

**AHAMKARA AND FORGIVENESS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF  
ANASAKTI.**

*A Thesis submitted in the partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of*

**MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY (CLINICAL)**

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## ABSTRACT

A vital psychological construct that is important for psychological adjustment, healthy interpersonal relations, and emotional wellness is forgiveness. Exploring the relationship between Ahamkara, Anasakti, and Forgiveness, as well as the mediating role played by Anasakti in the relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness was the main objective of the present study. Anasakti refers to non-attachment, emotional stability, and lack of preoccupation with outcomes in Indian psychology, whereas Ahamkara refers to the ego and self-identity. Acquiring knowledge about these concepts would assist one in comprehending the psychological process of forgiveness better. 151 individuals (85 women and 66 men), who ranged in age from 18 years to 40 years, participated in the online survey. The measures used in the study included Heartland Forgiveness Scale, Anasakti Scale, and the Aham Inventory. Multiple regression, mediation analysis, and Pearson correlation were used to test the hypothesized relationships. The higher scores of Ahamkara were associated with higher scores of forgiveness as per the findings of the study, which revealed that there was a significant positive correlation between both factors. However, there was no apparent relationship found between Anasakti and forgiveness and between Anasakti and overall Ahamkara. There were some important relationships found between Ahamkara, Anasakti, and Forgiveness at the subscale level. Mediation analysis did not reveal that Anasakti had a significant mediating role between overall Ahamkara and forgiveness. But the relationship between Identification and Forgiveness of Situations was mediated by Outcome Vulnerability. The findings show the diverse nature of Ahamkara and Anasakti and suggest that the effect of these two constructs on forgiveness operates through specific dimensions and not through general constructions. With empirical support for the importance of indigenous concepts in understanding the phenomenon of forgiveness, the research makes a contribution to the growing body of literature on Indian psychology.

*Keywords: Ahamkara, Anasakti, non- attachment, forgiveness, Indian psychology*

## CERTIFICATE

This is certify that the thesis entitled “Ahamkara and Forgiveness: The Mediating role of Anasakti” being submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Psychology, submitted in the Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala is a bonafide work carried out under the supervision of Dr.Ipshita Chowdhury, Professor, School of Humanities and Social 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.



(SAMIKSHA)

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

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## CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis entitled, "Ahamkara and Forgiveness: The Mediating role of Anasakti" in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Degree of Master of Arts in Psychology, submitted in the Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala, is an authentic record of my own work carried out under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Ipshita Chowdhury, Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala and refers to other researcher's work which are duly listed in the reference section.

The matter embodied in this thesis has not formed the basis for the award of any other degree of this or any other university.

Date: May, 2026

Place: Patiala

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

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Life for humans is inherently social and interpersonal relationships are of primary importance in shaping emotional and psychological wellbeing. Nevertheless, misunderstandings, dispute and experiences of hurt are unavoidable features of these relationships. In such situations, forgiving a person is very important for maintaining a relationship and harmony and protects mental health. Forgiveness is a key psychological process that enables humans to get rid of negative emotions such as anger, displeasure, and hostility following interpersonal offences. Research indicates that forgiveness is beneficial to relationships, reduces psychological discomfort, and fosters emotional health (McCullough et al., 2001).

Recent research has focused on the topic of forgiveness in psychology, particularly within positive psychology. Robert D. Enright (1996) suggests that forgiveness is a conscious and intentional process that entails a change in how one feels, thinks and acts toward the person who has harmed you through removing negative feelings, thoughts and motivations from the ways in which you think about or respond to that person and replacing those negative responses with more neutral or positive ones. Everett L. Worthington Jr. (2005) adds that forgiveness can also serve as a coping mechanism that aids in making an individual psychologically and emotionally healthy following trauma from a relationship. Studies show that forgiveness is positively associated with greater satisfaction in one's life (regardless of how satisfied one is with one's life), as well as greater emotional well-being and less stress, anxiety and depression (Toussaint et al., 2015).

Although an enormous amount of research has been conducted on forgiveness, the majority has occurred within a Western psychological paradigm that has primarily focused on individual traits, empathy, and cognitive assessments. In these psychological paradigms, the self is primarily conceptualized as an independent, separate, individual being. However, these methodologies may not accurately capture many aspects of human behaviour that are culturally influenced, particularly among cultures outside of the West. The increasing understanding that a more total understanding of human functioning should include indigenous psychological constructs is becoming more and more accepted (Kim & Berry, 1993).

Indian Psychology is a blend of the psychological, intellectual and spiritual aspects of the self that provide a holistic understanding of human behaviour. Through the use of cultural-based concepts such as Ahamkara (sense of self or ego) and Anasakti (non-attachment), Indian thoughts provide a culturally based framework for understanding emotional processes and relationships. In contrast to many Western models which tend to focus on enhancing the self,

Indian models focus on controlling or transcending one's own ego-based identity as a means of attaining psychological well-being. (Kumar Kiran, 2014)

Given that ahamkara is associated with ego involvement, self-centrality, and heightened emotional sensitivity whereas anasakti is associated with emotional stability, non-attachment, and emotional regulation, both approaches provide very important theoretical perspectives to understand forgiveness. Based on the current literature, these theories could have implications on individuals' perceptions and reactions to interpersonal offences. Non-attachment theory has shown to be positively related to low levels of rumination, empathy, and emotional well-being (Sahdra et al., 2010; Sahdra et al., 2015), which are key determinants that facilitate forgiveness. Self-identity and ego involvement can inhibit forgiving tendencies by increasing sensitivity to personal harm and anger based on ahamkara theory (Kiran Kumar, 2005). Nevertheless, only limited empirical studies have focused on the combined role of anasakti and ahamkara for understanding forgiveness in Indian psychology despite their theoretical importance. The indigenous construct of anasakti has been less addressed than other constructs involving the notion of the self or general psychological aspects of forgiveness in most previous studies. Hence, there is need for more research on the extent to which cultural notions such as ahamkara and anasakti can add to our understanding of forgiveness and interpersonal functioning.

## 1.2. Ahamkara: Concept of Self- Sense

According to Indian psychological thought processes (Kiran Kumar, 2014), Ahamkara represents the fundamental Indian psychological concept of an individual's experience of being human, defined by their personal sense of self (I). Ahamkara is derived from the Sanskrit word Aham (I) and is the principle of individuation which allows an individual to view himself or herself as a separate, distinct individual from other people (Kiran Kumar, 2014). In addition, Ahamkara affects an individual's experience by providing a sense of personal identity, possession (ownership) of that identity, and agent (doership or *karta*) interaction with their experience of self and the world around them.

Ahamkara acts as a subjective point of reference for making impersonal experiences subjective. When an individual connects with a particular experience by using "I see," or "I feel," he/she makes it subjective and enhances his/her identity (Kiran Kumar, 2014). Ahamkara ties into many contemporary psychology concepts, such as identity, self-concept, and ego involvement. Ahamkara and *buddhi* (intellect), *manas* (mind), and *chitta* (memory) form a unified psychological system of the individual or internal (*antahkarana*) psychological equipment by the Sankhya and Vedanta philosophies. Ahamkara helps to define the distinction of the individual as subject and object, creating and clarifying the sense of uniqueness and separateness.

When we talk of *ahamkara* from current perspectives, there are different elements of it including separation/differentiation, individuality, identification, and agency (Kiran Kumar, et al. 2005). If we are strongly attached to *ahamkara*, we risk experiencing emotional reactivity along with a more egocentric perspective of the world, leading to a greater vulnerability to perceived threat. *Ahamkara* is how each person interprets events and direct experience from a cognitive perspective within the framework of their own understanding and self-importance. It is through a lens of one's self that they interpret an event, rather than neutrally or objectively. An internal reference point shaped by one's own experience can cause someone to say "that happened to me," or "that is important to me," generating self-referential, subjective processing (Baumeister, 1998). A self-referential framework is also important for generating emotional responses because the psychological impact of any event is entirely dependent on the subjective weight that someone applies to that event. These effects are also emphasized in the literature on self-concept and ego involvement, which discuss how people frame comparisons to their own identity for understanding experience (Baumeister, 1998).

One of the major characteristics of *ahamkara* is the promotion of self-identity (Kiran Kumar et al., 2005). The integration of individual thoughts, feelings, roles, and experiences within oneself happens through identification with oneself. Through this identification, people become more aware of environmental changes, reinforcing the connection between environmental events and their inner feelings. Identification may sometimes lead to rigidity of thinking and emotions, although it plays an important role in developing self-concepts (Kiran Kumar et al., 2005). Identification with self-concept and the resultant *ahamkara* leads to high reactivity to emotional events. Since people tend to feel attached to themselves, anything that poses a threat to the self will generate strong emotions in people. This is especially true of interpersonal situations when individuals become sensitive to any sort of threat posed by others, including criticism. A violation of conduct may be considered as not only an independent event but also an act that directly threatens the person's self-respect or dignity. This kind of thinking may trigger emotional behavior, such as wrath and defensiveness (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998).

*Ahamkara* is also instrumental in ensuring that the experience of emotions through attachment and rumination continues. People will continue to reflect on the act repeatedly and even relive the whole event, affirming their feelings. This kind of interaction only makes it difficult to escape the cycle of negative emotions. Recurring patterns of thoughts in relation to this aspect have been found to be connected to prolonged emotional distress and lack of control over emotions (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 2008).

The behavioral aspect of *Ahamkara* becomes particularly apparent in social situations. People with too much involvement of the ego are likely to respond in an overly defensive manner when faced with any kind of criticism, disagreement, or threat to their ego image. In light of the fact that humans are always motivated to protect or restore their ego identity, it is often seen that such behaviors tend to further complicate any interpersonal conflicts. Furthermore,

Ahamkara is associated with personalization, which refers to the phenomenon where people tend to associate things with themselves regardless of their direct relevance to the situation. This tendency is likely to increase interpersonal conflicts and misunderstandings.

In the context of interpersonal conflict, one would recognize the significance of ahamkara because neither individual is likely to let go of their negative feelings about the situation, nor will they oppose any attempt at making peace, especially if they feel that their ego has been violated by the other party. The dilemma of respect for oneself against forgiveness arises in the process of contemplating forgiveness, since it involves letting go of grudges and looking at the broader perspective. Because forgiveness requires relinquishing the ego, it can be difficult for someone with high ahamkara. From a broader psychological perspective, ahamkara can be seen as having a range with various amounts of involvement and association within it. Individuals who have a moderate level of ahamkara can adjust to the changes and have open minds while remaining grounded in their identities. In contrast, individuals who possess a high level of ahamkara are more rigid in nature and experience strong emotions, but they do not possess the ability to regulate emotions.

In terms of forgiveness, one of the key determinants of how offenses are perceived is ahamkara. In such a manner, ahamkara acts as an obstacle to the process of forgiveness because it holds negative emotions and builds up the association between one's identity and the wrongdoings carried out by another person. Hence, the understanding of the process of forgiveness and its facilitators and obstacles becomes clearer if one comprehends the impact of ahamkara on cognition and emotions.

### **1.3. Anasakti: Concept of Non-Attachment**

One core concept of Indian thought - particularly as articulated within the Bhagavad Gita - is that of anasakti or non-attachment. Anasakti exemplifies a person's ability to act without becoming emotionally attached to or dependent on his/her output/result. It also defines a way of living actively and joyfully with mental clarity (serenity) and freedom from excessive wants, as opposed to being apathetic (Easwaran, 2007; Radhakrishnan, 1948).

