



Navigating The Complexities of Parenting: The Interconnectedness of Forgiveness, Perfectionism, and Self-Compassion

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Abstract: The objective of this research was to examine the causal connections between parents' levels of perfectionism, forgiveness, cognitive distortions, and self-compassion. A relational research approach was used to investigate the associations between variables and forecast potential results, while structural equation modelling was employed to illustrate how different factors are believed to be structurally connected to each other. The study included 384 parents living in the northern part of Cyprus who completed the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, the Heartland Forgiveness Scale, the Cognitive Distortions in Relationships Scale, the Self-Compassion Scale, and a personal information form for demographic data. Results showed a positive correlation between the scores on the Self-Compassion Scale and the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, including self-directed perfectionism, perfectionism towards others, and socially perceived perfectionism. The structural equation model indicated that there was a statistically significant and positive association between the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, and Self-Compassion Scale scores. Furthermore, it predicted a statistically significant and negative association with the scores on the Cognitive Distortions in Relationships Scale.

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Introduction

In its most general definition, the family is the smallest unit that keeps society alive, connected by blood ties and influenced by each other's thoughts (Şekerli, 2021). When people reach a certain age and feel psychologically ready, they think about starting a family and taking on the role or responsibilities of being a family. The family system begins to be established with the marriage of the couples, and after establishing this system, the couples want to have children. Before having a child, couples only have responsibilities in the role of spouse, but with the birth of the child, the responsibility of being a mother and father is added to the responsibilities of the spouse (Koyuncu, 2021). The responsibilities that arise after becoming a parent, such as taking care of the child, change the expectations of the spouses from each other. For this reason, some

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problems may be experienced in the process of adapting to the changing world of spouses after having children.

Parents cannot keep up with everything, both materially and spiritually, due to some problems they encounter after having a child, and they sometimes feel inadequate due to the thought of not being able to keep up (Meriç, 2020). Parents, who try to do the best for themselves, their children, and their families, feel negative emotions by blaming themselves when they have the thought of inadequacy. However, the ability of parents to deal with these accusatory thoughts and negative emotions will only happen if they show self-compassion. Neff (2003) defines self-compassion as people's understanding instead of criticising themselves, being able to look at events with a logical perspective instead of being stuck with negativities, seeing the negativities they experience as a part of life, and accepting that they can happen to all people (Avşaroğlu & Güleş, 2018). Self-compassion is an important concept for parents to be able to solve problems and learn to cope with problems in order to continue being parents (Şekerli, 2021).

On the other hand, when the problems encountered cannot be solved, they cause conflicts within the family. Due to the conflicts experienced, spouses sometimes get hurt, and sometimes they hurt their partners (Oral, 2016). Therefore, parents need to develop their level of forgiveness as well as their self-compassion in order to solve the problems they face. Enright (1996) defines forgiveness as "an individual's willingness to abandon feelings such as anger, negative judgement, and indifference, by encouraging feelings such as love, generosity, and compassion towards the other person who hurt him unjustly" (Batik, 2020; Aslan, 2017). Forgiveness, which has a multidimensional structure in the literature, has three dimensions: forgiving oneself, forgiving others, and forgiving the situation (Kuşçu, 2019). Self-forgiveness is defined as the individual's feelings of tolerance, compassion, and compassion towards himself and giving up criticising and blaming himself in the face of accepting his mistake (Kaygas, 2017). Forgiving others is defined as individuals' giving up their negative emotions consciously and willingly and developing compensatory feelings such as compassion or love towards the people they forgive (Kaygas, 2017).

Forgiveness is explained as giving neutral or transformative responses to situations that create negative feelings and thoughts (Kaygas, 2017). In order for parents to cope with the problems they face and to show self-compassion by getting rid of negative thoughts, they must first forgive themselves. On the other hand, it is thought that it is very important to forgive others and to show understanding to others in order to cope with the problems experienced in marriage and family life.

