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**FORGIVENESS IN COLLEGE STUDENTS: THE ROLE OF CHILDHOOD
TRAUMA AND HUMOR**

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To my sister.

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of the study is to explore the predictive power of childhood trauma and humor on college students' tendency to forgive. College students aged 18-25 living in Turkey (N= 423) were included in this study. For the data collection, the demographic information form was prepared by the researcher, the 18-item Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) adapted to Turkish by Bugay and Demir (2010a), Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ-33) adapted to Turkish by Şar et al. (2012) and revised by Şar et al. (2020), and Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) adapted to Turkish by Aslan et al. (1999) and revised by Özdoğru (2018) were used. The results of the data of the descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Hierarchical Regression Analysis, Independent Groups t-test, and Mann Whitney-U Test are presented in the tables. According to the results of the study, the predictive role of childhood trauma and humor on college students' tendency to forgive is found ($p < .05$). The independent variables explain %12 of the total variance with regard to the total forgiveness score of college students. Significant differences are found between the self-forgiveness and gender ($p < .05$); no significant difference is found between the total score of forgiveness ($p > .05$). The limitations and findings of the study are stated in the related literature. Along with these, suggestions for future studies are presented.

Keywords: Forgiveness, Childhood Trauma, Humor

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, çocukluk çağı travmaları ve mizahın üniversite öğrencilerinde affetme eğilimleri üzerindeki yordama gücünü incelemektir. Türkiye’de yaşayan, yaşları 18-25 değişen üniversite öğrencileri (N= 423) çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Verilerin toplanmasında araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan demografik bilgi formu, Bugay ve Demir (2010a) tarafından Türkçe’ye uyarlanan 18 maddelik Heartland Affetme Ölçeği (HAÖ), Şar ve arkadaşları (2012) tarafından Türkçe’ye uyarlanan, Şar ve arkadaşları (2020) tarafından gözden geçirilen Çocukluk Çağı Travmaları Ölçeği (ÇÇTÖ-33) ve Türkçe’ye Aslan ve arkadaşları (1999) tarafından uyarlanan, Özdoğru (2018) tarafından gözden geçirilen Çok Boyutlu Mizah Duygusu Ölçeği uygulanmıştır. Verilere ait tanımlayıcı istatistikler, Pearson Çarpım Moment Korelasyonu, Hiyerarşik Regresyon Analizi, Bağımsız Gruplar t Testi ve Mann Whitney-U Testi sonuçları tablolar halinde sunulmuştur. Araştırmanın sonucuna göre çocukluk çağı travmaları ve mizahın üniversite öğrencilerinin toplam affetme skoru ile ilgili toplam varyansın %12’sini açıklamaktadır. Üniversite öğrencilerinin kendini affetme eğilimleri ile cinsiyet arasında anlamlı farklılık bulunurken ($p < .05$); affetme eğilimleri ve cinsiyet arasında anlamlı farklılık bulunmamıştır ($p > .05$). Araştırmanın sınırlılıkları ve bulguları ilgili literatüre göre belirtilmiştir. Bunlarla birlikte, gelecekteki çalışmalar için öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar sözcükler: Affetme, Çocukluk Çağı Travmaları, Mizah

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ABBREVIATION LIST

HFS : Heartland Forgiveness Scale

CTQ-33 : Thirty three-item Childhood Trauma Questionnaire

CTQ : Childhood Trauma Questionnaire

MSHS : Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale

RFT : Relational Frame Theory

ACT : Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

PTSD : Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problem of the Study

One of the most fundamental characteristics of humanity is the ability to make mistakes (Bem et al., 2021). The way of coping with mistakes could be adaptive or maladaptive. According to mindfulness and cognitive reappraisal, maladaptive coping strategies can be seen as rumination, catastrophizing, suppression, etc. (Fischer et al., 2021). Liu and Thompson (2017) stated that these coping strategies may have a toxic effect on people's well-being. On the other hand, some adaptive coping strategies are positively associated with balance and life satisfaction (Fischer et al., 2021). For instance, forgiveness is a significant factor in the process of confronting a mistake and moving on. Confronting one's misbehavior, the consequences of unfavorable situations, or the offender who caused this situation may be helpful for an individual's maturation or self-development. If a person cannot sincerely forgive a situation, self, or another person, the person cannot fully focus on the here and now. Therefore, the process of fixation may appear (Cioni, 2006). Due to negative emotions (resentment, pain, etc.) caused by not forgiving, the individual may be fixated on past experiences. For this reason, the person can reflect on this pain in the future (Walser, 2021). Although it has been clearly stated that forgiveness can be a significant coping skill, it is necessary to understand that forgiveness has a much deeper meaning. It contains many paradoxes, one's perception, moral potential, trust, and faith (MacLachlan, 2012). Therefore it is necessary to carry out various studies on forgiveness.

Forgiveness can be effective for the individual's well-being. According to Positive Psychology, forgiveness has a significant role in interpersonal relationships and an individual's relationship with oneself (Altmaier & Gleason, 2019). MacLachlan (2012) stated that

forgiveness moderates negative feelings like anger, revenge, etc. For this reason, forgiveness is a complex process that is not dependent on any such dimensions. At the end of the process, improvements may be seen in an individual's mental health, perception of the offender or the victim, working environment, communication skills, etc. Due to the benefits of forgiveness, increasing the use of 'forgiveness language' may be seen in the psychotherapy process.

The tendency to forgive level may have different repercussions on individuals. Orcutt et al. (2005) stated that the people who have lower levels of forgiveness, show more experiential avoidance or suppressive attitude. On the basis of experiential avoidance which is one of the maladaptive coping strategies, individuals do not want to re-experience the moment or the similar one that has negative related feelings, thoughts, or behaviors. In addition, the behavior of avoidance can be caused by a traumatic event that makes an individual psychologically or physically harmed. However, such an event is part of life. The significant thing here is how individuals cope with situations like stress, danger, loss, fear, anxiety, etc. Especially in childhood, early recollections that are trauma-related may cause psychopathology or fixation (Pynoos et al., 1999). Maladaptive coping strategies or psychopathological features may be common in childhood traumas and may have lifelong effects on the person (Wright et al., 2009). The reason for this effect is that children may feel guilt or shame as a result of traumatic experiences (e.g., Szentagotai-Tătar and Miu, 2016; Kealy et al., 2018). In some cases, children grow up unnoticed by the guilt and shame they experience and these feelings can continue to affect them later in life. That's why, in the last few decades, there has been a surge of interest in the effects of childhood trauma on college students (Güloğlu et al., 2016; Taylor, 2020; Wright et al., 2009). A possible explanation is that when children are exposed to neglect and harmful behaviors during childhood by parents or caregivers, they may associate these situations with their personalities. According to Riek et al. (2014), feelings of shame and guilt arising from negative events experienced, have an important effect on the forgiveness process.

Guilt may be a motivator in forgiveness seeking but on the other hand, shame is related to making negative self-evaluations that may decrease the tendency of forgiveness (Carpenter et al., 2016). One of the most significant factors determining the tendency of forgiveness is the intimacy between transgressor and victim (Riek et al., 2014). For this reason, a person who has been neglected or abused by a caregiver in their childhood may need forgiveness or forgiveness from the victim more than someone who has not experienced childhood trauma. According to Güloğlu et al., (2016) college students who experienced childhood trauma have a lower tendency to forgive than others who did not experience childhood trauma. Data from several studies suggest that how college students evaluate the traumatic events experienced is much more important than the event itself (Wright et al., 2009). When evaluating traumatic events such as childhood traumas, the level of forgiveness of the person has an effect. Especially in Turkey, there are many college students that have severe childhood traumas (Güloğlu et al., 2016). In order to cope with these traumas, forgiveness is a significant factor for a person to continue one's life adaptively despite childhood traumas.

Apart from the negative impact of childhood trauma on the forgiveness process, a person can use humor as a coping strategy. Because forgiveness and humor share several key features, in recent years, there has been a greater focus placed upon humor within the forgiveness literature (e.g., Hampes, 2016; Mabia et al., 2020; Satıcı, 2020). One of the key features may be perspective-taking. According to the individual's perspective-taking, the tendency to forgive and the humor style can be positively or negatively affected (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Vescio et al., 2003). If there are positive changes in the perspective of the individual, forgiveness, and humor may show an improvement. In addition to this, Hampes (2016) found that self-enhancing humor is positively correlated with perspective-taking empathy. Based on this result, he predicted that self-enhancing humor may be positively correlated with forgiveness. These relationships may partly be explained by the fact that self-enhancing humor

helps the individual to understand the feelings and thoughts of the people around oneself (Hampes, 2010). What's more, it helps in dealing with a negative situation (Martin et al., 2003). Although the studies on forgiveness and humor are insufficient, they reached a similar conclusion. They concluded that forgiveness and humor may have important roles in acquiring a positive perspective in the face of negative situations or in coping with these situations.

Looking at the studies about forgiveness and humor, there are various studies (e.g., Hampes, 2016; Mabilia et al., 2020). According to Hampes (2016), evaluating people's perspective-taking and empathy levels, he made various inferences on humor styles. Based on these inferences, he predicted that positive humor styles would positively correlate with forgiveness, while negative humor styles would negatively correlate with forgiveness. Conversely, Mabilia et al. (2020) reported humor styles did not predict significantly forgiveness among undergraduates. Overall, these studies provide mixed evidence for the predictability of humor level on the tendency of forgiveness.

Within the scope of the study, the reason for studying variables (childhood trauma and humor) specified by forgiveness is that the definition of forgiveness may be too superficial for an experiential perspective therefore there are still dimensions of forgiveness that need to be explored. In order to take a closer look at people's experiences, the mentioned variables were included in the study.

1.2. The Significance of the Study

According to the author's knowledge, this study is one of the first attempts to investigate predictors of childhood trauma and humor levels to the tendency of forgiveness in Turkey.

However, few published studies have systematically investigated the power of forgiveness in the process of coping with people's mistakes (e.g., Cornish & Wade, 2015). Furthermore, A systematic understanding of how forgiveness contributes to childhood trauma

and humor is still lacking especially in a conceptual framework. Examining these variables with a framework may be beneficial for understanding the client's needs and planning a therapy process. For this reason, the findings of the study may be beneficial for practitioners in the psychology field.

One of the significances of the study is contributing to the forgiveness literature. Looking at forgiveness literature, the impact of forgiveness on humor is understudied, particularly for the therapy process or as a coping strategy for the individual. Only, Dahl et al. (2013) stated that in the relational frame theory perspective, individuals' relational framework should be coherent with self and another in order to have an adaptive humor style.

Considering the relationship between childhood traumas and forgiveness, there may be many aspects of the two concepts that need to be investigated since there are few studies (e.g. Bem et al., 2021). According to the literature on childhood trauma, studies that focus on negative-related variables are more common than positive-related ones (Holden et al., 2022; Humphrey et al., 2022; Rengasamy et al., 2021). Unlike other studies, one of the main goals of this study is how the person's childhood trauma effects can be decreased in early adulthood rather than examining the relationship of childhood trauma with some negative-related variables. For the reasons mentioned above, this study is thought to contribute to the literature on childhood traumas.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The study aims to examine the predictive roles of childhood trauma and humor levels on the tendency to forgive.

1.4. Research Questions

The following questions of the study were addressed:

- 1) Is there a significant relationship between childhood trauma, humor, and the level of forgiveness of college students?
- 2) Is there a significant difference between undergraduates' childhood trauma, humor, and forgiveness levels based on gender?
- 3) To what extent do childhood trauma and humor predict the level of forgiveness, after controlling for gender?

1.5. Assumptions

In this study, the following assumptions are accepted as accurate:

- a. The scales used in the study (HFS, CTQ-33, and MSHS) are reliable and valid.
- b. The college students who participated in the study answered the measurement tools sincerely.

1.6. Definitions

The definitions of the basic concepts in the research are given below.

Forgiveness: Forgiveness is defined as “a willingness to abandon one’s right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly injured us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her” (Enright, 1996, p.113).

Childhood Trauma (CT): It is the negative, harmful behavior experienced by the individual's parent or caregiver during childhood. There are many types such as physical, psychological, neglect, and sexual (Bernstein et al., 2003; American Psychological Association, 2007).

Humor: Humor is a condition that is psychologically prone to laugh. It includes many factors such as mimics, perception, and language (Beeman, 1999).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the theoretical background and types of forgiveness, childhood trauma, and humor are explained in detail. After the explanation, the studies about forgiveness and gender are presented. Then, previous studies on the independent variable, namely childhood trauma and gender are stated. After the childhood trauma, the relationship between humor and gender is presented. Lastly, studies about the relationship between forgiveness and childhood trauma, and forgiveness and humor are stated below.

2.1. Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a necessary feature of an individual's lifespan development process. For instance, trying to cope with a situation, moving on the life, confronting a situation or person, and overcoming an unfinished business. According to these situations, forgiveness is a process in which neutral or positive emotions are replaced by negative feelings about oneself, the situation, or another (Enright, 2019). In addition, forgiveness is a multidimensional and voluntary process for individuals throughout their lives in interpersonal relationships, facing negative situations, and their way of thinking about life (Enright, 2019). George Herbert (n.d.) stated the forgiveness' process in one of his poems: Every individual should pass the bridge to relieve and reach heaven. However, if the individual cannot forgive the person who causes negative experiences, the bridge will fall apart. For this reason, he stated that every individual needs to forgive and be forgiven.

People may misbehave voluntarily or involuntarily for themselves, a situation, or another person. This is the inevitable feature of humanity. In general, people may use two simple strategies while dealing with a negative situation or an offender. These are avoiding or

seeking revenge from the offender. These behavior patterns can show themselves as keeping distance toward the offender or trying to harm the offender physically or emotionally (McCullough et al., 2001). Due to misbehaving, the victim can see oneself as worthless. In some cases when an individual forgives one's transgressor, this individual may see oneself as virtuous. On the other hand, if an individual forgives oneself because of what he/she's done, may be seen as compensation for low self-respect and failure (Dillon, 2001). Due to misbehaving, the victim or the transgressor's level of self-respect may decrease. Therefore, self-destructive behaviors may occur (Walser, 2021). Horsbrugh (1974) stated that if an individual has difficulties forgiving oneself, this unforgiving process may be a serious matter and self-punishment behavior may be seen. These patterns may negatively affect an individual who is seen as a victim position, mental and physical health. However, some strategies can be more adaptive for the victim. One of them is forgiveness. Dealing with negative situations, forgiveness is a complex process that is conscious and voluntary (e.g. Enright, 1996; Hirsch et al., 2011).

There are many studies about forgiveness and its process. According to these studies, forgiveness is based on philosophy and religion because it is a more abstract and spirituality-oriented concept compared to other concepts in psychology. The studies of forgiveness, until the 1980s, are not sufficient because there was not enough attention to it. Especially after the 2000s, interest in forgiveness has increased because researchers have realized how significant and necessary forgiveness is in an individual's life.

Utilizing the features mentioned, there are many assumptions about the definition of forgiveness and its process. Looking at the first attempts to define forgiveness; religion, cultural factors, philosophy, and theoretical perspectives are significant.

Definition of forgiveness has been developed from 1985 to the present (Freedman et al., 2005). The first study about forgiveness was started with Lewis Smedes' book which is called

“Forgive and Forget: Healing the hurts we do not deserve”. Owing to thoughts about how forgiveness may be beneficial for individuals’ mental state, studies that focus on the scientific and therapeutic process of forgiveness were started to develop (Worthington, 2008). While various studies were focusing on forgiveness, the definition of forgiveness has changed over time (Worthington et al., 2011). Scientists, psychologists, and philosophers developed their own definitions of forgiveness. In addition, there are many similarities in definitions of forgiveness. Firstly, there is a consensus that forgiveness is a complex and internal process. The process may be affected by social interactions (Worthington, 2014). Also, Many researchers define forgiveness as a period in which changes can occur in individuals’ motivations, thoughts, emotions, or behaviors (McCullough, 2001). For instance, Baskin and Enright (2004) stated that when an individual forgives, the person cannot completely forget the situation, the offender, or the one’s behavior. People tend to recall negative experiences but with forgiveness, the person may remember the negative experience in a new way that is not destructive.

Apart from similarities in definitions of forgiveness, these definitions also have many differences. Forgiveness should not be seen as condoning, reconciling, forgetting, or excusing (Baskin and Enright, 2004; Freedman, 1988). Focusing on forgiveness or being forgiven, people may think first of forgiveness as interpersonal (Demirbilek, 2021). On the contrary, forgiveness is an active process in which the victim sincerely decides to forgive the situation, the offender, or oneself. The vast majority of research focuses on interpersonal forgiveness rather than situational forgiveness or self-forgiveness. Especially, self-forgiveness has especially been neglected (Hall & Fincham, 2005). Besides differences and similarities in definitions of forgiveness, the definition that was made by Enright et al. (1998) may be seen as more common than other definitions. They defined interpersonal forgiveness as “interpersonal forgiveness [as] a willingness to abandon one’s right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly injured us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion,

generosity, and even love toward him or her” (pp. 46–47). After this definition, a more general and specific definition was made by McCullough et al. (2001). The definition of forgiveness was that “intraindividual prosocial change toward a perceived transgressor that is situated within a specific interpersonal context” (p. 9). Looking at one of the current definitions of forgiveness, Worthington and Sandage (2016) defined two types of forgiveness: Decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness. Firstly, decisional forgiveness was defined as “making a behavioral intention statement to treat the transgressor as a person of value, to forswear revenge, and to act in ways that forbear expression of anger about the transgression” (p. 22). Secondly, emotional forgiveness was defined as the process that which negative unforgiving emotions like anger, resentment turn into some improved state: a) low intensity of negative unforgiving emotions, b) neutralization of negative emotions (balance between negative and positive emotions, in other words, having homeostasis in emotions), c) emotional positivity (the process of losing the effect of negative-related emotions while positive emotions having dominance) (Worthington & Sandage, 2016).

Generally, people may use two simple strategies while dealing with a negative situation or an offender. These are avoiding or seeking revenge from the offender. These behavior patterns can show themselves as keeping distance toward the offender or trying to harm the offender physically or emotionally (McCullough, 2001). These patterns may have negative effects on the individuals’ mental health, physical health, or interpersonal relationships. In order to avoid these situations as much as possible, forgiveness can lead to a more positive and adaptive lifestyle for individuals. Although forgiveness is a general concept, it is divided into 3 dimensions: Forgiving oneself, forgiving others, and forgiving the situation. These dimensions are defined in detail under the headings below.

2.1.1. Self-Forgiveness

Recently in forgiveness literature, many researchers have stated that self-forgiveness has a powerful impact on individuals' wrongdoing and moving on in their life (Cornish & Wade, 2015). However, most of the studies focus on others and situational forgiveness which are based on specific occasions (Hall & Fincham, 2005). One of the reasons may be that self-forgiveness can be more abstract and cannot match expectations than types of forgiveness (Carpenter et al., 2019). Another reason may be that every individuals' self-forgiveness process may be different from each other, and every experience can be unique (Worthington et al., 2020). Besides there is still uncertainty in self-forgiveness, it is significant that self-forgiveness should be understandable in detail.

Enright (1996) defined self-forgiveness as a willingness to overcome self-accepted negative related emotions like anger, resentment, or disappointment then these negative related emotions are replaced by generosity, love, or compassion. This process can take a while because of self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-motivation for the change. Owing to these changes, the attitude of seeking revenge (self-destructive behavior or punishing self) or avoiding stimuli (the stimuli that trigger offense) may be decreased (Belgin, 2019).

Besides there are many different definitions of self-forgiveness, many researchers stated that self-forgiveness has many effects on different dimensions of the individual. For instance, self-forgiveness is associated with depression (Xie et al., 2020), subjective well-being (Gao et al., 2022), guilt, and shame (Carpenter, Isenberg & McDonald, 2019), etc.

Before the self-forgiveness process, the individual who has not experienced self-forgiveness, due to negative perceptions about self, self-destructive behavior, or negative self-thoughts can be seen in the individual. Thoughts of wrongdoing may lead to self-condemnation. Because of feeling self-condemnation, individuals may need self-forgiveness to overcome

negative thoughts and feelings. Contrary to expectations, self-forgiveness is not about exonerating self. Self-forgiveness is associated with feeling right and doing right about the perception of self with regard to the harmony of moral integrity (Worthington et al., 2020).

Hall and Fincham (2005) stated that there are three significant steps for self-forgiveness. Firstly, an individual should face the wrongdoing situation toward the self and take responsibility for the consequences of the situation, and accept it. Accepting and taking responsibility may lead to guilt and shame. This process may be more psychologically exhausting than be seen. For instance, self-destructive behaviors can be seen in this process when an individual cannot overcome these feelings and thoughts. If an individual overcomes these feelings, the last step of self-forgiveness can occur. In the last step, an individual overcomes these feelings and has the motivation to change feelings (resentment, anger, disappointment, etc.) and thoughts (negative self-thought, etc.) thus, self-punishment and self-destructive behavior turn into self-acceptance. Looking at a cognitive perspective of self-forgiveness, the process involves the transformation of negative self-evaluation. At the beginning of the self-forgiveness process, individuals' level of negative self-evaluation can be high. Owing to self-forgiveness, the level of negative self-evaluation may be less negative than at the beginning. From the behavioristic perspective, defensive behavior and avoidance may decrease (Worthington et al., 2020). Thus, self-forgiveness has two dimensions which are focused on cognitive and affective components. The cognitive dimension is composed of taking responsibility and focusing on how wrongdoing can be worked. In other words, the process of self-exoneration to self-forgiveness. On the other hand, in the affective dimension of self-forgiveness, this process is mainly associated with reducing feelings of self-condemnation (Griffin et al., 2018).

According to those mentioned above, it is known that self-forgiveness has many dimensions. Because self-forgiveness is neglected more than forgiveness of others and

forgiveness of situations, there is still uncertainty in self-forgiveness literature (Hall & Fincham, 2005). It is aimed that owing to this study, aspects of self-forgiveness may be developed.

2.1.2. Others Forgiveness

Considering that humanity is seen as a social creature, it is inevitable that people may experience conflicts, loss, or unfinished business. In interpersonal relationships, there are positive experiences as well as negative ones which may be voluntary or involuntary. While coping with the effects of these negative experiences, there are many coping strategies like avoidance, overcompensation, etc. Apart from these strategies, interpersonal forgiveness has a beneficial effect in facing the offender or moving on (Worthington & Scherer, 2004).

Regarding others-forgiveness effects, interpersonal forgiveness plays a significant role in sustaining social relationships and resolving conflicts (Noreen et al., 2014). In detail, forgiveness has an effect on the victim's anger level (Chen et al., 2017). From the victim's perspective, the intensity of a negative situation or relationship may decrease because the victim decides to move on and regulate negative thoughts and feelings thanks to forgiveness. Because the victim avoids the conflict and cycle of maladaptive coping strategies, the tendency of rumination (Berry et al., 2005), and depression (Zhang et al., 2020) may reduce. According to these benefits of interpersonal forgiveness, Li et al. (2021) stated that interpersonal forgiveness has a positive effect on individuals' overall health as well as interpersonal relationships.

Although people need love and belonging from a special one in their life, people are most likely to experience conflicts with their partners (Gerlach et al., 2012; Strelan et al., 2017). These conflicts sometimes may be inevitable. For this reason, interpersonal forgiveness is an essential part of individuals' life.

2.1.3. Situational Forgiveness

In every individual's life, some situations, which did not cause by the victim or the offender, may happen. Generally, these situations cannot control by anyone. For instance, a disaster, an illness, or an unexpected loss can be an example of these situations (Thompson et al., 2005). Sometimes, these situations have negative effects on individuals' life. In order to accept the situation and decide to move on, forgiveness has an essential role in this process.

For a long time, many researchers focused on forgiveness without examining the situational side. For this reason, it can be said that there is not enough research on situational forgiveness in the literature (Thompson et al., 2005). Although situational forgiveness is associated with self and others forgiveness, situational forgiveness has different dimensions compared to these two. The reason why it is specifically stated as 'situational' is being potentially a source of transgression toward individuals. When an individual, who describes her/his personality as successful, made a mistake and this situation violates the assumption about the self may be an example of situational transgression.

2.2. Models of Forgiveness

Ideas about models of forgiveness have arisen from the researchers' question that "How can people know that they have forgiven their offenders?" (Worthington, 2014). For this reason, there are many assumptions about the process of forgiveness. In this section, some forgiveness models that are significant in the forgiveness literature are mentioned.

2.2.1. Enright's Process Model of Forgiveness

In forgiveness literature, Robert Enright has significantly contributed to defining forgiveness and establishing a model of forgiveness. Many of his early works focused on how children and adults experience forgiveness (Enright & The Human Development Study Group, 1994).

Enright's model of forgiveness also is known as the Cognitive, Affective, Behavioral Process Model. The reason for this is that in the forgiveness process, individuals' three dimensions that are cognitive, affective, and behavioral need to change if they truly forgive their' transgressor' (Worthington, 2006).

While developing the process model of forgiveness, hundreds of people were asked how forgiveness occurs and what forgiveness is (Knutson et al., 2008). These thoughts and descriptions were revised until the essence of forgiveness is considered to be reached (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2014). After scientific analysis of definitions of forgiveness, they created phases of forgiveness. Enright and Fitzgibbons (2014) stated that the model of forgiveness may provide a cognitive map for practitioners like psychologists. Owing to the model's phases, practitioners may easily understand where clients got 'stuck' in the forgiveness process.

The Process Model of Forgiveness consists of four phases. These are respectively uncovering, decision, work, and deepening. Although it is a structured model, every step of the model may have a different effect on individuals or the length of time that each individual experiences and overcomes these steps may differ. In order to examine phases of forgiveness, these phases' goals are presented in Table 1 (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015).

Table 1: Goals of the Phases of Forgiveness

Phase	Goal
Uncovering	Clients begin to examine the situation which can be injustice and stressful. Owing to this examination, they have an awareness of the effects of situations in their lives.
Decision	As clients begin to understand the nature of forgiveness, they make committed decisions to forgive.
Work	Clients develop their understanding of the offender's behavior from a new perspective. This perspective may lead to positive changes in the thoughts about the offender, the self, and the relationship.
Deepening	Clients find new meanings in the suffering; have more adaptive relationships with others, and experience' negative affect decreases. In this phase, clients have renewed purpose in their lives.

Note. From “Forgiveness Therapy: An Empirical Guide for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope” by Enright, R. D., & Fitzgibbons, P. (2015). *American Psychological Association*, (<https://doi.org/10.1037/14526-000>)

2.2.2. Hargrave's Four Stations of Forgiveness

Hargrave and Sells (1997) developed a theory of interpersonal forgiveness based on Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark's (1973) theory of family therapy. In order to maintain a relationship, individuals should be involved in the relationship voluntarily. In addition, one of the essential parts of a relationship is justice. If there is no justice in the dynamics of a relationship, individuals may have difficulties about the self, the other, or the situation and thus, the relationship has to end. With the ending of the relationship, many coping mechanisms may be seen as adaptive or maladaptive. Maladaptive ones may lead to self-destruction or negative self-thoughts (Hargrave & Sells, 1997).

They stated that forgiveness has two driving forces of forgiveness are exoneration and entitlement. In order to examine these forces in a detailed way, firstly four stations of forgiveness should be analyzed. Unlike Enright's Process Model of Forgiveness, these four

stations may not be a sequential process (Hargrave, 2001). *Insight* (station 1) consists of gaining awareness about the dynamics of the transgression. *Understanding* (station 2) figures out why the transgression happened. Hargrave called the first two stations exoneration. Exoneration is associated with how the individual interprets the stressful situation, the offender, or the relationship. According to the Family Systems Theory, the system has a responsibility for problems. For this reason, when the individual realizes that no one is specifically guilty of the system's responses, and thus the individual is exonerated. In the third (*allowing for compensation*) and the fourth stations (*explicit forgiving*), an entitlement that is associated with establishing a genuine relationship between the victim and the offender may occur (Hargrave, 1994).

2.2.3. Worthington's Model of Forgiveness

Worthington (1998a) explained the model of forgiveness process as an emotional conditioning. The essential feature of emotional conditioning is a situation which triggers pain, anger, and fear. Due to a stressful situation, individuals may become classically conditioned to these feelings. For this reason, individuals may give different responses to situations with their feelings. These responses can be seen as avoidance, freeze, or fight and may be combined with feelings (i.e., fear, anger, resentment) (Worthington, 2014). If these painful situations do not resolve in an adaptive way, unfinished business may occur (Kılıç, 2021).

Worthington's Model of Forgiveness consists of three dimensions that are empathy, humility, and expressing forgiveness. In the forgiveness process, empathy helps individuals to take perspectives about the offender in a different way (McCullough et al., 1998). However, just empathy is not enough for forgiveness. Individuals may gain a different perspective about the offender. Nevertheless, individuals cannot accept the painful situation. Besides empathy, humility is a necessary dimension for forgiveness. The individual who has empathic thinking and humility decides to decrease the effects of negative-related feelings and begins to think that

forgiveness is a good choice for moving on (Kılıç, 2021). After the thoughts about forgiveness, the last dimension, expressing forgiveness, may be seen in the individual. In this process, the victim decides to let the offender know that he/she has been forgiven.

In terms of forgiveness as emotional conditioning, Worthington (2014) likened extinction to forgiving. He evaluated a stressful or conflict situation as a stimulus that triggers negative-related feelings like anger, and fear. The effects of the stressful situations may occur in (1) re-experiencing a similar situation, (2) being exposed to another conditioned stimulus (if the person was hurt again in a different situation), (3) the stimulus that can be a reminder of the pain, or (4) feeling a similar pain by a different situation. As can be seen from this model, the person's response is more focused on fear than anger Worthington (2014).

2.3. The Stress and Coping Theory

Facing a stressful situation, there are many assumptions about how people react to the situation. Especially, about conceptualizing the tendency of forgiveness, Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress and coping theory is a significant example. When individuals are experiencing a negative situation, firstly, they decide on this situation as to whether it is beneficial, stressful, or unreasonable to their mental health (Strelan, 2020; Worthington et al., 2020). If the individual decides to view the situation as stressful, analyzing the situation may begin in a detailed way. In detail, determining the situation's potential level of harm, benefits or challenge may be seen in this process. After this process, individuals try to use their capacity for psychological mental health, physical, social, or material in order to deal with the situation (Strelan, 2020). While individuals are using their capacities, attitudes of coping may begin.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), the coping process may be defined as individuals' attitudes toward dealing with a situation that is perceived as stressful in line with all their capacities. These coping strategies can be seen in two different ways. Firstly, if

individuals decide their capacities as positive and enough to deal with it, the coping process can be seen as adaptive. Secondly, if individuals evaluate their capacities from a negative perspective, they continue to see the situation as stressful and the coping process can repeat (Strelan, 2020).

Looking at the theory from the perspective of forgiveness, it can be evaluated that forgiveness is an adaptive coping strategy. Stackhouse (2019) stated that higher levels of forgiveness may be beneficial in perceiving a situation or an offender in a less harmful way. In addition, forgiveness is defined as an emotion-focused coping strategy because the victim may manage easier cognitive and emotional perceptions about the transgressor (Worthington & Scherer, 2004). For this reason, in the Stress and Coping Theory, forgiveness is evaluated as that is an adaptive strategy in a way of dealing with the stress of a situation or offender (Strelan, 2020). Indeed, if forgiveness happens, the victim may make a connection with their transgressor easier (McCullough, 2008).

2.4. Childhood Trauma

In childhood, one of the main needs of the child is the establishment of a relationship. For this reason, the effects of behaviors on children have been a significant research topic for many years (e.g., Macarenco et al., 2021; Wright et al., 2009). Besides behaviors that may have positive effects on children, there are some behaviors that may affect directly or indirectly children in a negative way. If these negative behaviors are systematic or intense, traumatic effects may be seen in children. In detail, childhood trauma may occur in events that can be sometimes chronic sometimes intense by the child's caregivers or social environment and cause harm or distress, thus, causing the child's development to have negative effects compared to their peers. Although some of the behaviors do not evaluate as abusive or neglectful behavior because of multiculturalism, It is inevitable to see the effects of these behaviors in a lifetime (Macarenco et al., 2021; Raman & Hodes, 2012).

Difficulties have been encountered in defining 'harmful behavior' due to differences in perceptions about parenting styles. In this process, The International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (ISPCAN) collected definitions of 'harmful behavior' towards children and tried to find similarities between these definitions (WHO, 2002). In the light of the similarity of the definitions, all of the forms of behavior that are physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful that may harm the child's life, morals, and emotional state in the individuals under the age of 18 are defined as childhood trauma (WHO, 2016; 1999). With this definition, childhood trauma is divided into two dimensions: abuse and neglect. Defining child abuse, the non-moral behaviors which may be damaged children's physical, mental, or psychosocial development by caregivers or people in a social environment. These behaviors may be intentional and repetitive (Pelendecioğlu & Bulut, 2016). Not fulfillment in children's essential needs like love and belongingness by caregivers was defined as child neglect (WHO, 1999). Child neglect may occur in physical, educational, emotional, and medical dimensions in children's lives (De Bellis, 2005). An example of this is that a parent whose children are sick does not take medicine and does nothing to treat them. The differences between child neglect and child abuse can be explained as child neglect occurs with passive behaviors. On the other hand, the main feature of child abuse is that the behavior is intentional (Pelendecioğlu & Bulut, 2016). Apart from the differences in childhood trauma styles, there is an important aspect that has been neglected. Not only behaviors from caregivers or social environment cause trauma but also war, epidemics, or infectious diseases (Zoroğlu et al., 2001).

Studies all over the world about childhood trauma showed that child abuse and neglect have been major problems. In order to show the problem, the study was conducted in 21 countries. The study by Kessler et al. (2010) showed childhood trauma scores that %39.1 for undeveloped countries, %38.9 for developing countries, and %38.4 for developed countries.

According to the United States Department of Health & Human Services (USDHHS, 2020) as the age decreases of children, the possibility of childhood trauma increases.

2.4.1. Types of Childhood Trauma

In general, types of childhood trauma consist of five dimensions. These are emotional abuse, emotional neglect, physical abuse, physical neglect, and sexual abuse (Bernstein et al., 1994). These dimensions are presented below.

2.4.1.1. Emotional Abuse

Unlike other types of childhood trauma, emotional abuse has no physical evidence and thus, it may be the most difficult to detect, but it is a type of childhood trauma that affects the child's emotional, behavioral, and cognitive development deeply. Indeed, emotional abuse becomes difficult to detect thoroughly because children do not know with whom and how they can share this situation (Schaaf, 2012). Emotional abuse may show itself in verbal (Bernstein et al., 2003) or nonverbal (Glaser, 2002) behaviors, which consists of the possibility to harm to a child's perception about self, or the world, from caregivers or social environment. In detail, ignoring the child, insulting, mocking, punishing, or any form of behavior that would undermine a child's potential may be defined as emotional abuse. Due to cultural factors and social norms, it may be a problem in some cases that emotional abuse is accepted and defined as abuse (Doğruer, 2019).

2.4.1.2. Emotional Neglect

One of the childhood traumas that is difficult to detect is emotional neglect. Emotional neglect can be defined as the child's emotional needs, such as love and affection, that are not met as a result of not paying the necessary attention by caregivers (Bernstein et al., 2003; Cameron et al., 2017). Apart from emotional needs, attitudes that do not seek solutions to children's problems or allow children to witness conflict situations can also be examples of emotional neglect (Stoltenborgh et al., 2013). The effects of these negligent behaviors may last

a lifetime. The individuals who experienced emotional neglect from caregivers may have difficulties in meeting their children's emotional needs.

2.4.1.3. Physical Neglect

Looking at types of childhood trauma, physical neglect (78.5%) is the most common neglect type among children. Each year, more than 1,500 child deaths are associated with child abuse or child neglect (Schilling & Christian, 2014; HHS, 2020).

Definition of physical neglect is the situation where the physical needs of children such as clothing, supervision, or personal hygiene are not met by the caregivers (Stoltenborgh et al., 2013). Not taking the child with a health problem to the hospital or not taking any action to treat it is an example of physical neglect (Acehan et al., 2013).

2.4.1.4. Physical Abuse

As it has been seen since the existence of humanity, child abuse has still continued (Polat 2007). In ancient times, the use of children as slaves, forced labor, or sacrifice may be essential examples of physical abuse (Pelendecioğlu & Bulut, 2016). Behaviors that have the potential to negatively affect the child's physical health by their caregivers or individuals in their social environment may be called as physical abuse (Bernstein et al. 2003). In brief, physical abuse may be called as situations where the child is injured out of an accident. In general, physical abuse may be seen in punishment behaviors or caregivers who have lost control (Pelendecioğlu & Bulut, 2016).

2.4.1.5. Sexual Abuse

For a long time, it has been thought that sexual abuse is very rare and only occurs in regions with low socioeconomic status. On the contrary, sexual abuse is very common nowadays and it is a situation that affects many children negatively (Murray et al., 2014). Child sexual abuse is the perception of the child as a sexual object by a person in a social environment

or by caregivers. As an example of this situation; forcing, threatening, voyeurism, or using sexually explicit expressions for sexual intercourse may be given. In sexual abuse, offenders and victims may be of any gender. However, in general, the offender is the man and the victim is the woman (Yiğit, 2010).

2.4.2. Consequences of Childhood Trauma

Being exposed to trauma during childhood is common, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, etc. Since it is so common, there are many studies on the negative effects of childhood traumas in the later periods. In line with these studies, it has been seen that there is a possibility of experiencing many problems in many areas due to childhood traumas in adulthood.

Growing up without caring and responsive caregivers, it may have many biological adverse effects on the child. Many studies showed that child abuse and neglect may lead to psychopathology disorders or general health problems (Chen et al., 2019; Choi et al., 2009; Felitti et al., 1998; Reyes, 2008; Şar et al. 2021; Turner et al., 2010). In detail, if children become familiar with traumatic and stressful situations, the possibility of behavioral problems increases (Connell et al., 2018) because the children who are in a victim position, brain function may change because of the situations that they exposed (Dye, 2018). Exposure to trauma especially in childhood showed that individuals' hormonal systems that regulate the stress and brain functions level may be triggered in any situation (Nemeroff, 2004). When individuals felt threatened, the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis, which is associated with cognitive functions like inflammation and immunity, is activated and it causes an increase in the corticosteroids. Because of the repetitive conflict situations, HPA begins to dysregulate. Individuals are constantly on the alert with the fight-flight-freeze mechanism (Butler et al., 2017). For this reason, children who have traumatic experiences become vulnerable to over corticosteroids. In addition, because of dysregulation of the HPA axis may lead to hormonal

abnormalities, or increase the risk of depression (De Kloet et al., 2005). In brief, because of childhood trauma, individuals have difficulties in regulating intense emotions and thus, they become vulnerable to events that can be reminders of the trauma (Dye, 2018).

Besides the biological effects of childhood trauma, there may be seen behavioral problems in children and adults (Connell et al., 2018). For instance, childhood trauma may also be associated with insecure attachment styles, and emotional neglect may lead to maladaptive behaviors such as attachment disorders (Gabler, 2004). Regarding attachment style, the essential needs for children to make connections between the self and the world, establish an adaptive relationship, or sustain life in a positive way are protection, exploration, and nutrition (Downey & Crummy, 2022). If children do not feel safe or these needs do not meet by caregiver(s), emotional hesitations may be seen in these children later in life. In addition, because exploration needs did not encourage by caregiver(s), a low level of self-esteem can be seen with the thought of any risk of failure (van Rosmalen et al., 2016). These effects of attachment styles may be seen in generations. For instance, an adult, who had childhood trauma experiences, may show abusive or neglectful behaviors toward his/her children (Özgentürk, 2014). Even if individuals do not show this attitude towards their children, it can be challenging for the individual.

Apart from parenting styles, because of the instability relationships between the child and the caregiver(s) and traumatic experiences, the child's sense of self may be destructed (Teague, 2013). Traumatic events may cause not only great damage but also maladaptive perceptions about oneself and the world (Janiri et al., 2020). These effects may result from (non-moral) shame and guilt. With these feelings, individuals can blame themselves like 'I am bad because I did something bad' or 'I deserve what I've been through because I'm not good enough' (Bem et al., 2021). Due to maladaptive perceptions, If children do not receive support

for their traumatic experiences, they may be inclined to find relationships similar to the relationship patterns they were exposed to in their childhood (Crowley, 2018).

In addition to the psychological effects of childhood traumas, Briere and Jordan (2009) stated that individuals, who experienced childhood trauma, may suffer from anger, anxiety, abandonment, and trust issues. As a result of the continuation and dysregulation of these feelings, individuals may suffer from PTSD (Dye, 2018; Downey & Crummy, 2022). PTSD's symptoms which are aggression, sleep disturbances, the blame of self or others, or hypervigilance may be harder for individuals who have no skills to manage these feelings and symptoms (O'Bryan et al., 2015).

When the effects of childhood traumas are examined in general, it is seen that individuals may experience problems in many areas, including psychological and physiological, throughout their lives. In order to decrease these negative effects, social support, and resources which can be financial stability, advanced education, etc. may be provided for individuals (Campbell-Sills et al., 2009).

2.5. Humor

Humor is a concept that has been studied in fields such as psychology and philosophy since the existence of humanity and still continues. Because there are different definitions in many different fields, it is difficult to make a general definition of humor. However, looking at humor behavior in general, the situations that people find funny or absurd may be called as humor (Billig, 2014). In addition, general knowledge about humor is that takes place in our lives from infancy to the end of adulthood and has many functions.

2.5.1. Humor Theories

As studies on the importance and function of humor in humanity have been carried out, many different perspectives have emerged. Superiority Theory, Incongruity Theory, and Relaxation Theory are defined below.

2.5.1.1. Superiority Theory

One of the oldest theories of humor is the superiority theory which Plato and Hobbes developed in order to examine the functions of humor and examine what humor is (Lintott, 2016). In general according to Superiority Theory, when individuals compare themselves with other people, if they see themselves as better and stronger in terms of status, it is argued that humor is used because of pleasure from this situation (Hobbes, 1962).

Looking at the basis of ideas about superiority theory, Platon (1975) stated essence of humor is evil. In detail, he argued that the worsening or misfortune of others in an individual's social environment causes individuals to experience pleasure rather than pain. What's more, According to Platon, the main reason why an individual thinks they are funny is that they do not really know themselves. In fact, these individuals see themselves as smarter, stronger, etc. than self-concept. As mentioned above, the general focus in this theory is the weaknesses of people.

Similar to Plato's definition of humor was made by Hobbes (1651). According to Hobbes, the desire for superiority is a part of human nature. He argues that with the sense of pleasure, individuals actually achieve a sense of victory. Within the scope of superiority theory, a different comparison was made by Anthony Ludovici (1933) regarding the feeling of victory. He likened dogs showing their teeth when challenging each other to people showing their teeth to each other when laughing and mocking. The superiority theory generally suggested that

humor is about comparing individuals among themselves. But many researchers and theorists who disagreed developed a new theory of humor called the Incongruity Theory.

2.5.1.2. Incongruity Theory

Kant and Schopenhauer (1819) developed a humor theory based on incongruence. They stated that laughing behavior emerged as a result of unexpected events that occurred suddenly (Attardo, 1994). These situations should be not only unexpected but also safe in order to laugh (Martin, 2006).

Like other theories of humor focused on the cognitive and perceptual side of humor, incongruity theory has a cognitive and perceptual side. However, incongruity theory is more focused on the cognitive side of humor than other theories because of the cognitive assumptions. While superiority theory focuses on enjoyment, incongruity theory focuses on cognitive reactions to unexpected situations (Atabay, 2019). In detail, people find the situation as funny when the situation's conclusion is different than expected by individuals. Namely, laughing is the opposite of expectations (Akyol, 2011).

2.5.1.3. Relaxation Theory

While superiority theory sees humor as a means of pleasure, Incongruity theory sees humor as a reaction to unexpected events, relaxation theory defines humor from a different perspective. Relaxation Theory defines humor as a coping mechanism that helps individuals to find their homeostasis (Raskin, 1985). Looking at the theory in detail, it is advocated that humor is used in a functional way to balance or reduce the effect of intense depressive feelings in life. For this reason, Aristotle defined humor as a balancing element between excess and absence (Marra, 2019).

According to Gregory (1924), the results of situations that cause individuals to laugh often lead to relaxation. For instance, the feeling of uncertainty about winning, the feeling of

victory after winning, or the feeling of realizing that you are better than someone else, cause a feeling of relief as a result of laughing. As can be seen here, pain and pleasure actually continue together for a while (Atabay, 2019). When the situation in which the individual has a problem ends, laughing begins.

2.6. Relationship between Forgiveness, Childhood Trauma, and Humor

Although there is no study in which all the analyzed variables were found at the same time, there is a theory perspective that explains the three variables mentioned. Relational frame theory, which is in the theoretical framework of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and detailed explanations of the variables are presented below.

2.6.1. Relational Frame Theory and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

After the 1990s, several behavior therapies did not rely on traditional approaches. They tried to find new techniques and new approaches in the therapies. These new therapy approaches are called ‘third wave therapies’. For instance, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT; Linehan, 1993) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT; Segal et al., 2002), etc. The key feature of these therapies may be that they focus more on the empirical side of the therapy process than other traditional approaches. In addition, dimensions like spirituality, acceptance, mindfulness, cognitive defusion, or relationships are the main points of the third wave therapy approaches (Hayes, 2016).

One of the third wave therapies is Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Hayes (2016), who is the developer of the therapy, stated that ACT has many perspectives and is hard to categorize. Looking at the therapy from a theoretical perspective, ACT is based on Skinner’s philosophy of radical behaviorism just like Relational Frame Theory (RFT) (Kohlenberg et al., 1993). According to Relational Frame Theory, language and cognition are the essential

dimensions of contextual inferences in life. Due to the dimensions of RFT, individuals can relate to or infer events.

Relational Frame Theory has six patterns of relational responding, these are stated below (McEnteggart, 2017):

1. *Coordination Relationships* are defined as similarity or sameness and it is the establishment of a relationship using words in some way.
2. *Opposition Relations* are the identification and expression of extremely different stimuli.
3. *Distinction Relations* are the identification and expressions of structures that are different from each other (nor are they opposite).
4. *Comparative Relations* are the expression of the similar and different structures of different stimuli using words.
5. *Hierarchical Relations* is a comparison that critically involves containment.
6. *Perspective Taking* focuses on how individuals see themselves, and others. It is a perspective that contains interpersonal relations, temporal dimensions, and spatial.

Creating relational frames may be both effective (problem-solving, making rational associations, etc.) and ineffective (experiential avoidance, suppression, etc.) for the individual. According to RFT and ACT, cognition and language may create suffering and fixation on shame, regret, remorse, and guilt (Dewar et al., 2017). These experiences can be caused by irrational or unworkable responses to situations (Hayes et al., 2001d). In addition, sometimes individuals may see themselves as responsible for a situation that won't happen. It will cause more pain and struggle (Hayes et al., 2001d). RFT stated that when an individual has a cognitive fusion, the tendency of suppression, disputation, or experiential avoidance, it is significant that

these irrational thoughts or behaviors may change over time thanks to the clinical intervention with the ACT approach and RFT (Hayes, 2016).

RFT explains how individuals interpret occasions, relationships, themselves, or make associations in life. Further, RFT analyzes how and why individuals blame themselves for situations that they are not responsible for. Although some decisions and thoughts may be seen as voluntary actions, due to experiences and cognition, these decisions can automatically happen with language and relational frames (Dewar, 2017). Why individuals make an association with situations that they are not responsible for may be the result of automatically thinking or victimless offense (Dewar, 2017; Wilson et al., 2001). Some of this automatically thinking which can be called 'arbitrary contextual control' may lead individuals to suffer (Hayes, 2016). Due to suffering, ACT stated that in order to not feel any pain, people may avoid the situation or any situation that can be a reminder. This avoiding approach can be called experiential avoidance. In order to make experiential avoidance into experiential acceptance, RFT can be used in clinical interventions.

Nowadays, therapists are trying to find evidence-based techniques and approaches in order to improve clients' tendency to forgive, especially self-forgive (Martyn, 2016). One's perspective taking and experiences are significant too for the tendency to forgive. How individuals interpret the world, relationships, and themselves may have an effect on forgiveness. Accordingly, RFT may help the individual understand one's experiences in oneself, others, and situations (Dewar, 2017). People can think automatically about what is good, and what is bad for them. Due to making negative associations that are not rational, conscious, or effective, sometimes individuals cannot forgive themselves, others, or situations (Wilson et al., 2001). For this reason, RFT and ACT may play a critical role in enabling clients to be aware of and define their own needs (Martyn, 2016; Woodyatt & Wanzel, 2014). As the client discovers their own needs, thus the client's level of forgiveness and level of flexibility

may increase. Consequently, RFT based therapy like Acceptance and Commitment Therapy provides an understanding of how people use cognition, language, and relational frame while giving internal or external responses to life events, and thus there may be a flexible pathway to forgiveness (Woodyatt & Wenzel, 2014).

How individuals interpret traumatic experiences from different perspectives like the situation, the offender, or the victim is significant (Wright et al., 2009). Looking at childhood trauma literature, many studies stated that in order to avoid trauma-related experiences which as a fear of being triggered, people use dissociation as a natural defense mechanism (Dalenberg et al., 2012; Macarenco et al., 2021; Vonderlin et al., 2018). In addition, traumatic early-recollections may lead to dissociative thoughts and behaviors when close ones (such as parents or caregivers) have control over a child's internal experiences such as emotions and thoughts. From an RFT point of view, dissociation means a significant interruption in the process of understanding developmental the difference between self and others (McEnteggart et al., 2017). Irrationally connecting with these dimensions (self and others) may have severe and negative consequences in the developmental process. For instance, Barnes-Holmes et al. (2020) presented a case summary that focuses on a 30 years old woman who has childhood trauma. From a Relational Frame Theory perspective, they stated that it is a highly sensitive process because the client blames herself for what has been done. In this process, the therapist and the client revisit these traumatic experiences and focus on how the individual made connections between the traumatic experience and herself. In order for the client to engage in these avoided and traumatized situations, the therapist shows unconditional positive regard and commitment during the therapy process (Barnes-Holmes et al., 2020).

Establishing coherent communication between people is a complex process and has many dimensions. Especially, perspective-taking which explains how an individual interprets and understands the context of self and others is significant for the communication process

(Hendriks et al., 2016). There may be seen as a reflection of perspective-taking skills in every tendency of communication. For instance, humor, deception, or empathy are complex social interactions (Heagle & Rehfeldt, 2006). According to RFT, humor occurs when an incongruous joke turns out meaningful and coherent owing to relational networks (Stewart et al., 2001; Nuñez, 2017). What makes humor incongruence is that generally, jokes have double meanings. The process of understanding humor is based on coherent relations in context, examination of relational networks between humor's function and stimuli, and transformation of humor's function (Dahl et al., 2013; Nuñez, 2017). In addition, looking at a joke in a context, sometimes individuals cannot make a connection between the joke's stimulus. According to RFT, with many trainings, humor can be taught, and thus, these stimuli may become more understandable (Nuñez, 2017).

2.7. Research on Forgiveness and Gender

When the literature on forgiveness and gender is examined, it is seen that there are many different results and assumptions. Although there are some studies that did not result in a significant relationship between gender and forgiveness, the majority of them found a significant relationship between gender and forgiveness. These studies are stated below respectively.

The purpose of the study by Toussaint and Webb (2005) was to examine the relationship between the level of empathy and forgiveness with regard to gender. This study with 127 participants (45 men and 82 women) showed that women were more empathic than men. However, there was no relationship between forgiveness and gender. A similar result was found from the domestic study with 522 health care professionals and candidates conducted by Batık (2020) in order to examine the level of forgiveness. The result of the study showed that there were no significant differences between gender and forgiveness.

Although there is no significant difference between the tendency of forgiveness and gender, the study, which consists of 20 women and 18 men who are victims of forced displacement, by Otalvaro et al. (2020) showed that women's tendency toward self-forgiveness was higher than men's tendency toward self-forgiveness ($\bar{x}$ = 28.00, SD = 4.89; $\bar{x}$ = 26.00, SD = 4.22). On the other hand, it was observed that men's tendency in forgiveness to others was greater than women's ($\bar{x}$ = 29.11, SD = 4.12; $\bar{x}$ = 28.35, SD = 5.40).

The study, which was conducted by Robertson and Swickert (2016), focused on examining how age, gender, and forgiveness affect individuals' expression styles. The sample of the study consisted of 80 young adults and 80 older adults. According to the study's result, looking at forgiveness as a dimension of high level and low level, there was a significant relationship between low level of forgiveness and gender (β = -.28, $t(155)$ = -2.70, p = .01). For instance, lower levels of forgiveness in men showed themselves at using more anger words than women. On the other hand, at high-level forgiveness, there was no significant relationship between forgiveness and gender. In other words, although there was a significant negative effect of forgiveness for men, in women there was not found significant relationship for forgiveness.

A meta-analysis by Gao et al. (2022), the tendency to forgive was examined and included 83 studies and 39,104 participants in this study. These studies focused on different dimensions of forgiveness. For instance, 50 studies for the tendency of forgiveness, 13 studies for situational forgiveness, and the last 20 studies did not clarify which type of forgiveness they were. With the random effects model, the results showed that high level of forgiveness can lead to higher subjective well-being, life satisfaction, fewer negative emotions, and more positive emotions. The relationship between negative emotions and forgiveness was controlled by gender. It was found that a higher tendency to forgive may cause weaker negative emotions, especially in women. Also, the study by Walker and Gorsuch (2002) found similar results. The study which focused on the relationship between dispositional forgiveness and personality traits

in a total of 180 participants (137 females and 43 males) from Southern California universities. The result of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between receiving other's forgiveness and gender. In detail, women are better at receiving other's forgiveness than men.

Similar results have been found in Swickert et al.'s (2015) study. Their study consisted of 156 participants in order to examine the relationship between empathy, forgiveness, and gender. Pearson correlation analysis of the study showed that forgiveness was significantly associated with gender ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$). According to this study, women's tendency toward forgiveness was greater than men's.

A domestic study which was conducted by Öksüz and Öztürk (2017) focused on how individuals' tendency of forgiveness was affected by different variables like gender. In order to examine these variables, 117 teacher candidates participated in the study. According to the result of the study, there was no significant relationship between forgiveness and gender ($p = .70$).

A similar result was found in another domestic study. The study by Asıcı and Karaca (2014) examined the relationship between forgiveness and self-compassion of 400 teacher candidates (269 women and 131 men). While examining these variables, the role of gender was examined too. The result showed that there was no significant relationship between the total score and sub-dimensions of forgiveness and gender ($p = .68$).

Lastly, a similar result was found in the study of Sayın (2017), which is one of the domestic studies. This study consisted of 681 college students (478 women and 203 men). The goal of the study was to examine the roles of forgiveness and self-compassion in coping strategies. Looking at the relationship between gender and forgiveness, there was no significant relationship ($p > .05$).

2.8. Research on Childhood Trauma and Gender

In the literature review, in general, research results on childhood trauma and gender revealed a relationship between these two variables. These studies are stated below respectively.

The study by Wei et al. (2021) was conducted in China with 6510 students (3102 females and 3408 males, aged 10-17). The aim of the study was examine gender differences in the effects of resilience and childhood trauma on depressive symptoms. The result of the study revealed that childhood trauma was positively correlated with depressive symptoms for women and men. However, they stated that the relationship which was mentioned above was stronger in women than men ($\bar{x}$ = 10.05, SD= 9.66; $\bar{x}$ = 9.20, SD= 8.92; t = -2.81, p < 0.05).

The review study by Vila-Badia et al. (2021) showed many studies' results about the relationship between childhood trauma and first episode psychosis. They conducted a literature research 1995 to 2019 in order to compare samples with gender. They found 493 studies and after the elimination, they included 68 studies in the study. Considering all the studies, they stated that women suffer more sexual abuse than men. Except this, some of the studies included in the study are stated in detail below.

The study which focused on the relationship between childhood trauma and cognition in patients who suffer from first-episode psychosis conducted by Aas et al. (2011). This study consists of 276 participants (137 women and 139 men) aged 16-65 years. The results about childhood trauma and gender effect revealed that female patients had significant higher levels of childhood trauma than male patients (Women: %78, Men: %60; χ^2 = 5.30, df = 1, p < 0.05). However, the results showed that there was an association between worse cognitive functions and childhood trauma, especially in men ($\bar{x}$ = -0.85, SD= 1.2; $\bar{x}$ = 0.47, SD= 1.2, p < 0.05). On the other hand, there was no significant relationship between childhood trauma and cognition amongst female participants.

Pruessner et al. (2018) conducted a research to examine gender differences in childhood trauma and their effects on psychosis. The study consisted of 210 patients (60 women and 144 men). Results about gender differences in childhood trauma showed that male patients more suffered from neglectful experiences than female patients ($\chi^2 = 10.34$; $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, female patients had more emotional abuse than men ($\chi^2 = 7.64$; $p < 0.05$). Lastly, regarding sexual and physical abuse, there were no significant differences between women and men.

Domestic studies, which was conducted by Mert et al. (2016), focused on the interaction between childhood trauma and cognitive ability with regard to the effects of gender and minimization. The study consisted of 345 students (226 female and 119 male). Results of the study stated that the male students' mean Childhood Trauma Questionnaire total score and the mean sub-dimensions (emotional neglect, physical neglect, and sexual abuse) scores was significantly greater than female students ($p < .05$). A different result was found in Şar et al.'s (2019) study. This study consisted of 184 college students (93 women and 91 men). In this study, there were no differences between childhood trauma and both gender but women had more suffer from emotional abuse than men ($\bar{x} = 7.53$, $SD = 3.71$; $\bar{x} = 6.42$, $SD = 2.89$; $t = 2.42$, $p < .05$). In another study which was conducted with 549 college students (360 women and 189 men) by Başoğlu (2019) showed that men had suffered more from child abuse than women ($\bar{x} = 35.38$, $\bar{x} = 63.80$; $p < .001$). It was seen in the study of Güloğlu et al. (2016) that men were exposed to traumatic situations more than women. One of the aims of the study is to examine gender differences in childhood trauma. In this study, in which 536 college students (413 women and 123 men) participated, it was concluded that male students were exposed to more traumatic situations especially sexual ($\bar{x} = 9.65$, $SD = 3.20$; $\bar{x} = 8.53$, $SD = 3.00$), physical ($\bar{x} = 9.09$, $SD = 2.87$; $\bar{x} = 8.33$, $SD = 2.78$), and emotional abuse ($\bar{x} = 9.85$, $SD = 3.41$; $\bar{x} = 8.74$, $SD = 3.75$) and physical ($\bar{x} = 8.64$, $SD = 3.15$; $\bar{x} = 7.18$, $SD = 2.55$) and emotional neglect ($\bar{x} = 8.95$,

SD=3.47; $\bar{x}$ =7.60, SD= 2.65) than female students. Looking at all the studies mentioned, it is seen that there is no consensus on the effect of gender in childhood trauma.

2.9. Research on Humor and Gender

Looking at the literature, it has been determined that there are very few studies examining the difference in humor use between the genders. Some research on gender humor has focused on the social dimension (e.g., Crawford, 2003) but these studies did not make any comparisons between the gender. As a result of the literature review, few studies were found that could be included in the literature review. The studies were stated below.

In order to examine the interaction of humor and gender in moderating relationships among anxiety, physical symptoms, and perceived stress, Abel (1998) conducted a study with psychology students (70 women and 61 men). In this study, no gender differences were found in humor ($p>.05$).

Examining humor in 29 six-person conversation groups formed with university students was conducted by Robinson and Smith-Lovin (2001). In this study, they observed that male students engaged in humor more than female students ($b= -2.94$, $p< .01$). However, when no men in the group, women's rate of humor was higher than the group of only male students.

Looking at gender differences in humor, Hofmann et al. (2020) reviewed 77 studies. In the light of the study's result, although there was a difference between genders in humor styles, there was no significant relationship between general humor and gender.

A domestic study which was conducted by Kirkbir et al. (2021) focused on the relationship between humor styles and gender. This study consisted of 126 college students (31 women and 95 men). The result of the study revealed that there were no significant humor style differences between gender.

2.10. Research on Forgiveness and Childhood Trauma

In general, the studies about the relationship between forgiveness and childhood trauma showed that there is a direct relationship. Studies in which forgiveness and childhood trauma are considered together with different variables are stated below. Studies are listed according to publication dates respectively.

The study by Snyder and Heinze (2005) consisted of 79 college students (32 males and 47 females). The aim of the study is to examine the mediational role of forgiveness in the relationship between PTSD-hostility. In sexual versus physical and male versus female abuse, there were no significant differences between them. On the other hand, forgiveness has a mediator effect on the relationship between PTSD and hostile behavior.

Qualitative research by Breshears (2015) focused on the participants who have an alcoholic parent(s) in early childhood experiences. 16 females and 4 males were included in this study. Findings showed that almost all of the participants could not forgive their parents. However, owing to reframing, participants were more motivated to forgive their parents for faith and personal well-being.

Güloğlu et al. (2016) conducted a study to examine the differences in forgiveness and spirituality levels between college students who experienced and did not experience childhood trauma. This scope of study, 536 college students (413 women and 123 men) were included. The result of the study revealed that the participants who experienced childhood trauma had lower scores on spirituality ($\bar{x}= 55.39$, $SD= 12.34$; $\bar{x}= 62.33$, $SD= 8.67$), self-forgiveness ($\bar{x}=25.15$, $SD= 13.32$; $\bar{x}=28.24$, $SD= 5.07$), others forgiveness ($\bar{x}= 24.91$, $SD= 5.90$; $\bar{x}= 26.78$, $SD= 6.88$), and situational forgiveness ($\bar{x}= 24.35$, $SD=6.23$; $\bar{x}= 27.88$, $SD= 6.11$) than participants who did not experience childhood trauma.

Edara and Chen (2018) examined the determinants of forgiveness in family conflicts. The data was collected from 377 college students. The hierarchical multiple regression analysis showed that after controlling gender, the intensity of hurt was a significant predictor and explained an additional %5 of variance of forgiveness. Also, they stated that higher neglectful or abusive behaviors may lead to lower tendency of forgiveness.

Within the scope of the study with 100 offenders, Erzar et al. (2019) examined relationships between childhood victimization and chronic anger, chronic anger and forgiveness, and forgiveness and hurt. The result of the study revealed that childhood victimization was positively correlated with chronic anger (0.22 and 0.31, $p < 0.05$). Also, chronic anger had a mediation effect on the relationship between forgiveness and hurt.

The mediator effect of forgiveness between childhood trauma and adulthood dating violence victimization was examined by Seo and Hyun (2019). Contrary to other studies, only self-forgiveness had partially mediating effect on the relationship between adulthood dating violence victimization and childhood trauma. It was found that other and situation forgiveness did not have a significant mediating effect on the above-mentioned variables. Looking at the studies in general, it is seen that forgiveness has a positive or mediator effect, but the researches are still insufficient.

2.11. Research on Forgiveness and Humor

When the relevant literature was reviewed, it has been determined that more studies have been conducted on humor styles or coping humor rather than humor tendency. For this reason, the studies which focused on the relationship between different dimensions of humor and forgiveness are mentioned below.

The study, which included 112 college students (73 women and 39 men), focused on the relationship between humor styles and forgiveness (Hampes, 2016). According to this study,

self-enhancing humor, which is an ability to laugh at yourself in life's hardships, was found significantly and positively correlated with all of the sub-dimensions of forgiveness ($r = .34$, $p < .001$). In addition, aggressive humor ($r = -.25$, $p < .01$) and self-defeating humor ($r = -.31$, $p < .001$) were found significant and negative correlations with forgiveness. Unlike this result, Mabilia et al. (2020) found no significant difference between humor styles and forgiveness. For this reason, they stated that humor may not be included in activities such as seminars or studies for college students.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research model, the study's participants, data collection tools, data collection process, and analysis of data are explained.

3.1. Research Model

The goal of this study is to examine to what extent childhood trauma and humor of participants predict forgiveness in college students after the gender variable was controlled. In this study, the correlational research design was used to examine the relationship between these variables (Büyüköztürk, 2021). By examining the relationships between the variables, it is tried to determine the value of one of the variables that the relationship is established with and the other variable (Büyüköztürk et al., 2019). Fraenkel et al. (2012) stated that predictor variable whose value is known and criterion variable whose value is to be determined. The predictor variables of this research are childhood trauma and humor. The criterion variable is determined as forgiveness.

Regarding the number of predictor variables, predictor correlational patterns are included in two dimensions: single and multi-factor. Because there are two predictor variables in this study, a multi-factor predictor correlational pattern was used (Büyüköztürk et al., 2019).

3.2. Study Group

The target population of the study was college students. In order to reach college students, a convenient sampling method was used. Although 510 people participated in the study, the total number of participants that meet the study's criteria was calculated as (N= 423). After removing 87 people who did not meet the criteria (under 18 or over 25 or not a college student) of the study from 510 people who voluntarily participated in the research. Demographic information about the participants is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Female	298	70.4
Male	125	29.6
Age		
18	47	11.1
19	67	15.8
20	90	21.3
21	67	15.8
22	51	12.1
23	43	10.2
24	36	8.5
25	22	5.2
Year in College		
Prep.	65	15.4
Freshmen	95	22.5
Sophomore	98	23.2
Junior	67	15.8
Senior	98	23.1
n= 423		

According to the Table 2, 298 of the total 423 participants were women (70.4%) and 125 (29.6) were men. In addition, out of 423 participants, 47 (%11.1) participants were the age of 18, 67 (%15.8) of them were 19 years old, 90 (%21.3) of them were the age of 20, 67 (%15.8) of them were 21 years old, 51 (%12.1) participants were the age of 22, 43 (%10.2) of them were 23 years old, 36 (%8.5) of them were 24 years old, and 22 (%5.2) participants were the age of 25. About the class level of the participants, out of 423 participants, 65 (%15.4) of them were in their prep. year, 95 (%22.5) of them were freshmen, 98 (%23.2) of them were sophomore, 67 (%15.8) of them were junior, and 98 (%23.1) of them were senior in college.

3.3. Data Collection Tools

Demographic Information Form, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, and Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale were used for data collection. In the next 4 sections, detailed information about these scales is presented. Reliability scores of these scales are presented in the Table 3.

Table 3: Reliability Scores of Heartland Forgiveness Scale, Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, and Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha reliability co-efficient
Heartland Forgiveness Scale	.80
Forgiveness of Self	.75
Forgiveness of Others	.77
Forgiveness of Situation	.79
Childhood Trauma Questionnaire	.86
Emotional Abuse	.84
Physical Abuse	.89
Physical Neglect	.79
Emotional Neglect	.85
Sexual Abuse	.87
Overprotection-Overcontrol	.84
Multi Dimensional Sense of Humor Scale	.90

3.3.1. Demographical Information Form

Demographical Information Form was developed by the researcher and used for collecting demographic information of college students. In this form, there are 3 questions include gender, age, and current level of studying at the university.

3.3.2. Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS)

The 18-item scale, which was developed by Thompson et al. (2005), and self-report questionnaire that includes three subscales that all have six items: forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness of situations. In this scale, participants are asked how

they responded in the transgression they experienced. The participants evaluated these items on a 7-point Likert-type scale, 1: Almost always more false than true, 7: Almost always true of me. There are nine negative scored items (2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, and 17). After reverse items, total score of forgiveness can be calculated. The individuals who have high scores on this scale may have a higher tendency to forgive than other people.

According to psychometric characteristics of HFS, Thompson et al. (2005) stated internal consistency coefficients respectively: Forgiveness of self .75, forgiveness of others .79, and forgiveness of situation .79, and .87 for total scores; test-retest reliabilities calculated as .72, .73, and .83 in a three-week test-retest procedure.

The adaptation of the Heartland Forgiveness Scale in Turkish and evaluation of its psychometrics were conducted by Bugay and Demir (2010a). Adaptation study was conducted with 376 university students (196 women, 180 men). The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be as .80 (total score), .71 (forgiveness of self), .82 (forgiveness of others), and .79 (forgiveness of situation) in their study.

3.3.3. Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ-33)

Firstly, Childhood Trauma Questionnaire was developed by Bernstein et al. (1994) to assess neglect or the abuse in childhood experiences with 53 items. After a while, they decided to decrease the number of items from 53 to 28 (Bernstein et al., 2003). With this scale, individuals may evaluate their neglectful or the abuse experiences that are before the age of 20 via self-report. The scale consists of five sub-dimensions: Sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, emotional neglect, and physical neglect. There are five items in each of these sub-dimensions. Participants may evaluate their experiences with a 5-point Likert-type (1: Never, 5: Very often). In order to calculate the total score of the scale, the scores of the five sub-dimensions should be added.

According to psychometric characteristics of CTQ, Bernstein et al., (2003) stated internal consistency coefficients: .83 for physical abuse, .92 for sexual abuse, .87 emotional abuse, .61 for physical neglect, and .91 for emotional neglect.

The adaptation of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire Scale in Turkish was developed by Şar et al., (2012). Because of cultural dimensions, they decided to revise the scale in a culture-sensitive way. With the revision, a new sub-dimension (overprotection – overcontrol) was added to the scale (Şar et al., 2021). The study of revision was applied with participants ($n = 783$) consisting of 78 non-dissociative and 37 dissociative and non-psychotic psychiatric outpatients, and 668 non-clinical people. Cronbach's Alpha score of the CTQ-33 was found as .87 and Gutmann split half coefficient was calculated as .69.

3.3.4. Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS)

Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale is a self-evaluation scale developed by Thorson and Powell (1993) which consists of 24-items and consists of six sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions are humor production, playfulness or a sense of whimsy, the ability to use humor to achieve social goals, recognition of humor, appreciation of humor, and use of humor as an adaptive or coping mechanism. According to these sub-dimensions, participants may evaluate themselves with a 5-point Likert-type (1 = never agree, 5 = fully agree). The study of the scale was conducted with 262 participants ages 17-77. In terms of assumption about the scale, factor analyses showed different results. According to results, a 4-factor structure was found in the scale. These are humor production, coping humor, negative attitudes toward humor, and appreciation of humor (Martin, 2003; Özdoğru, 2018).

The value of Cronbach's Alpha was calculated as .90 for total score of the scale but reliability values are not given for factor structures. For this reason, although the scale has six sub-dimensions, it was appropriate for using the total score only. The scale was used to assess individuals' humor level (Martin, 2003).

MSHS was adapted in Turkish by Aslan et al. (1999). Reliability of the scale was provided with Cronbach's Alpha value and test-retest with 102 participants. The value of Cronbach's Alpha was calculated as .81 and .87, test-retest reliability value was calculated as .85.

In the Turkish version of MSHS, differences have been identified in two items and ratings. Re-evaluating and revision of the scale were made by Özdoğru (2018). The study was conducted with 556 participants. At the end of the study, differences between the original scale and the adapted scale were eliminated. The Cronbach's value was calculated as .89. The minimum score of this scale that can be obtained is 0, the maximum score is 96. The higher the score on the scale, the higher the humor level of the person is indicated.

3.4. Data Collection Process

For the first stage of the data collection process, permissions were obtained from the owners who developed or adapted the scales used in this research via e-mail (Appendix 5, 6, and 7). After that, demographic information was created. In order to conduct the research, the necessary permissions have been obtained from Yeditepe University Ethics Committee (Appendix 8). After the approval from Ethics Committee, a Google Form document which consists of demographic form and scales was created. The document's link was shared on-line with college students. Data collection process started in December 2021 and ended in February 2022. The completion of the Google Form document takes approximately 10-15 minutes.

3.5. Analysis of the Data

The steps followed in the data analyses procedure is presented in this section. When the data collection was terminated, all the data was merged in the Excel file via Google Forms. In the Excel file, the names of the scale items were revised and transferred to the SPSS 22 version. Answers that are duplicated data were cleared on SPSS. Reverse coding was done according to the instructions of the scales, and sub-dimensions and total scores were calculated. Lastly,

missing data was controlled. The analysis of the missing values showed that there was no missing data.

Firstly, descriptive statistics and assumption checks were conducted. Then, reliability analyses for the total scales and sub-dimensions of the scales were run and the main data analyses were conducted by IBM Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS). Mann Whitney U and Independent Sample t-test analyses were used to compare intergroup averages. Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. In this analysis, the predictive power of humor and the total score of childhood trauma on forgiveness was conducted. The reason for this is that although humor is often neglected, studies showed that humor may be an adaptive coping strategy for traumatic situations (Garrick, 2008) and humor has positive effects on the forgiveness process (Hampes, 2016). The following sequence is used because as indicated in the literature humor is thought to strengthen forgiveness over childhood trauma. For the all analyses which are mentioned above, .05 alpha level was chosen as the statistical significance criterion.

3.5.1. Outlier Analysis

Firstly, according to the histogram of regression standardized residual which was presented below, in the middle of the normally distributed data, there are a few data that exceed the graph but this number of cases was not high. These cases were checked one by one and there was no mistake in data entry. In the casewise diagnostic table, Cook's distance values were checked. The maximum value was found as .0089. The maximum value was less than 1 which demonstrated that there was no major problem (Cook & Weisberg, 1982). According to Cook's distance value, 25 cases that were greater than .0089 were excluded from the analysis.

3.5.2. Regression Assumption Tests

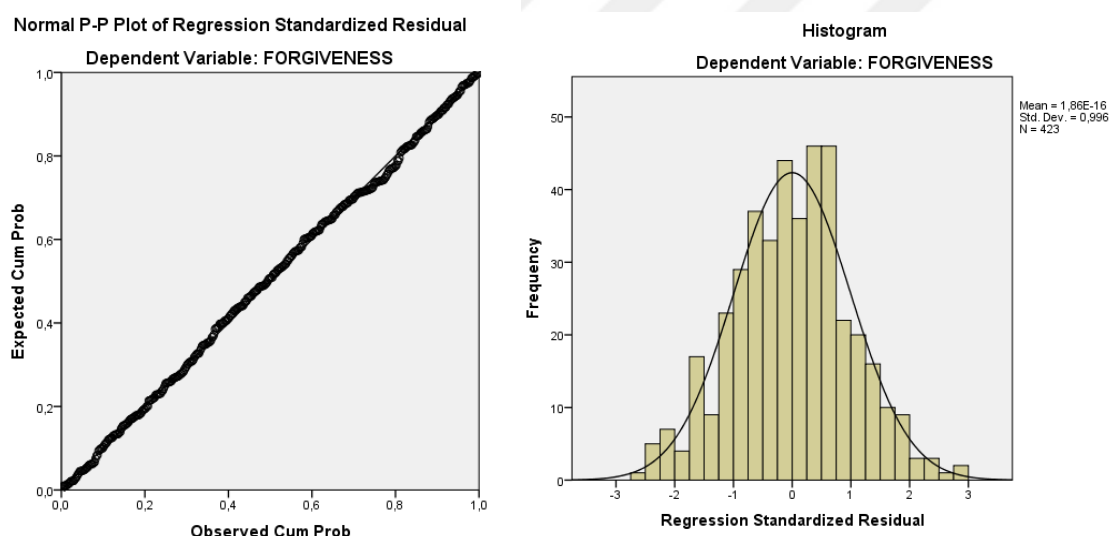
In order to perform hierarchical regression analysis, firstly regression analysis assumptions should be met. Assumptions consist of normality of error terms (residuals),

linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. These assumptions were tested in 4 sections. According to the results, regression assumptions are not violated.

3.5.2.1. Normality Test of the Regression Assumption

In order to conduct a regression analysis, assumptions of regression should be met. For this reason, histogram and normal p-p plot of regression standardized residual are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Histogram and Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual for Forgiveness



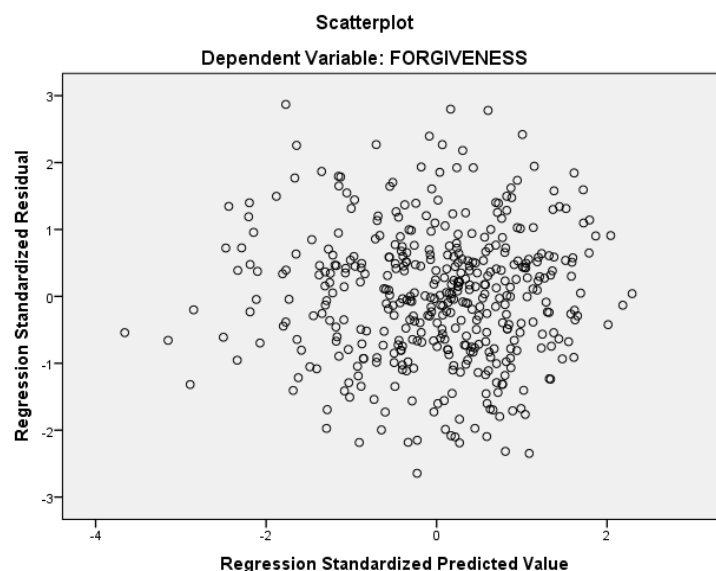
There are two fundamental methods when deciding whether a data is normally distributed: Numerical (statistical tests) and graphical (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). According to Figure 1, the graph is approximately symmetric about the mean, it can be said that the data were normally distributed (Armitage & Berry, 1987). In terms of numerical tests, two of the most popular methods for normality of continuous data are the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test. The test to be used may change according to the number of samples. In detail, if the sample size is less than 35 the Shapiro-Wilk may be more appropriate than the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965, s. 592). Generally, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is used for greater than 35 sample sizes. By looking at the result for both tests, it

is decided whether to reject the null hypothesis or not. When P-value is greater than .05, the null hypothesis can be rejected and the evaluation that the data is normally distributed may be made (Mishra et al., 2019; Shapiro & Wilk, 1965). According to total scores of residuals (errors), results of the tests of normality, the value of the Shapiro-Wilk was found as 0.75 ($p > .05$) and the value of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was found as 0.20 ($p > .05$), and the normality assumption was successfully provided (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965).

3.5.2.2. Linearity and Homoscedasticity

One of the regression assumptions is linearity for the dependent (forgiveness) variable. As can be seen in the scatter plot (Figure 2), there are some deviations but generally, can be grouped at a certain point. In addition, the homoscedasticity assumption was also checked by controlling the scatter plot. Values between ± 3 are required to provide the homoscedasticity assumption. There are some outlier values in scatter plot but it is not show a major problem in the scatter plot (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Scatterplot of Regression Standardized Predicted Value for Forgiveness



3.5.2.3. Multicollinearity

In this study, multicollinearity was tested for one dependent variable, forgiveness. To avoid multiple linearity problems, The VIF value should be less than 10 and the Tolerance value should be greater than 0.10 (Çokluk et al., 2012). According to this study, VIF values were found between 1 and 1.1, and tolerance values were found between 0.98 and 1. According to these data, it has been revealed that there are no multicollinearity problems.

3.5.2.4. Assumption of Independence of Residuals

In order to examine the independence assumption of residuals, The Durbin-Watson coefficient test was performed. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), the value should be less than 4, in order to not violate the assumption. Looking at the value of the study, the Durbin-Watson value was found as 1.88. This value provide the assumption of independence of residuals.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This section explain the results and the analysis of the data. Descriptive statistics about the variables, the correlations between study variables, the demographic variable (gender), and hierarchical regression analysis are stated in the rest of the chapter.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics of the dependent variable (forgiveness) and two independent variables (humor and childhood trauma) of this study are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for the Dependent and Independent Variables of the Study

Variables	$\bar{x}$	SD	Min-Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Forgiveness	75.57	14.93	37.00-118	0.03	-0.18
Self-Forgiveness	26.56	6.71	7.00-41.00	-0.30	-0.23
Others Forgiveness	22.93	7.50	6.00-42.00	0.02	-0.55
Situational Forgiveness	26.08	7.04	7.00-42.00	-0,15	-0.50
Humor	65.68	15.37	23.00-95.00	-0.27	-0.46
Childhood Trauma	50.45	17.05	30.00-127	1.19	1.41
Emotional Abuse	8.87	4.48	5.00-25.00	1.34	1.30
Physical Abuse	6.25	3.04	5.00-25.00	3.28	11.86
Physical Neglect	6.88	2.97	5.00-24.00	2.23	5.85
Emotional Neglect	11.15	4.86	5.00-25.00	0.56	-0.47
Sexual Abuse	6.45	3.34	5.00-25.00	2.89	8.68
Overprotection- Overcontrol	10.83	4.88	5.00-25.00	0.83	-0.07

n=423

According to Table 4, for forgiveness mean score was 75.57, standard deviation was 14.93, and minimum maximum scores ranged between 37.00 and 118. Examining mean scores of forgiveness' subscales, participants' tendency of self-forgiveness is higher than other subscales ($\bar{x}$ =26.56, SD=6.71). When the childhood trauma subscale mean scores were detected; emotional neglect and overprotection- overcontrol are close to each other but participants' level of emotional neglect is higher than other subscales ($\bar{x}$ =11.15, SD=4.86). For humor mean score was 65.68, standard deviation was 15.37, and minimum maximum scores ranged between 23.00 and 95.00.

4.2. Correlations among the Measures of the Study

The first research question was “Is there a significant relationship between childhood trauma, humor, and the level of forgiveness of college students?”. According to this question, the analysis of Pearson Product Moment Correlation was conducted. The aim of the analysis of Pearson Product Moment Correlation is defining the relationship between variables, direction, and strength of the relationship. Pearson correlation coefficients are divided into three

categories; values between 0.70-1.00 are strong, values between 0.70-0.30 are moderate and values between 0.30-0.00 are weak (Büyüköztürk, 2002). For the first research question, the analysis of Pearson Product Moment Correlation was conducted. The coefficients of the variables are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Coefficients Among Study Variables

	FO	SEF	OF	SIF	HU	CT	EA	PA	PN	EN	SA	OO
FO	1											
SEF	.70**	1										
OF	.57**	-.05	1									
SIF	.83**	.60**	.20**	1								
HU	.18**	.20**	.04	.16**	1							
CT	-.27**	-.20**	-.16**	-.21**	.00	1						
EA	-.25**	-.17**	-.13**	-.21**	.03	.84**	1					
PA	-.15**	-.08	-.10*	-.13**	-.02	.70**	.60**	1				
PN	-.18**	-.10*	-.14**	-.12**	-.10*	.68**	.46**	.47**	1			
EN	-.23**	-.17**	-.15**	-.17**	-.06	.81**	.65**	.40**	.53**	1		
SA	-.06**	-.05	-.05	-.03	-.05	.43**	.22**	.32**	.18**	.18**	1	
O-O	-.23**	-.21**	-.10*	-.17**	-.03	.75**	.57**	.37**	.40**	.53**	.13**	1

*p<0.05, **p<0.01 FO: Forgiveness, SEF: Self-Forgiveness, OF: Others Forgiveness, SIF: Situational Forgiveness, HU: Humor, CT: Childhood Trauma, EA: Emotional Abuse, PA: Physical Abuse, PN: Physical Neglect, EN: Emotional Neglect, SA: Sexual Abuse, O-O: Overprotection- Overcontrol

According to Table 5, humor was significantly and positively correlated with forgiveness ($r = .18$, $p < .01$), self-forgiveness ($r = .20$, $p < .01$) and situational forgiveness ($r = .16$, $p < .01$). There is no significant relationship between humor and others forgiveness.

Forgiveness was significantly and negatively correlated with childhood trauma ($r = -.27$, $p < .01$), emotional abuse ($r = -.25$, $p < .01$), physical abuse ($r = -.15$, $p < .01$), physical neglect ($r = -.18$, $p < .01$), emotional neglect ($r = -.23$, $p < .01$), sexual abuse ($r = -.06$, $p < .01$), and overprotection-overcontrol ($r = -.23$, $p < .01$). According to the sub-dimensions of forgiveness, there are significant and negative relationship between self-forgiveness and

emotional abuse ($r = -.17, p < .01$), emotional neglect ($r = -.17, p < .01$), overprotection-overcontrol ($r = -.21, p < .01$), and physical neglect ($r = -.10, p < .05$). For others forgiveness, there are significant and negative relationships between emotional abuse ($r = -.13, p < .01$), physical abuse ($r = -.10, p < .05$), physical neglect ($r = -.14, p < .01$), emotional neglect ($r = -.15, p < .01$), and overprotection-overcontrol ($r = -.10, p < .05$). Lastly, situational forgiveness was significantly and negatively correlated with emotional abuse ($r = -.21, p < .01$), physical abuse ($r = -.13, p < .01$), physical neglect ($r = -.12, p < .01$), emotional neglect ($r = -.17, p < .01$), and overprotection-overcontrol ($r = -.17, p < .01$).

The relationship between trauma and humor, only a significant relationship was found between humor and physical neglect ($r = -.10, p < .05$).

According to the overall results, except for relationships between the same sub-dimensions, there are no moderate or strong relationships between the variables.

4.3. Independent Sample t-test Results Regarding Gender

The study's second research question was "Is there a significant difference between undergraduates' childhood trauma, humor, and forgiveness levels based on gender?". Independent Sample t-test was applied for this research question. The result of the test Independent Sample t-test Analysis for Forgiveness, Childhood Trauma, and Humor Levels with Regard to Gender was presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Results of the Independent Sample t-test Analysis for Forgiveness and Childhood Trauma with Regard to Gender

	Group	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-test	
					t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Forgiveness	Female	298	75.26	15.52	-0.66	0.50
	Male	125	76.32	13.43		
Situational Forgiveness	Female	298	25.95	7.03	-0.57	0.56
	Male	125	26.38	7.11		
Childhood Trauma	Female	298	49.06	16.28	-2.59	0.01*
	Male	125	53.75	18.40		
Emotional Abuse	Female	298	8.65	4.31	-1.60	0.10
	Male	125	9.41	4.83		
Emotional Neglect	Female	298	10.71	4.76	-2.91	0.00*
	Male	125	12.20	4.96		
Overprotection-Overcontrol	Female	298	10.62	4.80	-1.33	0.18
	Male	125	11.32	5.05		

n=423, *p<0.05

For Levene's homogeneity variance test result of forgiveness and its subscales, childhood trauma and its subscales, the distribution of variance is homogeneous (Respectively, $p = 0.18$, $p = 0.95$, $p = 0.25$, $p = 0.14$, $p = 0.86$, $p = 0.51$). Because equality of variances is provided, t value was selected according to "equal variances assumed" option. As Table 6 shows, there is a significant difference ($t = -2.59$, $p = 0.01$) between female ($\bar{x} = 49.06$, $SD = 16.28$) and male ($\bar{x} = 53.75$, $SD = 18.40$) participants for childhood trauma. Men's level of childhood trauma was higher than those of women. In addition, the results show that there is a significant difference ($t = -2.91$, $p = 0.00$) between between female ($\bar{x} = 10.71$, $SD = 4.76$) and male ($\bar{x} = 12.20$, $SD = 4.96$) participants for emotional neglect. Men's level of emotional neglect was higher than women.

4.4. Mann Whitney-U Test Results Regarding Gender

According to the second research question, Mann Whitney-U Test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between gender and the variables. It was observed that Mann Whitney-U assumptions, which are having two independent groups and having a continuous dependent variable, were provided before the analysis (Fay & Proschan, 2010). The result of the Mann Whitney-U Test was presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Result of the Mann Whitney-U Test Analysis Regarding Gender

	Group	n	$\bar{x}$	Sum of Ranks	U	z	p
Self-Forgiveness	Female	298	204,43	60919,00	16368,000	-1.97	.04*
	Male	125	230,06	28757,00			
Others Forgiveness	Female	298	215,17	64120,00	17681,000	-.82	.41
	Male	125	204,45	25556,00			
Sexual Abuse	Female	298	218,51	65117,00	16684,000	-2.16	.03*
	Male	125	196,47	24559,00			
Physical Abuse	Female	298	205,88	61353,50	16802,500	-2.01	.04*
	Male	125	226,58	28322,50			
Physical Neglect	Female	298	193,67	57715,00	13164,000	-5.11	.00***
	Male	125	255,69	31961,00			
Humor	Female	298	209,01	62285,00	17734,000	-.77	.437
	Male	125	219,13	27391,00			

n=423, $p \leq .05^*$, $p \leq .01^{**}$, $p \leq .001^{***}$

According to Table 7, Men's the tendency of self-forgiveness ($U = 16368,00$, $p = .04$), the level of physical abuse ($U = 16802,50$, $p = .04$), and physical neglect ($U = 13164,00$, $p = .00$) were found statistically significantly higher than women. On the other hand, the level of sexual abuse ($U = 16684,00$, $p = .03$) was found higher in women rather than men. All of the results except the forgiveness of the others and humor showed that there are significant differences between groups of gender. The null hypotheses of the mentioned variables may be rejected.

4.5. Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Forgiveness

Before the hierarchical regression analysis, the value of unstandardized residual was calculated in order to examine normality assumption. The model's value of the Shapiro-Wilk was found as 0.75 and the normality assumption was successfully provided.

Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to find out the predictive power of childhood trauma and humor on forgiveness which was the third research question (“To what extent do childhood trauma and humor predict the level of forgiveness, after controlling for gender? ”). Unlike multiple regressions, hierarchical regression analysis has variables that are pre-sorted in a certain order (Pallant, 2015).

In this study, due to the normality assumption, sub-dimensions of the forgiveness were not conducted. For this reason, in the first step, gender is entered and in the second step, humor was entered into the model. After that, in the third step, subscales of childhood trauma were entered into the model. The results of the model mentioned below are presented in Table 8 and Table 9.

- Model 1. Gender
- Model 2. Gender, Humor
- Model 3. Gender, Humor, Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse, Physical Neglect, Emotional Neglect, Sexual Abuse, Overprotection-Overcontrol

Table 8: Results of the Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Forgiveness

		B	SE	β	t	p
1	(Constant)	74.21	2.18		33.96	.00
	Gender	1.05	1.59	.03	.66	.50
2	(Constant)	62.47	3.69		16.90	.00
	Gender	.89	1.56	.02	.57	.56
	Humor	.18	.04	.18	3.90	.00*
3	(Constant)	72.32	4.08		17.70	.00
	Gender	2.01	1.57	.62	1.27	.20
	Humor	.18	.04	.18	4.01	.00*
	Emotional Abuse	-.47	.24	-.14	-1.96	.05*
	Physical Abuse	.06	.30	.01	.19	.84
	Physical Neglect	-.16	.30	-.03	-.55	.58
	Emotional Neglect	-.19	.20	-.06	-.95	.34
	Sexual Abuse	-.06	.22	-.01	-.27	.78
	Overprotection- Overcontrol	-.34	.17	-.11	-1.94	.05*

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender

b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Humor

c. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Humor, Emotional Abuse, Physical Neglect, Emotional Neglect, Sexual Abuse, Overprotection- Overcontrol

d. Dependent Variable: Forgiveness

According to Table 8, in the Model 1, gender is not a significant predictor for the forgiveness. Looking at the Model 2, humor was found as a significant predictor for the forgiveness ($\beta = .18, p < .001$). In the Model 3, unlike some sub-dimensions of the childhood trauma, humor is a significant predictor for the forgiveness ($\beta = .19, p < .001$). Looking at sub-dimensions of the childhood trauma, only emotional abuse ($\beta = -.14, p < .05$). and overprotection-overcontrol ($\beta = -.11, p < .05$) were found as significant predictors for the forgiveness.

Table 9: Comparison Values for the Hierarchical Model for Forgiveness

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	R^2 Change	F	p
1	.032 ^a	.001	-.001	.001	.439	.50
2	.190 ^b	.036	.031	.035	7.85	.00*
3	.346 ^c	.120	.103	.084	7.05	.00*

*p<.05

According to Table 9, Model 1 (gender) is not significantly predicted, the outcome variable, the tendency of the forgiveness in college students. In the second step, humor variable was added to find its contributions to the model and significantly explained %3 of the total variance $F(2, 420) = 7.85, p < .01, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .03$. The final Model 3, it contributed a statistically significant amount (%9) variation, $F(8, 414) = 7.05, p < .01, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .10$. The overall regression model significantly predicted approximately %12 of variance in the forgiveness.

4.6. Summary of the Results

According to the research questions of the study, Mann Whitney-U, Independent Sample t-test, and hierarchical regression analysis were conducted, and their assumptions were checked. For the first research question, the analysis of Pearson Product Moment Correlation was conducted. The result of the study showed that forgiveness has significant relationships between many variables (e.g. emotional neglect and sexual abuse). While there was a significant relationship between the two dimensions of humor and forgiveness, a significant relationship was found only between physical neglect and humor, which is one of the childhood trauma sub-dimensions. For the second research question, Mann Whitney-U and Independent Sample t-test analyses were conducted in order to examine gender differences. According to the results, significant differences were found between men and women in self-forgiveness, childhood trauma, sexual abuse, physical abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect. According to the third research question of the study, hierarchical regression analysis were conducted. Results of the model showed that humor, emotional abuse, and overprotection-overcontrol variables were significant predictors for forgiveness.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the predictive power of childhood trauma and humor on college students' tendency to forgive. In this section, discussion of findings was presented.

5.1.1. Discussion of Findings on Relationship Between Forgiveness, Childhood Trauma, and Humor

The first research question was associated with examining the relationship between forgiveness, childhood trauma, and humor. The result of the Pearson correlation analysis was examined with regard to relevant literature.

A significant positive correlation was found between humor and forgiveness, and self-forgiveness, and situational forgiveness. The study by Hampes (2016) was found similar result for the relationship between humor and forgiveness. Unfortunately, there are not enough studies examining the relationship between these two variables. The reason for this result may stem from that since forgiveness and humor generally have a positive effect on the mental health of individuals, it can be thought that humor also contributes positively to this situation in the forgiveness process. From another point of view, both forgiveness and humor were associated with perspective-taking empathy. Perspective-taking empathy provides individuals to see different perspectives of situations, self, and other people. Due to Perspective-taking empathy, individuals can forgive more easily or deal with the situation more easily using humor (Hampes, 2016).

Examining the relationship between forgiveness and childhood trauma, a negative significant relationship was found between forgiveness, all sub-dimensions, and the total score of childhood trauma. These results may be consistent with studies in the literature which was found a negative relationship between these variables (Breshears, 2015; Edara & Chen, 2018;

Güloğlu et al., 2016). It can be thought that as the intensity of childhood trauma increases, the tendency of the individual to forgive decreases, because the process of forgiveness may be a challenging process with the individual's decision and in some cases. In such cases, individuals may decide not to forgive. This situation can negatively affect the person's well-being because with the decision not to forgive, individuals may actually be fixated on a traumatic situation throughout their lives. No association was found between self-forgiveness and physical abuse. In addition, there is no significant relationship between all of the sub-dimensions of forgiveness with sexual abuse.

Looking at the relationship between humor and childhood trauma, there is only a negative significant relationship was found with physical neglect. No association was found between humor and total score and sub-dimensions of childhood trauma. Although there is no research between humor and physical neglect, it can be commented as follows: As it is known, there are many different situations in which humor is used: Expressing happiness, relaxing, coping with stress. Compared to other types of trauma, physical neglect can be thought of as the most tangible and, depending on its severity, perhaps the most manageable. It can be thought that college students who experienced physical neglect in their childhood use humor to cope with this situation and to relieve themselves.

5.1.2. Discussion of Findings on Forgiveness Scores According to Gender

The second research question of the study focused on whether forgiveness scores differed by gender. The result of the Independent sample t-test showed that situational and total scores of forgiveness did not differ significantly with regard to gender. Similar to the results obtained in this study, some domestic studies were also examined (Asıcı & Karaca, 2014; Öksüz & Öztürk, 2017; Sayın, 2017). It may be due to the fact that forgiveness is a personality trait regardless of gender or considering that many studies have found different results, it can be said that cultural factors for forgiveness are effective (Asıcı & Karaca, 2014).

According to the result of the Mann Whitney-U test, self-forgiveness differed significantly by gender. It was found that men's tendency of self-forgiveness was higher than women's. Looking at the literature, there are many studies which found significant differences between forgiveness and gender (Gao et al., 2022; Swickert et al., 2015; Walker & Gorsuch, 2002). However, these studies found that women's tendency of forgiveness was higher than men's which is different than this study's results. In addition, others forgiveness did not differ significantly by gender.

5.1.3. Discussion of Findings on Childhood Trauma Scores According to Gender

In order to examine the second research question focused on the relationship between gender and childhood trauma, the Mann Whitney-U test and Independent Sample t-test were conducted. According to the result of the Independent Sample t-test, the total score of childhood trauma and emotional neglect were significantly differentiated with regard to gender. In addition, the analysis showed that men's scores of childhood trauma and emotional neglect were higher than women's. About relationship between childhood trauma and gender, this result was found consistent with many studies in the literature (Aas et al., 2011; Başoğlu, 2019; Güloğlu et al., 2016; Mert et al, 2016; Pruessner et al., 2018; Vila-Badia et al., 2021; Wei et al., 2021). Regarding men experiencing more traumatic events than women, similar results were found in some studies (Güloğlu et al., 2016; Pruessner et al., 2018). However, emotional abuse and overprotection-overcontrol were not significantly differentiated by gender. The result in this direction was found in the literature by the relevant study (Şar et al., 2019).

According to the Man Whitney-U test, sexual and physical abuse and physical neglect were significantly differentiated according to gender. In detail, men's scores of physical abuse and neglect were higher than women's. These results were consistent with some studies in the literature (Başoğlu et al., 2019; Güloğlu et al., 2016; Pruessner et al., 2018). On the other hand, women's sexual abuse score was found higher than men's. The result that women have more

traumatic experiences is consistent with a few studies in the literature (Aas et al., 2011; Mert et al., 2016; Vila-Badia et al., 2021; Wei et al., 2021). In general, on the results of the study, the reason for women's scores of childhood trauma being lower than men's may be that women tend to suppress the trauma they experience due to cultural values and gender roles (Güloğlu et al., 2016). In addition, due to the patriarchal social structure, more social support may be seen in the traumatic events experienced by men. That's why, men may be more inclined to share traumatic events because they know they will receive social support than women (Güloğlu et al., 2016). On the other hand, some of the harsh approaches of the Turkish family structure toward women due to social values may be more inclined to suppress or deny traumatic events.

5.1.4. Discussion of Findings on Humor Scores According to Gender

One of the aims of the second research question is to examine the differences between humor levels and gender. In order to examine these differences, the Mann Whitney-U test was conducted. The result of the study showed that there were no significant differences between humor levels and gender. Although there are few studies about the tendency of humor and gender in the literature, similar results were found with these studies (Abel, 1998; Hoffman et al., 2020; Kırkçir et al., 2021). This result may stem from gaining high scores of both genders and the unequal gender samples. On the other hand, as seen in the results, the humor levels of women and men were close to each other. Although there is no significant difference between women and men, men's level of humor was found to be slightly higher. This situation may stem from the that while men anticipate threats or reduce stress, they may use humor more than women (Abel, 1998). What's more, humor can be seen as a coping strategy at a close level for both men and women. In order to understand the relationship between humor and gender in more detail, many studies need to be done in the field.

5.1.5. Discussion of Findings on the Power of Childhood Trauma and Humor to Predict Forgiveness Levels

The aim of the third research question was to determine whether childhood trauma and humor predicted the tendency of forgiveness. Looking at hierarchical regression results, it was found that humor and subscales of childhood trauma significantly predicted the tendency of forgiveness.

In the first step of hierarchical regression analysis, gender as a dummy variable was added to the analysis. According to the result of the first model, gender was not a significant predictor of the tendency of forgiveness. A similar conclusion was found with some research in the literature (e.g., Toussaint & Webb, 2005; Otalvaro et al., 2017; Batık, 2020). Although gender is an effective factor for forgiveness in some studies, forgiveness may also be affected by personal experiences, cultural factors, or social values. Moreover, the unequal sample distribution may also be a reason why gender is not a significant factor for forgiveness.