Attachment (*asakti*) links people to their expectations, desires and results, so Indian philosophy teaches that it is the greatest source of emotional strife in life. Furthermore, anasakti is a state of mental balance that allows people to obtain peace/serenity from success or failure. This idea is closely associated with *nishkama karma* [selfless action] which encourages one to perform properly, irrespective of how the result occurs.

Anasakti implies a modification of the relationship between an individual and his/her internal experience from a psychological standpoint. One learns to perceive such sensations without becoming overwhelmed with them but without engaging in an emotional reaction to every thought or feeling. From a theoretical perspective, this technique can be compared with mindfulness techniques based on the principles of awareness and no reactivity (Brown &

Ryan, 2003). As a result of such an approach, people are capable of reducing the intensity and persistence of undesirable emotional states, thereby helping to achieve psychological balance. Reduction of the attachment to results is among the defining features of anasakti.

Emotional pain tends to happen to people who tie themselves down to some particular outcome or expectation. In most cases, anger, frustration, disappointment, and distress are the result of unfulfilled expectations. By practicing anasakti, one will direct their attention to action rather than outcome, thus minimizing their dependence on external conditions. An additional contribution of anasakti to psychological flexibility and ego detachment is quite significant. In this respect, by reducing attachment to how an individual defines themselves and how they feel about their emotions, an individual is able to respond to situations with greater clarity and calmness. Anasakti is especially important in the context of forgiveness, as it allows individuals to create distance between themselves and their feelings

Cognitively speaking, anasakti facilitates cognitive flexibility since those individuals who score high on non-attachment are able to consider various perspectives and not think rigidly and egocentrically. It lowers the risk of rumination, which can be a reason for developing prolonged emotional distress (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 2008). Thinking flexibility and clear judgments are ensured by anasakti since egocentricity and repetition are prevented. Equanimity can be described as a state of emotional balance where people are not affected by positive stimuli and not overwhelmed by negative ones. Individuals with balanced emotions are able to regulate their response to events. Scientific investigations into the nature of non-attachment have shown that people with high levels of non-attachment experience less negative effects and greater emotional resilience (Sahdra et al., 2010).

Decreased tendency towards avoidance, aggression, and retaliation behavior in social contexts is one of the behavioral aspects of anasakti. Instead of resorting to a defensive strategy when dealing with challenges, individuals who demonstrate non-attachment behaviors are more likely to be receptive to the challenge. This fosters positive interpersonal relationships between people (Sahdra et al., 2015). Moreover, anasakti reduces the tendency of making the experience personal. People will hardly view the situation as a threat to them when the relationship between the occurrence and their identity becomes weaker. People find themselves in a better position to take an unbiased and empathic view on matters due to this personalization tendency. The most significant aspect of anasakti is that it aids the process of release, which is an integral part of forgiveness. It is necessary for the individual to reduce his or her emotional connection to the offense and release the attachment to the past grudges for forgiveness. The psychological basis for the same is established through non-attachment, wherein the individual can shift his or her focus from negative emotions to acceptance and reconciliation. Anasakti can also be seen from the broader psychological perspective as a way in which flexibility and resilience can be increased. The capacity for resilience allows individuals to face any challenges that they may encounter in their lives without being overly reliant upon outside conditions from an emotional perspective.

Conclusively, the term Anasakti refers to a concept that entails several aspects such as emotion regulation, cognitive flexibility, and behavioral flexibility. Individuals will be able to do things without being disturbed due to the reduced influence of stressful experiences caused by anasakti.

#### **1.4. Relationship between Ahamkara, Anasakti and Forgiveness**

Understanding the mediation role of ahamkara as a psychological mechanism will help us understand the link between anasakti and forgiveness. Anasakti and ahamkara have a connection and interact to influence the perception and reaction to offenses among individuals instead of acting as different predictors. Specifically, through minimizing ahamkara's influence, anasakti helps minimize the emotional response and attachment to negative experiences, thereby indirectly encouraging forgiveness.

Being a state of detachment, anasakti requires the reduced ability of individuals to identify with their own emotions, thoughts, and experiences. Individuals who have a high level of anasakti will be more capable of detaching themselves psychologically from emotionally loaded instances and less likely to perceive incidents with reference to themselves (Sahdra et al., 2010). As a result of such detachment, the significance of ahamkara will be lowered since it will weaken the relevance of the self in the interpretation of personal interactions.

Whereas Ahamkara represents the "I" that organizes the experience based on individual identification (Kiran Kumar, 2014), individuals are predisposed to seeing interpersonal slights as a threat to their self-concept in case of a strong ahamkara, resulting in intense emotional responses such as anger and bitterness. Processes of cognitive reappraisal, such as rumination and personalizing, which contribute to increased involvement in the negative experience typically lead to prolonged emotional response. As stated by McCullough et al. (2001), such emotional involvement constitutes a primary barrier to forgiveness.

The theory indicates that anasakti is a form of regulation which makes the intensity of the ahamkara decrease. Anasakti diminishes the tendency to take things personally because it leads to the reduction of identification with oneself and his or her experiences. The diminishment of ahamkara contributes to creating a more tolerant psychological climate wherein people can manage their emotions and reinterpret the offense.

Analyzing the way in which people tend to interpret interpersonal harm serves to make the mediating role of ahamkara quite clear. High ahamkara, resulting in rigid and selfish interpretation of events, is more characteristic of individuals with low levels of anasakti. In these situations, the action of sinning will be viewed as a direct assault against one's own self-respect, and thus, emotions will be elevated to a level that makes it impossible for them to forgive. However, in instances where people have very high levels of anasakti, the intermediary influence of ahamkara will be minimal. This mediated relationship is further

confirmed by scientific findings. Scientific findings on the phenomenon of non-attachment reveal that people with a high degree of anasakti are less reactive emotionally, less ruminative, and psychologically flexible (Sahdra et al., 2015). Such attributes are associated with a low likelihood of maintaining negativity emotionally, making forgiveness easier.

However, findings on the ego-involved phenomenon reveal that narcissism and self-identification hinder forgiveness by intensifying emotional attachment to offenses (Exline et al., 2004). All these findings confirm the role of ahamkara in the mediation between anasakti and forgiveness. In a broader theoretical perspective, the above mediation model aligns with the theories of psychology in India, which emphasize ego diminishment (ahamkara) as a way of attaining emotional balance and adaptability (Cornelissen et al., 2014). On the same lines, Western theories such as self-transcendence imply that going beyond ego-centered identity enhances one's relationships and psychological wellness (Reed, 1991). All these theories share the belief that minimizing self-interest leads to better social behavior, for instance, forgiveness and emotional regulation.

However, it is important to note that a thorough exploration of the role of the mediating factor of ahamkara has not been carried out by the empirical research community, particularly regarding the concept of forgiveness. The bulk of studies have focused on one or the other component, instead of exploring their joint effect in an integrated approach, thus highlighting an area that needs to be researched very seriously.

To conclude, it would be safe to say that there is an indirect relationship between anasakti and forgiveness through ahamkara. The effect of anasakti on ahamkara and its consequences results from the fact that anasakti lowers self-awareness and emotional attachment. Ultimately, this results in the facilitation of forgiveness since emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility, and releasing of undesirable experiences become easy. This understanding of the indirect relationship between anasakti and forgiveness through ahamkara highlights the importance of psychological factors in shaping interpersonal behavior.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Ahamkara and Forgiveness

The role that ego involvement plays in emotional processing sheds some light on why forgiveness has something to do with ahamkara. In Indian philosophy, ahamkara symbolizes an individual's dedication towards his identity and significance and usually results in heightened awareness when one feels he has been wronged or harmed. Ego involvement seems to be the major hindrance for an act of forgiveness based on psychological studies on forgiveness. Empirical evidence linking ahamkara and forgiveness can be understood from the findings of Gupta and Agrawal (2020) who investigated the effects of ahamkara and anasakti on the psychological well-being of urban Indian adults. The results showed that people with higher levels of ahamkara experience more negative emotions and psychological distress, often associated with anger, resentment, and difficulty releasing interpersonal distress. Research has shown that excessive ego involvement increases egocentric interpretations of situations and emotional attachment to personal experiences. Because forgiveness requires empathy, emotional regulation, and reduction of resentment, a strong ahamkara can act as a psychological barrier to forgiveness. However, research has also shown that certain aspects of ahamkara can have a positive impact on psychological functioning, suggesting that ahamkara is multidimensional and may impact forgiveness differently depending on its components. For instance, a developmental model of forgiveness was introduced by Robert D. Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1992). Based on this model, individual progresses from his retaliatory responses into more advanced kinds of unfelt forgiveness. Retaliatory response seems to be prevalent at lower levels, which is characteristic of high ego involvement and self-interest. On the other hand, higher levels of forgiveness are increasingly detached from environmental factors and are based on moral considerations and empathy.

Further support for the role of ego in blocking the process of forgiveness is provided by McCullough, Worthington, and Rachal (1997). They examined the phenomenon of forgiveness in close personal relationships and revealed a relationship between forgiveness and rumination. Rumination is a type of mental activity involving repetitive thoughts about a particular event. This self-centered type of cognitive activity tends to sustain anger and resentment because individuals continually recall the unpleasant experiences in association with their self-perception and emotions. The concept of ahamkara, in which the self remains central to interpreting events, corresponds perfectly with this approach. Forgiveness, in contrast, was seen to promote empathy, which implies that forgiving responses presuppose shifting the focus away from the self.

Several pieces of research on the issue of motivation behind forgiveness were conducted by Michael E. McCullough et al. (2001). They argued that forgiving involves reduced feelings of revenge and avoidance behavior alongside increased empathy towards the person who committed the transgression. Based on the results of these studies, individuals characterized by high levels of narcissism and egoism will be inclined to take vengeance on the perpetrators rather than forgive them. This implies that selfishness and egoism, together with negative emotions such as hatred and anger, can hinder the forgiveness process. The concept of 'ahamkara', which refers to being self-centered in analyzing interpersonal relationships, is especially important here.

On the other hand, Exline et al. (2004) conducted research on the impact of narcissistic entitlement on forgiveness. From their findings, it can be observed that people who show great ego defenses and entitlement are less likely to forgive violations of interpersonal relationships. They had a tendency to hold grudges against others and to see any wrongdoing done to them as an insult to their sense of dignity. It was concluded that the traits of the ego played an important role in enhancing self-centric views of incidents, acting as barriers to forgiveness. It is possible that the concept of ahamkara could act as one of those barriers.

Empirical evidence relating ahamkara to psychological implications was provided by Gupta and Agrawal (2022) in the Indian setting. A high degree of ahamkara was associated with poor emotional wellness and negative affectivity in their study involving adults in India. Since the experience of negative emotions like anger and resentment is a major obstruction to the process of forgiveness, the findings of their experiment may be utilized in examining forgiveness. People with strong ego may find it challenging to get over negative emotions and develop a forgiving mentality.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the findings above is that ahamkara functions as a psychological barrier to forgiveness as it fosters attachment to the feeling of injustice and egotism.

