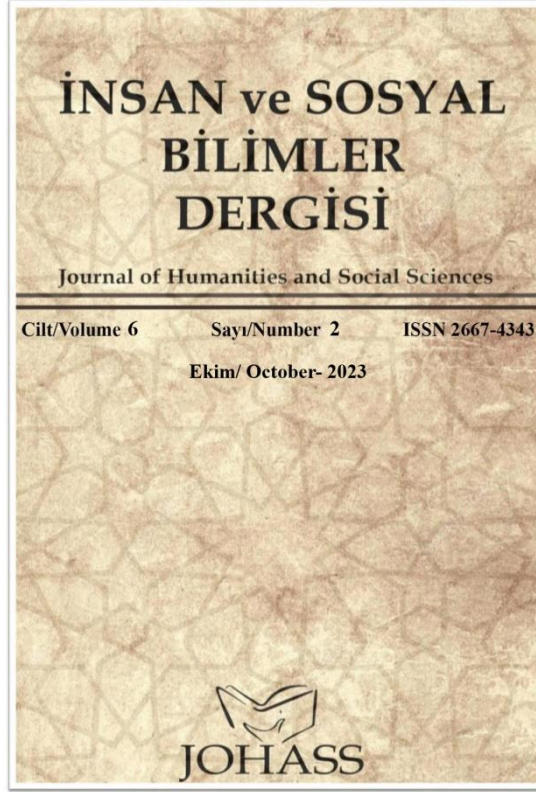# JOURNAL OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (JOHASS)

A Comprehensive Review of Forgiveness Interventions in Türkiye

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Abstract	Research Article
With the rise in the popularity of the positive mental health perspective, the concept of forgiveness has captured the attention of numerous researchers in the psychology and mental health domains. This heightened interest has resulted in a notable surge in studies focused on identifying the variables associated with forgiveness. Beyond elucidating the connection between forgiveness and psychological well-being, there is a growing emphasis on studies that aim to enhance individuals' knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes toward forgiveness. In this study utilizing a descriptive research model, 13 theses and 7 articles featuring experimental interventions on forgiveness were scrutinized. The evaluation encompassed the composition of the research group, the primary disciplines and publication years, the study design, characteristics of the applied group intervention, the entity administering it, session numbers, utilized measurement tools, and the effectiveness of the intervention. The findings indicate that all forgiveness interventions effectively heightened participants' knowledge and skills regarding forgiveness, fostering a positive attitude toward forgiveness. In summary, forgiveness interventions are associated with increased forgiveness and a positive impact on psychological health.	

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Introduction

Forgiveness, an intricate and multifaceted occurrence, holds a pivotal role within the field of psychology. Emerging from the complex interplay of emotions, cognition, and interpersonal dynamics, the concept of forgiveness has attracted considerable interest across a wide array of academic domains. The significance of forgiveness goes beyond individual experiences, exerting influence on both mental and physical well-being (Friedberg, Suchday, & Srinivas, 2009; Seybold, Hill, Neumann, & Chi, 2001; Toussaint, Worthington, & Williams, 2015). Psychological inquiries delve into the cognitive and emotional mechanisms that form the foundation of forgiveness, investigating its implications for mental health (McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000; Worthington, 1998). Within the realm of interpersonal relationships, forgiveness assumes a pivotal role, serving as a catalyst for healing and restoration (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, & Hannon, 2002; Rusbult, Hannon, Stocker, & Finkel, 2005; Witvliet, 2005). A compilation of forgiveness studies in these contexts unveils the intricate factors contributing to the forgiveness process, illuminating the outcomes and consequences associated with either extending forgiveness or withholding it.

Forgiveness is a process that is dynamic rather than static, capable of being nurtured and enhanced through interventions. This review conducts a critical assessment of forgiveness interventions, scrutinizing their effectiveness and dissecting the underlying mechanisms that promote positive change. Consequently, the review endeavors to amalgamate and integrate a wealth of knowledge derived from diverse studies, offering a comprehensive perspective on forgiveness that goes beyond individual viewpoints. Through an exploration of the psychological aspects of forgiveness, this research aspires to contribute to a more profound and nuanced comprehension of forgiveness and its extensive implications for both individuals and societies.

Building upon this exploration, the dynamic essence of forgiveness takes center stage, underscoring its capacity for cultivation and enhancement through targeted interventions. The review proceeds to meticulously scrutinize a range of forgiveness interventions, evaluating their efficacy and deconstructing the fundamental mechanisms that drive positive transformations. Through this comprehensive methodology, the objective is to amalgamate and integrate a diverse array of knowledge derived from various studies, providing a broad perspective on forgiveness that transcends individual viewpoints.

This research, conducted to scrutinize forgiveness-based experimental studies in Türkiye, aspires to provide a substantial local perspective on the subject, which is extensively explored, particularly within the purview of positive psychology. The study delves into the examination of forgiveness interventions within the culturally and socially intricate framework of Turkish society. On one facet, it seeks to establish a robust scientific foundation for gauging the efficacy of forgiveness interventions in Türkiye. Conversely, it aims to deepen our understanding of how this intricate psychological process unfolds within a society defined by its distinct values and norms. Beyond the primary objective of broadening the horizons of forgiveness research, this study endeavors to make a noteworthy contribution with the potential to enhance psychological well-being, foster interpersonal concord, and facilitate conflict resolution in our culturally diverse global landscape.