In the second step of hierarchical regression analysis, humor was added to the analysis. According to the result of the second model, humor was found to be a significant positive predictor of the tendency of forgiveness. Looking at the literature about the relationship between humor and forgiveness, although Hampes (2016) considers humor as their style, the results found were similar. The reason for this situation may be that humor has a positive effect on the forgiveness process unless it is used as a maladaptive coping mechanism by individuals.

In the last step of hierarchical regression analysis, subscales of childhood trauma were added to the analysis. The results showed that childhood traumas are significant negative predictor of forgiveness. In the literature of the relationship between forgiveness and childhood trauma, similar results were found in most studies (Breshears, 2015; Edara & Chen, 2018; Erzar et al., 2019; Güloğlu et al., 2016; Snyder & Heinze, 2005). The reason for the relationship between forgiveness and childhood trauma may be that traumatic experiences negatively affect

the tendency of individuals to forgive (Güloğlu et al., 2016). In detail, since forgiveness itself is a voluntary and long process, and in addition, the event that the person intends to forgive is traumatic, it may be possible that the individual decides not to forgive or ignores the existing situation. In addition, these experiences may lead to difficulties for individuals to move on their lives in an adaptive way.

5.2. Implications, Recommendations, and Limitations

This section consists of recommendations and implications for practitioners and field researchers, and limitations regarding to results of the study.

5.2.1. Implications and Recommendations for Practitioners

The result of the study showed that humor and childhood trauma are predictors of forgiveness. Also, similar results were seen in the correlational analysis. Examining the regression analysis, there is a positive contribution of humor to forgiveness. On the other hand, some subdimensions of childhood trauma, which are emotional abuse and overprotection-overcontrol, have a negative contribution to forgiveness. In order to minimize negative effects of childhood trauma, the number and quality of psychological counseling in universities should be developed. Firstly, a system should be established in which college students who have experienced childhood trauma can be identified. In order to determine the level of trauma during the college enrollment process, students may be asked to answer the scale.

After determining process, group counseling or group guidance may be set up for college students who have high scores in CTQ-33 and thus, realizing that there are many people like them who have experienced childhood trauma, they may not feel alone. According to the process in group counseling, some students should also be included in individual counseling. In addition, psychoeducation groups are significant for how to cope with the effects of childhood trauma in early adulthood. If these planned interventions are implemented efficiently,

it is thought that the impact of childhood trauma will decrease and the negative impact on forgiveness will decrease.

According to the result of the study, humor has a positive effect on forgiveness. As long as humor is used in an adaptive way, various activities (e.g. student clubs) in which college students can develop their sense of humor should be supported. For college students who have a low level of humor, psychoeducation groups may be prepared. Also, it is thought that the use of humor in therapies will reduce the negative effects of childhood trauma and increase the power of forgiveness.

Another result of the study showed that levels of physical abuse and neglect were higher in men participants than in women. Gender inequality and patriarchal society may be the reason for this situation. In detail, According to gender inequality and patriarchal society, men are evaluated as strong and do not need to be protected by someone else compared to women. Actually, image of 'strong' may cause contradiction. The social pressure, which is that no matter how a man has difficulty in his life, he should be strong, may be an example of this situation. On the other hand, there is also the perception that the more difficulties a man has, the stronger he will be. It can be said that such an understanding negatively affects the well-being of people in general. Another reason for this situation may be related to the coping mechanisms of women in these conditions. In order not to create a bad image or avoid social pressure, women generally may tend not to reflect on or suppress negative events. For this reason, in this study, they may have reflected their negative experiences by minimizing.

5.2.2. Recommendations and Implications for Field Researchers

Firstly, given the limitations of this study, it is suggested that the study be conducted with the same variables with a larger group of participants. In addition, this study examined the predictive power of childhood trauma and humor in exploring the tendency of forgiveness in

college students, it was not investigated which variable affected the other. In order to improve this situation, path analysis may be helpful for future studies.

In order to deeply understand the process of forgiveness, more comprehensive qualitative research may be conducted. Because of the hierarchical regression analysis in this study, no inference may be made about causality. Especially, complex processes like forgiveness should be a topic in many studies with different analyses. In addition, for a better understanding the function of humor in the forgiveness process, scales that assess the humor styles may be used in future studies.

Lastly, it can be said that because there are few studies about forgiveness, especially research on individuals who have a high level of trauma, it may be helpful to conduct more studies on different populations on the relationships, causes, and prevalence of forgiveness process.

5.2.3. Limitations

The limitations of the study were stated respectively. Firstly, due to the limited number of participants, the average traumatic experience population in Turkey could not be represented in this study. Also, there are other limitations about participants. Because the number of women participants was greater than that of men, there was no balance between the number of women and men. For this reason, this situation may lead to some limitations in this study.

One of the limitations of the study is that the scales are used in this study regarding self-report. In detail, participants may answer scales with social desirability biases which have a motivation to show a better version of self (Edwards, 1953). Another limitation is that Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ-33) is based on participants' early childhood recollections. For this reason, participants may have difficulties in remembering and evaluating memories.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Personal Information Form

Değerli katılımcı,

Bu çalışma Doç. Dr. Yelkin Diker COŞKUN danışmanlığında, üniversite öğrencilerinde Affetme eğilimlerinin, erken çocukluk çağı travması ve mizah düzeylerinin yordayıcı rollerinin inceleneceği yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yapılmaktadır. Verdiğiniz bilgiler toplu olarak değerlendirilecek, gizli tutulacak ve bu çalışma dışında hiçbir yerde kullanılmayacaktır. Formlardaki soruları boş bırakmadan tamamını içten, dürüst bir şekilde cevaplamanız yapılan bilimsel araştırmaya çok önemli katkılar sağlayacaktır. Verdiğiniz destek için teşekkür eder, saygılar sunarım. Araştırmayla ilgili yapılan açıklamaları anladım, araştırmaya katılmayı

() kabul ediyorum.

() kabul etmiyorum.

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Kişisel Bilgi Formu

1. Yaşınız:

2. Cinsiyetiniz:

3. Kaçınıcı Sınıftasınız?

Appendix 2: Heartland Forgiveness Scale

Hayatımız boyunca, kendi davranışlarımız, başkalarının davranışları veya kontrolümüz dışındaki durumlar nedeniyle olumsuz olaylar yaşayabiliriz. Bu olumsuz yaşantıların ardından belli bir zaman geçtikten sonra, kendimiz, diğer insanlar veya yaşanan durumlar hakkında olumsuz duygu veya düşüncelerimiz olabilir. Bu tür olumsuz olaylara genel olarak nasıl tepki verdiğinizi düşününüz ve aşağıda verilen her ifadenin yanına, tarif edilen olumsuz duruma genellikle nasıl tepki verdiğinizi ifade eden sayıyı (aşağıdaki 7'li değerlendirme ölçeğine göre) yazınız. Vereceğiniz yanıtlarda doğru veya yanlış cevap yoktur. Lütfen yanıtlarınızda olabildiğince dürüst ve samimi olunuz.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Beni hiç yansıtmıyor	Beni pek yansıtmıyor	Beni biraz yansıtmıyor	Beni biraz yansıtmıyor	Beni biraz yansıtmıyor	Beni biraz yansıtmıyor	Beni tamamen yansıtmıyor
___ İşleri berbat ettiğimde önce kötü hissetmeme rağmen zamanla kendimi rahatlatabilirim.						
___ Yaptığım olumsuz şeyler için kendime kin tutarım.						
___ Yaptığım kötü şeylerden öğrendiklerim onlarla baş etmemde bana yardımcı olur.						
___ İşleri berbat ettiğimde, kendimi kabul etmek benim için gerçekten çok zordur.						
___ Yaptığım hatalara, zamanla daha anlayışlı olurum.						
___ Hissettiğim, düşündüğüm, söylediğim ya da yaptığım olumsuz şeyler için kendimi eleştirmeyi						
durduramam.						
___ Yaptığının yanlış olduğunu düşündüğüm kişiyi cezalandırmayı sürdürürüm.						
___ Beni incitenlere karşı zamanla daha anlayışlı olurum.						
___ Beni incitenlere karşı katı olmaya devam ederim.						
___ Başkaları bana geçmişte zarar vermiş de olsa, eninde sonunda onları iyi insanlar olarak görebilirim.						
___ Başkaları bana kötü davranırsa, onların hakkında kötü düşünmeye devam ederim.						
___ Biri beni hayal kırıklığına uğrattığında, bu olayı eninde sonunda geçmişte bırakabilirim.						
___ Kontrol edilemeyen nedenlerden dolayı işler ters gittiğinde, onlar hakkında olumsuz düşüncelere takılıp						
kalırım.						
___ Hayatımdaki kötü durumlara zamanla daha anlayışlı olabilirim.						
___ Hayatımdaki kontrol edilemeyen durumlar yüzünden hayal kırıklığına uğrarsam, onlar hakkında olumsuz						

düşünmeyi sürdürürüm.

___ Hayatımdaki kötü durumlarla eninde sonunda barışırim.

___ Kimsenin hatası olmayan olumsuz durumları kabullenmek benim için gerçekten çok zordur.

___ Kimsenin kontrolünde olmayan kötü durumlarla ilgili olumsuz düşüncelerimden, eninde sonunda

kurtulurum.



Appendix 3: Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale

Aşağıda 24 maddeden oluşan tutum ölçeği bulunmaktadır. Lütfen hızlı bir şekilde her bir ifade için soldan sağa sıralanmış olan “0: Kesinlikle katılmıyorum”, “1: Katılmıyorum”, “2: Kararsızım/Nötr”, “3: Katılıyorum” veya “4: Kesinlikle katılıyorum” seçeneklerinden size uygun olanı X ile işaretleyiniz.

	0	1	2	3	4
Benim ince esprilerim herkesi güldürür.					
Bazı şeyleri insanları güldürecek şekilde söylemeyi beceririm.					
Çevremdeki insanlar benim komik şeyler söylediğimi söylerler.					
Arkadaşlarımdan tarafından nüktedan (esprituél) olarak tanınırım.					
İnsanları güldürebildiğime eminim.					
İnsanlar eğlendirici şeyler söylememi beklerler.					
Zaman zaman düşünüp komik öyküler ya da fıkralar üretirim.					
Arkadaşlarımı eğlendirmek için mizahı sıklıkla kullanırım.					
Söylediklerim insanları sıklıkla gülme krizine sokar.					
Komik şeyler söyleyerek gergin bir ortamı yumuşatabilirim.					
Mizah güç durumların üstesinden gelmeye yardımcı eder.					
Mizah yoluyla sorunlarla başa çıkmak ince ve üstün bir yoldur.					
Mizah sorunlarla başa çıkmamı sağlar.					
Mizah rahatlamama yardımcı olur.					
Mizah hoş olmayan bir başa çıkma yoludur.					
Değişik koşullara uyum sağlayabilmek için mizahı kullanabilirim.					

Mizahla çeşitli sorunların üstesinden gelmeye çalışmak gerçekten aptalcadır.					
Birine "komedyen" denmesi onun için onur kırıcı bir durumdur.					
Karikatürden hoşlanmam.					
Fıkra anlatan insanlar rahatsız edicidir, başa beladır.					
Aslında bir grup üzerinde mizahı kullanarak kontrol sağlayabilirim.					
Mizah üreten insanları takdir ederim.					
İyi bir espri hoşuma gider.					
Herkesin şaka yaptığı bir ortamda kendimi rahatsız hissederim.					

Appendix 4: Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ-33)

Her bir madde için aşağıdaki seçeneklerden birini işaretleyiniz:

1.Hiçbir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

Çocukluğumda ya da ergenliğimde...

1)Yeterli yemeğim olurdu.

1.Hiçbir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

2) Gündelik bakım ve güvenliğim sağlanıyordu.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

3) Anne ya da babam kendilerine layık olmadığımı ifade ederlerdi.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

4) Fiziksel ihtiyaçlarım tam olarak karşılanırdı.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

5) Ailemde sorunlarımı paylaşabileceğim biri vardı

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

6) Üst baş açısından bakımsızdım.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

7) Sevildiğimi hissediyordum.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

8) Anne ya da babam kendimden utanmama neden olurdu.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

9) Ailemden birisi bana öyle kötü vurmuştu ki doktora ya da hastaneye gitmem gerekmişti.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

10) Ailemde değiştirmek istediğim şeyler vardı.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

11) Ailemdekiler bana o kadar şiddetle vuruyorlardı ki vücudumda morartı ya da sıyrıklar oluyordu.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

12)Kayış, sopa, kordon ya da başka sert bir cisimle vurularak cezalandırılıyordum.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

13) Anne ya da babam fikirlerimi önemserdi.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

14) Ailemdekiler bana kırıcı ya da saldırganca sözler söylerlerdi.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

15) Fiziksel bakımdan hırpalanmış olduğuma inanıyorum.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

16) Çocukluğum mükemmeldi.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

17) Bana o kadar kötü vuruluyor ya da dövülüyordum ki öğretmen, komşu ya da bir doktorun bunu fark ettiği oluyordu.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

18)Ailemde birisi benden nefret ederdi.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

19)Ailemdekiler kendilerini birbirlerine yakın hissederlerdi.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

20) Biri bana cinsel amaçla dokunmaya ya da kendisine dokundurtmaya çalıştı.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

21) Kendisi ile cinsel ilişki kurmadığım takdirde bana zarar vermekle tehdit eden biri vardı.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

22) Benim ailem dünyanın en iyisiydi.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

23) Birisi beni cinsel şeyler yapmaya ya da cinsel şeylere bakmaya zorladı.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

24) Birisi bana cinsel tacizde bulundu.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

25) Ailemdekiler bana karşı suçlayıcıydı.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

26) İhtiyacım olduğunda beni doktora götürecek birisi vardı.

1.Hiçbir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

27) Cinsel istismara uğradığım kanısındayım.

1.Hiçbir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

28) Ailem benim için bir güç ve destek kaynağı idi.

1.Hiçbir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

29) Ailemdekiler yaşıtlarımla ve arkadaşlarımla görüşmemi kısıtlardı.

1.HiçBir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

30) Ailemdekiler her şeye karışırdı.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

31) Anne ve babam bir işi kendi başıma yapmama fırsat verirlerdi.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

32)Ailemdekiler rahat vermeyecek derecede peşimdeydiler.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

33)Anne ya da babam beni kontrol etmek için kişisel eşyalarımı benden habersiz karıştırırdı.

1.Hiç Bir Zaman 2.Nadiren 3.Kimi Zaman 4.Sık Olarak 5.Çok Sık

