

The Role of Gratitude and Patience in Forgiveness

A thesis submitted in the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY



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Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Science

Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala

Submitted By: Jigyasa Batra (8624020028)

Under the guidance of

Dr. Ipshita Chowdhury

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, 'The Role of Gratitude and Patience in Forgiveness' is being submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the award the of the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology, presented in the Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala is a bonafide work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Ipshita Chowdhury, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala and that no part of this project has been submitted for the award of any other degree.



Jigyasa batra

This is to certify that the above statement made by the student concerned is correct and true to the best of my knowledge.



Dr. Ipshita Chowdhury

Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis entitled, 'The Role of Gratitude and Patience in Forgiveness' submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the award the of the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology, presented in the Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala, is an authentic record of my work carried out under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Ipshita Chowdhury, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala and refers other researchers' work which are duly listed in the reference section. The matter embodied in this thesis has not formed the basis for awarding any other degree at this or any other university.



Jigyasa Batra

Date- May, 2026

Place- Patiala

This is to certify that the above statement made by the student concerned is correct and true to the best of my knowledge.



(DR. IPSHITA CHOWDHURY)

Assistant Professor, TSLAS

Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala

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ABSTRACT

Forgiveness plays a well-recognized role as a significant psychological process that enables individuals to release feelings of bitterness, reduce hostility and gain emotional balance following conflicts and wrongdoings in relationships. Although previous studies have explored forgiveness in terms of its associations with empathy, apology and personality, minimum research has focused on the role of positive character strengths in promoting forgiveness, particularly gratitude and patience. This study aimed to bridge this gap by exploring how gratitude and patience plays a role in forgiveness. This was done with a correlational study. The study used three scales. One for each variable. Patience was used as a mediator while gratitude served as a criterion variable and forgiveness as an outcome variable. Results showed a positive relationship between all three variables, and mediation analysis confirmed full mediation. Patience completely explained the pathway from gratitude to forgiveness. The findings highlight the importance of targeting patience, not only gratitude. This is especially important and useful for mental health professionals

Keywords- Forgiveness, gratitude, patience, emotional regulation, interpersonal relationships.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Human relationships, by their very nature, are fragile and open to hurt. Almost everyone at some time has experienced emotional hurt or pain caused by other people- maybe by broken promises, hurtful words, or intentional betrayal. It's not the situation that makes people apart but how it was perceived and experienced or responded to that hurtful situation. Some people are able to move forward with understanding while some feel stuck in the same loop. The difference helps us to put one very important psychological question: What helps people to forgive?

Over the past few decades, Forgiveness has become a growing field of interest in psychological research. Now we know a great deal about its benefits for mental and emotional well-being, the deeper processes that support forgiveness are still not fully developed. In particular, the roles of qualities like Gratitude and Patience have not received much attention.

The current study aims to explore the relationship between gratitude and patience and how they contribute in the process of forgiveness or whether they work in sequence. Patience gives people time and space to deal with their pain, while gratitude helps them see the good in themselves and others. They assist individuals in coping with emotional distress, regulating negative emotions, and maintaining connections which helps to examine the correlation between these two variables which facilitates forgiveness.

Forgiveness is something most people think they understand until and unless they are asked to do it. Usually people get confused with forgetting, excusing, or reconciling despite knowing all three

are different. Forgetting isn't a choice, excusing means accepting the behaviour, and reconciling means getting back together. Meanwhile forgiveness is none of these. It is a complicated and internal process of slowly letting go of anger and negative feelings towards someone who have hurt you without minimizing what happened or you don't need the other person to apologies because you don't want the relationship to be restored.

It entails a deliberate choice to diminish adverse thoughts, emotions, and behaviors directed at an individual who has inflicted harm, while fostering more neutral or empathetic sentiments towards them (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Worthington, 2006). For example, the operation of forgiveness should depend greatly on whether it occurs between two friends, between two married adults, or between a parent and a child, because these relationships subsume different roles and serve different psychological needs. Forgiveness is understood as a personal choice to release anger and desire for revenge. The major and important focus is on internal satisfaction rather than external reconciliation. One does not need to say their actions were justified or be friends again but its about freeing yourself from negative emotions and feelings.

When we forgive it's not only about words but also needs genuine change in how we think and feel. True forgiveness comes from a deeper emotional and mental shift, allowing us to move forward and mental shift, allowing us to move forward with understanding and peace.

The General Process of Forgiveness

Two types of forgiveness are recognized in the literature which are - Decisional and emotional forgiveness. Decisional forgiveness refers to where you can make a choice about stop seeking revenge and treating the person decently. On the other hand, Emotional forgiveness is deeper, your true feelings change slowly, anger and bitterness fades away. These two do not take place at the same time. An individual can decide to forgive but can still feel hurt inside which is completely normal and very human.

For example, forgiving a stranger feels very different from forgiving a parent, partner and children. This happens because of the closeness we share with our loved ones. Close relationships carry more emotional history, The closer the relationship, the more complicated forgiveness tends to be due to more invested, it needs more to work through. Some researchers believe that forgiveness have biological roots not only moral and cultural aspects. Our ancestors also survived by this by maintaining strong family bonds. Forgiveness is linked to lower level of depression, anger, anxiety and higher life satisfaction and well-being. People who forgive more have better emotional health compared to those who hold grudges. So forgiveness is more than just moral and a valuable tool for better relationships and well-being.