## **2.2. Anasakti and Forgiveness**

Whereas ahamkara has negative implications for forgiveness, anasakti is a psychological attitude conducive to forgiveness, characterized by disinterest, acceptance, and emotional balance. Anasakti is associated with lower identification with one's emotions, beliefs, and outcomes, allowing individuals to respond to situations in a calm manner. In psychological terms, this conforms to processes such as cognitive flexibility and emotion regulation, necessary for regulating negative emotions associated with interpersonal harm.

There is ample evidence to prove the positive influence of non-attachment in the process of forgiveness. Empirical evidence relating anasakti to forgiveness can be understood from the findings of Gupta and Agrawal (2020), who examined the effects of ahamkara and anasakti on psychological wellbeing among urban Indian adults. Their study revealed that individuals

with higher levels of anasakti experienced greater emotional balance, positive affect, life satisfaction, and better mental wellbeing. Anasakti, which refers to non-attachment and reduced emotional dependence on outcomes and experiences, helps individuals regulate negative emotions such as anger, resentment, and frustration. Since forgiveness involves letting go of hurt, reducing hostility, and developing acceptance, the qualities associated with anasakti may facilitate the forgiveness process. The study further suggested that individuals high in anasakti are less likely to remain emotionally attached to painful interpersonal experiences and are therefore more capable of responding with emotional stability and empathy. These findings indicate that anasakti may positively contribute to forgiveness by promoting emotional regulation, detachment from ego-centered reactions, and psychological resilience. To measure the non-attachment scale, Sahdra, Shaver, and Brown (2010) conducted an important study. Self-report measures were used to assess the relationship between well-being and non-attachment. According to the findings, individuals who scored highly for non-attachment had relatively higher levels of general psychological well-being, as well as low negative affect, such as worry and distress. Of more importance is the discovery of a positive correlation between empathy and non-attachment. As Sahdra et al. (2010) point out, people that cannot feel very strongly will be able to think wider and thus find it easier to empathize with others. This is crucial in discussing forgiveness because it means that one needs to be sympathetic enough to see things differently. It should be noted that this study had to look at the level of the subjects' well-being rather than their forgiveness ability.

Building on the findings of this study, Sahdra, Shaver, and Brown (2015) performed another experiment in order to assess the impact of non-attachment on interpersonal functioning. The study sought to establish the correlation between non-attachment and emotional and relational variables through the use of large and diverse samples. The positive relationship between adaptive interpersonal skills, like empathy, compassion, and emotional stability, and non-attachment was another observation made by the researchers. The second observation is that rumination, which is repetitive and self-focused thinking about negative experiences, is less common in individuals who have high levels of non-attachment. According to Sahdra et al. (2015), the reduction in rumination allows individuals to disconnect from maladaptive emotional cycles and gain objectivity in their interactions with others. The concepts of emotional regulation and creativity are very important in terms of forgiveness because they make it possible to forgive and accept one's own emotions toward others. The most important aspect to emphasize in relation to this research is that it highlights interpersonal qualities, which increases its practical significance as regards the topic of forgiveness. However, the results are general in nature because, similar to the former article, the concept of forgiveness does not appear anywhere.

The connection between anasakti and forgiveness within the institution of marriage forms the topic of discussion for the next study conducted by Sharma et al. (2020). In the research, the authors use various scales to assess the level of forgiveness and non-attachment of a sample of married working couples. The results revealed that there was a positive correlation between the two variables, meaning that individuals are more likely to forgive their spouses

when they have low levels of emotional attachment to outcomes and their personal offenses. Moreover, the research illustrated that non-attachment facilitates in diminishing one's emotions with respect to the problems emerging out of communication. This point of view of the authors is significant because it provides empirical support regarding the importance of anasakti for promoting forgiveness in personal interactions between people. Nevertheless, the limited scope of the sample studied may prevent the transferability of their findings.

To be specific, Rajeev and Hebbani (2022) investigated the benefits of non-attachment in psychology and concluded that non-attachment had a positive impact on the level of emotional resilience and reduced stress among people. In their survey-based approach, Rajeev and Hebbani (2022) found that individuals who had higher non-attachment were able to manage their emotions and stress situations effectively. As indicated by Rajeev and Hebbani (2022), it is essential to mention emotional resilience because it enables individuals to remain in control of their emotions of pain and rage. In non-attachment, there is a lower level of stress and higher emotional stability, making it easier for people to forgive others. However, it is hard to make certain assumptions about the significance of forgiveness in the process of forgiveness because it was not assessed directly.

Gupta and Agrawal (2022), who studied the impact of anasakti, ahamkara, and well-being in Indians, provide additional proof of the positive role of anasakti. Positive affective states and life satisfaction have been discovered to be positively associated with anasakti. As per Gupta and Agrawal (2022), people having high levels of non-attachment shall show positive affect, improving their cognitive perspectives and enabling them to adapt to coping mechanisms. It has been established that positive emotions help to foster forgiveness since they allow the victim to perceive their trauma in a less negative way and respond positively towards it. This shows that anasakti not only reduces negative emotions but also encourages positive affective and cognitive processes for fostering acts of forgiveness. One of the major strengths of this research is its application of native concepts within the context of the culture. Like other studies, this one too highlights well-being more than forgiveness.

Taking everything into consideration, it can be said that there is substantial evidence that proves that anasakti is important for forgiving others. With non-attachment, individuals can distance themselves from anger and react to violations committed against them in a more adaptive manner because it helps them become emotionally distant from negative events, reduces rumination, and encourages empathy and emotional balance. But one of the drawbacks of such researches is that the process of forgiving was not explored in depth as a dependent variable.

### **2.3. Ahamkara and Anasakti**

These two psychological constructs are mutually contradictory but linked in nature. While anasakti refers to detachment and equilibrium of emotions as well as selflessness, ahamkara

implies self-identification and emotionality along with personal engagement. Because self-identification plays a role in the capacity for detachment, these two theories not only contradict each other but are dynamically interlinked as well.

To understand the psychology of ahamkara and how it works, Kiran Kumar et al. (2005) conducted a theoretical and empirical investigation. Important aspects like identification, individuality, agency, and separation of ahamkara were discovered in the study that helped to construct the notion of self-identity. Ahamkara refers to the individuation process, whereby individuals are able to differentiate themselves from other people and comprehend events with respect to their self, states Kiran Kumar et al. (2005). As per the outcomes, increased identification with personal characteristics, roles, and events would be associated with elevated ahamkara, leading to greater emotional involvement and connectedness. The reason being, when individuals identify with personal experiences, it increases their ability to consider events significant to them, thus creating increased emotional sensitivity to interpersonal experiences. Though the research provided an elaborate understanding of ahamkara, the conclusions have limited validity due to its mostly theoretical nature and lack of empirical evidence on a larger scale.

Additional theoretical perspectives can be seen in Kiran Kumar (2014) wherein he mentions that ahamkara exists in relation to the subject-object dichotomy, thereby creating distance between people. Kiran Kumar (2014) claims that subject-object dichotomy leads to intense emotional responses and ego-based thinking processes. However, Indian philosophy emphasizes that non-attachment involves taking a holistic viewpoint and not a fragmented one. Nonetheless, the lack of empirical support for this view makes it hard to incorporate it into modern-day practice within the field of psychology. This is evidenced by the findings from the study conducted by Gupta and Agrawal (2022) regarding the relationship between ahamkara, anasakti, and psychological well-being among Indians. According to the results of their study, anasakti showed positive correlations with life satisfaction and positive affect, whereas ahamkara showed positive associations with negative affect such as uneasiness and dissatisfaction. From the results of the study, it can be concluded that anasakti promotes emotional stability and well-being, whereas ahamkara contributes to emotional attachment and negative affect. The most prominent merit of the research is its empirical testing of indigenous theories. The major drawback of the study is its cross-sectional design, making it impossible to establish cause-and-effect relationships.

Theoretically, an increase in anasakti will depend on the dissolution of ahamkara in accordance with Indian psychology principles. According to Cornelissen et al. (2014), ego transcendence allows individuals to transcend their ego-centric perspectives and establish a more harmonious perspective of themselves and other people. The process involves the development of a more holistic mode of consciousness, coupled with the gradual detachment from the ego. Such a development has been associated with positive prosocial behavior, reduced reactivity, and greater emotional stability—attributes that are beneficial for healthy

interpersonal interactions, according to Cornelissen et al. (2014). Nonetheless, there is a research gap in terms of theoretical propositions, which have yet to be empirically verified.

The self-transcendence notion introduced by Reed (1991), meaning that people could obtain psychological wellness through transcending their egocentric selves, is similar to the Western notion. Self-transcendence according to Reed (1991) means going beyond the borders of oneself into larger realms of thought that help in being more meaningful in life and build good relationships. This theory shares some similarity with the Indian notion where the lessening of ahamkara helps one to detach. Nevertheless, a limitation is that Reed's concept is predominantly applied in nursing and developmental frameworks, with a need for further empirical studies before its application in terms of ahamkara and anasakti.

From literature, ahamkara and anasakti appear to be opposing yet complimentary dimensions of psychology. While anasakti promotes detachment, emotional regulation, and psychological balance, ahamkara promotes self-recognition and emotional engagement, which might promote emotional reactions while hindering adaptation. While a significant amount of theoretical support exists, there is a notable lack of research studies investigating how these dimensions correlate in relation to one another, particularly in terms of forgiveness. The importance of conducting studies that combine both dimensions to provide insight into their cumulative effect becomes evident.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH GAP, OBJECTIVES, CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS**

#### **3.1. Research Gap**

Firstly, it should be stated that there are few studies that empirically explore the combination of all three constructs mentioned in one theoretical model. In other words, although it is possible to analyse their role in influencing forgiveness, most studies either focus on exploring ego-related elements or non-attachment. Secondly, the mediation mechanisms underlying the relationship have also not been explored to the extent required for theory development. According to theories on this issue, it is possible to note that reducing the importance of ego would lead to greater forgiveness. Another weakness in the body of knowledge on this topic relates to the scarcity of studies using indigenous psychology that makes use of ideas such as *anasakti* and *ahamkara* for analyzing interpersonal relations. The significance of such results in a given culture becomes limited due to this limitation. Finally, previous studies tend to have been based on mere theoretical discussions or correlational studies rather than examining the underlying process involved.

Taking into account the limitations noted above, the present research examines the association between forgiveness and *anasakti*, along with the role of *ahamkara* as a mediator in this connection. The research seeks to provide a deeper insight into the psychological aspects of forgiveness through incorporating these variables into a mediation model.