Definitions

After a comprehensive review of the literature, it is apparent that a consensus on the definition of forgiveness is lacking (Worthington, 2019). Various perspectives on forgiveness underscore different dimensions; some emphasize emotional aspects, while others focus on cognitive, behavioral, or motivational elements. Enright (1996) characterizes forgiveness as the ability of an individual to release negative emotions—such as disappointment, anger, and the desire for revenge—stemming from a mistake. Instead, individuals adopt positive emotions like compassion, love, and understanding, coupled with the display of positive behaviors. Worthington (2015) contends that forgiveness is both an art and a science, involving the process of mitigating emotions, motivations, and cognitions rooted in negative resentment. Diverse definitions of forgiveness have been put forth, exploring its presence, absence, and the underlying processes. These definitions encompass a spectrum of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to an error (Strelan & Covic, 2006). Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) provide another perspective, defining forgiveness as a transformation from a negative to a more positive state, integrating cognitive, behavioral, and emotional aspects.

It's crucial to acknowledge that forgiveness doesn't imply pardoning the wrongdoer, tempering calls for justice in socially sanctioned manners, overlooking the harm inflicted on the individual, endorsing or justifying the wrongdoing, legitimizing it by entertaining the notion that the offender's actions were right, presuming that the situation will naturally improve over time, dismissing the inherent repercussions of the offense by substituting

negative thoughts or emotions with neutral or positive ones, or seeking retaliation against the wrongdoer in any form (Denham, Neal, Wilson, Pickering, & Boyatzis, 2015; Enright & Coyle,1998; Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015; Enright, Freedman, & Rique, 1998; Freedman, & Enright, 1996; McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000; Worthington, Witvliet, Pietrini, & Miller, 2007).

Approachs to Forgiveness

Forgiveness models are conceptual frameworks crafted within the realm of social sciences, especially in psychology, to comprehend the dynamics of the forgiveness process. Models of forgiveness serve as theoretical frameworks designed to comprehend how individuals go about forgiving others. They offer valuable guidance to both researchers and practitioners by providing insights into the psychological, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of forgiveness. Depending on their distinctive experiences and contexts, individuals frequently find utility in multiple models or stages within these models. In essence, forgiveness models contribute significantly to our comprehension of how individuals navigate the intricate process of forgiving others.

Forgiveness Process Model

Enright and the Human Development Working Group formulated a forgiveness process model and carried out over 10 intervention studies. Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) provide a comprehensive description of the model and intervention strategies. Representing the forgiveness process in four fundamental stages—uncovering (becoming cognizant of negative feelings linked to the offense), decision-making (recognizing the client's requirement for alternative solutions to alter their sentiments toward the offender), working (comprehending and empathizing with the offender), and deepening/outcome (exploring meaning and universality)—this 20-stage model outlines the intricate journey of forgiveness.

In the "uncovering" phase (Steps 1-8), individuals delve into the experience of injury and injustice, assess the depth of their anger, and explore ways to manage that anger. In the "decision-making" phase (Steps 9-11), wherein individuals seek to comprehend the essence of forgiveness and its advantages, those who have been hurt attempt to reorganize their emotions, address the issue, and make the decision to forgive the wrongdoer. Following this, individuals acknowledge their errors, assume responsibility, and progress to the "working" phase, where they adopt a new perspective. During the working phase (Steps 12-15),

individuals reframe the negative situation, beginning to perceive it differently, and concentrate on the humane aspects of the offender. Empathetic and compassionate feelings toward the offender come to the forefront in this phase. Lastly, individuals reach the "deepening/outcome" stage, relinquishing negative emotions like anger and resentment through a renewed perspective. In this stage (Steps 16-20), individuals unearth new insights into the negative event and the forgiveness process, recollecting instances when they, too, required forgiveness in the past. They realize they are not alone in the forgiveness journey, leading to psychological healing. Through these stages, adverse experiences and emotions can culminate in meaningful and positive outcomes (Akhtar, & Barlow, 2016; Baskin & Enright, 2004; Enright 2019; Enright, & The Human Development Study Group, 1996).

Every primary stage comprises significant sub-stages. These stages and their sub-units lack a strict chronological sequence and are not universally experienced in the same manner by each individual. A skilled counselor, upon scrutinizing the components of this model, can discern how these stages might be applied within the context of their unique theoretical approach and therapeutic proficiency. Research consistently indicates that this approach tends to be more effective than support-oriented control conditions across diverse adult samples. This model conceives forgiveness as a complex construct involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. It defines the process as one in which the flow between stages is adaptable and can move in either a forward or backward direction (Enright ve Fitzgibbons, 2000; Enright, & Kittle, 1999; Freedman, Enright, & Knutson, 2005).