1.2 Patience

Patience is a common topic in everyday life but we don't study in psychological aspect enough . It means accepting discomfort, frustration, or delay without getting angry or stressed or reacting impulsively. It means controlling your impulses and managing emotions by our own. People who are patient do think before they act instead of quick reactions. This is a very impressive quality if one has during conflicts. According to Worthen (2018), Patience can help people to let go of unexpected expectations that cause resentment. Individuals with patience can manage their emotional pain and allow themselves to feel strong emotions. Patience creates the mental space needed to deal with pain. It doesn't guarantee forgiveness but it makes it more likely. It gives people time to process the pain about their situation.

Schnitker (2012) identifies three types of patience:

Interpersonal patience— staying calm when others disappoint you

Life hardship patience — enduring difficult or painful situations without giving up

Daily hassles patience — tolerating everyday annoyances, like waiting in traffic or lines

When someone hurts you, your first reaction is usually anger, defensiveness, or wanting to get back at them. These reactions block forgiveness from happening. Patience creates a gap between feeling hurt and acting on it. That gap gives you time to calm down, think more clearly, and slowly let go of resentment. Patience does not guarantee forgiveness but it makes forgiveness possible. Research shows patience is connected to many areas of life or better wellbeing, better relationships, and stronger goal pursuit. It is an underappreciated strength that affects. Research shows that patience links to positive outcomes, such as greater well-being, better goal achievement and

improved relationships. (Schnitker,2012). These highlights patience as an important factor in many aspects of life.

1.3 Gratitude

Gratitude is often defined as a positive psychological state marked by the acknowledgment and appreciation of the favorable and advantageous elements of life and the assistance provided by others (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Gratitude means recognizing and appreciating the good things in your life and the people who contribute to them (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010). It can be a temporary feeling — like feeling thankful for a gift, or it can be a stable personality trait, a habitual way of seeing the world positively (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). This study focuses on gratitude as a stable trait. People who feel grateful a lot often say they are happier, more satisfied with their lives, more empathetic, and more likely to help others (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Instead of only thinking about bad things that have happened to them or things that seem unfair, they are more likely to focus on the good things in their lives and relationships. Being thankful is often linked to better mental health(Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). It also changes how people think about bad things that happen (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994). The opposite of it would be wastefulness and extravagance, which will certainly cause the loss and destruction of our resources and blessings(Emmons, 2007) . (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004) stated People who are thankful are more likely to see bad things as chances to grow or as chances to be thankful for the people who support them. Fredrickson (2001) said positive emotions like gratitude

broaden your thinking. They expand the range of thoughts and responses available to you in a situation. Over time, gratitude builds things that truly matter like stronger bonds with people, flexibility, and staying positive even during hard times in life (Fredrickson, 2001). Grateful people let go of anger easily instead of thinking about getting even, they are more likely to respond in a generous way even towards someone who hurt them in the past (DeShea, 2003). People who practice gratitude are less driven to seek revenge. They actually want to save the relationship or protect it rather than burning them (McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997). Gratitude also slows us down in the best ways. It builds patience, helps us to pause before reacting and avoid decisions that we might regret later (Krause, 2009). Hence, patience plays a key role - it acts as the bridge between feeling grateful and being able to forgive (Worthington, 2006). When we are grateful, we start to see painful experiences differently. Rather than focusing on harm caused, we begin to notice what we gained- lessons learned, personal growth, the ways we become stronger (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). We also become more aware of the good people around us, who support us and show care for us which softens the sting of hurt by someone else (Wood et al., 2010). All of this shift in perspective loosens the hold that hurt had on us. It creates the space to grow slowly and quietly.

1.4 Relationship between Patience, Gratitude and Forgiveness

When people practice patience, they tend to pause before reacting emotionally, which gives them the mental space needed to work through hurt feelings rather than acting on them impulsively (Schnitker, 2012). Gratitude shifts a person's focus to what is meaningful and positive in their relationships, making it easier to look past conflict and choose forgiveness over resentment (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). These two qualities together gradually reduce anger and build empathy, which are both essential steps toward healing emotional wounds caused by others (Worthington, 2006). While researchers have explored how gratitude connects to overall well-being and prosocial behavior, its direct link to forgiveness remains an area that deserves deeper study. Culture plays a big role in how forgiveness unfolds. Sometimes people feel a sense of responsibility to forgive even when they don't truly want to, just out of the sake of cultural values (Sandage & Williamson, 2005). Patience gives a person time to process what happened before deciding how to respond. Gratitude reinforces the value of important relationships, which can motivate someone to repair bonds rather than let bitterness take over. Understanding how these traits work in everyday life can help therapists and counselors design better approaches for people struggling with stress, anger, or long-held resentment. Building habits of patience and gratitude may equip people to handle conflict more effectively and protect their emotional health over time. (Fredrickson, 2001)

This knowledge is also useful for creating mental health programs that help people create friends and become more resilient (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). To sum up, they

may work even better together, Gratitude gives you the motivation to forgive, Patience gives you emotional control to actually do it(Worthington, 2006) .

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Understanding the Idea of Forgiveness

Forgiveness research has been going on since the late 1980s. It's a motivational shift- moving away from wanting to hurt or avoid someone towards being natural or kind. It happens inside the person who was hurt- not dependent on whether the offender apologized. Forgiveness has been thoroughly examined as both an interpersonal and intrapersonal activity essential to psychological well-being and relational effectiveness. Modern views say that forgiveness is a change in

motivation that makes people less likely to avoid or seek revenge and more likely to be kind to the person who hurt them (McCullough et al., 2000; Worthington, 2006). Forgiveness does not mean forgetting or accepting what happened; rather, it is choosing to change how you feel and think when someone hurts you. A notable differential in current forgiveness research is the contrast between emotional and decisional forgiveness (Worthington, 2006). The part of forgiveness that sits in your will rather than your emotions is called decisional forgiveness. Even if your anger hasn't completely declined, it is the decision to put an end to your desire for revenge and treat the person who wronged you with basic human respect. Beyond just an altering behavior, emotional forgiveness involves a true internal transformation in which sentiments such as resentment, anger, and bitterness gradually diminish. This inner transformation is crucial because in close relationships, people can act calmly on the outside while harboring unresolved emotional pain on the inside. Choosing to forgive has been shown to have significant positive effects on mental health, including reduced levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and overthinking as well as increased life satisfaction and emotional well-being (Toussaint et al., 2015; Wade et al., 2014). Moreover, research indicates that those who respond with forgiveness typically have better emotional control and less physical stress than those who focus on anger or mentally relive painful experiences (Witvliet et al., 2001). Because of this, forgiveness serves as a useful tool for letting go of unpleasant feelings that might otherwise linger for years, making it more than just a moral decision. The other person is much more likely to forgive someone who accepts responsibility, expresses sincere regret, and shows concern for the relationship (Fehr et al., 2010; Schumann, 2012). It's interesting to note that people are more likely to forgive when they believe the other person genuinely means it than when they receive gifts or symbolic compensation (Schumann, 2012). Forgiveness and mutual understanding are two distinct processes, so it's critical to realize

that forgiving someone does not always imply trusting them again or getting back together (Worthington, 2006; Wade et al., 2014). Forgiveness is just a personal choice to let go of the emotional burden; it does not entail accepting harmful behavior or acting as though nothing occurred (Worthington, 2006). In fact, it may be more detrimental than beneficial to force someone to forgive before they are emotionally prepared because it may keep them from fully understanding what they have experienced.

2.2 Gratitude and Forgiveness

A person's innate capacity to identify and value the kindness or advantages they receive from others is known as gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Gratitude is a positive emotional quality that has been repeatedly associated with improved general wellbeing, more compassionate behavior toward others, and stronger interpersonal bonds. According to Emmons and McCullough (2003), people who are inherently more appreciative typically report higher levels of life satisfaction and feel more in control of their emotions. Positive emotions like gratitude broaden one's perspective and enable one to approach problems in more inventive and adaptable ways, according to the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001). This suggests that instead of focusing solely on the suffering or harm done, gratitude may encourage people to consider painful circumstances more. By doing this, gratitude can enhance one's capability to understand what actually occurred and consider how to react in a more purposeful and helpful manner. The idea

that forgiveness and gratitude go hand in hand is supported by real-world research; those who are more appreciative are less likely to seek retribution or avoid someone after being wronged (McCullough et al., 2002). This suggests that practicing gratitude on a regular basis may naturally make a person more open to forgiving others and letting go of negative feelings. Gratitude has also been demonstrated to make people more empathetic and more likely to do things that help keep relationships strong, which makes it simpler for them to respond in a way that is conciliatory (Algoe et al., 2008). Additionally, thankfulness fosters temporal patience and reduces impulsive decision-making, allowing individuals to respond more reflectively to interpersonal injury (DeSteno et al., 2014). Gratitude may also help people reappraise unfavorable situations in a positive way by putting them in a bigger picture of relationships or personal growth (Emmons, 2007). Gratitude facilitates the recognition of grief without dismissing the reality of injury, while concurrently acknowledging relational investments. This technique may help people forgive each other emotionally by slowly lowering their anger and resentment. So, gratitude seems to be an emotional resource that helps people get along and fix things.

2.3 Patience and Forgiveness

The ability to bear discomfort, delays, and irritation without losing your cool is known as patience. Schnitker (2012) asserts that self-control and emotional regulation are components of the virtue of patience. It allows people to persevere through adversity while still acting in a goal-oriented manner. Patience enables people to think critically and control their impulses for retaliation when there is interpersonal disagreement.

Forgiveness frequently requires a period of time after the original transgression. Anger and defensive responses are often the first things that come to mind when someone is hurt. Patience may reduce retaliatory impulses by creating the emotional space required for affective de-escalation. Sincere and voluntary apologies are more successful in regaining confidence, per research on trust recovery (Schumann, 2012). By allowing people to recognize and assess genuine regret, patience may aid in forgiveness. In relationships that are continuing or complex, where breaches are obscure or recurrent, emotional resilience is especially important. In these situations, forgiveness is more likely to happen gradually as people think about it rather than right away. Patience serves as a regulatory mechanism that encourages both decisional forgiveness (behavioral restraint) and emotional forgiveness (the gradual fading of resentment). Despite its theoretical significance, patience has not yet been sufficiently explored in forgiveness research. The regulatory role of patience is rarely adequately examined because the majority of research focuses on empathy, apologies, or personality qualities.