#### **3.2. Objectives**

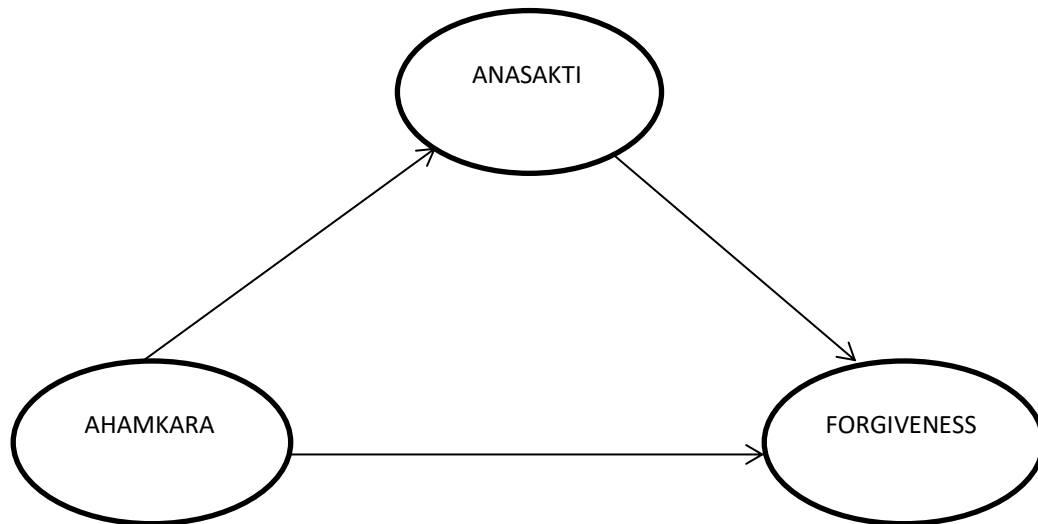
1. To examine whether *Anasakti* mediates the relationship between *Ahamkara* and Forgiveness.

#### **3.3. Conceptual Framework**

The present research seeks to explore the effect of *ahamkara* on forgiveness by employing a mediation model. As defined by Baron and Kenny (1986), a mediation effect occurs when another variable, called the mediator, influences the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable.

In the study, *ahamkara* will be the independent variable while forgiveness will be the dependent variable. The mediating variable will be *anasakti*. In accordance with the theory,

ahamkara influences anasakti, which subsequently influences forgiveness either directly or indirectly.



*Figure 1- Conceptual Framework*

The theoretical basis for this model includes the premise that non-attachment results in decreased self-identification and its related phenomena. Individuals who are highly anasakti can maintain their emotional detachment from personal issues and refrain from viewing incidents through a self-serving lens (Sahdra et al., 2010). The egoic state of ahamkara is characterized by excessive ego involvement and self-referential cognition. This egoic state is diminished by the reduction in self-identification (Kiran Kumar, 2014). Lack of emotional sensitivity, lower chances of taking the offense personally, and increased flexibility are some factors that are related to having less ahamkara. They enable a person to control his/her emotional state, change how he/she perceives the offense committed against him/her, and break away from negative emotional states. In this way, they help in the forgiveness process (McCullough et al., 2001; Worthington, 2005). On the other hand, there is a high chance of an individual having high ahamkara, leading him/her to be emotionally attached to him/her. In such cases, any interpersonal offense will be seen as a threat to the individual and his/her self and this will make it difficult for the individual to forgive.

Based on the conceptual framework, the connection between ahamkara and forgiveness is not a direct one but is rather mediated by anasakti. The focus on the inner workings of the psyche highlights how less involvement in the ego results in a better emotional response, and thus a process explanation for forgiveness has been provided by this model (Cornelissen et al., 2014).

### **3.4. Hypothesis**

H<sub>1</sub>: There will be a significant relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness.

H<sub>2</sub>: There will be a significant relationship between Ahamkara and Anasakti.

H<sub>3</sub>: There will be a significant relationship between Anasakti and Forgiveness.

H<sub>4</sub>: Anasakti will mediate the relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1. Sample**

The sample was composed of 151 people aged between 18 and 40 years old, with 55.6% of the participants being females and 43.1% males. The participants in this research comprised young adults and adults who form an important stage of development, where identity formation, emotion regulation, and social interaction are greatly engaged. Selection of participants was based on convenience, since they were willing and available to participate in the study. The sample includes participants with varying economic backgrounds and levels of education. The study's sample size of 151 participants enabled a meaningful examination of the linkages among the variables in question, since it was considered large enough to conduct statistical analyses, both correlations and mediation tests.

#### **4.2. Sampling Procedure**

This study made use of convenience sampling, where individuals who can readily participate and are willing to do so were selected for the study. This method is often used in psychological studies owing to its practicality, efficiency, and suitability for exploratory and correlational studies.

#### **4.3. Research Design**

Considering the importance of understanding the mediating effect of ahamkara between anasakti and forgiveness, the present study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships between anasakti, ahamkara, and forgiveness. In order to measure and analyse objectively the dependent and independent variables studied, the quantitative approach was used. The cross-sectional research method provided a snapshot of the current levels of anasakti, ahamkara, and forgiveness among the study participants, since data collection occurred at one specific point in time. Such a technique is commonly used in psychological research to explore relationships among variables. Since the research aimed to explore the relationship and strength of the correlation between the variables without altering the values of the variables, the research design could be considered correlational. Nonetheless, this experiment was supposed to examine a mediation hypothesis that not only looks at correlations but can also identify the psychological process through which one variable affects another. Anasakti was used as the independent variable (IV) in this research, forgiveness as the dependent variable (DV), while ahamkara was used as the mediating variable (MV). The mediation technique was used to determine whether the correlation between anasakti and forgiveness is mediated by ahamkara (Baron & Kenny, 1986). This approach allows one to understand the way non-attachment can influence forgiveness.

#### 4.4. Tools Used

In this study, three standardized psychological assessments were employed to measure the three main variables under consideration: forgiveness, anasakti, and ahamkara. These tests were administered using an online questionnaire format. The standardized questionnaires used are as follows:

##### 4.4.1 The Anasakti Scale:

Anasakti was measured using the Anasakti Scale that was developed by Singh & Raina (2015). Anasakti is defined as the capacity to carry out deeds without attachment to their results and to maintain a stable and balanced frame of mind regardless of success or failure in classical Indian literature like the Bhagavad Gita. The handbook states that a person with a high level of anasakti exhibits emotional equilibrium, perseverance in the face of difficulty, and the capacity to operate in a goal-directed manner without involving their ego (Singh & Raina, 2015). Because they interpret life events in a balanced and non-reactive way, these people are able to manage stress well. Each one of the 22 dimensions found in the Anasakti Scale signifies a unique dimension of non-attachment. Each item has to be responded to on a five-point scale of *never (1) to always (5)* depending upon individual experiences. Favourable as well as unfavourable statements have been used in developing the items. Unfavourable items have to be reverse-scored. Each of the six distinct anasakti factors assessed through the scale captures some aspect of the psychology of non-attachment. These include:

1. Faith in God can be seen as an indicator of an individual's belief in the existence of a supreme being and the notion that everything that happens in life has a deeper meaning.
2. Outcome vulnerability assesses the extent to which individuals fear the possible repercussions of their decisions. The higher the individual's level of non-attachment, the lower the score on this factor.
3. Empathy focuses on the prosocial nature of non-attachment by showing that one is sensitive to other people's experiences.
4. Persistence and fortitude measure an individual's capacity to pursue their goals despite difficulties and uncertainties.
5. Frustration tolerance is the extent to which one can cope with challenging situations without feeling any emotional upset.
6. Emotional equipoise refers to the ability to stay emotionally balanced despite different life conditions. (Singh & Raina, 2015)

Each answer on the scale is assigned a numeric value, where positively framed statements have values ranging from 1 to 5, while negatively framed ones have their values inverted. The scale yields a total anasakti score, which is obtained through the summation of individual scores across all the six subscales. An increased degree of non-attachment correlates with higher scores on the scale.

According to the psychometric properties, the Anasakti scale is a reliable tool to use. From literature sources, it has been revealed that the Cronbach's alpha value for the reliability of the entire scale is 0.70, which is relatively good. As per Singh and Raina (2015), the reliability values for individual scales lie between 0.40 and 0.81. The measure demonstrates convergent validity with respect to validity because it has a negative relationship with negative emotions and a positive one with well-being and positive affect measures. The theory behind this scale is empirically supported because it is positively correlated with the Mental Health Continuum Short Form and the Flourishing Scale and negatively correlated with negative emotions.

The main advantage of the Anasakti Scale is its potential for integration of ancient Indian philosophy with modern psychology, particularly the transactional approach to stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The integration enables an empirical analysis of non-attachment from a cultural perspective.

#### **4.4.2 Aham Inventory:**

Aham Inventory, developed by Kiran Kumar and Raj (1993), was utilized to measure Ahamkara. This inventory is an assessment of the psychological construct of 'aham,' which implies a feeling of 'I' or the perception of oneself. It is important to realize that 'ahamkara' in this study refers to the basic aspect of self, with which one perceives the universe and not a feeling of egoism (Kiran Kumar & Raj, 1993).

The total of 18 questions included in the Aham Inventory assesses various aspects associated with oneself. The answers to these questions are to be provided by the participants using a scale of four options (*Always, Often, Sometimes, and Rarely*), which will depend on personal experiences. Some of the issues related to the self that need to be measured through the use of these questions include feelings of identity, importance, control, emotions, and identification with one's traits and accomplishments. There are four important sub-components of the ahamkara including individuality, identification, agency, and separation/differentiation, which are gauged by the inventory. The individuality component refers to the sense of uniqueness and difference while identification pertains to the extent to which an individual identifies himself with achievements and role performances. Agency involves control and ownership while differentiation is a reflection of differences from other people.

Each response is assigned a number according to the scoring guide using the four-point rating scale for the inventory. In accordance with the scoring guide, some responses are scored negatively, requiring great caution when scoring. After scoring each response, the scores from the total 18 responses are totalled to obtain a total score. Additionally, for the four dimensions, subscale scores are computed. A higher score implies a higher level of ahamkara, which means self-identity. The maximum score possible is between 18 and 72. Since the nature of self is relative, no norm was established by the creators for this inventory, so score interpretations will be based relatively. It is a well-established fact that individuals have varying levels of ahamkara based on factors like age and development stages.

According to the authors, the extent of the level of sense of self will be seen from the increased total score while a weak self-sense would be associated with a lower score. Further, the variations in the subscales scores could reveal the importance placed by the individual on various dimensions of his self-concept. This is because, for example, a higher score in the identification dimension would reflect the individual's strong identification with his role identities, whereas a higher individuality score would imply a unique self-concept. Curiously, since it demonstrates a reduced tendency to identify oneself with outside sources, the differentiation aspect is also considered a mark of personal and even spiritual development.

One of the prominent characteristics of the Aham Inventory lies in its lack of reliance on interpretation frameworks and standardized criteria. Instead, the importance of recognizing variations in self-construction is highlighted. It is important to recognize the dynamism and evolving nature of the self, which changes depending on different periods of an individual's life when certain parts of ahamkara become more prominent than others.

#### **4.4.3 Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS):**

Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS), developed by Thompson, Snyder, and Hoffman in 2005, was employed for measuring forgiveness. Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) is a commonly used measure that has been designed for estimating disposition forgiveness. Disposition forgiveness may be defined as a tendency of an individual to forgive people in different situations. Scale assumes that negative life events can be experienced either as a consequence of one's actions, other peoples' actions, or uncontrollable situations, and people respond in different ways to such experiences throughout their lives (Thompson et al., 2005). For our purpose, forgiveness will refer to a phenomenon where a person reduces aversive emotions, responses, and attitudes towards oneself, other people, or situations.

The Heartland Forgiveness Scale comprises of 18 questions which are rated on a 7-point Likert scale from "*Almost always false of me*" (1) to "*Almost always true of me*" (7). Unlike focusing on any specific event, individuals are expected to reflect on their responses towards unpleasant events in life. This technique enables us to study dispositional forgiveness rather than situational forgiveness.

Three separate measures are employed to determine forgiveness in the scale; there are six elements in each dimension.