The ability of parents to continue their roles and responsibilities in marriage despite all the problems they face is closely related to the concept of perfectionism as well as self-compassion and forgiveness. Perfectionist personality is defined as people struggling to be perfect, overperforming while trying to reach unrealistic goals they set for themselves, and being overly critical of themselves when they cannot reach the goals (Doksat, Zengin, & Doksat, 2018). Hewitt and Flett (1991) describe perfectionism as having a multidimensional structure, both intrapersonal and interpersonal: self-directed perfectionism, others-oriented perfectionism, and socially perceived perfectionism (Büyükşahin Sunal, Ok, & Keskin, 2016). In self-directed perfectionism, people set high standards for themselves and try to achieve these standards perfectly (Kiper, 2016). In perfectionism towards others, people set high standards for others and expect others to fulfil these standards without making mistakes (Büyükşahin Sunal, Ok, & Keskin, 2016). In the last dimension, socially perceived perfectionism, people try to fulfil a set of standards determined by society (Kiper, 2016). The fact that people set such high standards in their relationships causes them to develop dysfunctional thoughts towards themselves and others over time (Kuzucu, Tuncer, & Aksu, 2015).

Dysfunctional thoughts arise because individuals perceive certain events differently than they actually are and interpret them according to their own feelings and thoughts (Büge, 2020). These dysfunctional thoughts of individuals cause some errors when interpreting events, and cognitive distortions are observed as a result of repetitive errors and automatic thoughts (Çelebi & Odacı, 2018). Because these cognitive distortions cause misunderstanding, they prevent the establishment of healthy relationships in marriage and family life. Cognitive distortions about relationships; have sub-dimensions such as avoidance of intimacy, mind reading, and unrealistic relationship expectations. The dimension of avoidance of intimacy refers to people's belief that closeness to be established in their relationships will cause harm; the unrealistic relationship expectation dimension refers to having above-standard expectations in one's relationships; The mind-reading dimension represents the mind-reading error, assuming that people know their feelings and thoughts (Kuzucu, Tunçer, & Aksu, 2015).

Cognitive distortions, which cause the development of dysfunctional emotions and behaviours in individuals, cause the person to attribute negative meanings not only to others but also to themselves (Tunçer, Aksu, & Kuzucu, 2015). In this context, it is thought that individuals with high levels of self-compassion will be effective in controlling dysfunctional thoughts.

Self-compassion, which is the basic concept of this research and is increasingly attracting the attention of scientific research literature, first started in Far Eastern philosophy. Later, this concept started to attract attention and become a research interest in western culture in the early 2000s and in psychology in recent years (Sarıcaoğlu & Arslan, 2019). This situation causes frequent studies on the concept of self-compassion, both at home and abroad. When the studies conducted both in Turkey and abroad are examined, it is seen that the self-compassion level of individuals has a multidimensional structure affected by different concepts. Studies have shown that people's self-compassion levels; life satisfaction (Avşaroğlu & Güleş, 2019; Deniz et al., 2012; Neff, 2003), resilience (Alibekiroğlu et al., 2018; Neff & McGehee, 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2005), humour styles (Baş, 2019), compassion (Güleş, 2017), empathy (Daltry et al., 2018) and forgiveness (Karataş & Uzun, 2021; Kılıç & Tunç, 2020; Çakır & Yavuz Güler, 2020; Wu et al., 2019; Oral, 2016; Sarıçam & Biçer, 2015)) is found to be positively correlated with On the other hand, the level of self-compassion of individuals; anxiety (Lightning, 2020; Neff, 2003), burnout (Kuzgun, 2020; Kara, 2018), stress (Dev, Fernando & Consedine, 2020; Sirois, Molnar & Hirsch, 2015), depression (Zhang et al., 2019; Lopez et al., 2018), perfectionism (Çarkıt & Yalçın, 2021; Şahin, Kabakçı & Olçun, 2020; Çakır & Yavuz Güler, 2020; Olgunçelik, 2019; Bayır & Lomas, 2016; Barnard & Cury, 2011), and cognitive distortions (Kılıç and Tunç, 2020; Stephenson et al., 2017; Akın,2010; Doğan, 2009).

When the relevant literature is examined, many studies on self-compassion, both at home and abroad, have been found. However, a limited number of studies on self-compassion were found in the parent sample. On the other hand, no study was found that revealed the relationship between parents' self-compassion levels and forgiveness, perfectionism, or cognitive distortions. In order to overcome these deficiencies in the literature, it is thought that a study that will explain the relationship between parents' self-compassion levels and forgiveness, perfectionism, and cognitive distortions will be important. Based on this shortcoming, the study aimed to examine the relationship between parents' self-compassion levels and forgiveness, perfectionism, cognitive distortions, and this relationship around various variables. The sub-objectives determined for this purpose are as follows:

(1) What are the parents' levels of self-compassion, forgiveness, perfectionism, and cognitive distortions?

