



## Relationship Between Psychological Resilience, Forgiveness and God Perception

Fatma Baynal<sup>\*</sup> , Saliha Uysal<sup>\*\*</sup>

### Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between psychological resilience, forgiveness, and the perception of God and their correlation. The research was conducted using the relational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. The sample of the study consisted of adult individuals. A total of 549 people—316 women and 233 men—participated in the research. “Tendency to Forgive Scale”, “Heartland Forgiveness Scale (Self Forgiveness)”, “Brief Resilience Scale”, and “God Perception Scale” were used as data collection tools in the research. The data obtained within the scope of the research was analyzed using the SPSS (Version 25) program. The findings of the research provide evidence that the love and fear of God among women are reported to be higher than among men. The study also shows there is a positive correlation between income and love and fear of God, which means the lower the income is, the lower the fear and love of God. Marital status and age have also been reported to influence the level of forgiveness. The study demonstrates that religiosity is another factor that is positively correlated with forgiveness. The level of forgiveness is comparatively higher in individuals who identify themselves as religious; it has been found that love of God and fear of God are associated with forgiveness. It has been revealed that there is a significant relationship between psychological resilience, self-forgiveness, and God perception. In other words, self-forgiveness and positive God perception contribute to psychological resilience.

**Keywords:** Psychology of Religion, Religiousness, Forgiveness, God Perception, Psychological Resilience

\* **Corresponding Author:** Fatma Baynal (Assoc. Prof. Dr.), Yalova University, Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Department of Psychology of Religion, Yalova, Türkiye. E-mail: fatmayogurtcu@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0002-6705-4340

\*\* Saliha Uysal (Asst. Prof. Dr.), İstanbul University, Theology Faculty, Psychology of Religion, İstanbul, Türkiye. E-mail: saliha.uysal@istanbul.edu.tr ORCID: 0000-0003-0408-7775

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## Introduction

Psychological resilience means recovering quickly in the face of illness, depression, or separation. It is a phenomenon that has been emphasized in recent years, which is a person's reaction to life challenges. In psychological resilience, protective factors that mitigate the negative impact and adaptation in the face of risk are essential. Studies on the subject have focused on the individual's adaptation in the face of risks. It turns out that such individuals who have high psychological resilience have high interpersonal relationships and strong problem-solving skills (Karairmak 2009, 131).

Psychological resilience may present itself in varying forms such as the ability for a child to continue his life in a healthy way in a family with psychological problems or the ability of an individual to adapt to life after the loss of a parent. These cases have common features of resilience such as coping with difficulties, having a personality trait that allows coping with these difficulties, and the ability to adapt to stressful life events (Öz and Yılmaz 2009a, 83). It has been suggested that for people to attain high psychological resilience, they need to require certain virtues and forgiveness can be seen as one of these virtues.

Forgiveness means abandoning negative thoughts or behaviors when faced with injustice; in some cases, it means having a positive attitude (Rye and Pargament 2002, 419). There are different types of forgiveness. Forgiveness because of the other person experiencing the same thing that has happened to him is vengeful forgiveness. It is conditional forgiveness for a person to forgive on the condition of getting back what he has lost. Forgiveness for the expectations of others is expectation-oriented forgiveness. Forgiveness that prioritizes social peace is forgiveness for social harmony. Forgiveness full of love for the sake of continuing the relationship. Forgiveness due to religious/philosophical views is conscientious forgiveness (Enright, Santos, and Al-Mabuk 1989, 105–8). According to Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000), it might take a certain amount of time before a person can forgive. According to them, real forgiveness is out of the question in attitudes and behaviors such as condoning, ignoring, reconciling, leaving it to time, caring about its interests and verbally saying that one forgives. Studies have shown that forgiveness has positive effects on a person's psychological well-being.

Maintaining mental health is important for people to continue their lives in a healthy way and to cope with the troubles experienced (Taşcı Yıldırım 2022, 54). According to a study, people who forgive others are less prone to psychological problems such as depression and anxiety (Sheffield 2003, vi). In terms of religions, forgiveness is also an important virtue. Sinners and their victims handled and

forgiveness in terms of a more harmonious continuation of marriage, family, and society (McCullough 2002, 20). Studies show positive results between religiosity and mental health (Gürsu 2011, 3). It is revealed that religious beliefs and practices are related to coping with problematic situations (Pargament 2005, 27) and getting away from stressful situations (Beagan, Etowa, and Bernard 2012, 103); in recovery from traumatic events (Drumm et al. 2014, 385); in reducing psychopathological disorders and boosting personal health (Kalkstein and Tower 2009, 402); in reducing anxiety and depression (Mann et al. 2008, 19; Waddell and Lawson 2010, 181) in accepting disease and clinging to life (Conway-Phillips and Janusek 2014, 72,77; Mesquita et al. 2013, 539; Valcanti et al. 2012, 837); and in the reduction of addiction and suicidal behaviors (Unterrainer, Lewis, and Fink 2014, 382). Accordingly, forgiveness is an important virtue in terms of psychological resilience and in terms of religion. When it comes to religions, the Perception of God<sup>1</sup> is among the concepts that have come to the fore in recent studies. In particular, there is a mutual interaction in terms of positive God perception and psychological health in the research.