1. Forgiveness of Self involves forgiving oneself for mistakes, weaknesses, and wrongs that one has committed.
2. Forgiveness of Others refers to how people can forgive those individuals who have either wronged or caused them any distress.
3. Forgiveness of Situations refers to being able to accept the unfortunate or undesirable situations, which may be beyond one's control, like diseases and natural disasters.

Both positively and negatively phrased items have been included in this scale. There are certain items (items 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, and 17) that need to be reverse scored, as mentioned in the scoring guide, while others are scored directly according to the responses given by the respondent. Scoring of the HFS is done by adding items that correspond to dimensions in order to compute subscale scores and also by adding all 18 items in order to get an overall score for forgiveness. Self-forgiveness is therefore symbolized by items 1-6, other forgiveness by items 7-12, while situation forgiveness is symbolized by items 13-18. According to the scoring criteria provided, the overall score that all the items will give is about 93, while that of the individual scales is approximately 31. This provides a general guide for interpreting individual scores.

The Heartland Forgiveness Scale has established very reliable psychometric properties, such as reliable construct validity and high internal reliability among many groups. As a multidimensional measure, the scale provides researchers with a comprehensive and credible method of measuring general forgiveness and specific components of forgiveness.

#### **4.5. Procedure**

The technique employed for data collection in this current research was an online survey approach through the use of Google Forms. All necessary elements such as the informed consent form, demographic details, and the three psychological tests adopted in this study were thoroughly incorporated into the survey questionnaire prior to conducting the survey.

The informed consent document which detailed the purpose of the research, its voluntary nature, and assurance of confidentiality and anonymity was presented to the participants first. It was clarified to the participants that their responses would be used for academic purposes and that they could withdraw from the study at any point in time without any consequences. The survey could only be conducted on people who had consented. The participants were provided information related to demographics, including age and gender, once they gave their consent. Following this, the survey was administered to the participants, with the presentation of scales in sequence, beginning with the first scale and ending with the last. Instructions were provided to the participants in regard to answering each part of the survey, informing them that there were no correct or incorrect answers.

The survey link was shared via different online platforms such as social media and through contacts, allowing the participants to complete the survey at any time that suited them. The use of Google Forms would enable easy recording of the information provided by the respondents and secure storage of the data collected.

The collected answers were analysed and verified for accuracy and completeness following the end of the data collection procedure. The answers that had discrepancies and inaccuracies were excluded from the sample. There were 151 valid answers obtained from the

respondents, which were used in statistical analysis in order to evaluate the proposed mediation model.

#### **4.6. Precautions**

A variety of precautions were put in place to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and ethical nature of the data collected during this study.

To begin with, before their participation in the research, participants were given a detailed and clear informed consent form. They knew about the objectives of the research, about their participation being purely voluntary, and about their right to withdraw from participation at any time without any consequences. This ensured that participation was based on free will.

Secondly, strict adherence was given to the confidentiality of the respondents. The respondents were told that their answers would only be used for academic purposes and nothing else. Moreover, no private information was taken from them at all. This was done in order to make sure that the respondents gave honest answers.

Thirdly, in order to prevent any confusion, detailed instruction regarding all the scales was provided to the respondents. This was especially important because of the fact that data collection had been done online.

The respondents were also encouraged not to provide random answers or answers without any thinking process, but they were rather encouraged to give genuine answers. The point worth noting here is that these answers were provided in an undistracted atmosphere.

The answers were screened and analyzed with regard to their validity and accuracy; the answers which were not valid were not used in the study.

To ensure the validity of the measurement process, the tests used during the experiment were applied without any modifications to their structure and the appropriate scoring procedures were used.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS

Descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation, and path analysis were performed using JASP software. To test whether there is a mediation effect of Anasakti on the relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness, mediation analysis was conducted.

#### 5.1. Table 1

##### Descriptive Statistics

*Table 1 Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	Anasakti	Ahamkar	Forgiveness
n	151	151	151
M	48.23	74.50	83.05
SD	4.153	10.04	13.04
Skewness	0.381	-0.049	0.448
SE Skewness	0.197	0.197	0.197
Kurtosis	0.120	0.512	-0.175
SE Kurtosis	0.392	0.392	0.392
Min	39.00	43.00	54.00
Max	61.00	102.00	119.00

Descriptive data of the three major variables under study namely Anasakti, Ahamkara, and Forgiveness among 151 respondents have been presented in Table 1 below. The average value of the anasakti scale was 48.23 (SD = 4.15) which means that the level of non-attachment of the respondents was moderate. Average value of ahamkara scale was 74.50 (SD = 10.04) meaning that there were relatively high levels of the ego related traits. The most high average level (M = 83.05, SD = 13.04) belonged to the variable of forgiveness meaning that respondents' level of this personality attribute was rather high. Values of kurtosis fluctuated between -0.175 and 0.512 and skewness was ranging from -0.049 to 0.448. This means that the distributions of these variables were normally distributed since these values lie within the permissible limits of normalcy. Variety of the participants' responses to all the variables can be observed from minimum and maximum scores.

#### 5.2. Inferential Statistics

**Table 2 Pearson's Correlation among Ahamkara, Anasakti, and Forgiveness**

Variable	<i>n</i>	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Ahamkara	151	74.50	10.04	—	—	—
2. Anasakti	151	48.23	4.15	-.104	—	—
3. Forgiveness	151	83.05	13.04	.547**	-.080	—

Note. *N* = 151. \**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01 (1-tailed).

The Pearson Correlation Coefficients of ahamkara, anasakti and forgiveness are provided in Table 2 below. Higher levels of ahamkara were associated with higher levels of forgiveness according to the findings of the current study, which showed a significant positive correlation between ahamkara and forgiveness ( $r = .547, p < .01$ ). The above findings imply that ahamkara might not be always considered a negative concept and some of its characteristics could positively influence interpersonal relations and psychological processes. The correlation between ahamkara and anasakti was weakly negative and statistically insignificant ( $r = -.104, p > .05$ ) and hence ahamkara and anasakti could be considered independent constructs within the current research. In the same way, the relationship between anasakti and forgiveness was weakly negative and statistically insignificant ( $r = -.080, p > .05$ ). This implies that forgiveness and general levels of anasakti could be independent concepts. Ahamkara was the only variable which was significantly correlated with forgiveness at the level of construct in general.

**Table 3 Regression Analysis Predicting Total Forgiveness from Ahamkara and Anasakti**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	33.94	13.04	—	2.60	< .001	—
Anasakti	-.073	.217	-.023	-.338	.736	
Ahamkara	.707	.090	.544	7.87	< .001	.290

Note. Dependent Variable: Forgiveness.

Table 3 presents the results of multiple regression analysis conducted in order to examine the effects of predictors of Ahamkara and Anasakti on forgiveness. The overall model possesses limited predictability, since only 29% of variance in forgiveness can be explained by the variables included in the equation (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.290). It was discovered that ahamkara possessed a strong positive relationship with forgiveness ( $B=.707$ ,  $\beta=.544$ ,  $t=7.87$ ,  $p<.001$ ). This means that the degree of forgiveness among individuals was related to high levels of ahamkara. The most powerful variable of the regression model, namely, Ahamkara, considerably contributed to explaining the phenomenon of forgiveness. In contrast, there was no significant effect of Anasakti on forgiveness ( $B=-.073$ ,  $\beta=-.023$ ,  $t=-.338$ ,  $p=.736$ ). Controlling for ahamkara, this non-significant effect indicates the lack of association between the general degree of non-attachment and forgiveness among participants. As seen from the presented results, the regression analysis revealed that Anasakti was a weak predictor of forgiveness, whereas Ahamkara had a strong predictive power.

*Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for Ahamkar, Forgiveness, and Anasakti Subscales (N = 151)*

Variable	<i>n</i>	M	SD	Skewness	SE Skewness	Kurtosis	SE Kurtosis	Range
<i>Ahamkar</i>								
Individuality	151	14.40	1.967	-0.014	0.197	-0.297	0.392	10-19
Identification	151	13.28	2.398	-0.060	0.197	-0.198	0.392	7-19
Separation	151	10.46	2.042	0.053	0.197	-0.343	0.392	6-16
Agency	151	10.08	1.889	0.311	0.197	0.275	0.392	6-16
<i>Forgiveness</i>								
Self	151	27.65	5.031	-0.225	0.197	1.001	0.392	7-40
Others	151	28.45	5.547	-0.040	0.197	0.030	0.392	10-41
Situations	151	26.95	5.768	0.343	0.197	0.619	0.392	6-42
<i>Anasakti</i>								
Faith in God	151	11.18	3.445	-0.864	0.197	-0.057	0.392	3-15
Outcome Vulnerability	151	14.48	4.099	-0.258	0.197	0.045	0.392	5-25
Empathy	151	12.07	2.134	-0.638	0.197	0.389	0.392	5-15
Persistence	151	11.95	2.804	-0.096	0.197	0.452	0.392	4-20
Frustration Tolerance	151	13.60	3.219	-0.087	0.197	-0.108	0.392	4-20
Emotional Equipoise	151	11.24	2.247	-0.331	0.197	-0.133	0.392	4-15

Table 4 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the Ahamkara, Forgiveness, and Anasakti subscales among 151 participants. Among the Ahamkara dimensions, Individuality showed the highest mean score ( $M = 14.40$ ,  $SD = 1.97$ ), followed by Identification ( $M = 13.28$ ,  $SD = 2.40$ ), Separation ( $M = 10.46$ ,  $SD = 2.04$ ), and Agency ( $M = 10.08$ ,  $SD = 1.89$ ). Regarding the facets of forgiveness, Forgiveness of Others had the highest mean score ( $M = 28.45$ ,  $SD = 5.55$ ) compared to Self-Forgiveness ( $M = 27.65$ ,  $SD = 5.03$ ) and Forgiveness of Situations ( $M = 26.95$ ,  $SD = 5.77$ ). The dimension with the highest mean score among the Anasakti facets was Outcome Vulnerability ( $M = 14.48$ ,  $SD = 4.10$ ). Other facets with the relatively high mean scores included Frustration Tolerance ( $M = 13.60$ ,  $SD = 3.22$ ), Empathy ( $M = 12.07$ ,  $SD = 2.13$ ), Persistence ( $M = 11.95$ ,  $SD = 2.80$ ), Emotional Equipoise ( $M = 11.24$ ,  $SD = 2.25$ ), and Faith in God ( $M = 11.18$ ,  $SD = 3.45$ ). Skewness and kurtosis statistics of all scales were within the acceptable range. This implied that the variables had normal distribution.