Worthington's Forgiveness REACH Model

While many forgiveness models typically concentrate on cognitive processes, Worthington (1998a) formulated a model that underscores the emotional dimension. This model posits that cognition and behavior should fundamentally be intertwined with the emotional injury. The forgiveness process initiates with the hurt person's empathy, progresses with humility in the hurt person, and ultimately solidifies through a commitment to forgiveness. Within this framework, the essential elements of forgiveness are identified as empathy, humility, and dedication to forgiveness. Worthington's proposed model regards forgiveness as a decision-making process and independently assesses the cognitive and emotional facets of this progression. The notion of cognitive forgiveness is characterized by a decision to forgive that actively contributes to fostering constructive and reconciliatory relationships. This encompasses the intention to cultivate a different motivation and behavior

towards the offender. Emotional forgiveness is defined as the replacement of negative emotions towards the individual or situation to be forgiven with positive emotions, particularly sympathy, empathy, and compassion. This entails substituting positive emotions for negative ones that impede or diminish the impact of forgiveness. In summary, Worthington's model underscores the intricacy and adaptability of this process by addressing forgiveness across emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions (Berry, Worthington, O'Connor, Parrott III, & Wade, 2005).

Worthington (1998b) created the five-step REACH model for forgiving a particular offense. This model encompasses recalling (R) the incident, understanding the offender's perspective, building empathy (E), showing altruism (A), publicly demonstrating commitment (C) to forgiveness, and making a formal commitment and holding (H) the achieved gains. The REACH Model involves recalling and expressing painful feelings associated with the offense, developing empathy with the offender's perspective and motivations, recognizing times when the victim has received forgiveness from others, giving an altruistic gift of forgiveness, making a formal commitment to forgive, and holding onto the gains made (Akhtar, & Barlow, 2016; Goldman, & Wade, 2012; Wade, & Meyer, 2009; Worthington, 2001). In numerous studies, this intervention strategy based on the model has been identified as more effective than no treatment at all in facilitating individuals to forgive particular offenses, and in certain instances, it has proven to be more effective than active control treatment (McCullough, & Worthington,1995; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997).

Other Models

The two models mentioned above (Enright's and Worthington's) are the most widely used forgiveness interventions (Akhtar, & Barlow, 2016). Since they have been described in detail, the following ones will be briefly mentioned.

Hargrave's forgiveness model centers around the theme of forgiveness within family dynamics. In this model, an individual who has experienced harm within the family may grapple with unchecked emotions of anger and resentment towards the offending party. Simultaneously, they may carry feelings of guilt or shame, believing that they are unworthy of a relationship built on trust. In an attempt to minimize the risk of future harm, the individual might display overly controlled behavior, or they may navigate life in a state of chaos, convinced that relational pain is inevitable. The model comprises two fundamental elements: justification and forgiveness. Justification involves the harmed individual developing empathy

for the offender and gaining insights into the negative situation. On the other hand, forgiveness entails interaction between the harmed and offending parties, with the aim of restoring love and trust within the family. This process is geared towards healing relationship wounds and reconstructing a positive bond (Hargrave, 1994; Hargrave ve Sells, 1997; Sells ve Hargrave, 1998).

Gordon (2003) introduced a cognitive forgiveness model specifically designed for individuals who have undergone traumatic events, focusing on pardoning significant mistakes. This model, as proposed by Gordon and Baucom (2003), delves into topics like marital infidelity and outlines the forgiveness process across three stages: impact, understanding, and healing, and taking action. In the initial stage, the individual undergoes emotional, cognitive, and behavioral upheaval, recognizing sentiments such as sadness and pain. Subsequently, the person seeks to comprehend why the event unfolded for both themselves and the other party involved. Following this, the individual addresses the "why" question to understand the negative emotions and experiences, taking measures to mitigate the adverse impact on their life. In the concluding stage, negative emotions like pain, helplessness, and anger diminish, initiating a healing phase where positive emotions, especially relational trust, are re-established. Throughout the forgiveness process, the individual scrutinizes relational beliefs, investigates the origins of the situation necessitating forgiveness and its repercussions on the relationship. They formulate new and realistic expectations, standards, and assumptions, considering both positive and negative aspects related to themselves and the individual being forgiven (Gordon, & Baucom, 1998; Gordon, Baucom, & Snyder, 2004).

In the social psychological determinants model (McCullough Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & Hight, 1998), forgiveness is conceptualized as a motivational system. This framework encompasses emotions such as hurt and anger within this motivational system. Hurt involves an individual's perception of an attack and the inclination to avoid the associated situation. On the other hand, anger corresponds to the motivation to refrain from reconnecting with the offender. Additionally, the emotion of anger encapsulates the desire to seek revenge or cause harm to the offender, commonly known as the revenge motive. These motivations of avoidance and revenge diminish the probability of the individual extending forgiveness. To put it differently, these emotional responses emerge as factors that decrease the inclination to forgive (McCullough, 2000; 2001; McCullough, Bellah, Kilpatrick, & Johnson, 2001).

Scobie and Scobie (1998) investigated four models that delved into various aspects of the forgiveness construct, ultimately crafting an integrated forgiveness model by synthesizing these approaches. The initial model explored the positive impact on the forgiver's well-being that arises from mitigating negative emotions like anxiety and anger resulting from wrongdoing. The second model adopts a philosophical stance, underscoring the necessity of overcoming resentment and discerning between right and wrong. The third model addresses forgiveness within a religious framework, while the fourth and final model, the prosocial model, concentrates on altruistic behavior aimed at enhancing interpersonal relationships. Individuals perceive events as positive, negative, neutral, or ambiguous. The developed model specifically focuses on scenarios where the perceived event is negative, driven by the notion that events categorized as negative warrant a forgiveness strategy. Negative events are classified into four violation levels, ranging from mild to severe. These levels are; *Apology-Automatic, Apology-Dependent,* and two different levels of *Forgiveness.*

Aims of Interventions

Interventions aimed at promoting forgiveness have the potential to enhance individuals' emotional well-being. The cultivation of forgiveness skills is associated with a reduction in adverse emotional states, including stress, anger, and depression. These intervention programs play a role in mitigating conflicts within relationships and facilitating the development of healthier interpersonal connections. This applies to various contexts, whether within the family, friendships, or work relationships. Forgiveness is beneficial for enhancing stress coping abilities. Engaging in forgiveness interventions equips individuals with effective strategies to navigate through negative experiences (Wulandari & Megawati, 2020). Particularly, forgiveness proves to be impactful in anger management. Programs focused on forgiveness intervention empower individuals with the skills needed to manage anger and respond in a more constructive manner (Lawler-Row, Karremans, Scott, Edlis-Matityahou, Edwards, 2008).

Forgiveness plays a role in fostering understanding of others' perspectives and cultivating empathy (Worthington, 1998). This contributes to the establishment of deeper connections in relationships. Interventions promoting forgiveness can also aid in personal development, enhancing self-esteem, fostering a positive mindset, and facilitating inner peace. Such interventions contribute to heightened tolerance and understanding within communities, fostering increased social cohesion and solidarity. They assist individuals in relinquishing

thoughts of blame and revenge, enabling them to take positive strides toward the future rather than dwelling on past negative experiences. Forgiveness interventions support individuals in letting go of negative behaviors and adopting more constructive ones (Lundahl, Taylor, Stevenson, & Roberts, 2008).

Exploring forgiveness interventions through research offers valuable insights into fostering forgiveness. This research gains importance as forgiveness is associated with numerous positive outcomes, including enhanced mental and physical health, stronger interpersonal bonds, and the creation of a more harmonious society. Recognizing forgiveness as a promoter of psychological well-being underscores the growing significance of studies aiming to augment individuals' capacity for forgiveness, whether directed towards specific individuals or situations, or in a general sense.

In this study, the goal is to systematically review the effectiveness of forgiveness-centered group interventions. The attempt was made to access all intervention studies conducted in Türkiye. The aim of this review is to assist researchers in comprehending the need for developing and implementing forgiveness-based interventions for individuals, and to guide them in the effective design of such interventions. The study addresses the following questions within this framework:

1. How were the research groups selected in studies involving group interventions for forgiveness?

2. In which academic departments and during which years were the studies incorporating group interventions for forgiveness conducted?

3. Regarding the studies employing group interventions for forgiveness, what is the theoretical orientation, the number of sessions, and duration?

4. Which measurement tools were utilized in studies assessing the effectiveness of group interventions for forgiveness, and to what extent have these interventions proven effective?

Method

Model

This study is a descriptive research aiming to investigate interventions implemented to enhance forgiveness in specific groups and assess their effectiveness. Descriptive research involves analyzing events in their natural state and attempting to ascertain the current

situation. It involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data without manipulating variables. This type of research is often used to answer questions related to the current state of affairs, characteristics of a group, or the prevalence of certain phenomena within a population. The findings from descriptive research contribute valuable insights for understanding and describing the features of a given subject, setting the groundwork for further investigation and hypothesis testing. In this type of research, the relationship between past events and situations is examined, aiming to provide a detailed explanation of "what" (Erkuş, 2005).

In this study, the preference for descriptive research over meta-analysis in the analysis of experimental studies is grounded in several crucial points. While meta-analysis is an effective statistical method for consolidating findings from a large number of studies, it may not always align with the characteristics of experimental studies. Experimental studies often involve complex methodologies and different participant characteristics. Therefore, methods like meta-analysis run the risk of overlooking important details when amalgamating these specifics. In contrast, descriptive research provides the capability to analyze the unique features and context of each experimental study in detail. This approach has the potential to capture crucial details outside the general scope of meta-analysis by meticulously addressing the methodological differences, participant profiles, and contextual factors of each experiment. This preference may stem from the necessity to comprehend the intrinsic complexity and distinctions of each experiment. Descriptive research also contributes to a more comprehensive and context-specific interpretation of experimental findings by identifying patterns and trends in the literature. The decision to choose descriptive research over meta-analysis can be viewed as a methodological accommodation to the complexities and specificities inherent in experimental research paradigms. By highlighting the richness and diversity of empirical studies, descriptive research offers a more comprehensive and context-specific interpretation (Berman, & Parker, 2002; Higgins, Thomas, Chandler, Cumpston, Li, Page, & Welch, 2019).

Search Strategy, Eligibility Criteria and Study Selection

A structured literature review was conducted to access experimental studies carried out in Türkiye, utilizing the thesis center database of "Council of Higher Education". In the search for published experimental theses related to forgiveness, keywords like " forgive, forgiveness, forgiver, forgiveness" were employed, and a total of 144 theses were scrutinized. Additionally, a literature review was performed in both Turkish and English to encompass

published research articles, particularly focusing on studies examining the efficacy of forgiveness. Databases including Wiley Online Library, PsycINFO, Taylor and Francis, Springer Link, Scopus, Science Direct, Sage Journals, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and TR Index were utilized. Throughout this review, keywords such as "forgiveness intervention," "forgiveness group," "forgiveness therapy," "forgiveness training," and "forgiveness program" were used to identify studies involving experimental interventions.

The criteria used to determine the research articles in the literature review were aimed at including forgiveness group interventions, offering details about the features and content of the applied intervention, and substantiating the effectiveness of the intervention with meaningful data. The exclusion criteria encompassed articles in languages other than Turkish or English, articles with only abstract access, studies not reliant on group intervention, and review/descriptive articles.

Findings

In this study, 7 research articles (Asıcı, & Karaca, 2019; Asıcı, & Karaca, 2020; Batık, & Afyonkale-Talay, 2021; Bugay, & Demir, 2012; Özgür, & Eldeleklioğlu; Parlak, Öksüz Gül, 2021; Taysi, & Vural, 2016) and 13 theses (Adam Karduz, 2019; Alp, 2022; Asıcı, 2018; Çardak, 2012; Çolak, 2014; Eker, 2017; Ertürk, 2019; Göregen, 2022; Gültekin, 2023; Karakaş, 2014; Murat, 2021, Şahin, 2023; Tezcan-Yanar, 2023) focusing on forgiveness interventions for various groups between 2012-2023 were selected and analyzed. All studies were conducted in Türkiye. The features and findings of the studies examined within the scope of the study are provided under the following headings.

The Distribution of Theses Based on Departments

As depicted in Table 1, the distribution of the theses examined in this study reveals that 9 were conducted in the field of educational sciences, 2 in the field of philosophy and religion, and 2 in the field of nursing. This data suggests that the topic of forgiveness spans across various disciplinary fields.

Table 1

The Distribution of Theses Based on Departments

	Educational Sciences	Philosophy and Religion	Nursing
Doctoral	6	2	2
Master	3		

The Distribution of Studies According to Years

As indicated in Table 2, the studies were conducted between 2012 and 2023. This suggests that research on forgiveness group interventions does not have a long history and has been undertaken in a relatively recent timeframe. Particularly after 2017, there is an observable increase in the frequency of such studies.

Table 2

The Distribution of Studies According to Years

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Doctoral	1	-	2	-	-	1	1	1	-		2	2
Master	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1
Article	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	2	-	-

The Distribution of Studies According to Research Type

While it's widely acknowledged that experimental studies typically employ a quantitative model, it's worth noting that in certain instances, researchers integrate qualitative research methods, such as interviews, to assess the impact of interventions. As seen in Table 3, in the context of this study, it was noted that two doctoral theses and two articles incorporated qualitative research techniques. This nuanced approach of utilizing qualitative methods to gauge the effectiveness of the intervention is considered an appropriate and insightful strategy.

Table 3

Distribution of Studies According to Research Type

	Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed
Doctoral	-	8	2

Master	-	3	
Article	-	5	2

Measurement Tools

As seen in Table 4, in examining the measurement tools employed by the studies within the scope of the research to assess the effectiveness of forgiveness interventions, it is evident that a variety of measurement tools were utilized. While the table includes measurement tools specific to forgiveness, non-forgiveness-oriented instruments were also employed in intervention studies to gauge the impact on various variables. Notably, in the study by Asıcı and Karaca (2019), no measurement tool related to forgiveness was employed. Instead, the study focused on the effect of the intervention on aggression, utilizing a measurement tool in this context. Therefore, the measurement tool used in this study is not included in the table. Alongside quantitative measurement tools, qualitative techniques such as interviews were employed in four studies to delve into a deeper understanding of the effects.

In the realm of measurement tools, the Heartland Forgiveness Scale, crafted by Thompson, Snyder, Hoffman, Michael, and Rasmussen (2005), and subsequently translated and adapted into Turkish by Bugay and Demir (2010), emerges as a prominent instrument. This scale encompasses 18 items distributed across three sub-dimensions: self-forgiveness, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness of the situation. Additionally, the Enright Forgiveness Inventory for Children, developed by Enright (2005), found application in two studies. The Forgiveness Scale for Adolescents, formulated by Asıcı and Karaca (2018), was employed in three studies. This particular scale is a 21-item measurement tool designed to gauge adolescents' inclination to forgive in interpersonal relationships, incorporating four sub-dimensions: components of forgiveness, taking revenge, maintaining anger, and empathizing. Furthermore, the Forgiveness Flexibility Scale, developed by Çolak, Koç, Eker, and Düşünceli (2017), along with the Forgiveness Scale devised by Ersanlı and Vural-Batik (2015), and the Trait Forgiveness Scale, originated by Berry, Worthington, O'Connor, Parrot III, and Wade (2005), and later adapted into Turkish by Akın, Akın, and Gediksiz (2012), each found application in a singular instance.