The first theory regarding God perception is that Freud regarded God as a projection of the “father” image. According to him, individuals in childhood overcome their helplessness by holding on to a strong father figure. This situation will leave the place of the father figure to the believed God in the coming years (Erten 2010, 11). Jung however, defines God as an archetypal aspect of the unconscious and a product of individual experience. According to him, the God archetype directs the behavior of people by reaching the conscious from the unconscious and making himself accepted. Accordingly, the image of God is the symbolic expression of a certain psychological state in individuals (Aydın 2010, 60). The perception of God has also been explained with different theories. According to the object relations theory, God representations emerges as a reflection of the relationship between the child and his parents. According to Rizzuto, in addition to one’s parents, one’s close environment such as grandmother, grandfather, or teacher, also affects one’s representation of God. According to Kirkpatrick, who associates the attachment theory developed by Bowlby with the representation of God, there are secure, avoidant or anxious attachment styles established with parents on the basis of God representation (Çetin 2019, 179).

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1 There is abundance research in the literature for *taşawwur* of God with using different terms as “God representation”, “God concept”, “God image”, “Heart knowledge of God”. There is not a conceptual precision. However, we tried to stick to the original usages (perception, image, representation...etc) of the term in articles, while making references in this study. (For details pls see: Forcada, 2014; Sharp 2019).

Harms listed the periods of religious development in three periods. He described the first period between the ages of 3 and 6 as the fairy-tale stage. According to him, children envision God as one of the heroes in fairy tales such as giants, dragons, and winged angels. In the second period, the age of 7-12, the child embodies God; the priest, like Jesus, can perceive God as a real person. The age of 12-18 years and above is divided into two subsections as traditional and mystical religious depictions (Yıldız 2007, 59–60). It is stated that the perception of God is parallel to Piaget’s theory of cognitive development. In the 0-2 age period, the relationship that the baby establishes with its parents shapes the imagination of God in the mind of the individual. The child, who is in the concrete operational stage at the age of 3-6, embodies God and anthropomorphic features are attributed to God. Between the ages of 7 and 12, the perception of children becomes more concrete. While God was conceived as an ordinary human being in the previous period, a more powerful being like Zeus is conceived in this period. God is thought to be a merciful or punishing being. For individuals aged 12 and over, God is interpreted with a more abstract way of thinking such as love and trust (Yıldız 2007, 92–93). Previous studies found a positive relationship between a positive God image and psychological well-being (Kirkpatrick and Shaver 1992, 266). Based on these findings this study examined, what kind of relationship is found between psychological resilience, forgiveness, and God perception. The data obtained will shed light on further research in this area. The main hypothesis of the research was determined as “There is a significant relationship between psychological resilience, God perception and forgiveness”. Studies have been conducted in the field of forgiveness; however, there have not been enough studies on the relationship between forgiveness, God perception and psychological resilience. Therefore, this study will contribute to the field of religious psychology.

This research has some limitations. Since the research was carried out on a group, it is limited to the selected sample. In addition, due to the cross-sectional nature of the study, the findings are limited to the time the research was conducted.

## Method

### 1. Participants

The research data were collected through a questionnaire between October and December 2022. Data were collected from 561 volunteer participants aged 18 and over. The questionnaire forms of the individuals who were rejected and under the age of 18 were removed from the data, and 549 final samples were reached from 561 people. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are as follows:

Of the participants, 316 (57.6%) were female and 233 (42.4%) were male. 125 people were aged 18-24 (22.8%), 112 people were aged 25-34 (20.4%), 229 people were aged 35-50 (41.7%), 72 people were aged 50-59 (13.1%, and 11 people (2.0%) were between the ages of 60-69. Overall, the survey was conducted with a highly educated participant group: The order in the table is as follows: 5 people (0.9%) had a primary school degree, 44 people (8%) had a secondary school degree, 5 people (0.9%) had an associate degree, 361 people (65.8%) had an undergraduate degree and 134 people (24.4%) had a graduate level degree.

**Table 1.**  
*Demographic Characteristics*

Gender	N	Age	N	Education	N
Female	316	18-24	125	Primary	5
Male	233	25-34	112	Secondary	44
		35-50	229	Associate	5
		50-59	72	Undergraduate	361
		60-69	11	Graduate	134

As for the marital status of the participants, 219 people were single (39.9%), 304 people (55.4%) were married, 24 people (4.4%) were divorced, and 2 were widowed (0.4%). Based on their own statement, the socioeconomic status of the participants was as follows: 19 (3.5%) had a low economic level, 300 (54.6%) had a moderate economic level, 155 (28.2%) had a good economic level and 20 (3.6%) had a very good economic level.