(2) What is the relationship between parents' self-compassion and multidimensional perfectionism, forgiveness, and cognitive distortions?

(3) Do parents' self-compassions predict perfectionism, forgiveness, and cognitive distortions?

In this section, information about the research design, participants, data collection tools, statistical analysis of the data, and ethical procedures followed in conducting this study will be presented.

Method

Research Model and Design

Survey research includes gathering information from a sample through participants' answers to questionnaires (Ponto, 2015). The relational research method is used to determine the relationships between variables and predict possible outcomes. In this model, it is tried to determine whether the variables change together and, if they do, how they change (Karasar, 2011). In addition, a structural equation model was employed to represent how various aspects are thought to be causally structurally related to one another. Therefore, the current study was designed as a relational survey study aiming to investigate the causal relationship between parents' perfectionism, forgiveness, cognitive distortions, and self-compassion levels.

Participants

The population of this research consists of parents who live in the northern part of Cyprus. The participants were selected with random cluster sampling method. Participants consisted of a total of 384 parents. Table 1 shows the distribution of parents included in the study according to their socio-demographic characteristics. It is seen that, 55.73% of the parents included in the study were female and 44.27% male, 27.60% were 34 years old and younger, 24.74% were 35-44 years old, 32.032%. It was determined that 45-54% of them were in the age group of 45-54 and 15.63% of them were in the age group of 55 and above. 94.27% of the parents are married, 34.53% of the married ones are 10 years or less, 41.71% are 11-20 years and 23.76% are married for 21 years or more. It was also determined that 27,60% had one child, 55.73% had two children, and 16.67% had three or more children.

Table 1. Distribution of Parents by Socio-Demographical Characteristics

	Frequency (n=364)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Female	214	55.73
Male	170	44.27
Age group		
34 years and under	106	27.60
35-44 years	95	24.74
45-54 years	123	32.03
55 years and older	60	15.63
Marital status		
Married	362	94.27
Divorced	22	5.73
Marriage duration (n=362)		
10 years and below	125	34.53
11-20 years	151	41.71
21 years and above	86	23.76
Number of children		
One child	106	27.60

Two children	214	55.73
Three children and above	64	16.67

Data Collection Tools

Five different data collection tools were employed in this study: Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, Cognitive Distortions in Relationships Scale, Self-Compassion Scale and personal information form to gather demographic information about the participants. Detailed information about these data collection tools will be presented in this section.

The Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MCMS), was developed by Hewitt and Flett (1991). A 7-point Likert-type scale consisting of 45 items is graded between “I totally disagree” and “I totally agree”. It consists of three sub-dimensions, “self-directed perfectionism”, “other-oriented perfectionism” and “socially perceived perfectionism”, and each dimension consists of 15 items.

Items 1, 6, 8, 12, 14, 15, 17, 20, 23, 28, 32, 34, 36, 40 and 42 represent "Self-directed perfectionism" sub-dimension; items 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 16, 19, 22, 24, 26, 27, 29, 38, 43 and 45 represent “Other oriented perfectionism” sub-dimension; items 5, 9, 11, 13, 18, 21, 25, 30, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41 and 44 represent the "socially prescribed perfectionism" sub-dimension. There are also reverse items in the scale. These items are 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 19, 21, 24, 30, 34, 36, 37, 38, 43, 44 and 45 (Oral, 1999). Hewitt and Flett (1991), determined the internal consistency coefficients of the scale as .86 for "self-directed perfectionism" and .87 for “other oriented perfectionism” and .82 for “socially perceived perfectionism”. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was carried out by Oral (1999). In this study, the Cronbach alpha reliability of the scale was found to be 0.84.

