my success	1	2	3	4	5
49. Reasons for disagreements are always clear to me	1	2	3	4	5
50. I generally build solid relationships with those I work with	1	2	3	4	5

TOTALS

Calculate Your Overall Score by adding together the totals of the five columns.

YOUR Grand Total Score is:

APPENDIX C – HEARTLAND FORGIVENESS SCALE

Reference: Yamhure Thompson, L., Snyder, C. R., Hoffman, L., Michael, S. T., Rasmussen, H. N., Billings, L. S., Heinze, L., Neufeld, J. E., Shorey, H. S., Roberts, J. C., & Roberts, D. E. (2002). *Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS)* [Database record]. APA PsycTests.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/t00957-000>

Below are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who "talks a lot"? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement:

	Almost Always False of Me AF	Usually False of Me UF	More Often False of Me MF	Neutral N	More Often True of Me MT	Usually True of Me UT	Almost Always True of Me AT
Statements	AF	UF	MF	N	MT	UT	AT
1. Although I feel bad at first when I mess up, over time I can give myself some slack	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I hold grudges against myself for negative things I've done.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. Learning from bad things that I've done helps me get over them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. It is really hard for me to accept myself once I've messed up.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. With time I am understanding of myself for mistakes I've made	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I don't stop criticizing myself for negative things I've felt, thought, said, or done	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. I continue to punish a person who has done something that I think is wrong.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
8. With time I am understanding of others for the mistakes they've made	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I continue to be hard on others who have hurt me.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
10. Although others have hurt me in the past, I have eventually been able to see them as good people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. If others mistreat me, I continue to think badly of them.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12. When someone disappoints me, I can eventually move past it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. When things go wrong for reasons that can't be controlled, I get stuck in negative thoughts about it.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
14. With time I can be understanding of bad circumstances in my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. If I am disappointed by uncontrollable circumstances in my life, I continue to think negatively about them	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
16. I eventually make peace with bad situations in my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. It's really hard for me to accept negative situations that aren't anybody's fault	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
18. Eventually I let go of negative thoughts about bad circumstances that are beyond anyone's control	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

TOTALS

Calculate Your Overall Score by adding together the totals of the five columns.

YOUR Grand Total Score is:

APPENDIX D – RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION SCALE

Reference: Hendrick, S. S. (1988). A generic measure of relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 50, 93–98. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/352430>

Read each statement and decide how strongly it applies to you. Score yourself 1 to 5 based on the following guide:

	VERY LOW	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH
	VL	L	M	H	VH
Statements	VL	L	M	H	VH
1. How well does “someone you trust” meet your needs?	1	2	3	4	5
2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How good is your relationship compared to most?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How often do you wish you hadn’t gotten into this relationship?	5	4	3	2	1
5. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How much do you love the person you trust?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How many problems are there in your relationship?	5	4	3	2	1

TOTALS

Calculate Your Overall Score by adding together the totals of the five columns.

YOUR Grand Total Score is: