



# PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE & FORGIVENESS IN YOUNG AND MIDDLE- AGED ADULTS

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## ABSTRACT:

**Background:** the purpose of the research was to study the relationship between emotional intelligence and forgiveness on the psychological wellbeing of young and middle-aged adults, and to assess if there was any significant difference between the two groups and furthermore to understand if emotional intelligence and forgiveness were significant predictors of psychological wellbeing. **Method:** A convenient sampling was used to recruit participants. Data was collected from 140 individuals (70 young adults & 70 middle aged adults) using standard questionnaires: Ryff's 42 item Psychological Wellbeing Scale, Assessing Emotions Sale and Heartland Forgiveness Scale. Result was analysed using SPSS v29 and MS Excel. **Results:** Significant positive correlation was found between emotional intelligence and forgiveness on the psychological wellbeing of both young and middle-aged adults, there was no significant difference between emotional intelligence and forgiveness on the psychological wellbeing in young and middle-aged adults and furthermore, it was found that emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing were significant predictors of psychological wellbeing in both young and middle-aged adults. **Conclusion:** The findings of this study point to the importance of taking into account both emotional intelligence and forgiveness when promoting psychological well-being in young and middle-aged adults.

**Keywords:** Psychological Wellbeing, Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness, Young Adults, Middle-aged Adults

## INTRODUCTION:

Psychological wellbeing, emotional intelligence and forgiveness are considered as important aspects of human life which have a significant impact on individuals' health and their satisfaction. Psychological wellbeing refers to the overall state of an individual's psychological health, including emotions, thoughts and behaviour. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand regulate and express emotions effectively. Forgiveness is the process of letting go of negative emotions and resentment towards others who have caused harm.

Research has shown that psychological wellbeing, emotional intelligence and forgiveness are all interrelated and have a significant impact on an individual's overall wellbeing. Furthermore, we will explore the concept of psychological wellbeing, emotional intelligence and forgiveness and relationship with one another.

Psychological wellbeing is a multidimensional construct that includes several components, such as positive emotions, engagement, meaning relationships and accomplishment (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Positive emotions lead to experiencing joy, happiness and contentment. Meanwhile engagement involves the feeling of being absorbed in activities that are challenging and rewarding. The meaning of life refers to the sense of purpose and fulfilment obtained in life, while the relationship indicates the quality of social connections. Accomplishment refers to the sense of achievement and mastery in various domains of life. All these components together contribute to a person's overall psychological wellbeing.

Emotional intelligence is a set of skills that involves the ability to perceive, understand, regulate and express emotions effectively (Salover & Mayer, 1990). It includes four components: (1) emotional perception referring to the ability to recognise and identify emotions of oneself and others, (2) emotional understanding indicating the ability to understand the causes and consequences of emotions, (3) emotional regulation meaning the ability to manage and regulate one's emotions effectively and (4) emotional expression referring to the ability to communicate emotions to others in an appropriate manner.

Forgiveness is the art of letting go of the negative emotions and resentment towards others who have caused harm and pain. It involves a willingness to forgive empathy and compassion towards the offender (McCullough, Worthington & Rachal, 1997). Forgiveness has been associated with several benefits, including improved mental and physical health, increased wellbeing and better relationships.

Psychological well-being, emotional intelligence, and forgiveness are all important factors for young and middle-aged adults to consider as they navigate the ups and downs of life. By developing emotional intelligence, practicing forgiveness, and focusing on their overall well-being, they can lead more fulfilling and satisfying lives.

## METHODOLOGY:

**Aim:** To assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and forgiveness on psychological wellbeing of young and middle-aged adults.

### **Objective:**

1. To understand how emotional intelligence and forgiveness are related to the psychological wellbeing in young adults.
2. To understand how emotional intelligence and forgiveness are related to the psychological wellbeing in middle aged adults
3. To understand whether there would be difference in the psychological wellbeing, emotional intelligence and forgiveness in young adults and middle-aged adults.

**Independent Variable:** Emotional Intelligence and Forgiveness

**Dependent Variable:** Psychological Wellbeing

### **Hypotheses:**

**H1** There will be significant relationship between emotional intelligence and forgiveness on the psychological wellbeing of young adults and middle-aged adults.

**H2** There will be a no significant relationship in the psychological wellbeing, emotional intelligence and forgiveness between young and middle-aged adults.

**H3** Emotional intelligence and forgiveness will significantly predict psychological wellbeing in both young and middle-aged adults

### **Sample/Participants:**

A total of adults (N=140) aged between 18-55 years falling in two separate categories of young adults (18 - 35 years) and middle-aged adults (36-55 years). The sample were adults from various parts of India. Convenient sampling was used for data collection.