Cognitive Distortions in Relationships Scale was developed by Hamamcı (2002), in order to measure the cognitive distortions people have in relationships. In this 19-item scale, “I strongly disagree” choice gets 1 point, “I agree very little” gets 2 points, “I partially agree” gets 3 points, “I highly agree” gets 4 points, and “I totally agree” gets 5 points. The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 95, and the lowest score is 19. High scores obtained from the scale indicate that individuals have cognitive distortions related to relationships. The test-retest correlation coefficients of the scale were .74 for the whole scale and .70 for the Intimacy Avoidance sub-dimension; .74 for the Unrealistic Relationship Expectation sub-dimension; .74 for Mind Reading sub-dimension (Hamamcı & Büyüköztürk, 2003). In this study, the Cronbach alpha reliability of the scale was found to be 0.78.

Self- Compassion Scale developed by Neff (2003) was adapted to Turkish by Deniz et al (2008). It consists of 24 items with one dimensional structure. In the scale, respondents are asked to rate how often they act on a 5-point Likert-type scale of "Almost never=1" and "Almost always=5" regarding the situation. In addition, the internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .89 and the test-retest correlation as .83. In the criterion-related validity of the self-compassion scale, $r=.62$ between Self-Compassion Scale and self-esteem; among life satisfaction $r=.45$; $r=.41$ between positive emotion and $r=-.48$ relationship between negative emotion. In this study, the Cronbach alpha reliability of the scale was found to be 0.84.

Heartland Forgiveness Scale was developed by Thompson, Snyder, Hoffman, Michael, Rasmussen, & Billings (2005) and adapted into Turkish by Bugay and Demir (2010). It consists of 18 items, is a 7-point Likert type scale. Heartland Forgiveness Scale has three sub-dimensions: forgiving oneself, others and the situation. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability

coefficient values for the subtests of the scale were .64 for self-forgiveness, respectively; .79 for forgiving others, .76 for forgiving situation, and .81 for the total score of the scale. In this study, the Cronbach alpha reliability of the scale was found to be 0.92.

Data Analysis

All quantitative data collected through scales and forms were transferred to the SPSS program for analysis. 365 questionnaires were given to parent but three of the completed questionnaires were excluded from the study because they contained incomplete information, and the remaining 362 questionnaires were included in the study. The significance level for all analysis was determined as .05. Correlation analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between self-compassion levels and perfectionism, cognitive distortions, forgiveness levels of parents. In addition, structural equation modelling was employed in order to find the prediction relationship of the variables.

Ethics and Procedure

Participants were provided with a personal information form including gender, marital status, age, number of children and marriage duration as well as three standardized measurement tools. Quantitative data were collected from the measurement tools. The measurement tools used are the Heartland Forgiveness Scale, the Self-Compassion Scale, the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, and the Cognitive Distortions Related to Interpersonal Relations Scale.

Data was collected at the end of three general seminars about parenting were given to parents (in three provinces; Girne, Famagusta and Nicosia) organized by the Ministry of Education of North Cyprus. After the participants read the informed consent form, those willing to participate in the study were asked to fill out the questionnaires. Participants were not obliged to participate in the research and were not asked for information that will reveal their identities. It took approximately 10-15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire to collect data.

The research was carried out in accordance with the ethical principles of human participants according to the APA, as well as the ethics committee research guide determined by the Near East University. After the approval of the Near East University Ethics Committee for the research, the data were started to be collected.

Results

In this section, firstly, the scores of Self-Compassion Scale, Multi-dimensional Perfectionism Scale, Heartland Forgiveness Scale and Cognitive Distortions in Relationships Scale were examined. Then, the relationship between parents' self-compassion scores and perfectionism, forgiveness and cognitive distortions was analyzed. In addition, to reveal whether self-compassion predicts the other variables, structural equation modelling was tested.

Table 2. Scores of Parents' Self-Compassion Scale, Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, and Cognitive Distortions in Relationships Scale

	$\bar{x} \pm s$	Bottom-Upper
Self-Compassion Scale	75.14 ± 12.82	33 - 109
self-directed perfectionism	69.97 ± 11.24	33 - 94
perfectionism towards others	61.06 ± 11.33	31 - 90
Socially perceived perfectionism	59.18 ± 12.96	30 - 90
Multidimensional Scale of Perfectionism	190.21 ± 32.23	94 - 270
Self Forgiveness	28.35 ± 5.61	16 - 41
Forgive Others	28.55 ± 6.65	14 - 42