2.4 Combining Forgiveness, Patience, and Gratitude

According to recent studies, appreciation, patience, and forgiveness all function together. Patience may serve as a temporal regulator, lowering unpleasant feelings and emotional impulsivity. By encouraging positive reappraisal and highlighting relational worth, thankfulness raises benign impulses, claim Fredrickson (2001) and DeSteno et al. (2014). When combined, these processes may promote emotional and decisional forgiveness (Worthington, 2006). However, the majority of empirical studies on forgiveness have been carried out in individualistic Western nations. Cultural contexts differ greatly in what is expected of emotional expression and harmony in relationships. In cooperative societies like India, maintaining social cohesiveness, interpersonal harmony, and relationship responsibility is crucial (Hofstede, 2001). Even if they don't feel better about it, people may ignore another person's actions in these circumstances in order to maintain social order. This distinction raises the possibility of forgiveness motivated by compliance as in contrast to sincere emotional forgiveness (Exline et al., 2003). In collectivist societies, a person's community, family, and social surroundings frequently support and reinforce the values of patience and gratitude, making them more than just personal traits. This raises an important question about whether people in such settings practice patience and gratitude because they genuinely feel that way, or simply because society expects them to behave that way. It remains unclear whether these traits actually help people work through and transform their negative emotions from the inside, or whether they are mostly used as a way to suppress and hide feelings that have not truly been resolved. Real emotional healing looks very different from simply putting on a calm or grateful front to meet social expectations. More investigation is required to determine whether patience and gratitude

result in true forgiveness and emotional healing or if they occasionally serve as a mask to conceal deep suffering.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH GAP, OBJECTIVES, AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Research Gap

Although both forgiveness and gratitude have been thoroughly studied on their own, researchers have not yet investigated the effects of combining the two in one study. It is still unclear whether forgiveness and gratitude operate in combination or in a specific order, and research has never really examined this combination. An additional gap that the question of whether patience contributes to the explanation of how gratitude leads to forgiveness has never been thoroughly examined. This study's goal is to fill in these gaps by investigating the unanswered questions in the body of existing literature. Theoretically, forgiveness and patience are closely linked because patience creates an internal buffer that allows people to internalize hurt before reacting. The majority of research on forgiveness has focused on personality qualities, empathy, and apologies; patience has only been mentioned in passing but has never been considered a key factor worth examining separately. By bringing patience to the forefront of the discussion, this study directly tackles that oversight. Gratitude has been associated with less desire for revenge and more prosocial behavior, but its relationship with emotional regulation traits like patience has not been sufficiently examined in the literature. The strong dependence on Western, individualistic cultural

contexts in forgiveness studies is another major drawback; collectivist civilizations have been mostly ignored. According to Hofstede (2001), maintaining harmony in relationships, carrying out societal obligations, and appreciating interdependence are top objectives. As a result, forgiveness may appear and operate very differently in these contexts than it does in Western ones. Additionally, it's still unclear if patience and appreciation actually assist people in changing their emotions in collectivist environments or if they rather promote suppressing bad emotions in order to preserve social harmony. It hasn't been thoroughly examined how patience, a type of emotional control, and gratitude, a positive reappraisal, interact to promote forgiveness in these cultural contexts. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate, within a collectivist cultural framework, the individual and combined effects of gratitude and patience on forgiveness.

Previous research has also suggested that positive psychological traits like Gratitude and Forgiveness tend to be universal in nature and may not differ strongly across gender. But also few studies showed gender differences in these variables, which makes this a mixed area of research and further studies are needed.

3.2 - Study Objectives

The current research aims to:

Objective 1 - to examine the correlation between gratitude and forgiveness

Objective 2 - to examine the correlation between patience and forgiveness

Objective 3 - to examine the combined contribution of both gratitude and patience in predicting forgiveness

Objective 4 - to examine whether patience acts as mediating factor in relationship between forgiveness and gratitude.

3.3 Hypotheses

- H1 - gratitude will be significantly and positively associated with forgiveness
- H2 - patience will be significantly and positively associated with forgiveness
- H3 - patience is expected to mediate the relationship between forgiveness and gratitude, such that the influence of gratitude on forgiveness occurs indirectly through patience.
- H4 - There will be significant differences between Males and Females participants.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sample

The study has a total of 153 participants. People of different ages, gender, social economical background, educational backgrounds and occupations were included. The study used random sampling to collect data

4.2 Research Design

In this study, gratitude served as a criterion variable and forgiveness as an outcome variable and Patience is the Mediating Variable (MV). Gratitude is seen as a positive personality tendency that helps individuals feel appreciative and develop a more positive outlook toward others (Fredrickson, 2004). Correlational Research Design.

4.3 Tools Used

The following three scales were used in total to administer Google forms via an online medium in order to gather the necessary data from the individuals:

4.3.1 Gratitude Questionnaire – Six Item Form (GQ-6)

The GQ-6 is a brief questionnaire created by McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002). It consists of just six questions, but those six questions are sufficient to reveal a great deal about an individual's general level of gratitude. It goes deeper and seeks to determine whether a person naturally tends to notice and appreciate the good things and good people in their life on a regular basis, rather than merely asking if someone says "thank you." This is significant for this study because our goal is to determine whether a person's general gratitude makes it easier for them to forgive others, not whether they felt thankful on a specific day. It is very easy to complete because each question is answered on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 represents strong disagreement and 7 represents strong agreement. This scale's advantage is that it has been applied in nations outside of America, such as Asian and European nations, indicating that it is not restricted to a certain demographic and functions well in a variety of cultural contexts. Questions 3 and 6 are flipped before the total is added to determine the score. The final score ranges from 6 to 42; the higher the score, the more appreciative a person is in their daily life.

According to research, this scale has reliability scores between .82 and .87 (McCullough et al., 2002), which is regarded as very good in psychology research and indicates that it produces consistent results.

4.3.2 Factor Patience Scale

The Patience Scale was created by Schnitker (2012) and is predicated on the notion that patience varies depending on the circumstance. For example, a person may be extremely patient with a friend who is going through a difficult moment but lose all composure when stuck in traffic. The scale divides patience into three categories in order to provide a more comprehensive and accurate representation of a person's true level of patience in real life. The first kind, Interpersonal Patience, consists of five questions that assess a person's level of patience when interacting with friends, family, or coworkers. Since forgiveness always involves another person, this type is the most crucial for this study. The second kind is Life hardship Patience

The second type is Life Hardship Patience this examines how well a person manages significant, persistent challenges in life without giving up or growing resentful. It consists of three questions. The third type, Daily Hassles Patience, consists of three questions and examines how a person responds to minor everyday irritations like being stuck at a traffic light or standing in a long line. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means not like me at all and 5 means very much like me, respondents rate each question according to how much it sounds like them over the previous month, keeping it straightforward and approachable. Before determining the score, questions 3, 9, and 11 are reversed. A higher score simply indicates that a person is more patient overall. The final score for each type of patience and the overall patience score are calculated by taking the average. With scores of .75 for Interpersonal Patience, .73 for Life Hardship Patience, and .69 for Daily Hassles Patience (Schnitker, 2012), all of which are acceptable levels in psychological research, the scale has demonstrated strong reliability.

4.3.3 Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS)

The HFS captures forgiveness across three domains, each representing a different type of situation in which forgiveness may be needed. The first domain is forgiveness of self (6 items), which reflects how readily a person can let go of guilt, shame, or self-blame when they have made mistakes or caused harm. The second domain is forgiveness of others (6 items), which captures how inclined a person is to release resentment and bitterness toward those who have wronged them. The third domain is forgiveness of situations (6 items), which reflects the ability to make peace with painful or unfair circumstances that are beyond anyone's control — such as illness, loss, or bad luck. Each question is answered on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means this is almost never true of me and 7 means this is almost always true of me — this gives people a chance to be more precise about how they actually feel rather than just agreeing or disagreeing. The odd-numbered questions are switched around before the score is determined. The overall score is then calculated by summing all 18 questions, applying the reversed versions when necessary, after each section's questions are added up. The higher the score, the more forgiving a person is generally, whether it's toward themselves, other people, or challenging circumstances in life that were beyond their control.

Reliability & Validity: The HFS has demonstrated strong and reliable internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha for the total scale ranging from .87 to .93 across different samples (Thompson et al., 2005). The scale has shown good convergent validity through meaningful positive correlations with psychological well-being, empathy, hope, and self-compassion — all of which are traits one would naturally expect to accompany a forgiving disposition. It has also demonstrated strong discriminant validity through significant negative correlations with rumination, trait anger, anxiety, and depression, confirming that dispositional forgiveness is a distinct and meaningful psychological construct in its own right.

4.4 Procedure

The data collection process was designed to be as straightforward, comfortable, and participant-friendly as possible. Everything was conducted online through Google Forms, which allowed participants to complete the questionnaire from the comfort and privacy of their own space, at a time that suited them. Before participants began filling out any of the questionnaires, informed consent was obtained from each of them..

Instructions for the GQ-6 were as follows: "Using the scale below, indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements."

Instructions for the Patience Scale were as follows: "For each of the statements below, please indicate how much the statement is like or unlike you in the past month."

Instructions for the Heartland Forgiveness Scale were as follows: "In the course of our lives, negative things may occur because of our own actions, the actions of others, or circumstances beyond anyone's control. For some time after these events, we may have negative thoughts or feelings about ourselves, others, or the situation. Think about how you typically respond to such negative events. Using the scale provided, please indicate how each of the following statements applies to you."

Participants were encouraged throughout to answer as honestly as possible, and were reminded that there were no right or wrong answers, only their genuine, personal responses mattered. The whole questionnaire was kept short enough to finish in around 15 to 20 minutes, so it would not feel like too much of a burden for the people filling it out.No one was left to solve problems on

their own anyone who had no idea by a question or unsure of what it was asking was encouraged to get in touch with the researcher personally and ask for assistance. In order to get ready and be prepared for statistical analysis, all of the replies were systematically saved and arranged in an Excel file.

CHAPTER 5 : RESULTS

All the data was analyzed using Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP'26) to see descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gratitude	153	12.00	41.00	31.0327	5.41856
Forgiveness	153	39.00	209.00	139.7908	27.80043
Patience	153	1.45	4.64	3.4697	.43599
Valid N (listwise)	153				

There were 153 participants in all, and the findings for each of the three primary variables. Table 1 summarizes forgiveness and patience. Gratitude scores ranged from 12.00 to 41.00, with an average of 31.03 and a standard deviation of 5.42. This indicates that the majority of individuals experienced moderate to quite high levels of gratitude in their daily lives.

With an average of 139.79 and a standard deviation of 27.80, forgiveness scores had the broadest range, falling between 39.00 and 209.00. This wide range indicates that people's tendencies toward forgiveness vary widely.