*Table 5 Intercorrelations among Ahamkara subscales, Anasakti subscales and Forgiveness subscales.*

Variable	<i>n</i>	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Individuality	151	14.40	1.97	—												
2. Identification	151	13.28	2.40	-.101	—											
3. Separation	151	10.46	2.04	-.037	-.167**	—										
4. Agency	151	10.08	1.89	.228**	.254**	-.158*	—									
5. Faith in God	151	11.18	3.44	-.040	.241**	-.184*	-.201**	—								
6. Outcome Vulnerability	151	14.48	4.10	.117	-.193*	.001	.068	-.076	—							
7. Empathy	151	12.07	2.13	.025	.072	-.267**	-.051	.409**	-.095	—						
8. Persistence	151	11.95	2.80	-.020	-.106	.086	-.071	-.039	.532**	.050	—					
9. Frustration Tolerance	151	13.60	3.22	.034	-.136	-.093	.020	.138	-.007	.593**	.012	—				
10. Emotional Equipoise	151	11.24	2.25	-.022	.003	-.034	.030	.310**	.079	.422**	.151*	.453**	—			
11. Self Forgiveness	151	27.65	5.03	.089	-.023	.009	.023	.164*	.450**	.044	.182*	.083	.210**	—		
12. Forgiveness of Others	151	28.45	5.55	.008	-.169*	-.100	-.039	.120	.150*	.388**	.156*	.546**	.340**	—	—	
13. Forgiveness of Situations	151	26.95	5.77	.073	-.181*	.030	-.022	-.014	.440**	.192**	.289**	.271**	.291**	—	—	—

Note.  $N = 151$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$  (1-tailed).

Intercorrelations among the Ahamkara, Anasakti, and Forgiveness scales are presented in Table 5. The dimensions of Forgiveness of Others ( $r = -.169$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and Forgiveness of Situations ( $r = -.181$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were found to be negatively related to ego-identification, suggesting that greater ego-identification is associated with less forgiveness. There were some positive relationships between

Anasakti and forgiveness factors, with Forgiveness of Others showing significant correlation with Outcome Vulnerability, Persistence, Frustration Tolerance, and Emotional Equipose. Particularly, the strongest relationship was found to exist between Forgiveness of Others and Frustration Tolerance ( $r = .546$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The findings suggest that specific subscales of the Ahamkara and Anasakti scales are highly related to aspects of forgiveness.

*Table 6 Stepwise Regression Analysis Predicting Self-Forgiveness*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	19.65	1.351	—	14.55	< .001	—
Outcome Vulnerability	.553	.090	.450	6.154	< .001	.197
2 (Constant)	16.13	1.832	—	8.804	< .001	—
Outcome Vulnerability	.571	.088	.465	6.484	< .001	
Faith in God	.291	.105	.199	2.778	.006	.232

Note. Dependent Variable: Self-Forgiveness.

The stepwise regression result on the prediction of self-forgiveness is presented in table 6. The variance accounted for by outcome vulnerability was 19.7%, and outcome vulnerability was established to be a statistically significant positive predictor of self-forgiveness ( $\beta = .450$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Two variables that strongly predicted self-forgiveness (Self-Forgiveness) included Outcome Vulnerability ( $\beta = .465$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and Faith in God ( $\beta = .199$ ,  $p = .006$ ), which accounted for 23.2% of the variance (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .232). The findings suggest that those with high faith levels and less emotional involvement with the outcomes tend to forgive themselves better.

*Table 7 Stepwise Regression Analysis Predicting Forgiveness of Others*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	33.63	2.521	—	13.34	< .001	—
Identification	-.390	.187	-.169	-2.087	.039	.022
2 (Constant)	18.93	2.864	—	6.608	< .001	—
Identification	-.222	.160	-.096	-1.391	.166	
Frustration Tolerance	.918	.119	.533	7.709	< .001	.297
3 (Constant)	15.12	3.375	—	4.480	< .001	—
Identification	-.188	.159	-.081	-1.180	.240	
Frustration Tolerance	.918	.118	.533	7.800	< .001	
Persistence	.279	.135	.141	2.072	.040	.313

Note. Dependent Variable: Forgiveness of Others.

The findings from the stepwise regression model predicting Forgiveness of Others are presented in Table 7. It was discovered that Identification was a statistically significant predictor of Forgiveness of Others negatively ( $\beta = -.169$ ,  $p = .039$ ), suggesting that people who have high levels of self-identification do not forgive others as much as those who identify themselves with themselves less. Nevertheless, the first regression model accounted only for an insignificant proportion of the variation (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .022). Frustration Tolerance was introduced into the second regression model and significantly improved the explained variance as it turned out to be a highly predictive variable positively ( $\beta = .533$ ,  $p < .001$ ). While in the last regression model, Identification was not a predictor, Frustration Tolerance ( $\beta = .533$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and Persistence ( $\beta = .141$ ,  $p = .040$ ) became significant predictors of Forgiveness of Others. 31.3% of the variance in Forgiveness of Others was explained by the last regression model (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .313). The findings suggest that although a strong ego-identification can serve as an obstacle to forgiveness, people who better tolerate frustration and persist despite obstacles are more likely to forgive others.

*Table 8 Stepwise Regression Analysis Predicting Forgiveness of Situations*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	32.74	2.616	—	12.52	<.001	—
Identification	-.436	.194	-.181	-2.249	.026	.026
2 (Constant)	21.59	3.101	—	6.961	<.001	—
Identification	-.241	.180	-.100	-1.338	.183	
Outcome Vulnerability	.592	.105	.420	5.621	<.001	.192
3 (Constant)	13.71	3.643	—	3.764	<.001	—
Identification	-.149	.174	-.062	-.858	.392	
Outcome Vulnerability	.605	.101	.430	5.987	<.001	
Frustration Tolerance	.476	.127	.266	3.739	<.001	.257
4 (Constant)	11.48	3.732	—	3.075	<.001	—
Identification	-.186	.173	-.077	-1.075	.284	
Outcome Vulnerability	.580	.100	.412	5.789	<.001	
Frustration Tolerance	.330	.142	.184	2.328	.021	
Emotional Equipoise	.450	.202	.175	2.232	.027	.277

Note. Dependent Variable: Forgiveness of Situations.

The study of stepwise regression for the prediction of Forgiveness of Situations can be seen in Table 8. It was discovered that identification was a significant negative predictor in Model 1 ( $\beta = -.181$ ,  $p = .026$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that individuals with less forgiving of situations are more ego-identified. However, a very small amount of variance was accounted for by this model (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .026). In Model 2, Outcome Vulnerability was found to increase the amount of variance explained, and it was a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = .420$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Finally, the third model revealed Forgiveness of Situations as being strongly predicted by Frustration Tolerance ( $\beta$

=.266,  $p < .001$ ). The last model indicated that although Identification was not a significant predictor anymore, other variables such as Outcome Vulnerability ( $\beta = .412$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Frustration Tolerance ( $\beta = .184$ ,  $p = .021$ ), and Emotional Equipoise ( $\beta = .175$ ,  $p = .027$ ) were significant positive predictors. 27.7% of the variance in Forgiveness of Situations was explained by the model (Adjusted  $R^2 = .277$ ). Thus, it is clear that emotionally balanced people who are not affected much by the emotional impact of events and can handle their frustration well tend to forgive.

### 5.3 Mediation Analysis

In examining whether the role of anasakti serves as a mediator between ahamkara and forgiveness, the study made use of the maximum likelihood estimation technique in the analysis of mediation. The estimates of the direct, indirect, and total effects, along with the standard errors, z-statistic, p-value, and 95% confidence intervals of each effect were derived from the study. The indirect effect and the 95% confidence interval were used to determine the significance of the mediation effect. A non-zero value within the confidence interval indicates that the mediation effect is significant.

*Table 9 Mediation Analysis: Anasakti as mediator of the Ahamkara-Forgiveness relationship (N=151)*

Predictor	Mediator	Outcome	a Path	b Path	Direct Effect (c')	Sobel Z	P
Ahamkara	Anasakti	Forgiveness	-0.043	-0.073	0.707**	0.330	.741

*Note.* \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 9 presents the results of the mediation analysis concerning whether Anasakti acts as a mediator for the effect of Ahamkara on forgiveness. The findings indicated that there was no significant relationship between Ahamkara and Anasakti (a path = -0.043), nor was there any significant relationship between Anasakti and Forgiveness (b path = -0.073). Furthermore, Anasakti failed to significantly mediate the relationship between Ahamkara and forgiveness because it was non-significant according to the Sobel test ( $Z = 0.330$ ,  $p = .741$ ). However, Ahamkara still had a significant direct effect on forgiveness ( $c' = 0.707$ ,  $p < .01$ ), meaning that Ahamkara influenced forgiveness directly rather than Anasakti. Therefore, Anasakti was not a mediator of Ahamkara and forgiveness, thereby rejecting the proposed mediation hypothesis.

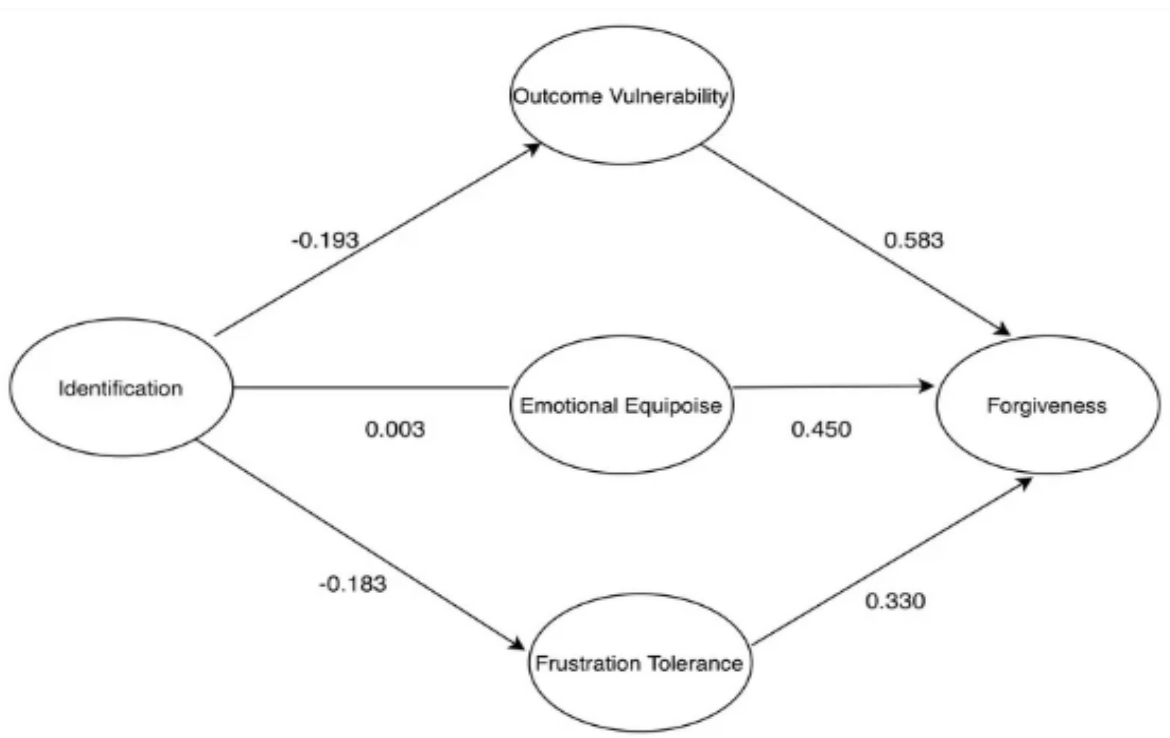
*Table 10 Mediation Analysis: Effects of Anasakti Subscales Mediating the relationship between Ahamkara Subscales and Forgiveness Subscales (N=151)*

Predictor	Mediator	Outcome	a Path	b Path	Direct Effect (c')	Sobel Z	P
Outcome Vulnerability	Faith in God	Self	-0.064	0.291**	0.571**	-0.882	.378
Identification	Frustration Tolerance	Others	-0.183	0.918**	-0.188	-1.640	.101
Identification	Persistence	Others	-0.124	0.279*	-0.188	-1.100	.271
Identification	Outcome Vulnerability	Situations	-0.193*	0.580**	-0.186	-2.217	.027*
Identification	Emotional Equipoise	Situations	0.003	0.450*	-0.186	0.042	.967
Identification	Frustration Tolerance	Situations	-0.183	0.330*	-0.186	-1.361	.174

Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

The results of mediation analyses conducted at the subscale level for testing whether certain Anasakti dimensions mediate the relationship between Ahamkara dimensions and Forgiveness dimensions are presented in Table 10 below. The result indicates that most of the mediation paths were statistically insignificant. However, only the mediation path with Identification, Outcome Vulnerability, and Forgiveness of Situations proved to have a very strong mediation effect. According to the findings, Outcome Vulnerability was significantly predicted by Identification (a path =  $-0.193$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This means that the greater the degree of identification, the more likely one will have low levels of outcome vulnerability. As a result, Forgiveness of Situations was significantly predicted by Outcome Vulnerability (b path =  $0.580$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This path was found to be significant via the Sobel test ( $Z = -2.217$ ,  $p = .027$ ). These findings show that the relationship between Identification and Forgiveness of Situations is partly mediated by Outcome Vulnerability. In other words, an individual's response to and perception of outcomes might shed light on the effects of ego-identification on one's ability to forgive difficult situations in life.