### **Tools:**

The instruments used for Psychological Wellbeing, Emotional Intelligence and Forgiveness respectively, were:

- **Ryff's 42-item Psychological Wellbeing Scale (Ryff, 1989):** A popular tool for measuring various aspects of psychological wellbeing is the Ryff's 42-item Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) Scale. Based on her theoretical framework of positive psychological functioning, Carol Ryff created it in 1989. The PWB scale includes six elements that contribute to psychological health:
  - **Autonomy:** The concept of autonomy describes a person's sense of self-determination, capacity for self-regulation, and ability to fend off social pressures.
  - **Personal Growth:** The ability of a person to successfully manage their environment and deal with challenges in their life is referred to as environmental mastery. Personal growth is the sense of personal development and potential realisation in an individual.
  - **Positive Relations with Others:** The ability of a person to create and maintain positive relationships with others is referred to as having positive relations with others.
  - **Purpose in Life:** A person's sense of direction and meaning in life is referred to as their purpose in life.
  - **Self-Acceptance:** Self-acceptance is the act of having a favourable opinion of oneself and accepting one's past.

The PWB scale has 42 items with 7 items per dimension. It is graded on a seven-point Likert scale, with 1 being the strongest disagreement and 7 being the strongest agreement. Higher scores represent psychological wellbeing at higher levels.

The PWB scale has been widely used in research in many disciplines, including psychology, medicine, and public health, to examine the connection between psychological wellbeing and various elements, including personality, social support, and health outcomes.

- **Assessing Emotions Scale (Schutte et al, 2009):** A self-report tool called the Assessing Emotions Scale (AES), created by Schutte and colleagues, is used to assess adults' emotional intelligence (EI). Salovey and Mayer's EI model served as the foundation for the development of the 33-item AES. The AES evaluates EI along four dimensions:
  - **Perception of Emotion:** A person's capacity to identify their own and other people's emotions is referred to as their perception of emotion.
  - **Utilisation of Emotion:** This term describes a person's capacity to make use of their feelings in order to think more clearly and solve problems.
  - **Understanding of Emotion:** The capacity to appreciate the complexity of emotions and their underlying causes.
  - **Management of Emotion:** The ability to control and manage one's own emotions as well as appropriately react to the emotions of others is referred to as "emotion management."

The Likert scale, which ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), is used to rate each item on the AES. Higher scores on the AES indicate higher levels of emotional intelligence; the total score ranges from 33 to 165. It has been used in numerous research studies to examine the relationship between EI and different psychological outcomes. The AES has shown good reliability and validity in prior studies.

- **Heartland Forgiveness Scale (Thompson, Snyder et al, 2005):** A self-report questionnaire called the Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) gauges a person's propensity for forgiving others. The scale, which has 18 items, was created in 2005 by Thompson, Snyder, Hoffman, Michael, Rasmussen, Billings, and Heinze. The HFS evaluates forgiveness on three different levels:
  - **Forgiveness of Self:** The ability to forgive oneself for past transgressions or failures is referred to as self-forgiveness.
  - **Forgiveness of Others:** The ability to forgive others for past wrongdoings or offences is referred to as forgiving others.
  - **Avoidance of Forgiveness:** This term describes a person's propensity to refrain from harbouring resentments or other unfavourable feelings towards other people.

Each HFS item is scored on a seven-point Likert scale, with 1 being the strongest disagreement and 7 being the strongest agreement. Higher scores indicate a greater propensity to forgive. The HFS total score ranges from 18 to 126. The HFS has been used in numerous research studies to examine the relationship between forgiveness and different psychological outcomes. Previous studies have shown it to be reliable and valid.

**Statistical Analyses:** SPSS v29 and MS Excel was used to analyse the data. Results were analysed using Pearson' Correlation Coefficient, Independent Sample t-test and Regression Analysis.

**RESULTS:****Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Psychological Wellbeing, Emotional Intelligence & Forgiveness in young and middle-aged adults*

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1. Emotional Intelligence	140	205.67	30.29	—		
2. Forgiveness	140	124.80	14.93	.161	—	
3. Psychological Wellbeing	140	87.32	12.94	.339**	.362**	—

*N=140, \*\*p<0.01*

**Table 2**

*Results of Independent Sample t test on the Psychological Wellbeing, Emotional Intelligence & Forgiveness in young and middle-aged adults*

	Young Adults		Middle-aged Adults		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig (2-tailed)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
PWB	202.70	33.50	208.65	26.61	-1.16	138	0.24
EI	126.40	15.09	123.20	14.71	1.27	138	0.20
Forgiveness	85.91	12.40	91.27	13.27	-2.46	138	0.015

