

The Descriptive Study of Forgiveness and Perceived Healing among Adults

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Abstract: *The present study examines forgiveness and perceived healing among adults through a quantitative descriptive research approach. Forgiveness involves accepting past experiences, letting go of negative emotions, and developing a willingness to forgive oneself and others, while perceived healing reflects emotional recovery, inner peace, and personal growth. Data from 102 response records were analysed using a self-designed questionnaire containing 30 statements, equally divided between forgiveness and perceived healing. Descriptive statistical methods, including mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha, were used to assess response patterns and internal consistency. The mean forgiveness score was 56.88 (SD = 9.94), while the mean perceived healing score was 56.04 (SD = 10.75). Both scores exceeded the theoretical midpoint of 45, reflecting generally positive responses across the two measures. Cronbach's alpha values of 0.914 for forgiveness and 0.942 for perceived healing indicated high internal consistency. The findings provide a descriptive understanding of adults' reported experiences of forgiveness and emotional healing. However, the study does not establish a causal or statistical relationship between these variables. Further research using validated measures and broader samples may offer a clearer understanding of forgiveness and psychological healing.*

Keywords: Forgiveness, Perceived Healing, Emotional Recovery, Self-Acceptance, Psychological Well-Being

1. Introduction of the Study

Forgiveness is an important aspect of human life that influences how individuals understand, accept, and respond to painful experiences. Throughout life, people encounter situations involving misunderstandings, conflicts, disappointments, and emotional hurt. These experiences may lead to feelings of anger, guilt, resentment, sadness, and emotional distress. The ability to forgive oneself and others is a psychological process that involves acknowledging these experiences, gradually releasing negative emotions, and developing a sense of acceptance.

Forgiveness does not necessarily mean forgetting the past, justifying harmful behaviour, or rebuilding relationships with those who have caused pain. Instead, it involves a personal willingness to move beyond negative feelings without allowing past experiences to continuously influence one's emotional state. Individuals differ in their ability to forgive depending on their personal experiences, emotional maturity, beliefs, and ways of coping with difficult situations.

Perceived healing refers to an individual's personal understanding of their own emotional recovery and psychological well-being. It includes feelings of inner peace, emotional acceptance, personal growth, and the ability to move forward after experiencing emotional difficulties. Healing is often a gradual and subjective process, and individuals may perceive their progress differently. While some may experience a sense of emotional relief and acceptance, others may continue to struggle with unresolved feelings and painful memories.

Adulthood is a significant stage of life during which individuals experience various personal, family, professional, and social responsibilities. These experiences may involve emotional challenges that require adjustment, acceptance, and psychological strength. Understanding forgiveness and perceived healing among adults is therefore important, as

both represent meaningful aspects of an individual's emotional experiences and psychological functioning.

2. Rationale of the Study

The rationale for conducting the present study arises from the importance of understanding forgiveness and perceived healing as individual psychological experiences. In everyday life, adults encounter various situations that may cause emotional pain, including relationship conflicts, personal failures, betrayal, and difficult life experiences. While some individuals may find it easier to forgive and move forward, others may experience continuing feelings of resentment, guilt, or emotional discomfort. Similarly, the experience of psychological healing may differ from person to person.

Although forgiveness and psychological well-being have been widely discussed in psychological research, it is also important to understand how adults report their own experiences of forgiveness and perceived healing. Examining these experiences through a descriptive approach allows the researcher to identify the general levels and variations of these psychological characteristics within a selected adult population.

The present study is undertaken to provide a quantitative description of forgiveness and perceived healing among adults aged 18 years and above. By using a structured self-designed questionnaire, the study aims to gather measurable information about participants' experiences and perceptions. The findings may contribute to a better understanding of the different levels of forgiveness and perceived healing reported by adults and provide preliminary information for future psychological research.

Therefore, the present study, titled "A Descriptive Study of Forgiveness and Perceived Healing Among Adults," adopts a quantitative descriptive research design involving 100 adult participants. The study focuses on assessing and describing forgiveness and perceived healing as separate psychological

variables without establishing a correlational or causal relationship between them.