In the answers given to the questions related to subjective perception of religiosity in the personal information form, the level of religiosity of the participants was found to be high. The responds were as follows: 104 people (18.9%) were slightly religious, 392 (71.4%) religious, 32 (5.8%) very religious, 21 (3.8%) non-religious/ not interested in religion.

**2. Data Collection Instruments**

Four different scales were applied to the participants in this study. In addition, questions were asked to collect information about personal characteristics. The scales named *Heartland Forgiveness Scale (Dimension of Self Forgiveness)*, *God Perception Scale*, *Tendency to Forgive Scale* and *Brief Resilience Scale* were used in the research.

*The Heartland Forgiveness Scale* developed by Thompson et al. (2005) consists of three sub-dimensions; forgiveness of self, forgiveness of other and forgiveness of situations. Consisting of 18 items in total, a seven-point Likert scale was used. In this study, a self-forgiveness subscale from three sub-dimensions is applied.

The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 42. In the Turkish version, the Cronbach's alpha value was calculated as .81. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient for the self-forgiveness subscale was found to be .64. In the self-forgiveness factor, there are items such as regretting mistakes made and getting angry with oneself, not being able to forgive oneself when things go wrong, and regretting when one has negative thoughts and feelings. Bugay and Demir (2010) adapted the Turkish version of this scale.

*The God Perception Scale* is a 22-item scale developed to determine positive and negative God perception. Güler (2007b), has developed a scale that aims to measure perceptions of God. The items of the scale were arranged as none (1), partially (2), somewhat (3), quite (4), completely (5). In the God Perception scale, the scale items were created as a five-point Likert type in the form of fear orientation and love orientation. Expressions of love are scored straight, while expressions of fear are reverse scored. The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 110. Due to these expressions of love numbered 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20 and 22; and expressions of fear numbered 2,3,7,8,10,14,15,16,18 are reverse scored. The reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .83. As a result of the analyzes made, it was seen that the God Perception Scale (TA) was a reliable and valid scale. High scores from the scale refer to the individual's positive (love-oriented) perception of God; low scores indicate a negative (punishing, fear-oriented) perception of God.

In the study, the "Forgiveness Scale" which was developed by Berry et al (2005) and adapted into Turkish by Akın, Gediksiz, and Akın (2012) was used to measure the forgiveness levels of the participants. The scale is one-dimensional and consists of 10 items. It is a 5-point Likert-type response scale from strongly disagree to disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. Items 1, 3, 6, 7, and 8 are reverse scored. Scores can range from 10 (min.) to 50 (max.). Higher scores indicate that the individual has a high tendency to forgive (Akın, Akın, and Gediksiz 2012).

*The Brief Resilience Scale* (BRS), developed by Smith et al. (2008) to measure resilience levels, was adopted into Turkish by Tayfun Dogan. It is a 5-point Likert-type, 6-item, self-report measurement tool. High scores on the scale indicate high psychological resilience. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be .83 (Doğan 2015, 93-95).

## Data Analysis

In the study, God perception, forgiveness and self-forgiveness were analyzed in terms of psychological resilience. For this purpose, it was tested whether there

was a difference between the groups. Factor and internal consistency analyses were performed for the scales and their validity and reliability were examined. T-test, ANOVA and Pearson correlation analyses were performed to test whether the difference between psychological resilience, God perception, and forgiveness, and self-forgiveness was statistically significant. SPSS (v25) software was used for the analysis of the data obtained in the research. In the analysis, first, the relationships of age, gender, income level, marital status variables with resilience, forgiveness and self-forgiveness were examined, and then the differences between psychological resilience and forgiveness, self-forgiveness and God perception were examined. Correlation, t-test, one-way Anova Scheffe and LSD processes were applied in the analyses. The significant findings were included in the study. Before the application, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research and informed that the data obtained would be kept confidential. Ethical permission was obtained for the research, with the protocol restriction of 2022/113 dated 07.10.2022.

Findings and Discussion

At this stage of the study, the differences between the levels of religiosity, psychological resilience, self-forgiveness, and God perception were examined according to demographic variables. The data was analyzed and shown in tables. The results of the analyses were evaluated. How does gender make a difference in terms of sub-dimensions of God vision, self-forgiveness, forgiveness, psychological resilience, and subjective religiosity? The answer to this question is given in the table:

Comparisons Between Groups by Gender

Table 2.  
Comparisons Between Groups by Gender and Variables with Significant Differences (t-test)

	Gender	N	Mean	SS	t	p
Religiosity	Female	316	1.93	.578	-.762	.446
	Male	233	1.97	.697		
Love of God	Female	316	4.5759	.56841	2.881	.004
	Male	233	4.4074	.80239		
Fear of God	Female	316	4.2013	.60663	4.560	.000
	Male	233	3.9391	.73893		
Self-Forgiveness	Female	316	4.8059	.82163	.007	.995
	Male	233	4.8054	.83135		
Resilience	Female	316	3.6962	.55286	-1.085	.279
	Male	233	3.7525	.63410		
God perception	Female	316	4.3383	.57830	.093	.926
	Male	233	4.3330	.75814		
Forgiveness	Female	316	3.2304	.61878	-.627	.529
	Male	233	3.2635	.60258		



According to the data obtained in Table 2, the gender variable causes a difference in terms of love of God and fear of God. According to the results of the research, the love of God was found to be higher in women ( $M=4.57$ ) than in men ( $M=4.40$ ). There is a significant difference between the groups ( $p<.05$ ). According to the table, fear of God is also higher in women ( $M=4.20$ ) than in men ( $M=3.93$ ). A significant difference was found between the groups ( $p<.001$ ). According to the table, fear of God is also higher in women ( $M=4.20$ ) than in men ( $M=3.93$ ). A significant difference was found between the groups ( $p=.000$ ).