**Table 3**

*Regression Coefficient Table*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.
		<i>B</i>	Std. Error	<i>Beta</i>		
1	(Constant)	74.53	24.02		3.10	.002
	EI	.62	.15	.30	3.97	<.001
	Forgiveness	.59	.18	.25	3.30	.001

a. Dependent Variable: PWB

## DISCUSSION:

The study focused on assessing the relationship between emotional intelligence and forgiveness on psychological wellbeing of young and middle-aged adults. For this purpose, a sample of 140 of young and middle-aged adults was selected. The sample included 70 young adults and 70 middle aged adults from all across India. The sample was selected through snowball sampling. The three tests that were administered on all on young and middle-aged adults were, Ryff's 42 item Psychological Wellbeing Scale, Assessing Emotions Scale and Heartland Forgiveness Scale.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and the correlation for the variables Emotional Intelligence, Forgiveness and Psychological Wellbeing of young and middle-aged adults (N=140). It can be observed that the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Forgiveness ( $r = 0.161$ ) suggests a weak positive relationship between the both. Moreover, the correlation between Forgiveness and Psychological Wellbeing ( $r = 0.339^{**}$ ) suggests a moderate positive relationship between the two variables and it is found to be statistically significant at 0.01 level. Furthermore, the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Wellbeing ( $r = 0.362^{**}$ ) suggests a moderate positive significant relationship between the two variables at 0.01 level of significance. This indicates that there as significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence, forgiveness and psychological wellbeing in young and middle-aged adults.

Table 2 shows the results obtained on Independent Sample t-test conducted on psychological wellbeing, emotional intelligence and forgiveness in young and middle-aged adults. For psychological wellbeing, the p value (0.24) is greater than 0.05 level, thus suggesting that there is no significant difference in the psychological wellbeing of young and middle-aged adults. Moreover, for emotional intelligence, the p value (0.20) is greater than 0.05 level, thus, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the emotional intelligence of young and middle-aged adults. Furthermore, for forgiveness, the p value (0.015) is less than 0.05 level, thus indicating that there is a significant difference in the forgiveness between young and middle-aged adults. In conclusion, the t test results indicate that there is no significant difference in psychological wellbeing, emotional intelligence between young and middle-aged adults and there would be a significant difference in the forgiveness, thus indicating middle aged adults exhibit higher levels of forgiveness as compared to young adults.



Table 3 indicates the regression coefficient predicting the psychological wellbeing with emotional intelligence and forgiveness. The t value of 3.97 indicated that the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing is statistically significant. Moreover, the t value of 3.30 suggests that the relationship between forgiveness and psychological wellbeing are statistically significant. In conclusion, both emotional intelligence and forgiveness are significant predictors of psychological wellbeing with emotional intelligence being slightly higher. The regression model suggests that emotional intelligence and forgiveness contribute positively to the prediction of psychological wellbeing in both young and middle-aged adults.

In numerous studies, it has been discovered that forgiveness and emotional intelligence (EI) are related to psychological well-being (PWB). EI and PWB have been found to positively correlate, indicating that people with higher levels of EI also tend to have higher levels of PWB (Singh & Jha, 2020; Tsaousis & Nikolaou, 2005). The positive relationship between forgiveness and PWB has also been discovered (Maltby, Day, & Barber, 2005; Toussaint & Webb, 2005), suggesting that those who are more forgiving generally have better mental health outcomes.

Additionally, a study by Kuzgun et al. (2017) discovered that in both young and middle-aged adults, EI and forgiveness significantly predicted PWB. According to the findings of their regression analysis, forgiveness and EI accounted for a sizable portion of the variance in PWB. The results of this study indicate that people with higher levels of EI and forgiveness are probably to have better psychological health. Overall, the research points to a strong connection between psychological health, forgiveness, and emotional intelligence. Therefore, programmes that increase emotional intelligence and promote forgiveness may have a positive impact on the state of one's mental health and general wellbeing.

## **SUMMARY & CONCLUSION:**

These findings imply that forgiveness and emotional intelligence are significant predictors of psychological well-being. The promotion of mental health and wellbeing may be aided by interventions that aim to improve forgiving others and emotional intelligence. For instance, interventions that emphasise strengthening emotional control abilities or encouraging forgiveness may be helpful in enhancing psychological outcomes in people with mental health issues.

It is crucial to remember that the current study is correlational and cannot prove causation. The relationships found in this study may be influenced by additional factors, such as personality traits or environmental factors. The sample was made up of young and middle-aged adults, so the findings might not apply to other age groups. Future studies could examine the connections between emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and psychological wellbeing, as well as investigate potential mechanisms underlying these relationships.



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