3. Review of Literature

- 1) Freedman and Enright (1996) conducted a study titled "Forgiveness as an Intervention Goal With Incest Survivors" to examine forgiveness in the context of emotional suffering and psychological recovery. The study involved 12 adult women who had experienced childhood sexual abuse. An experimental research design was adopted, and participants received a structured forgiveness intervention. The findings indicated improvements in forgiveness and hope, along with reductions in anxiety and depression among those receiving the intervention. The researchers highlighted the importance of forgiveness in addressing painful emotional experiences. The study contributed to psychological literature by demonstrating how forgiveness can be examined as part of emotional adjustment and recovery from distressing experiences.
- 2) McCullough et al. (1998) conducted research titled "Interpersonal Forgiving in Close Relationships: II. Theoretical Elaboration and Measurement" to investigate the psychological processes involved in interpersonal forgiveness. The research consisted of four studies examining avoidance, revenge, empathy, relationship satisfaction, and responses to interpersonal wrongdoing. The researchers developed a self-report instrument to assess motivations associated with forgiveness. Their findings highlighted the importance of emotional and motivational changes in the process of forgiving others. The study demonstrated that forgiveness involves more than simply forgetting an offence and includes changes in attitudes towards the person responsible. This research provided a foundation for understanding and measuring individual differences in forgiveness.
- 3) Thompson et al. (2005) conducted a study titled "Dispositional Forgiveness of Self, Others, and Situations" to examine forgiveness as a multidimensional psychological characteristic. The researchers conducted six studies and developed the Heartland Forgiveness Scale to assess forgiveness directed towards oneself, others, and difficult situations. The findings demonstrated that forgiveness could be measured using structured psychological questionnaires. Greater forgiveness was associated with positive emotional characteristics, while lower forgiveness was associated with resentment, hostility, and repetitive negative thinking. The study highlighted the importance of understanding forgiveness through different dimensions rather than considering it a single emotional response. The research contributed significantly to the quantitative assessment of forgiveness and provided a foundation for examining forgiveness among adults.
- 4) Egnew (2005) conducted a qualitative study titled "The Meaning of Healing: Transcending Suffering" to explore the psychological and personal meaning of healing. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with seven experienced physicians and healthcare professionals to understand how healing occurs beyond the physical treatment of illness. The findings identified personal wholeness, meaning-making, spirituality, and acceptance of suffering as important aspects of healing. Healing was described as a subjective experience involving the individual's ability to understand and integrate difficult experiences into their life. The study emphasised that healing does not necessarily mean the complete absence of suffering but may involve achieving a sense of acceptance and personal wholeness. This perspective provides a conceptual foundation for understanding perceived healing.
- 5) Reed and Enright (2006) conducted a study titled "The Effects of Forgiveness Therapy on Depression, Anxiety, and Posttraumatic Stress for Women After Spousal Emotional Abuse." The study involved 20 women who had experienced emotional abuse within marital relationships and had been separated from their former spouses for at least two years. The researchers compared forgiveness therapy with an alternative psychological treatment. The findings demonstrated improvements in psychological outcomes, including reductions in depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress symptoms among participants receiving forgiveness therapy. Improvements in self-esteem and meaning-making were also observed. The study highlighted the psychological importance of addressing emotional hurt and resentment in the process of recovery from distressing interpersonal experiences.
- 6) Leamy et al. (2011) conducted a systematic review titled "Conceptual Framework for Personal Recovery in Mental Health: Systematic Review and Narrative Synthesis." The researchers reviewed 97 published papers to understand the psychological processes associated with personal recovery. Five major components were identified: connectedness, hope and optimism, identity, meaning in life, and empowerment. The findings emphasised that recovery is a personal and subjective process extending beyond the reduction of psychological symptoms. Individuals may experience recovery through greater self-acceptance, emotional stability, hope, and a renewed sense of meaning. Although personal recovery and perceived healing are distinct concepts, the study provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the subjective experiences associated with psychological healing.
- 7) Shanks et al. (2013) conducted a systematic review titled "Measures of Personal Recovery: A Systematic Review" to examine psychological instruments used to assess personal recovery. The researchers identified 13 measures and evaluated how they represented important recovery processes, including connectedness, hope, identity, meaning, and empowerment. The findings indicated that personal recovery is a multidimensional concept that can be assessed through structured self-report measures. However, the researchers also identified limitations in the available measurement instruments and noted that no single measure represented a complete standard for recovery assessment. The study highlighted the importance of clear operational definitions and appropriate measurement procedures when investigating subjective psychological recovery.
- 8) Wade et al. (2014) conducted a meta-analysis titled "Efficacy of Psychotherapeutic Interventions to Promote Forgiveness: A Meta-Analysis." The researchers examined 54 published and unpublished research reports