Table 4

Measurement Tools

	HFS	EFI-C	FS-A	FFS	FIS	FS	TFS	I
Doctoral	4	1	1	3	1			2
Master	2		1					
Article	2	1	1			1	1	2

Note. HFS: Forgiveness Scale (Heartland), EFI-C: Enright Forgiveness Inventory, FS-A: Forgiveness Scale for Adolescents, FFS: Forgiveness Flexibility Scale, FIS: Forgiveness Inclination Scale, TFS: Trait Forgiveness Scale, I: Interview

Intervention Groups

When examining the composition of the intervention groups, as seen in Table 5, it is observed that in four studies, the sample comprised non-student adults. While one group did not specify its characteristics, another group consisted of psychological counselors, one group involved diagnosed psychiatric patients, and yet another group included relatives of individuals with terminal illnesses. Regarding the experimental and control groups, they comprised 10, 60, and 28 individuals, respectively.

The experimental and control groups of university students varied in size from 8 to 15. In studies targeting high school students and children (fourth to sixth-grade students), the sample size increased, and in some studies (Asıcı, 2018; Asıcı, & Karaca, 2019; Asıcı, & Karaca, 2020; Göregen, 2022), the class was selected as the sample. Another noteworthy point in this section is that the three studies I examined were derived from a single intervention program.

Table 5

Intervention Groups

	University students	Hihg school students	Children	Adults
Doctoral	3	3	1	3
Master	1	2		
Article	2	3	1	1

Number of Sessions

As depicted in Table 6, the intervention programs are typically composed of 8 or 10 sessions. Specifically, seven studies comprised 8 sessions, and five studies involved 10 sessions. Two studies were completed within 5 sessions, while there was one study for each of the session durations: 2, 9, 11, 12, 16, and 18.

Table 6

Number of Sessions

	2	5	8	9	10	11	12	16	18
Doctoral			4	1	3	1	1		
Master			1		1				1
Article	1	2	2		1			1	

Intervention Theoretical Model

When examining the theoretical underpinnings of the intervention programs used in the studies, as seen in Table 7, it is evident that models such as Enright's forgiveness process model and Worthington's forgiveness REACH model, which are widely cited in the literature, are frequently employed. These models serve as the foundational frameworks for the intervention programs in ten (each model in five studies) studies. Additionally, intervention programs grounded in logotherapy, value-oriented spirituality, positive psychology, cognitive-behavioral approaches, creative drama, and psychodrama have also been developed. However, during the review, satisfactory information regarding the determination process of the intervention programs in four studies could not be obtained. As mentioned earlier, in three publications derived from the same intervention program, it was indicated that Enright's process model and studies conducted abroad were utilized, while one study did not provide information on this aspect.

Table 7

Intervention Theoretical Model

	REACH	Enright	Logo	VOSEC	PPO	CBO	CD	PD	NI
Doctoral	3	1	1	1	1	1			2
Master	1	1					1		
Article	1	3						1	2

Note. VOSEC: Value Oriented Spiritual Empowerment and Care, PPO: Pozitive Psychology Oriented, CBO: Cognitive Behavioral Oriented, CD: Creative Drama, PD: Psychodrama, NI: No Information

Effectiveness of Forgiveness Interventions

In assessing the impacts of the examined studies, as depicted in Table 8, it was found that intervention programs had a statistically significant effect on the experimental groups in 16 studies, while no such effect was observed in 3 studies.

Table 8

Effectiveness of Forgiveness Interventions

	Significant impact	No impact	Not analyzed
Doctoral	8	2	
Master	2	1	
Article	6		1

As mentioned earlier, I cannot provide information on this issue as a different variable, other than forgiveness, was measured in a study conducted with the same sample group. However, in a study where the effect was observed (Göregen, 2022), it was determined that the mean scores of "forgiving others" and the total scores of the scale, sub-dimensions of the forgiveness scale, were statistically significant, while the other sub-dimensions of the scale were not. In another study (Parlak & Öksüz-Gül), no significant difference was found in a sub-dimension, while a significant effect was found in the total score. In yet another study (Murat, 2021), while no effect was observed in quantitative data, positive effects were identified in interviews, which were qualitative techniques.

Follow-up Evaluations

As seen in Table 9, follow-up evaluations were conducted in eight of the studies, and it was observed that the impact persisted in all of them. Six studies included a follow-up after three months, one after four months, and one after two months. In a study (Şahin, 2023) where a three-month follow-up was conducted, an additional follow-up was also performed after one month.

Table 9

Follow-up Evaluations

	1 month	2 months	3 months	4 months	No follow-up
Doctoral	1	1	3		6
Master			2		1
Article			1	1	5

Discussion and Results

This study analyzed research involving forgiveness interventions for specific groups in Türkiye, aiming to provide a comprehensive overview. Upon a general evaluation of the results obtained from the analyzed studies, it is evident that most of the studies contribute to

enhancing the ability to forgive. Furthermore, some studies were noted for by reducing negative emotions and behaviors while promoting an increase in positive emotions and behaviors.