*The Mediation Model*



The mediation model examined whether Outcome Vulnerability, Emotional Equipose, and Frustration Tolerance mediated the relationship between Identification and Forgiveness of Situations. The results indicated that only Outcome Vulnerability showed a significant mediating effect. Identification was negatively associated with Outcome Vulnerability ( $\beta = -0.193$ ,  $p < .05$ ), while Outcome Vulnerability was positively associated with Forgiveness of Situations ( $\beta = 0.580$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The Sobel test confirmed a significant indirect effect ( $Z = -2.217$ ,  $p = .027$ ). However, the mediation pathways through Emotional Equipose and Frustration Tolerance were not significant. These findings suggest that Outcome Vulnerability partially explains the relationship between Identification and Forgiveness of Situations.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **DISCUSSION**

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between Ahamkara, Anasakti, and Forgiveness among adults and to investigate whether Anasakti mediates the relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness. The findings provided partial support for the proposed hypotheses and revealed several interesting patterns at both the overall and subscale levels. While the overall results demonstrated a significant positive relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness, the relationships involving Anasakti were observed primarily at the subscale level. Furthermore, mediation analysis indicated that Anasakti did not mediate the relationship between overall Ahamkara and Forgiveness; however, a significant mediation effect emerged for specific subscale pathways. These findings contribute to the growing literature on indigenous psychological constructs and their relevance to positive psychological functioning.

#### **6.1 Ahamkara and Forgiveness**

One of the purposes of the present study was to examine the relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness. The results revealed a significant positive relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness. Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that “there will be a significant relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness” was accepted.

The results of the present study are interesting because they contradict a major part of literature on forgiveness and ego involvement. Enright et al. (1992) argue that forgiveness occurs when individuals move away from egoistic and punishing approaches towards empathic and ethical understanding of others. Higher levels of forgiveness imply emotional maturity and low self-centredness, while lower ones represent people's ability to concentrate on personal injuries and revenge. Along similar lines, McCullough et al. (1997) found a negative relationship between rumination and forgiveness. The latter is more likely not to be able to forgive but feel resentful if preoccupied with the thoughts of one's own injury.

McCullough et al. (2001) provided additional support for the harmful role of ego involvement in forgiving by suggesting that those with narcissistic and self-centered inclinations are more likely to resort to revenge rather than reconciliation. As reported by Exline et al. (2004), individuals characterized by elevated levels of entitlement and ego defensiveness are likely to perceive any interpersonal offense as a threat to their sense of self-worth, which makes it more difficult for them to forgive someone.

One would expect to see a negative relationship between Ahamkara and forgiveness based on the above theory and research findings. On the contrary, there is a significant positive association between the two concepts in this study. This may be attributed to the complexity of Ahamkara itself. According to Kiran Kumar et al. (2005), it consists not only of a negative form of egoism but also includes such factors as individuality, identification, separation, and action. The former

ones can positively influence an individual psychologically by providing him/her with a strong feeling of self, responsibility, and purposive action.

Indeed, Gupta and Agrawal (2022), who examined the relationship between Ahamkara, Anasakti, and well-being among Indian adults, provide supporting evidence for such an explanation of the discussed phenomena. As indicated by the findings of the research conducted by these scholars, Ahamkara was related to positive psychological functioning and positive affect, although other aspects of it were associated with negative emotions. For Gupta and Agrawal (2022), Ahamkara is important for self-regulation and identity formation. It is likely that some traits of Ahamkara facilitate emotional development and adaptation to interpersonal relationships. In such a way, this construct does not solely prevent people from being able to forgive, as has been shown before. It is quite fascinating that the results of the present study provide support for the mentioned point. The only subscale of Ahamkara significantly associated with Forgiveness of Others and Forgiveness of Situations negatively, while, in general, Ahamkara was positively correlated with Forgiveness. This means that there can be different effects of distinct dimensions of Ahamkara on forgiveness.

Thus, according to the findings presented in this paper, it can be stated that Ahamkara is a complicated phenomenon, which involves several aspects. While some aspects of self-concept may promote positive interaction between people, other aspects may hinder the process of forgiveness. Since it proves that Ahamkara is not solely a negative phenomenon and the relationship between it and forgiveness depends on specific traits involved, it contributes to existing literature on this subject.

## **6.2 Ahamkara and Anasakti**

The present study also examined the relationship between Ahamkara and Anasakti. The results revealed that there was no significant relationship between total Ahamkara and total Anasakti. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that “there will be a significant relationship between Ahamkara and Anasakti” was not supported at the overall level. However, significant relationships were observed between several subscales of Ahamkara and Anasakti. Hence, the hypothesis was considered partially accepted.

Indeed, the obtained data seem to contradict some traditional Indian perspectives of psychology. According to Indian philosophical tradition, Anasakti refers to liberation from emotional dependence on consequences and attachments, whereas Ahamkara refers to the feeling of I-myself. In terms of theory, individuals with a good sense of their self-identity will have lower rates of non-attachment. Consequently, an inverse relationship between the two variables was expected.

This point of view receives additional support from findings by Gupta and Agrawal (2022). It has been found out that there were negative correlations between Ahamkara and experiencing negative emotions, and between Anasakti and positive well-being and emotions. According to the authors, non-attachment can help to solve ego-centric issues and achieve emotional balance. In this context, low levels of Ahamkara should correlate with high Anasakti.

But the findings from this research seem to imply that the association between Ahamkara and Anasakti might not be as straightforward as initially expected. Even though there was no correlation at the overall construct level, certain relationships could be found on the subscale level. Such associations include the following: the Separation scale showed negative correlations with both Faith in God and Empathy, and the Identification scale had positive correlations with Faith in God but a negative one with Outcome Vulnerability.

Therefore, different dimensions of Anasakti can have diverse associations with different aspects of Ahamkara. One possible reason is that people can manifest their emotional stability and detachment to external events in everyday activities and still retain their self-awareness. Thus, even though the Ahamkara construct exists, it does not necessarily imply the absence of Anasakti.

### **6.3 Anasakti and Forgiveness**

The present study further investigated the relationship between Anasakti and Forgiveness. The results showed that total Anasakti was not significantly related to total Forgiveness. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that “there will be a significant relationship between Anasakti and Forgiveness” was not supported at the overall level. However, significant relationships were observed between several Anasakti subscales and dimensions of Forgiveness. Consequently, the hypothesis was considered partially accepted.

Past studies have shown a positive relationship between non-attachment and forgiveness. In accordance with Sahdra, Shaver, and Brown (2010), individuals with high levels of non-attachment also showed low negative affect and high levels of empathy. As empathy makes individuals realize the offender's side rather than focusing on their feelings of grief, it has been identified as one of the important psychological processes involved in forgiveness.

Likewise, Sahdra et al. (2015) found non-attachment to be associated with lower levels of rumination and better emotional regulation. Decrease in ruminating about negative thoughts can help individuals become forgiving as rumination is often considered as one of the most important barriers to forgiveness. Similarly, Sharma et al. (2020) found non-attachment to predict forgiveness amongst married individuals, as balanced individuals deal with interpersonal conflict easily.

Subscale analysis indicated the existence of numerous statistically significant relationships between Anasakti and forgiveness although in this case, there was no significant relationship between these variables. Self-forgiveness and situational forgiveness were positively correlated with outcome vulnerability. Both components of forgiveness were also positively correlated with persistence. Forgiveness of Others and Forgiveness of Situations had extremely high positive correlation with Frustration Tolerance that is considered to be one of the best predictors of forgiveness. At last, all three dimensions of forgiveness had positive correlation with emotional equipoise.

Based on these findings, we can conclude that some characteristics of Anasakti can help people forgive even though the construct as a whole is not significantly related to forgiveness. Emotional

stability, perseverance, frustration tolerance, and lack of result orientation can be helpful for the act of forgiveness in people towards themselves, others, and situations. Hence, it becomes clear that the relationship between Anasakti and Forgiveness is not general but specific for each of its dimensions.

#### **6.4 Mediating Role of Anasakti**

The final objective of the study was to examine whether Anasakti mediates the relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness. The mediation analysis revealed that Anasakti did not significantly mediate the relationship between total Ahamkara and total Forgiveness. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that “Anasakti will mediate the relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness” was not supported at the overall level.

It can be seen that there was no effect of Anasakti on forgiveness, and that Ahamkara did not influence Anasakti. Furthermore, there was no significant indirect effect demonstrated through Sobel test. It may be concluded from these results that Anasakti at the general level does not explain the relationship between Ahamkara and forgiveness.

However, a significant indirect pathway was found out through subscale-level mediation analysis. Forgiveness of situations was significantly mediated by Outcome Vulnerability. Identification also significantly predicted Outcome Vulnerability, whereas Forgiveness of situations was significantly predicted by Outcome Vulnerability. The significance of this indirect effect was confirmed through the Sobel test.

The study becomes relevant due to the implication that ego identification enhances forgiveness towards difficult situations in life, which can partly be attributed to the issue of consequences. This significant path proves the interaction between Ahamkara and Anasakti on some aspects, although the general mediation theory was not proven to be true. Hence, the presence of a significant subscale mediating path provides some level of validation for the proposed model even if the general mediation concept did not prove true. The hypothesis therefore is partially accepted.