In some research results, it has been found that women's representation of God are more positive than men's (Mehmedoğlu 2011; Yıldız and Ünal 2017, 16). In Taçar's study (2022, 139) while definitions such as love, kindness and warmth were at the forefront in girls' imagination of God, definitions of power were at the forefront in boys. As a result of Seyhan's research (2014, 90) it was determined that while the positive God images of female students was significantly higher than that of male students, negative God imagery was lower. Likewise, in this study, while the love of God was higher than males, the fear of God was also higher. This can be explained by the fact that women are more emotion-oriented than men. There was no significant difference between forgiveness and self-forgiveness by gender. Although there is little difference between them, self-forgiveness is higher in women and forgiveness is higher in men. Self-forgiveness was found to be higher in women ( $M=4.8059$ ) than men ( $M=4.8054$ ). The average of men ( $M=3.26$ ) in the tendency to forgive is higher than the average of women ( $M=3.23$ ). The studies investigating gender differences in forgiveness have documented different results, while male participants showed more forgiveness in some studies, females turned out to be more prone to forgive in some others (Kurtlar 2020, 556). But in some studies, it has been revealed that there is no difference between men and women regarding forgiveness (Macaskill 2007; Toussaint and Webb 2005). According to the results of Karduz's research (2019, 192) the level of forgiveness of women was lower than that of men. Karduz interpreted this situation as women's being emotional may make it difficult for them to forgive. As a result of Gündüz research (2014), it was concluded that religious orientation and gender are not related to self-forgiveness. According to the results of the research, including these studies, it can be said that there is no clarity regarding forgiveness based on gender.

According to Table 1, while there was no difference between psychological resilience and gender, resilience was higher in males. The mean of males was higher with ( $M=3.75$ ) than the mean of females with ( $M=3.69$ ) in psychological resilience, but there was no significant difference ( $p=.279$ ). As a result of Halisdemir's research (2013, 93), it was seen that the gender variable was not a significant predictor of psychological well-being.



At the level of subjective religiosity, the average of men is ( $M=1.97$ ), and the average of women is ( $M=1.93$ ). Women come out more religious in some researches (Açıkgöz 2010, 52,85; Özüdoğru 2009, 205). However, there are different results in studies on whether a woman or a man is more religious. While there are studies in which the result shows females are more religious (Coştu 2011, 232; Yazgan 2014, 108–10). There are also research results where males are more religious (Turan 2017). As a result, in this study, it was revealed that there was a significant difference between the gender variable and the love of God and fear of God.

### ***Fear of God and Love of God According to Income Level***

**Table 3.**

*Fear of God and Love of God According to Income Level (ANOVA)*

Income Level		N	X	SS	F	Sig	Difference
Fear of God	1 (high)	19	3.5579	.67191	3.648	.006	Between 1,2,3 and 4 (LSD)
	2 (good)	55	4.0600	.74277			
	3 (middle)	300	4.0973	.67427			
	4 (low)	155	4.1658	.59242			
	5 (low)	20	3.9800	.95510			
	Total	549	4.0900	.67788			
Love of God	1	19	4.0789	.89083	2.547	.039	Between 1,2,3 and 4 (LSD)
	2	55	4.4788	.72439			
	3	300	4.5200	.67337			
	4	155	4.5591	.63358			
	5	20	4.3208	.73463			
	Total	549	4.5044	.68209			

According to the data in Table 3, the differentiation between income level and love of God and fear of God was significant. In the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), a statistically significant difference was found between the groups. According to the results of the LSD test, there is a significant difference between the first group and the second, third and fourth groups. According to this, the fear of God ( $M= 3.55$ ) of those with high income level is lower. The group with the lowest income ( $M= 4.16$ ) is the group with the highest fear of God ( $p < .05$ ). Love of God ( $M= 4.07$ ) is lower for those with higher incomes; those with low-income levels ( $M=4.55$ ) had a higher love of God ( $p=.039$ ). In the studies on religiosity, the level of religiosity of those with a high average income is high (Kurt 2009, 18). This situation can also be reflected in the perception of God. As Hell and Fujikawa stated, in addition to cognitive factors, social, motivational, and emotional factors are also effective in our views on God (Sevinç 2020, 205). Accordingly, it can be said that the social environment and economic level of the person are also effective in the God perception. In this study, love of God and fear of God were found to be low in those with high income.