With an average of 3.47 and a standard deviation of 0.44, patience scores ranged from 1.45 to 4.64. This indicates that most participants fell somewhere in the middle range, indicating that most people had a moderate level of patience overall.

Table 2: Correlational analysis

		Gratitude	Patience	Forgiveness
Gratitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.315**	.165*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	.041
	N	153	153	153
Patience	Pearson Correlation	.315**	1	.297**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	153	153	153
Forgiveness	Pearson Correlation	.165*	.297**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	<.001	
	N	153	153	153

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A correlation analysis was done to check whether gratitude, patience, and forgiveness are related to each other. The results are shown in Table 2. The first finding was that gratitude and patience are positively connected meaning people who tend to be more grateful also tend to be more patient and this connection was significant ($r = .315$, $p < .001$).

Gratitude and forgiveness were also positively connected meaning more grateful people also tended to be more forgiving though this connection was weaker ($r = .165$, $p = .041$).

Patience and forgiveness showed a stronger connection compared to gratitude and forgiveness ($r = .297$), which is an interesting finding because it suggests that patience may have a more direct and closer relationship with forgiveness than gratitude does.

In simple terms being grateful does help with forgiving, being patient seems to play an even bigger and more immediate role in whether a person is able to forgive or not. This pattern of results also lines up well with what this study originally predicted that patience acts as a bridge or middle step between gratitude and forgiveness, rather than gratitude leading to forgiveness on its own.

Table 3: Multiple Regression analysis

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	df1	df2	p
1	.307	.094	.082	26.638	7.776	2	150	<.001

Predictors: Gratitude, Patience. Dependent Variable: Forgiveness.

Table 3 presents the model summary for the multiple regression analysis conducted with Gratitude and Patience as predictors of Forgiveness. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(2, 150) = 7.776$, $p < .001$, and accounted for 8.2% of the variance in Forgiveness (Adjusted $R^2 = .082$).

Table 4 : Multiple Regression analysis: unstandardized and standardized coefficients of predictors of forgiveness

Model		Unstandardized		Standardize		t	Sig.	Adjusted
		Coefficients		d				
				Coefficients				
		B	Std. Error	Beta				R²
1	(Constant)	66.938	18.819			3.557	.000	
	Gratitude	.408	.420	.080		.972	.333	.082
	Patience	17.346	5.221	.272		3.322	.001	

Dependent Variable: Forgiveness

Inspection of the individual regression coefficients revealed that patience was a significant predictor of forgiveness ($B = 17.35$, $\beta = .272$, $t = 3.32$, $p = .001$), whereas gratitude did not make a significant independent contribution to forgiveness when patience was simultaneously included in the model ($B = .408$, $\beta = .080$, $t = .972$, $p = .333$). Collinearity statistics were within acceptable ranges ($VIF = 1.11$ for both predictors), indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern in this analysis

Table 5

Mediation Analysis: Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects of Gratitude on Forgiveness via Patience

Path	B	SE	z	p	95% CI	
					LL	UL
Total Effect						
Gratitude → Forgiveness	0.847	0.409	2.071	.038*	−0.295	2.017
Direct Effect						
Gratitude → Forgiveness	0.408	0.519	0.786	.432	−0.589	1.462
Indirect Effect						
Gratitude → Patience → Forgiveness	0.439	0.169	2.596	.009**	0.129	0.948

The results revealed that Patience fully mediated the relationship between Gratitude and Forgiveness. While the total effect of Gratitude on Forgiveness was significant ($p = .038$), the direct effect became non-significant ($p = .432$) after including Patience as a mediator. The indirect effect through Patience was significant (Effect = 0.439, 95% CI [0.129, 0.948], $p = .009$), confirming full mediation.