Experimental interventions focusing on forgiveness have been conducted across a diverse array of disciplines. These studies are prevalent in fields such as psychology, sociology, health, and psychiatry. From a psychological perspective, research on forgiveness has explored its potential benefits in various aspects of human life. For instance, studies have delved into its impact on interpersonal relationships (Noreen, Bierman, & MacLeod, 2014; Wai, & Yip, 2009), romantic relationships (Braithwaite, Mitchell, Selby, & Fincham, 2016; Rye, & Pargament, 2002), mental health (Davis, Ho, Griffin, Bell, Hook, Van Tongeren, DeBlaere, Worthington, & Westbrook, 2015), and its role in coping with stress (Toussaint, Shields, & Slavich, 2016). In the realm of social sciences, research on forgiveness frequently addresses issues like social reconciliation, interethnic relations, and group dynamics (Marta, & Fernando, 2020), while pedagogical investigations explore how forgiveness skills can be effectively integrated into educational and training processes (Neng Lin, Enright, & Klatt, 2011). Though the majority of the studies we reviewed primarily belonged to the field of psychology, we also encountered two studies each in the domains of religion and philosophy (Göregen, 2022; Karakaş, 2014) and health (Gültekin, 2023; Şahin, 2023). This multidisciplinary approach underscores the extensive range of experimental interventions related to forgiveness and the intricacies inherent in these studies.

The incorporation of a qualitative dimension into the mixed design of four of the analyzed studies (Asıcı, 2018; Asıcı, & Karaca, 2019; Asıcı, & Karaca, 2020; Göregen, 2022) not only enriched the research methodology but also facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of forgiveness interventions by addressing potential shortcomings in quantitative methods. In two different experimental studies on forgiveness conducted abroad (Freedman, 2018; Vassilopoulos, Koutsoura, Brouzos, & Tamami, 2020), it was observed that a mixed design was employed, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This approach provided a more comprehensive perspective compared to traditional experimental research, which solely relies on quantitative methods. The inclusion of qualitative data, in addition to quantitative data, contributed to obtaining richer and more detailed results regarding the effectiveness of forgiveness interventions. Consequently, the results derived from these studies can be deemed more robust and reliable. The utilization of a mixed design afforded researchers access to both quantitative and

qualitative data, allowing for a nuanced exploration of participants' experiences and perceptions. This comprehensive approach facilitated a more profound examination of the impact of forgiveness interventions and provided insights into how these interventions influenced participants. Moreover, the mixed design enabled a holistic evaluation by analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data. Employing this methodological approach endowed researchers with greater depth and a broader perspective concerning the efficacy of intervention programs.

In the studies we reviewed, we observed that intervention programs typically comprised eight to ten sessions. Baskin and Enright (2004) assert that forgiveness is a time-consuming process and that short-term, decision-based programs are not as effective as process-based programs. Similar results were corroborated in the study conducted by Lundahl et al. (2008). Among the studies we analyzed, we noted that the predominant target group was composed of university and high school students. Two studies focused on secondary school students, while four studies included non-student adults in their samples. Aside from one group where the sample was unspecified, one group comprised psychological counselors, another group included diagnosed psychiatric patients, and a different group consisted of relatives of individuals with terminal illnesses. It is generally evident that these studies were primarily conducted with students, and sample selection was typically done without considering a common problem area. Regarding age, some studies have cited findings indicating that forgiveness reactions tend to increase with age (Allemand 2008; Arshi, Dalirian, Eghlima, & Shirinbayan, 2016; Ingersoll-Dayton, Campbell, & Ha, 2008; López, Serrano, Giménez, & Noriega, 2021; Záhorcová, Enright, & Halama, 2023).

It is evident that Enright's forgiveness process model and Worthington's forgiveness REACH model are commonly adopted in the studies under review. These models offer a comprehensive framework for grasping the intricacies and multidimensional nature of the forgiveness process. While Enright's model delves into the individual's internal emotional processes, Worthington's model places greater emphasis on external contexts and relationships. Both models treat forgiveness as a dynamic process, underscoring that it necessitates time and effort. In the studies we examined, although all programs showed positive effects, it was frequently observed in other studies conducted within the context of the models used in experimental research and in meta-analyses examining these studies that Enright's forgiveness process model yielded more effective results than the REACH model

(Baskin & Enright, 2004; Lundahl, Taylor, Stevenson, & Roberts, 2008; Wade, Hoyt, Kidwell, & Worthington, 2014).

The models define forgiveness, underscore its potential benefits, and advocate for the cultivation of empathy toward the offender. These approaches acknowledge that forgiveness is not an instantaneous occurrence but involves recognizing one's emotions and thoughts about the event or person that caused harm, attempting to comprehend the offender, and fostering positive emotions. Forgiveness is an individualized journey, with each person navigating the process differently. For some, it may unfold swiftly and smoothly, while for others, it may be a more gradual and challenging endeavor. There is no fixed timeframe for forgiveness; the crucial aspect is forgiving when one feels emotionally prepared (Toussaint, Williams, Musick, & Everson, 2001). Forgiveness contributes significantly to both mental and physical well-being. It aids in alleviating psychological issues like stress, anxiety, and depression. Furthermore, it has the potential to mitigate the risk of physical health problems, including heart disease, cancer, and chronic pain. Strengthening relationships is another positive outcome of forgiveness, fostering a deeper sense of closeness, trust, and fulfillment (Lawler, Younger, Piferi, Jobe, Edmondson, & Jones, 2005; Toussaint, & Webb, 2005; Witvliet, Ludwig, & Laan, 2001). Beyond these models, intervention programs drawing inspiration from various psychological schools have been developed. These programs strive to assist individuals in the forgiveness process, incorporating diverse strategies aimed at enhancing psychological health and relationships (Gordon, 2003; Hargrave, & Sells, 1997; Jacinto, & Edwards, 2011).