Tendency to Forgiveness by Age

Table 4.  
Tendency to Forgiveness by Age (ANOVA)

Age		N	X	SS	F	Sig	Difference
Forgiveness	1 (18-24)	125	3.1088	.56952	8.723	.000	Between 1, 3,4 and 5 (LSD) Between 2, 3,4 and 5
	2 (25-34)	112	3.0893	.55448			
	3 (35-50)	229	3.2952	.64606			
	4 (50-59)	72	3.4861	.54909			
	5 (60-69)	11	3.7273	.41495			
	Total	549	3.2444	.61162			

According to the data in Table 4, a statistically significant difference was found between the tendency to forgive according to age. A significant difference was found between 1 and 4.5 and between 2 and 4.5 in the Scheffe test. There is a significant difference between all ages except 1 and 2 in the LSD test. According to these results, the tendency to forgive (M= 3.72) increases with age (p<.05).

Forgiveness enable one to reduce obsessive thoughts, negative emotions, and hostile behaviors (Çolak and Koç 2016, 14). According to the results of Mitrofan and Ciuluvica’s research (2012, 65), it was revealed that anger and aggression are related lack of forgiveness. As a result of Girard and Mullet’s research (Girard and Mullet 1997), adults are more likely to forgive than adolescents. In some studies, it has been revealed that individuals in late adulthood and old age are more forgiving than young people. This is due to the fact that the person is more committed to his beliefs and values that advise forgiveness and attaches importance to friendships (Kurtlar 2020, 556). In Yıldız’s study (2007, 157) the punishing God representation is high in children; it has been observed that the forgiving image is higher as the age progresses. The results of Ayten and Tura’s research (2017, 27) revealed that the tendency to forgive increases as age increases. Accordingly, the results of the research were like the findings of this study. As individuals get older, they are more inclined to forgive.

Marital Status and Forgiveness, Fear of God, and Love of God

Table 5.  
Variance Between Marital Status and Forgiveness, Fear of God, and Love of God (ANOVA, Scheffe, LSD Test)

Marital Status		N	X	SS	F	p	Difference
Fear of God	1	219	3.9311	.73904	10.403	.000	Between 1 and 2 (Scheffe/ LSD)
	2	304	4.1987	.62097			
	3	26	4.1577	.51627			
	Total	549	4.0900	.67788			
Love of God	1	219	4.4064	.71405	3.824	.022	Between 1 and 2 (Scheffe/ LSD)
	2	304	4.5718	.63310			
	3	26	4.5417	.86803			
	Total	549	4.5044	.68209			

Forgiveness	1	219	3.0959	.57711	7.566	.000	Between 1 and 2 (Scheffe/ LSD)
	2	304	3.3493	.60754			
	3	26	3.2667	.68313			
	Total	549	3.2444	.61162			

According to Table 5, marital status created a statistical difference in terms of fear of God, love of God, and forgiveness. In the table 1<sup>st</sup> means single 2<sup>nd</sup> means married and 3<sup>rd</sup> means divorced or widowed. In the Scheffe test, there was a difference between the 1st and 2nd group in love of God, fear of God and forgiveness. Accordingly, love of God ( $p=.022$ ) and fear of God were higher in married people compared to single people ( $p=.000$ ).

It is expected that the attitudes of married individuals towards religion will be higher than those of single people due to the importance given by the society to the family and its expectations from the family and the responsibilities that increase with children (Turan 2017, 163). As a result of Arvas’ research (2017, 342) it has been revealed that religion contributes to providing happiness in marriages, supporting values, and coping with marital problems.

The level of tendency to forgive in married people ( $M=3.34$ ) was higher than in single people ( $M=3.09$ ) ( $p=.000$ ). Forgiveness is an important element in terms of healthy continuation and sustainability of relations (Yaman Akpınar and Altunsu Sönmez 2021, 204). As a result of Çitişlı Turgut’s research (2018, 48) it was revealed that forgiveness has a significant effect on marital satisfaction. Likewise, Sevinç (2020, 77) found that forgiveness is important in maintaining marital harmony and resolving disagreements. While forgiveness is important for the continuation of the couple’s relationship with each other in married individuals, it also plays an important role in the parent-child relationship (Fincham and May 2019, 260).

**Religiosity and the Tendency to Forgive**

**Tablo 6.**  
*Variance Between Religiosity and the Tendency to Forgive (ANOVA, LSD Test)*

Religiosity		N	X	SS	F	Sig	Difference
Forgiveness	1 (Highly religious)	104	3.1096	.57817	4.101	.007	Between 1 and 2,3 (LSD)
	2 (Religious)	392	3.2564	.59267			
	3 (Slightly Religious)	32	3.5281	.70264			
	4 (Non-Religious)	21	3.2571	.81827			
	Total	549	3.2444	.61162			

As it can see in Table 6, there was a significant difference between the 1st, 2nd and 3rd groups ( $p<.05$ ). According to this, the level of forgiveness was higher for those who were religious than those who were slightly religious and highly religious.