Forgive the Situation	26.49 ± 4.27	6 - 38
Heartland Forgiveness Scale	83.39 ± 12.87	59 - 110
avoiding intimacy	17.52 ± 5.02	8 - 29
unrealistic relationship expectation	19.85 ± 5.37	8 - 32
mind reading	8.47 ± 2.66	3 - 13
Cognitive Distortions in Relationships Scale	45.85 ± 10.71	19 - 69

Table 2. provides descriptive statistics on the scores of the Parents' Self-Compassion Scale, Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, and Cognitive Distortions in Relationships Scale. According to Table 2., the parents included in the study got 75.14±12.82 points from the Self-Compassion Scale. 190.21 ± 32.23 points from the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale; 69.97 ± 11.24 points from the self-oriented perfectionism sub-scale, 61.06±11.33 points from the other-oriented perfectionism sub-scale, 59.18±12.96 points from the socially perceived perfectionism sub-scale. It was determined that the parents got 83.39±12.87 points from the Heartland Forgiveness Scale, 28.35±5.61 points from Forgiveness of Oneself, 28.55±6.65 points from Forgiveness of Others, and 26.49±4.27 points from Forgiveness of Situation. From the Cognitive Distortions Scale of Relationships, parents got 45.85±10.71 points; 17.52±5.02 points from intimacy avoidance , 19.85±5.37 points from unrealistic relationship expectation, 8.47±2.66 points from mind reading subscales.

Table 3. Correlations between Parents' Self-Compassion Scale scores and Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, and Cognitive Distortions in Relationships Scale Scores

	Self-Compassion Scale	
	r	p
Self-oriented perfectionism	0.401	0,000*
Other-oriented perfectionism	0.369	0,000*
Socially perceived perfectionism	0.364	0,000*
Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale	0.416	0,000*
Forgiveness of self	0.216	0,000*
Forgiveness of others	0.312	0,000*
Forgiveness of the situation	0.188	0,000*
Heartland Forgiveness Scale	0.318	0,000*
Avoiding intimacy	-0.337	0,000*
Unrealistic relationship expectation	-0.273	0,000*
Mind reading	-0.157	0.002*
Cognitive Distortions in Relationships Scale	-0.334	0,000*

* $p < 0.05$

It was observed that there were statistically significant and positive correlations between the scores of the parents participating in the study from the Self-Compassion Scale and the scores they got from the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale in general, and the scores of the self-directed perfectionism, perfectionism towards others, and socially perceived perfectionism in the scale ($p < 0.05$). Positive and statistically significant correlations were found between the scores of the parents from the Self-Compassion Scale and the scores they got from the Heartland Forgiveness Scale in general and for self-forgiveness, forgiving others, and forgiving the situation ($p < 0.05$). It was determined that there were statistically significant and negative correlations between the scores of the parents from the Self-Compassion Scale and the scores of the Cognitive Distortions Related to Relationships, avoidance of intimacy, unrealistic relationship expectation, and mind reading ($p < 0.05$).