In 16 of the studies we reviewed, as expected, forgiveness intervention programs were found to have a statistically significant effect on the experimental groups. However, in 3 studies (Göregen, 2022; Murat, 2021; Parlak & Öksüz-Gül), such an effect was not fully observed. Experimental studies conducted abroad and the meta-analyses examining them generally indicate the effectiveness of intervention programs related to forgiveness (Akhtar & Barlow, 2016; Baskin & Enright, 2004; Harris, Luskin, Norman, Standard, Bruning, Evans, & Thoresen, 2006; López, Serrano, Giménez, & Noriega, 2021; Lundahl, Taylor, Stevenson, & Roberts, 2008). Forgiveness interventions play a crucial role in fostering a positive attitude towards forgiveness. They go beyond the mere imparting of knowledge about forgiveness, providing individuals with the practical skills and tools needed for effective forgiveness. These interventions are instrumental in helping people navigate and manage anger (Akhtar, 2002; Goldman, & Wade, 2012), alleviate anxiety and depression (Freedman, & Enright,

2017; Menahem, & Love, 2013; Xie, Tang, Rapp, Tong, & Wang, 2020), nurture hope (Jankowski, & Sandage, 2011; Kaleta, & Mróz, 2020), enhance empathy (Macaskill, Maltby, & Day, 2002), and elevate overall life satisfaction (Berry, Worthington, Parrott, O'Connor, & Wade, 2001; Bono, McCullough, & Root, 2007; Lawler-Row, & Piferi, 2006; Kaleta, & Mróz, 2018; Walker, & Gorsuch, 2002).

Forgiveness-based group interventions emerge as particularly valuable resources. Additionally, the impact extends beyond individual well-being, influencing interpersonal relationships and contributing to the creation of empathetic and supportive communities. Embracing forgiveness interventions represents a proactive and impactful strategy for promoting mental health and well-being across diverse populations. Forgiveness-centered group interventions emerge as highly valuable assets. These interventions play a significant role in fostering empathetic and supportive communities, influencing not only individual well-being but also making a positive impact on interpersonal relationships. Embracing forgiveness interventions signifies a proactive and efficient approach to enhance mental health and well-being across diverse populations. Future research in this field could provide a deeper understanding of how forgiveness-based interventions contribute to the mental health and well-being of communities. This can be achieved by delving more extensively into the positive effects of forgiveness, both at the individual and societal levels.

In brief, the examination of forgiveness interventions aimed at specific groups in Türkiye has revealed their effectiveness in enhancing individuals' forgiveness capacities, diminishing negative emotions, and encouraging positive conduct. These interventions span various academic domains, offering valuable insights into the enhancement of psychological wellness. Moreover, the study underscores the significance of forgiveness-centered group interventions, accentuating their potential impact on not only individual mental health but also the establishment of empathetic and supportive communities. This research contributes to a more thorough comprehension of forgiveness and the efficacy of forgiveness interventions, presenting significant implications for the advancement of mental well-being and the cultivation of harmonious relationships among diverse populations.

Recommendations

The existing body of research underscores the positive impact of forgiveness interventions across various settings, emphasizing their potential to enhance individual well-

being. However, for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding, it is imperative to embark on more specific studies. Researchers are encouraged to undertake targeted investigations that delve into the intricacies of forgiveness interventions across different age groups and cultural contexts. This refined and culturally sensitive approach holds the promise of not only advancing the development of tailored forgiveness interventions but also amplifying their applicability and effectiveness. By unraveling the unique dynamics of forgiveness within distinct age brackets and diverse cultural settings, researchers can extract invaluable insights. These insights, in turn, will pave the way for more precise and culturally attuned mental health practices, fostering resilience and well-being across a broader spectrum of individuals.

Forthcoming research should place a heightened emphasis on investigating the enduring impacts of forgiveness interventions. While the existing body of literature predominantly underscores the short-term benefits of such interventions, it is imperative to gain a comprehensive understanding of their long-term effects and the sustainability of their positive outcomes over the course of individuals' lives. Delving into these long-term aspects can offer deeper insights into the multifaceted ways in which forgiveness interventions can foster stronger interpersonal relationships, build more resilient communities, and potentially influence broader societal dynamics. Therefore, future research endeavors should prioritize comprehensive, long-term studies that encompass continuous monitoring and in-depth examinations to elucidate the societal and enduring effects of forgiveness interventions. This approach extends the potential of forgiveness interventions to provide a broader perspective and wield a more substantial and sustained positive influence on society.

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