Forgiveness is mentioned in monotheistic religions (Auerbach 2005, 469). When the studies conducted between religiosity and forgiveness are examined, there are generally positive and significant relationships.

In a study, a highly significant positive relationship was found between forgiveness and religiosity (Orathinkal and Vansteenwegen 2007, 379). In Ayten's research, it was revealed that religiosity had a positive and significant relationship with forgiveness. Individuals are more forgiving and understanding towards those who commit crimes against them; it has been determined that they are far from actions such as taking revenge (Ayten 2009, 127). In addition, in terms of positive effects, forgiveness increases life satisfaction (Ayten, et al. 2012, 76), psychological relaxation (Horozcu 2010, 273), and psychological health (Gürsu 2011, 5). Studies have shown that forgiveness has a positive effect. In Şentepe's research (2016, 213) with 1092 students studying at Sakarya University, it was determined that religiosity affected forgiveness, and forgiveness and religiosity significantly affected mental health. As forgiveness piety increase, humility increases; found that mental disorders such as hostility, somatization, depression, negative self-perception, and anxiety decreased. In this study, it was revealed that religiosity is effective in forgiveness; in the studies conducted, it was found that the results of this research were parallel.

### ***Relationship Between Groups***

Under this title, the relationships between age, God perception, love of God, fear of God, resilience, forgiveness, and self-forgiveness are evaluated, and answers are searched for the questions "How is the relationship between age, God perception, love of God, fear of God, resilience, forgiveness and self-forgiveness?" In accordance with the research model, the Pearson weighted coefficients of the relationship between the variables (Pearson correlation coefficients) are used. The table showing the relationship between the variables is given below:

**Table 7.**  
*Relationships Between Religiosity, Perception of God, Love of God, Fear of God, Resilience, Forgiveness, and Self-Forgiveness (Pearson Correlation Values)*

		Religiosity	Self-Forgiveness	Psychological resilience	Perception of God	Forgiveness	Love of God	Fear of God
Religiosity	<i>r</i>	1	<b>.088*</b>	-.023	-.013	<b>.112*</b>	<b>-.105*</b>	<b>.093*</b>
	<i>p</i>		.039	.587	.760	.009	.013	.029
	N		549	549	549	549	549	549
Self-Forgiveness	<i>r</i>		1	<b>.103*</b>	.053	-.010	.030	<b>-.124**</b>
	<i>p</i>			.015	.214	.813	.480	.004
	N			549	549	549	549	549
Psychological Resilience	<i>r</i>			1	.001	-.063	.038	-.039
	<i>p</i>				.984	.141	.371	.363
	N				549	549	549	549
God perception	<i>r</i>				1	<b>.190**</b>	<b>.834**</b>	<b>-.796**</b>
	<i>p</i>					.000	.000	.000
	N					549	549	549
Forgiveness	<i>r</i>					1	<b>.100*</b>	<b>.216**</b>
	<i>p</i>						.019	.000
	N						549	549
Love of God	<i>r</i>						1	<b>.332**</b>
	<i>p</i>							.000
	N							549
Fear of God								<b>1</b>

\**p*<.05    \*\**p*<.01

According to the data in Table 7, there is a low correlation and a significant relationship between forgiveness, and religiosity ( $r=.112$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Not forgiving increases ruminations, reinforces the desire for revenge, and causes stress. This situation affects the psychology of the person negatively. Forgiveness, on the other hand, reduces ruminations and feelings of revenge (McCullough et al., 2007, 502). Forgiveness takes the individual away from negative emotions such as anger, revenge, and rumination. Therefore, it makes individuals feel well psychologically. In addition, forgiveness ensures the continuation of social relations; forgiving individuals have stronger social relationships. Forgiving individuals are less blaming, both towards others and towards themselves; it shows that they are individuals with high self-acceptance (Şahin, 2013, pp. 79-80). In Bono and his friends' study (2008, pp. 182, 193). Revenge feelings were positively related to negative emotions and physical symptoms; however, forgiveness was found to be associated with positive emotions and life satisfaction, and less physical symptoms. It has also been found that close relationships have a meditative feature. As a result of Aslan's research (Aslan 2016, 68). Negative significant relationships were found between trait anger and the sub-dimensions of forgiveness. Religions

generally advise individuals to be forgiving. Regarding the virtue of forgiveness, it is emphasized from far eastern religions to monotheistic religions; people are encouraged to be forgiving (Rye et al. 2000, 17). As a result of Ayten and Tura's research, it was found that religiosity is a significant predictor of forgiveness and life satisfaction (Ayten and Tura 2017, 27). Accordingly, it can be said that the tendency of religious individuals to be forgiving may be related to their beliefs.