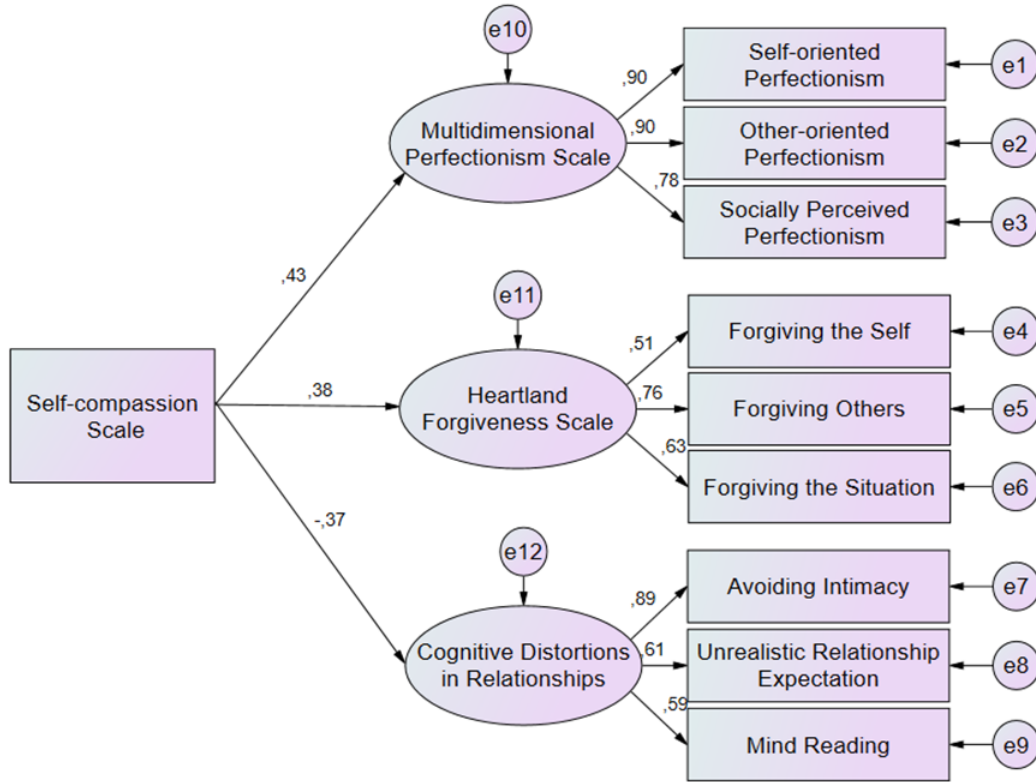


Figure 1. Parental Self-Compassion Scale scores predicting Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, and Relationship-Related Cognitive Distortions Scale scores

Figure 1 shows the findings of the structural equation model in which the Self-Compassion Scale scores of the parents participating in the study were examined in terms of predicting the scores of the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, the Heartland Forgiveness Scale, and the Cognitive Distortions in Relationships Scale. According to Figure 1., Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale ($\beta=0.43$; $p<0.05$) and Heartland Forgiveness Scale ($\beta=0.38$; $p<0.05$) scores of Self-Compassion Scale scores were statistically significant and positive. It predicts the scores of the Cognitive Distortions in Relationships Scale ($\beta=-0.37$; $p<0.05$) in a statistically significant and negative direction.

Discussion

This research was conducted on the levels of cognitive distortions related to forgiveness, perfectionism, and relationships in married and divorced parents. The aim of this study was to determine how much and in which direction they were affected in terms of their self-compassion levels. The findings obtained as a result of the research showed that it was an important predictor for the concepts of forgiveness, perfectionism, and cognitive distortions related to relationships.

In this direction, the first of the findings obtained as a result of the research is that self-compassion positively predicts parents' tendency to forgive themselves, others, and the situation. In other words, people with a high self-concept are likely to have a high tendency to forgive. When the literature was examined, no study was found in this direction in the parent sample, but when the studies dealing with the relationships between self-compassion and forgiveness in different samples were examined, it was seen that similar results were obtained.

Karataş and Uzun (2021), in their study, examined the extent to which the perfectionism, loneliness, and self-compassion levels of adolescents predict their tendency to forgive themselves, others, and situations. They stated that self-compassion predicted adolescents' tendency to forgive

themselves, others, and situations in a positive and meaningful way. Similarly, Sariçam and Biçer (2015) examined the effect of moral value and self-compassion on forgiveness in their study. They stated that there are positive relationships between moral value, self-compassion, and forgiveness, and accordingly, moral value and self-compassion affect forgiveness positively. Roxas, David, and Caligner (2014) examined the relationship between self-compassion and forgiveness. They concluded that self-compassion predicted both others and self-forgiveness in a positive and meaningful way. However, contrary to this research finding in the literature, Saeighi Mameghani, Taşan, and Saylan (2020) examined the levels of forgiveness, self-compassion, and kindness in terms of some socio-demographic variables and concluded that there was no significant difference between forgiveness and self-compassion.

As a result, when the research findings in the literature are examined, it can be said that the concepts of self-compassion and forgiveness generally predict each other and have a positive relationship with each other. Therefore, it is expected that the concepts of self-compassion and forgiveness will be effective in solving the problems encountered in order to maintain marriage and family life.

The second of the findings obtained as a result of the research was self-compassion. It was found that parents positively predicted perfectionism towards themselves, perfectionism towards others, and socially perceived perfectionism tendencies. This result may be due to the fact that the parents participating in the study did not perceive perfectionism negatively; that is, they treated themselves with understanding instead of feeling negative emotions when they could not reach the standards they aimed for. When the literature was examined, no study was found in this direction in the parent sample, but there are studies dealing with the relationships between self-compassion and perfectionism in different samples.