#### **6.5 Integration with Existing Literature**

The findings of the present study both support and extend previous research on Ahamkara, Anasakti, and Forgiveness. Consistent with previous studies, several dimensions of Anasakti were found to be positively associated with forgiveness. In particular, Frustration Tolerance, Emotional Equipoise, Persistence, and Outcome Vulnerability demonstrated significant relationships with different dimensions of forgiveness. At the same time, the present study challenges the common assumption that Ahamkara is always negatively associated with positive psychological outcomes. While previous studies emphasized the role of ego involvement as a barrier to forgiveness, the present findings revealed a significant positive relationship between total Ahamkara and Forgiveness. This suggests that Ahamkara may contain both adaptive and maladaptive components. Overall, the findings highlight the multidimensional nature of Ahamkara and Anasakti and demonstrate the importance of examining indigenous psychological constructs at

both the overall and subscale levels. The study contributes to the growing literature on Indian psychology by providing evidence that forgiveness is influenced by a complex interaction of self-identity, emotional balance, and attachment-related processes.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

#### 7.1 Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationships among Ahamkara, Anasakti, and Forgiveness, as well as the mediating role of Anasakti in the relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness. The study aimed to contribute to the understanding of forgiveness from both contemporary psychological and Indian psychological perspectives. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness, indicating that individuals with higher levels of Ahamkara reported higher levels of forgiveness. This finding suggests that Ahamkara may not always function as a negative psychological construct and that certain dimensions of Ahamkara may contribute positively to interpersonal functioning and forgiveness. The study further revealed that there was no significant relationship between total Ahamkara and total Anasakti. However, significant relationships were observed between several subscales of these constructs, indicating that the association between Ahamkara and Anasakti may be more complex than previously assumed. Similarly, no significant relationship was found between total Anasakti and total Forgiveness. Nevertheless, several dimensions of Anasakti, including Outcome Vulnerability, Frustration Tolerance, Persistence, and Emotional Equipoise, demonstrated significant positive relationships with different dimensions of forgiveness. The mediation analysis indicated that Anasakti did not significantly mediate the relationship between total Ahamkara and total Forgiveness. However, a significant mediation effect was observed at the subscale level, where Outcome Vulnerability mediated the relationship between Identification and Forgiveness of Situations. This finding suggests that specific dimensions of Anasakti may play an important role in explaining how aspects of Ahamkara influence forgiveness. Overall, the findings emphasize the multidimensional nature of Ahamkara and Anasakti and highlight the importance of examining indigenous psychological constructs at both the overall and subscale levels. The study contributes to the growing literature on Indian psychology by demonstrating that forgiveness is influenced by complex interactions among self-identity, emotional balance, and attachment-related processes.

#### 7.2 Theoretical Contribution

The present study contributes to psychological literature in several important ways. First, it extends the limited empirical research examining the relationships among Ahamkara, Anasakti, and Forgiveness within an Indian psychological framework. While these concepts have been widely discussed in philosophical and spiritual traditions, empirical investigations remain relatively scarce.

Second, the findings challenge the traditional assumption that Ahamkara functions solely as a barrier to positive psychological outcomes. Contrary to much of the existing literature, the present study found a significant positive relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness. This suggests that Ahamkara may possess both adaptive and maladaptive aspects and that certain dimensions may contribute positively to psychological functioning.

Third, the study highlights the importance of examining psychological constructs at the dimensional level. Although several relationships were non-significant at the overall level, meaningful patterns emerged among specific subscales. These findings demonstrate that important psychological processes may remain hidden when only total scores are examined.

Finally, the study contributes to the integration of indigenous Indian psychological concepts with contemporary empirical research. By scientifically examining Ahamkara, Anasakti, and Forgiveness, the study strengthens the growing movement toward culturally relevant psychological theories and research.

### **7.3 Practical Implication**

The findings of the present study have several practical implications for counseling, psychotherapy, conflict resolution, and positive psychological interventions.

First, the significant relationships between dimensions of Anasakti and forgiveness suggest that fostering emotional balance, frustration tolerance, persistence, and acceptance may facilitate forgiving attitudes. Interventions designed to strengthen these qualities may help individuals cope more effectively with interpersonal conflicts and emotional distress.

Second, the findings suggest that Ahamkara should not necessarily be viewed as a purely negative construct. Rather than focusing exclusively on reducing ego involvement, psychological interventions may benefit from helping individuals develop healthy forms of self-identity, personal agency, and self-awareness.

Third, the significant mediation pathway involving Outcome Vulnerability indicates that individuals' concerns about outcomes may influence their ability to forgive difficult situations. Therefore, interventions promoting acceptance and reduced preoccupation with outcomes may contribute to greater emotional wellbeing and forgiveness.

Finally, the study highlights the value of incorporating culturally grounded concepts such as Ahamkara and Anasakti into psychological practice. Such integration may improve the cultural relevance and effectiveness of counseling and mental health interventions, particularly within Indian populations.

### **7.4 Limitations**

Despite its contributions, the present study has several limitations.

First, the study employed a cross-sectional research design, which limits the ability to draw causal conclusions regarding the relationships among the variables. Future studies employing longitudinal or experimental designs would provide stronger evidence regarding causality.

Second, convenience sampling was used for participant recruitment, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The sample may not adequately represent the broader population.

Third, all variables were measured using self-report instruments. Consequently, the findings may be influenced by response biases such as social desirability, self-presentation, and inaccurate self-perceptions.

Fourth, although significant findings emerged at the subscale level, several overall relationships were non-significant. This suggests that additional psychological variables not included in the present study may influence the relationships among Ahamkara, Anasakti, and Forgiveness.

Finally, the mediation model received only partial support. This indicates that other psychological mechanisms may explain the relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness more effectively than Anasakti alone.

## **7.5 Future Implications**

The findings of the present study provide several directions for future research.

First, future studies should investigate additional mediators and moderators that may explain the relationship between Ahamkara and Forgiveness. Variables such as empathy, emotional regulation, mindfulness, self-compassion, cognitive flexibility, and rumination may provide valuable insights.

Second, researchers should employ longitudinal and experimental designs to better understand the causal relationships among Ahamkara, Anasakti, and Forgiveness.

Third, future research should utilize larger and more diverse samples to enhance the generalizability of findings across different age groups, educational backgrounds, and cultural settings.

Fourth, qualitative studies may provide deeper insights into how individuals experience Ahamkara, Anasakti, and Forgiveness in everyday life.

Finally, future research should continue exploring the multidimensional nature of indigenous psychological constructs. The present findings demonstrate that significant relationships often emerge at the subscale level, highlighting the importance of examining specific dimensions rather than relying solely on total scores.

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## *Appendix A*

### INFORMED CONSENT

Participation in this research is voluntary and the participant may withdraw consent at any point of the study without any consequences and without the need to give any explanation for the same. All the details and responses provided by the participants in this study will be kept anonymous and confidential and solely be used for research purpose.

I have read and understood the information and voluntarily agree to participate in this study:

- I AGREE

### DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

Name (you can use initials in case you don't want to reveal your identity.)  
: \_\_\_\_\_

Which age group you belong to?

- 18-25
- 25-30
- 30-40
- 40-50

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Current Location of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix B*

## AHAM INVENTORY

The following questions pertain to your attitudes and experiences. To fill in the blanks you have four alternatives – Always, Often, Sometimes, and Rarely. Select the alternative that best reflects your attitude and experience and fill in the blanks.

1. I \_\_\_\_\_ like wearing uniforms and badges because they make me feel proud to be a member of the organization they represent.
2. I \_\_\_\_\_ feel I am in special communication with others.
3. I \_\_\_\_\_ attribute the outcome of my actions to my own choices and efforts.
4. I \_\_\_\_\_ feel that I should be developing my unique capabilities.
5. It is \_\_\_\_\_ important for me to do what I like.
6. Recognition for the work I have done is \_\_\_\_\_ important to me.
7. It \_\_\_\_\_ embarrasses me when people refer to me in terms of my achievements.
8. It is \_\_\_\_\_ important for me to be in control of things.
9. It is \_\_\_\_\_ difficult for me to be a follower.
10. I am \_\_\_\_\_ particular about my food, dress and looks.
11. I am \_\_\_\_\_ affected by the sight of injury and accidents.
12. I \_\_\_\_\_ think, I am the master of all that I have and all that I want from life.
13. I feel my happiness \_\_\_\_\_ depends on material possessions.
14. According to me, losing the 'I' feeling is \_\_\_\_\_ the right way for human development.
15. I \_\_\_\_\_ believe in divine will.
16. Other's distress and sorrow \_\_\_\_\_ affects me.
17. It is \_\_\_\_\_ important for me to live by the rules and standards of society.
18. I \_\_\_\_\_ feel I am different from others.

*Appendix C***Anasakti Scale**

Mentioned below are a few statements to which you need to respond to the best of your understanding. Please, answer all questions. Tick (√) the best answer for each that applies to you.

SI No.	STATEMENTS	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
1.	I believe God cares for us more than we can care for ourselves.					
2.	I repeatedly ask myself whether I would succeed or fail.					
3.	I am happy to see others' happiness.					
4.	After sometime that task becomes a burden.					
5.	Even if he did bad to me, I would react back with kindness.					
6.	I am usually calm and quiet.					
7.	I feel remembering God is the perfect solution to all the problems.					
8.	I repeatedly think about the losses which will result due to failure.					
9.	I deeply care for people who are suffering and offer my comfort.					
10.	If chances of failure are high, my effort declines.					
11.	I do not believe in taking revenge.					
12.	I remain calm even after earning huge profits.					

13.	I try to see bigger plan of God in everything that is happening in my life.					
14.	Repeatedly this thought comes to my mind that I will be unsuccessful.					
15.	I offer care to one and all equally.					
16.	I hesitate in fulfilling a duty if I find it an expensive venture.					
17.	I do not react if someone says bad words to me.					
18.	I remain balanced in emotionally difficult situations.					
19.	I get upset if I incur loss in some work.					
20.	I like doing those tasks from which I can get quick profits.					
21.	If someone misbehaves with me, I try to understand their frustrations.					
22.	Thoughts related to success interfere in my task.					

## Appendix D

### Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS)

**Directions:** In the course of our lives negative things may occur because of our own actions, the actions of others, or circumstances beyond our 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. Next to each of the following items write the number (from the 7-point scale below) that best describes how you **typically** respond to the type of negative situation described. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as open as possible in your answers.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Almost Always		More Often		More Often		Almost Always
False of Me		False of Me		True of Me		True of Me

- \_\_\_ 1. Although I feel bad at first when I mess up, over time I can give myself some slack.
- \_\_\_ 2. I hold grudges against myself for negative things I've done.
- \_\_\_ 3. Learning from bad things that I've done helps me get over them.
- \_\_\_ 4. It is really hard for me to accept myself once I've messed up.
- \_\_\_ 5. With time I am understanding of myself for mistakes I've made.
- \_\_\_ 6. I don't stop criticizing myself for negative things I've felt, thought, said, or done.
- \_\_\_ 7. I continue to punish a person who has done something that I think is wrong.
- \_\_\_ 8. With time I am understanding of others for the mistakes they've made.
- \_\_\_ 9. I continue to be hard on others who have hurt me.
- \_\_\_ 10. Although others have hurt me in the past, I have eventually been able to see them as good people.
- \_\_\_ 11. If others mistreat me, I continue to think badly of them.
- \_\_\_ 12. When someone disappoints me, I can eventually move past it.
- \_\_\_ 13. When things go wrong for reasons that can't be controlled, I get stuck in negative

thoughts about it.

\_\_\_ 14. With time I can be understanding of bad circumstances in my life.

\_\_\_ 15. If I am disappointed by uncontrollable circumstances in my life, I continue to think negatively about them.

\_\_\_ 16. I eventually make peace with bad situations in my life.

\_\_\_ 17. It's really hard for me to accept negative situations that aren't anybody's fault.

\_\_\_ 18. Eventually I let go of negative thoughts about bad circumstances that are beyond anyone's control.