According to the table there is a weak correlation (.190) and a significant relationship between forgiveness and perception of God. There is a weak correlation (.100) and a statistically significant relationship ( $p < .019$ ) between forgiveness and love of God. There is a weak correlation (.216) and a significant relationship ( $p < .000$ ) between forgiveness and fear of God. According to these findings, there is a positive and significant relationship between forgiveness and the perception of God and its sub-dimensions. In some studies, perception of an unforgiving God was associated with negative religious coping. Koenig et al. (1998) examined the impact of religious coping on health status with older adults. In the study, it was concluded that perception of God, that is unforgiving and punishing and which is evaluated in the negative coping category, is associated with more depression and lower quality of life.

According to the table, there is a moderately positive and significant relationship between the love of God and the fear of God (.332). There is a statistically high level of positive correlation between the mean of God perception and love of God (.834). In addition, a high level of negative correlation was found between the God perception and the fear of God (-.796). These results indicate that the scale was filled in results were correctly by the participants.

According to the data analysis, there was a weak correlation (.088) and a significant relationship ( $p < .05$ ) between perception of God and psychological resilience; thus, positive perception of God has a small effect on psychological resilience. Studies have also found a positive relationship between positive God perception, life satisfaction, high self-esteem, and improvement of bodily symptoms. A negative relationship was found between depression and anxiety and positive God representation (Kirkpatrick and Shaver 1992, 266). Göregen and Yıldız's research (2021, 453) was found anger decreased as the representation of love-oriented God increased. According to Ceylan's research results (2018, 172), the love-oriented God perception is effective in preventing the stress related to death anxiety. Hence, the phenomenon of death in these individuals is less shocking psychologically. Oktay and Lokmanoğlu's research (2020, 1100) results were found, it has been determined that there is a positive relationship between negative God perception and neurotic personality trait, and a positive relationship between positive God

perception and responsibility, extraversion and agreeable personality traits. As a result of Seyhan's research (2014, 90), as the love-oriented God images of university students increased, the state of psychological well-being increased. Psychological well-being decreases as the fear-oriented God image increases. The fear-oriented perception of God can also negatively affect the individual's perspective on life (Güler 2007b, 147). According to Güzel's research results (2021, pp. 74-80), having a strong spiritual bond with a transcendent being enables one to cope with difficulties. Accordingly, the result of this research is directly proportional to the different research findings.

Although there was a weak correlation between self-forgiveness and resilience (.102), a statistically significant relationship was found ( $p < 0.05$ ). In addition, there was a low (-.124) negative statistically significant relationship between self-forgiveness and fear of God ( $p < 0.04$ ). Accordingly, the relationship between psychological resilience and self-forgiveness was significant. Research has shown that forgiveness has a positive effect on psychological health, the physical perceptions and behavior of victims who are abused (Zheng, et al. 2015). According to Aslan's research results (2016, 68) positive and significant relationships emerged between life satisfaction and forgiveness. In the study, it was found that all sub-dimensions of forgiveness showed significant negative relationships with trait anger.

According to Yaşar's research (2015, 69) a significant difference was found between the level of subjective well-being and psychological variables. Subjective well-being psychological resilience and forgiveness were positively related and negatively correlated with negative emotion. As a result of Topbaşoğlu's research (2016, 67) it was revealed that total forgiveness and forgiveness of others have a moderating role in the relationship between trait anger and life satisfaction. According to Standish, forgiveness has a positive effect on mental health. In addition, forgiveness has a positive effect on physical health. In particular, unconditional forgiveness towards oneself positively affects mental health in individuals in advanced adulthood (Standish 2016, pp. 65-66). As a result of Şahin's research (2013,79) a significant positive relationship was found between psychological well-being and forgiveness. According to the results of Qinglu et al.'s study (2018, 272) with 358 Chinese university students, it was concluded that self-compassion and forgiveness are negatively related to anger and rumination. As a result of Çınar's research (2022, 112), it was determined that forgiveness significantly predicted aggression negatively. In another study it is suggested that forgiveness is good for health, as it reduces stress, hostility, and rumination, and increases positive pro-social feelings (Worthington 2006). In Karakış's research (2019, 102) it was revealed that nurses who had a positive and calm outlook on life, approach towards patients



more calm too. In addition, it has been determined that psychological resilience is a facilitating factor in being solution-oriented for problems.

There might be differences between not forgiving others and not forgiving yourself. In some studies, non-forgiveness involves guilt, embarrassment, and regret. It was also found that less self-forgiveness was more strongly associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression, and anger compared to forgiving others. (Standish 2016, 63). It is important to forgive oneself and cope with negative feelings towards oneself for psychological health (Kim and Enright, 2014, 260). According to Enright, self-forgiveness is the individual's willingness to develop positive feelings such as acceptance, love and generosity towards himself. According to Hall and Fincham, self-forgiveness is being more compassionate towards oneself. In addition to loving oneself, it is important to take responsibility instead of feeling guilty about one's mistakes (Bugay 2010, 208). A person's psychological state is effective in forgiving himself. As a result of Halisdemir's research (2013, 94) was revealed that self-forgiveness significantly predicted psychological well-being. As a result of Önal's research (2014, 132) it was determined that the rumination and personal discomfort sub-dimension of empathy significantly predicted self-forgiveness. According to the results of Fincham and May's research (2019, 6), it was revealed that self-forgiveness was positively related to psychological well-being and negatively related to depression symptoms. In Bugay's research (2010, 219–20) it has been revealed that rumination triggers negative emotions such as guilt and shame, and these emotions prevent a person from forgiving himself. In another study, significant positive correlations were found between self-forgiveness and positive religious coping (İşcan, Lokmanoğlu 2021, 149). These findings show that self-forgiveness has important psychological effects.