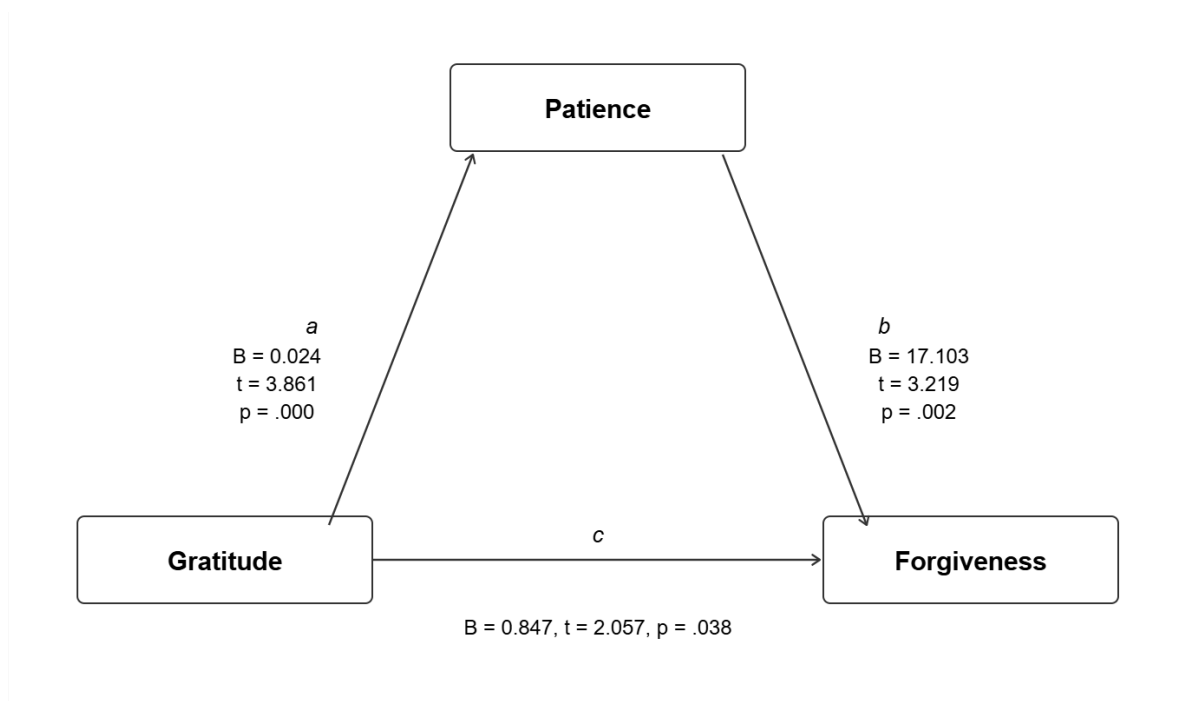


Figure 1

To test the hypothesis that patience mediates the relationship between gratitude and forgiveness, a mediation analysis was conducted using JASP. The analysis estimated three effects: the total effect of gratitude on forgiveness, the direct effect of gratitude on forgiveness controlling for patience, and the indirect effect of gratitude on forgiveness through patience.

Results indicated a significant total effect of gratitude on forgiveness ($B = 0.847$, $SE = 0.409$, $z = 2.071$, $p = .038$), confirming that gratitude and forgiveness share a significant positive relationship.

Path a, representing the effect of gratitude on patience, was significant ($B = 0.024$, $SE = 0.006$, $t = 3.861$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher gratitude significantly predicted higher patience. Path b, representing the effect of patience on forgiveness controlling for gratitude, was also significant ($B = 17.103$, $SE = 5.314$, $t = 3.219$, $p = .002$), indicating that patience was a strong predictor of forgiveness.

The indirect effect of gratitude on forgiveness through patience was significant ($B = 0.439$, $SE = 0.169$, $z = 2.596$, $p = .009$, 95% CI [0.129, 0.948]). Critically, the direct effect of gratitude on forgiveness became non-significant once patience was included as a mediator ($B = 0.408$, $SE = 0.519$, $z = 0.786$, $p = .432$, 95% CI [-0.589, 1.462]).

The pattern of results-the total effect was significant, the direct effect became non-significant after adding patience, and the indirect effect was significant, together these confirm full mediation.

These findings indicate that patience completely explain the pathway from gratitude to forgiveness. Gratitude does not directly lead to forgiveness; rather, it works by first building patience, which in turn enables forgiveness. Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Table 6 : Independent t-test for Gender Difference

	Female (n = 75)		Male (n = 75)		t(148)	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Patience	3.44	0.37	3.51	0.49	-0.88	.382	-0.14
Gratitude	31.44	5.73	30.79	5.08	0.74	.461	0.12
Forgiveness	138.50	28.74	141.80	27.16	-0.71	.481	-0.12

An independent sample t-test was conducted to examine whether males and females differed significantly on Patience, Gratitude, and Forgiveness. . Results showed that there was no significant differences between males and females on Patience ($t(148) = -0.88$, $P = .382$)

Similarly, no significant differences were found between males and females for Gratitude ($t(148) = 0.74$, $p = .461$). The mean score of all males and females were close to each other across all three

variables. All p values were significantly greater than .05, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted for all three variables.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Overview of Findings

The current study investigated how gratitude and patience contribute to forgiveness. Results showed that both variables shared a positive and significant relationship with forgiveness at the bivariate level. When entered into regression, patience proved to be a meaningful predictor of forgiveness, While gratitude's direct contribution lost significance once patience was included. Further mediation testing confirmed that patience completely explained the pathway from gratitude to forgiveness suggesting that gratitude's impact on forgiveness works entirely by first building patience.

A total of 153 participants took part in this study, out of which 75 were females and 75 were males. It showed that there are no gender differences in patience, gratitude and forgiveness was found. This suggests that both males and females experience these qualities equally. Both males and females showed nearly equal mean scores, indicating similarity in how they experience Patience,

Gratitude and Forgiveness. This finding can be understood in light of the fact that in today's time, males and females are exposed to similar social and cultural environments which may shape these qualities equally.

6.2 Gratitude and Forgiveness

The positive Association between gratitude and forgiveness ($r = .165$, $p = .041$) aligns with earlier research showing that individuals high in gratitude tend to be respond more forgivingly- including showing less desire for revenge and reduce avoidance of those who have wronged them (McCullough et al., 2002). The connection between gratitude and forgiveness makes theoretical sense because according to Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), positive emotions like gratitude open up a person's mind and make them think in more flexible and generous ways — which naturally makes forgiving others easier.

One of the most interesting findings was that once patience was added into the picture, gratitude's direct effect on forgiveness completely tells us that gratitude alone is probably not enough to make someone forgive. Rather than playing a direct role, gratitude appears to work in the background by increasing a person's patience, which is what finally motivate forgiveness. This finding goes beyond simply stating that "grateful people forgive more" and provides us with a much more realistic and clear explanation of how the process actually operates step-by-step.

The results of this study support the first two hypotheses and are consistent with previous research on these traits (McCullough et al., 2002; Schnitker, 2012). Additionally, patience alone was significantly and positively connected to forgiveness ($r = .297$, $p < .001$).