evaluating psychological interventions intended to improve forgiveness. Their analysis included 2,323 participants in post-treatment comparisons. The findings demonstrated that structured forgiveness interventions were generally effective in increasing forgiveness compared with no-treatment conditions and alternative treatments. Improvements in selected psychological outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and hope, were also reported. The researchers highlighted the relevance of forgiveness-focused interventions in addressing emotional difficulties following interpersonal offences. The study contributed to the understanding of forgiveness as a measurable psychological construct with implications for emotional adjustment and mental well-being.

- 9) Davis et al. (2015) conducted a meta-analytic review titled "Forgiving the Self and Physical and Mental Health Correlates" to examine self-forgiveness in relation to health and psychological well-being. The analysis included 65 samples involving 17,939 participants for psychological well-being outcomes. The findings indicated that greater self-forgiveness was positively associated with psychological well-being. The researchers also examined self-forgiveness in the context of physical health, emotional experiences, and interpersonal functioning. The study highlighted the importance of accepting personal mistakes and reducing persistent self-directed negative emotions. It contributed to psychological research by establishing self-forgiveness as an important construct for understanding individual differences in emotional functioning and psychological well-being.
- 10) Akhtar and Barlow (2018) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis titled "Forgiveness Therapy for the Promotion of Mental Well-Being." The researchers examined experimental studies involving forgiveness interventions among adolescents and adults who had experienced interpersonal hurt, violence, or distressing experiences. Their findings indicated that forgiveness-based interventions were associated with reductions in depression, anger, hostility, and psychological distress. Improvements in positive emotional experiences and forgiveness were also reported. The researchers concluded that forgiveness therapy may be beneficial for selected aspects of mental well-being while acknowledging limitations in the available research evidence. The study provided an understanding of forgiveness within psychological research on emotional adjustment and recovery from painful experiences.
- 11) Ho et al. (2024) conducted a multisite randomised controlled trial titled "International REACH Forgiveness Intervention: A Multisite Randomised Controlled Trial." The study involved 4,598 adult participants recruited from Colombia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Africa, and Ukraine. The researchers examined the effectiveness of a brief, self-directed forgiveness workbook in improving forgiveness and selected mental health outcomes. Participants who received the intervention immediately demonstrated greater forgiveness and lower symptoms of depression and anxiety compared with those assigned to receive the workbook later. The findings highlighted the psychological relevance of forgiveness across different cultural and social settings.

The study also demonstrated the importance of assessing forgiveness and emotional experiences among adults from diverse backgrounds.

- 12) Vismaya et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review titled "Psychological Interventions to Promote Self-Forgiveness: A Systematic Review." The researchers reviewed 21 studies examining different psychological approaches designed to improve self-forgiveness. The review included individual, group-based, and self-directed interventions and assessed their reported outcomes. The findings suggested that several psychological interventions were effective in promoting self-forgiveness and improving selected aspects of psychological functioning. The researchers emphasised the importance of recognising personal mistakes, developing self-acceptance, and reducing negative feelings directed towards oneself. The review contributed to understanding self-forgiveness as an important psychological experience associated with personal acceptance and emotional well-being.

4. Need for the Study

- Forgiveness is an important psychological process that may help individuals cope with emotional pain, interpersonal hurt, and difficult life experiences.
- Forgiveness may support psychological well-being by helping individuals reduce negative emotions such as anger, resentment, and sadness.
- Limited studies have explored forgiveness specifically as a process of psychological healing from a positive psychology perspective.
- There is a paucity of research connecting forgiveness with positive psychological outcomes such as resilience, self-esteem, emotional well-being, and personal growth.
- Existing research has examined forgiveness in relation to individual outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and well-being, but fewer studies have considered its broader role in psychological healing.
- The study is academically relevant as it contributes to the growing field of positive psychology by examining forgiveness as a possible psychological strength and resource.
- The study is socially relevant because unresolved anger, resentment, and emotional hurt can affect an individual's mental well-being, relationships, and quality of life.
- Hence, the present study attempts to understand the role of forgiveness in psychological healing from a positive psychology perspective and contribute to a better understanding of forgiveness as a positive psychological process.