Personality variables are associated with self-forgiveness and forgiving situations. According to the results of Strelan's research (2007, pp. 259,264) it was seen that the levels of self-forgiveness, forgiving others and forgiving situations were positively related to each other. According to Cornish's research (2018, 43) lower sensitivity and narcissism emerged in the self-forgiving group compared to the self-justifying and condemning groups. According to Carl Rogers, one of the founders of humanistic psychology, in order for a person to realize himself, he must first know and accept himself (Umar 2016, 60). Accordingly, it can be said that being tolerant and forgiving in the way of getting to know oneself brings about forgiveness for the social environment.

Individual, familial, and environmental risk factors may appear in the development of psychological resilience. Establishing positive relationships with parents for risk factors such as psychological/physical problems, being adopted, the death or

divorce of the parents, the support of the family to the child or parents providing good education are among the protective factors. Environmental risk factors are homelessness, abuse, malnutrition, and negative peer attitudes. Among the protective factors, positive social relationships, friend or parent support, and having a positive role model can be counted (Öz and Yılmaz 2009b, 84). Accordingly, the fact that individuals view life positively and regard life as reliable may be related to environmental factors such as parental attitudes.

Social factors also affect perceptions of God. According to Kirkpatrick (2005, 73), love for God is like a child's love for a caregiver. People receive their first religious education primarily from their parents. The religious information received from parents has a positive or negative effect on the perception of God (Güler 2007, 149). The relationship between mother and child has a great impact on the perception of God. Building a secure attachment and a positive relationship between mother and child also has a positive effect on the God representation (Hayta 2017, 86). According to the results of Erdogan's research (2014, 161), having a love-oriented perception of God, which approaches God with love and sees Him as the source of love, protects individuals' mental health and contributes to their resilience. According to the research findings of Dilek (2019, 101), it was found that individuals who were raised religiously in the family with love and tolerance have a more positive God perception. In Güleç's research (2021, 107) on Muslim children's depictions of paradise, it was determined that children's religious and cultural backgrounds were reflected in their image of paradise. According to the research results of Ayaz (2019, 93), it was found that a happy family influences children's imagination of God; a sense of love and trust contributes to a positive portrayal of God. In Hacikeleşoğlu's study (2020, 252), both mother and father attitudes were found to be an effective factor on the images of God. Therefore, environment and family influence are at the forefront in the formation of individuals' attitudes towards life and belief. For this reason, psychological resilience, forgiveness, and God perception are related concepts.

## **Conclusion**

This study discussed the relationship between psychological resilience, forgiveness, and God perception. The aim of the research is to determine the relationship between psychological resilience, forgiveness, and God perception. A relational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used in the research. The sample of the study consists of individuals in adulthood. A total of 549 people, 316 women and 233 men, participated in the research. "Forgiveness Tendency Scale", "Heartland Forgiveness Scale (Self Forgiveness)", "Brief Resilience Scale" and "God Perception Scale" were used as data collection tools

in the research. The data obtained within the scope of the research were analyzed using the SPSS (Version 25) program. As a result of the research, women's love of God and fear of God were higher than men. In addition, a significant relationship was found between marital status and love of God and fear of God. Love of God and fear of God were higher in married individuals than in singles. Love of God and fear of God levels were low in those with high income. Accordingly, demographic characteristics were found to be effective in the sub-dimensions of God perception.

The level of the tendency to forgive was higher in married individuals than in singles. There was a significant relationship between forgiveness and age. In addition, a significant relationship emerged between forgiveness and religiosity, love of God and fear of God, which are sub-dimensions of God perception. Those who are religious have a higher level of forgiveness than those who are slightly religious and very religious. Accordingly, as individuals get older, they tend to be more inclined to forgive. Accordingly, it can be said that religiosity, love of God and fear of God are effective in being forgiving.

In the study, a significant relationship was found between self-forgiveness and psychological resilience. In addition, a positive and significant relationship emerged between the perception of God and psychological resilience. As a result, while religiosity, love of God and fear of God are effective in forgiveness, self-forgiveness comes to the fore in terms of psychological resilience. In addition, a positive God perception has a positive effect on psychological resilience. Self-forgiveness has positive psychological effects. Accordingly, the main hypothesis "There is a significant relationship between psychological resilience and God perception and forgiveness" was partially confirmed. In future studies, the relationship between self-forgiveness, religiosity and resilience can be examined in detail by considering environmental factors.

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