6.3 Patience as a Mediator

The finding that patience fully mediates the relationship between gratitude and forgiveness is the most meaningful result of this entire study. First, patience is not just a personality trait that happens to correlate with forgiveness, it actually acts as the core psychological bridge that takes the positive mindset created by gratitude and turns it into the emotional control needed to actually forgive someone (Schnitker, 2012). This supports the idea that patience is an active skill a person uses to regulate themselves not just passively waiting or enduring something which is an important distinction. Second this finding connects well with research showing that gratitude makes people more patient in general and less likely to make impulsive decisions (DeSteno et al., 2014) if grateful people genuinely more capable of tolerating discomfort without reacting, it makes complete sense that they would also be better at doing the hard-emotional work that forgiveness requires. Third, this result suggests that if therapists and counselors want to help people forgive, they should not just focus on building gratitude or other positive feelings they should specifically and deliberately work on building patience as an in-between step because that is where the real change happens. This has real and meaningful implications for clinical psychologists, counselors,

and anyone working with people who are struggling with long-held anger, resentment, or the emotional pain left behind by being hurt or betrayed by someone they trusted.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how gratitude and patience affect forgiveness. We specifically looked at whether patience acts as a bridge between gratitude and forgiveness. Forgiveness is a complicated but important psychological process that people experience. It is not easy and it does not happen quickly. But it is possible. The character strengths a person has seem to play a big role in whether and how they forgive. This study looked at two character strengths which are gratitude and patience in relation to forgiveness. Sample was 153 Indian adults. . Patience is described as an active virtue involving emotional regulation and self control that allows individuals to persist through adversity in a goal directed manner (Schnitker, 2012). Patience creates the emotional space needed to process hurt, de-escalate negative feelings, and gradually move toward forgiveness, therefore it made intuitive sense to position patience as a mediator between gratitude and forgiveness, gratitude was significantly and positively associated with forgiveness. Grateful people hold a broader and more generous view of their relationships. They do not see a transgression as the whole story. They place the hurt in a bigger relational context. This reduces the urge for

revenge and makes forgiveness more accessible. Grateful people also tend to be more empathetic toward the person who hurt them. Both gratitude and patience were significantly and positively linked to forgiveness. Patience has a significant positive association with forgiveness across the full sample. Patience helps people manage their feelings when they have been hurt. When someone is wronged, they often feel anger, shame, or a desire to withdraw or retaliate. These reactions are normal but can make it hard to forgive (Schnitker, 2012). By allowing themselves to feel uncomfortable emotions without acting immediately, patient people give themselves time to think about the situation.

Patience fully mediated the relationship between gratitude and forgiveness. Instead, the pathway runs sequentially- gratitude builds patience, and patience enables forgiveness. Individuals who habitually feel grateful tend to be more understanding and tolerant of others, which over time cultivates the kind of patient emotional regulation that creates conditions favorable for forgiveness (Fredrickson, 2001; DeSteno et al., 2014). Individuals who habitually feel grateful tend to be more understanding and tolerant of others, which over time cultivates the kind of patient emotional regulation that creates conditions favorable for forgiveness (Fredrickson, 2001; DeSteno et al., 2014). The findings are relevant for researchers, therapists, and for anyone who is personally struggling to forgive. Learning patience is a real and true road to forgiveness. Patience is learning to sit with discomfort, to tolerate uncomfortable feelings and to resist the want to strike back instantly. Being thankful for life helps to grow this kind of patience. This is not submission, or acquiescence. It is about finding a stillness inside from which true forgiveness might grow. Gratitude and forgiveness were mediated by patience. This means that appreciation does not directly lead to forgiveness. It is a sequential path: thankfulness, leading to patience, leading to forgiveness. In the model with patience, the direct effect of gratitude was not substantial. Only the indirect benefit via patience remained substantial. This indicates that those who are appreciative yet still impulsive may not forgive. The advantage of thankfulness is only forgiveness when patience is there. Patience is the process of turning thoughts of gratitude into forgiving actions

7.2 Limitations

The current study was designed to examine the role of gratitude and patience in forgiveness with patience as a mediating variable. Despite the meaningful findings, several limitations should be acknowledged.

The study used Random sampling which can introduce self selection bias. Participants were likely educated English speaking adults. This may not represent the full diversity of the Indian population. No data was collected on socioeconomic status, education level, or geographic location. Future research should use more diverse and representative samples. Including rural populations and people from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

All three variables were measured through questionnaires only. Self report is vulnerable to social desirability bias. In India gratitude, patience, and forgiveness are highly valued virtues. Participants may have answered in socially desirable ways rather than honestly. Future research should add behavioral or physiological measures Or use experience sampling to capture responses across multiple time points

7.3 Future Implications

Future study should examine if gratitude therapies such as gratitude journaling promote patience and whether increased patience subsequently leads to more forgiveness. Such an experimental

strategy would provide proper causal evidence. This would also facilitate translating these findings into actual forgiveness promotion campaigns. Useful in counseling, clinical settings and relationship counseling. It would also be interesting to explore in future studies whether gratitude therapies, such as thankfulness blogging or writing gratitude letters—can effectively cultivate patience and so foster forgiveness, particularly within therapeutic or counseling contexts. Such experimental designs would provide stronger causal support to the mediation pathway found in the present investigation and facilitate translating these findings into actual forgiveness promotion initiatives.

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