5. Research Methodology

Aim

The aim of the present study is to assess and describe the levels of forgiveness and perceived healing among adults aged 18 years and above using a quantitative descriptive research approach.

Objective of the Study

To describe the overall pattern of responses related to forgiveness and healing.

Operational Definition

- 1) **Forgiveness:** Forgiveness refers to an individual's willingness to forgive oneself and others, let go of negative emotions, and accept past experiences. In the present study, forgiveness is measured using 15 statements from a self-designed questionnaire. Higher scores indicate greater levels of self-reported forgiveness.
- 2) **Perceived Healing:** Perceived healing refers to an individual's subjective experience of emotional recovery, inner peace, acceptance, and psychological well-being. It is measured using 15 statements from a self-designed questionnaire. Higher scores indicate greater levels of self-reported perceived healing.
- 3) **Adults:** Adults refer to individuals aged 18 years and above, with no upper age limit. The present study includes adults irrespective of gender, educational qualification, occupation, or marital status. A total of 100 adults will be included in the study.

Variables

- Independent Variable: Forgiveness intervention
- Dependent Variable: Psychological healing

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria specify the characteristics required for individuals to participate in the study.

The inclusion criteria are as follows:

- Individuals who are 16 years of age and above.
- Individuals who are willing to participate voluntarily in the study.
- Individuals who are able to understand the language used in the questionnaire.
- Individuals who are able to provide responses to the questionnaire.
- Individuals who provide informed consent before participation.

Exclusion Criteria

The exclusion criteria identify individuals who will not be included in the study.

The exclusion criteria are as follows:

- Individuals below 16 years of age.
- Individuals who are unwilling to participate.
- Individuals who do not provide informed consent.
- Individuals who are unable to understand the questionnaire sufficiently to provide meaningful responses

Research Design

The present study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the relationship between forgiveness and perceived healing among adults. This approach involves collecting numerical data through a structured questionnaire, which allows participants to express their experiences and perceptions in a systematic manner. The collected data will be analysed using appropriate statistical methods to identify patterns, trends, and possible relationships between forgiveness and perceived healing. This approach helps the researcher measure the variables objectively, compare participants' responses, and draw meaningful conclusions based on the findings. It also provides a systematic and reliable way to understand how forgiveness may be associated

with individuals' emotional well-being and perceived psychological healing.

Sample

- Sample size: 100 participants
- Age range: 18–30 years
- Population: Young adults

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique will be used to select 100 young adults aged 18 and above. Participants will be selected based on their relevance to the objectives of the study. This technique is appropriate as it allows the researcher to select participants who meet the specific requirements of the study. The synopsis also uses purposive sampling as the example sampling technique.

Tools and Techniques

- Demographic Data Sheet – to collect basic information such as age, gender, educational qualification, etc.
- Researcher-Developed Forgiveness Questionnaire – 15 items to assess forgiveness.
- Researcher-Developed Psychological Healing Questionnaire – 15 items to assess psychological healing.

Ethical Considerations

- Informed Consent: Participants will be informed about the purpose and nature of the study before participation. Their consent will be obtained voluntarily.
- Confidentiality: All information collected from participants will be kept confidential. The responses will be used solely for academic research purposes.
- Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study will be completely voluntary. Participants will not be forced or pressured to take part in the research.
- Right to Withdraw: Participants will have the right to withdraw from the study without any penalty. They may also skip questions that make them uncomfortable.
- Anonymity: Participants' identities will not be disclosed in the research findings. Personal identifying information will not be collected unless necessary.
- Protection from Psychological Harm: Participants' emotional well-being will be respected throughout the study. They will not be pressured to discuss painful personal experiences.
- Academic Integrity: The collected data will be analysed and reported accurately. No responses or research findings will be fabricated or intentionally misrepresented.

Materials' Used

- Demographic Information Sheet
- Self-Designed Forgiveness Questionnaire (15 items)
- Self-Designed Perceived Healing Questionnaire (15 items)
- Five-Point Likert Scale

Statistical Tools Used

The following statistical measures were employed:

- 1) Frequency: Used to determine the number of participants selecting each response category in the questionnaire.
- 2) Percentage: Used to represent the proportion of participants choosing each response category.

- 3) Mean: Used to calculate the average scores of forgiveness and perceived healing among the participants.
 - 4) Standard Deviation: Used to measure the variation in forgiveness and perceived healing scores.
 - 5) Cronbach's Alpha: Used to assess the internal consistency reliability of the self-designed questionnaire.
- The study followed a quantitative descriptive research design, and no correlational or inferential statistical tests were conducted.

Procedure

The present study, titled “A Descriptive Study of Forgiveness and Perceived Healing Among Adults,” adopted a quantitative descriptive research design. Participants were approached using a convenience sampling technique. The purpose of the study was explained, and informed consent was sought before administering the questionnaire.

A self-designed structured questionnaire consisting of 30 statements was used to collect data. The questionnaire included 15 statements on forgiveness and 15 statements on perceived healing. Participants were instructed to read each statement carefully and respond honestly using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

A total of 102 response records were included in the analysis. The collected responses were organised, and analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire.

The study focused on describing forgiveness and perceived healing separately, without conducting correlational or experimental analysis.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Total-score descriptive statistics for forgiveness and perceived healing

Variable	No of Participants	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max
Forgiveness	102	56.88	9.94	60	21	71
Perceived healing	102	56.04	10.75	58	18	75

Each scale has 15 items and a total-score range of 15–75. SD = sample standard deviation. Values are calculated using all 102 submitted rows, including repeated entries.

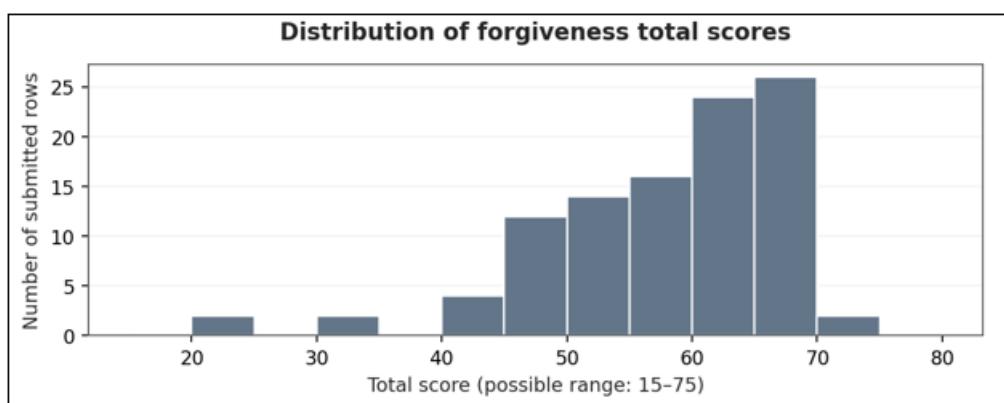
The forgiveness total score had a mean of 56.88, a standard deviation of 9.94, and a median of 60. Observed forgiveness totals ranged from 21 to 71. These figures describe the distribution of forgiveness scores in the uploaded rows.

The perceived healing total score had a mean of 56.04, a standard deviation of 10.75, and a median of 58. Observed perceived-healing totals ranged from 18 to 75. These values describe perceived healing as measured by the 15 corresponding questionnaire responses.

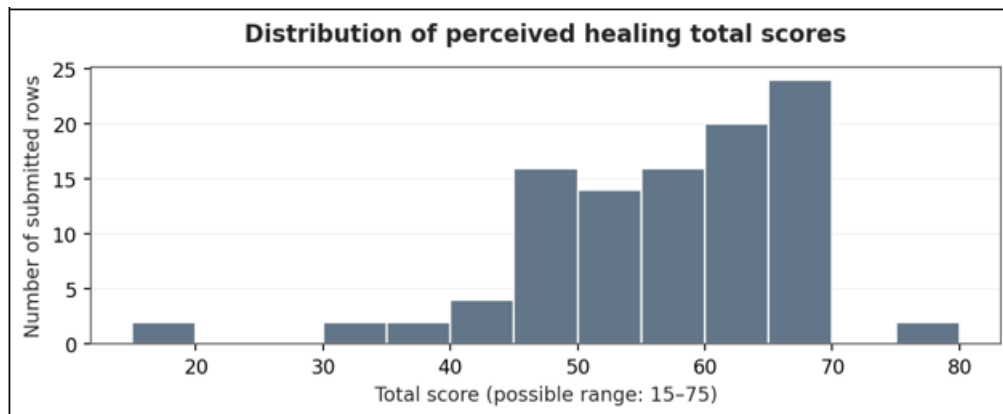
Table 2: Scalemean per questionnaire item

Scale	Items	Score range	Mean per item
Forgiveness	15	1–5	3.79
Perceived healing	15	1–5	3.74

Mean item scores indicate the average recorded agreement on each section. Because the exact wording of the complete questionnaire has not been verified for negatively worded items, scores should not yet be treated as a fully validated measure of forgiveness or healing. No unverified high/medium/low category boundaries have been created.



Frequency distribution of forgiveness total scores.



Frequency distribution of perceived-healing total scores

7. Analysis of Results

The present study aimed to assess and describe forgiveness and perceived healing among adults using a quantitative descriptive research design. A self-designed questionnaire consisting of 30 statements was used to collect data. The questionnaire contained 15 statements assessing forgiveness and 15 statements assessing perceived healing.

A total of 102 response records were included in the descriptive statistical analysis. The collected data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha to understand the scores and internal consistency of the two psychological variables.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Forgiveness and Perceived Healing

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Forgiveness	102	56.88	9.94
Perceived Healing	102	56.04	10.75

Interpretation

The results indicate that the mean forgiveness score was 56.88, with a standard deviation of 9.94. Since the possible scores range from 15 to 75, the obtained mean is above the theoretical midpoint of 45. This suggests that the recorded responses generally reflected agreement with statements related to forgiveness, including self-forgiveness, acceptance of mistakes, and letting go of negative emotions.

The mean perceived healing score was 56.04, with a standard deviation of 10.75. This score was also above the theoretical midpoint, suggesting that participants generally reported positive perceptions of emotional recovery, inner peace, acceptance, and personal growth.

The standard deviation for perceived healing was slightly higher than that for forgiveness, indicating greater variation in perceived healing scores among the recorded responses.

Table 4: Reliability Statistics

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Forgiveness	15	0.914
Perceived Healing	15	0.942

Interpretation

The Cronbach's alpha value obtained for forgiveness was 0.914, indicating high internal consistency among the 15 statements used to assess forgiveness.

Similarly, the Cronbach's alpha value for perceived healing was 0.942, indicating high internal consistency among the 15 statements assessing perceived healing.

These results suggest that the questionnaire sections demonstrate strong internal consistency under the scoring procedure used. However, high reliability does not independently establish the validity of the questionnaire.

8. Discussion

The present study aimed to assess forgiveness and perceived healing among adults using a quantitative descriptive approach. The findings revealed a mean forgiveness score of **56.88**, indicating generally positive attitudes towards forgiveness.

The mean perceived healing score was **56.04**, suggesting positive perceptions of emotional recovery, acceptance, and inner peace. These findings are consistent with Egnew (2005), who emphasised healing as a subjective experience involving acceptance and psychological well-being.

The standard deviations of **9.94** for forgiveness and **10.75** for perceived healing indicated variations in participants' responses. Cronbach's alpha values of **0.914** and **0.942**, respectively, demonstrated high internal consistency.

Results of the Study

- 1) The mean forgiveness score was 56.88, indicating that the recorded responses generally reflected positive attitudes towards forgiveness.
- 2) The standard deviation of forgiveness was 9.94, indicating variation in forgiveness scores.
- 3) The mean perceived healing score was 56.04, suggesting generally positive self-reported perceptions of emotional healing.
- 4) The standard deviation of perceived healing was 10.75, indicating variation in the perceived healing scores.
- 5) The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for forgiveness was 0.914, indicating high internal consistency.
- 6) The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for perceived healing was 0.942, indicating high internal consistency.

9. Conclusion

The present study provided a quantitative descriptive assessment of forgiveness and perceived healing among adults using a self-designed questionnaire. The findings indicated that participants generally reported positive levels of forgiveness and perceived healing, with variations in their scores. The study highlights the importance of understanding forgiveness and perceived healing as individual psychological experiences. However, as the study focused on descriptive analysis, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the relationship between forgiveness and perceived healing. The findings provide preliminary insights into these psychological experiences and may serve as a basis for further research using validated measurement tools and more comprehensive research designs.

Acknowledgement

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