Unlike the findings obtained in this research between self-compassion and perfectionism; Çarkıt and Yalçın (2021) examined the predictive role of self-concept, positive-negative emotion, and perfectionism in their study. They obtained the result that perfectionism traits predicted self-concept negatively and significantly. Demircan (2021), on the other hand, examined the relationship between styles of coping with stress, perfectionism, and self-compassion and stated that there is a significant negative relationship between self-compassion levels and perfectionism levels and all sub-dimensions of perfectionism. Similarly, Kirkpatrick (2005) examined in his study whether individuals' self-compassion levels could be improved and stated that self-compassion is negatively related to anxiety, depression, self-criticism, neuroticism, rumination, thought suppression, and perfectionism.

As a result, when the research findings in the literature are examined, it can be said that the concepts of self-compassion and perfectionism generally predict each other and have a negative relationship with each other. Based on the studies in the literature, it is an expected result that people who set high standards for themselves and others, that is, with a high tendency towards perfectionism, will not be able to understand themselves when faced with failure situations.

The third of the findings obtained as a result of the research, self-compassion; negatively predicted parents' avoidance of intimacy, unrealistic relationship expectations, and mind-reading tendencies.

This finding can be explained by the fact that people with high self-compassion tendencies keep themselves away from negative and dysfunctional thoughts by approaching the problems they encounter from a logical perspective. In the literature, no study was found in this direction in the parent sample, but when the studies dealing with the relationships between self-compassion and cognitive distortions related to relationships in different samples are examined, it is seen that similar results are obtained.

In his study, Hoşoğlu (2020) examined the mediating effect of automatic thoughts on the relationship between the level of self-compassion and life satisfaction and stated that there is a moderately negative relationship between self-compassion and automatic thoughts. Kılıç and Tunç

(2020), on the other hand, examined the mediating role of forgiveness and sub-dimensions of forgiveness in the relationship between irrational belief and self-compassion level. They stated that there was a significant negative relationship between irrational belief and self-compassion, self-forgiveness, and forgiveness of the situation, and that there was no mediation effect between irrational belief and forgiveness of others. Similarly, Stepheson et al. (2018) examined the effects of Rational Emotional Behaviour Therapy on self-compassion, self-esteem, and irrational beliefs in their study; stated that self-compassion is negatively related to irrational beliefs.

As a result, when the research findings in the literature are examined, it can be said that the concepts of self-compassion and cognitive distortions about relationships generally predict each other and have a negative relationship with each other. Therefore, it is an expected result that as the self-compassion level of individuals increases, their dysfunctional thoughts decrease.

When all these findings are examined, it is seen that if the self-compassion levels of the parents increase, the levels of forgiveness and perfectionism also increase; On the other hand, it is predicted that as the self-compassion level of parents increases, their cognitive distortions about relationships decrease. On the other hand, when the literature is examined, it is seen that there are a very limited number of studies examining parents' self-compassion levels with different variables in domestic studies. For this reason, it is thought that the findings obtained in our research will fill the gap in the literature on self-compassion and guide other researchers. In future studies, it may be suggested to re-examine the self-compassion levels of parents by considering different methods and variables. In addition, it is recommended to review the results obtained between self-compassion and other variables by re-executing this study with parents living in regions other than North Cyprus.

Limitations and Strengths

One limitation of the study is its limited sample size and population. The study only includes 384 parents living in the northern part of Cyprus. This sample size is relatively small and may not represent the broader population. Furthermore, the cultural context of the study may also limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultures and countries. Another limitation of the study is its reliance on self-reported measures. While the study uses validated scales to measure the variables of interest, self-reported measures may be subject to response bias or social desirability bias. Participants may also have provided socially desirable answers, leading to inaccurate results.

The study also does not establish causal relationships among the variables, as it only examines associations and predicts potential results. The study uses a relational research approach to investigate the associations between variables, but this approach does not provide a definitive causal relationship between the variables.

Despite these limitations, the study has several strengths. One strength of the study is its use of multiple validated scales to measure the variables of interest. The use of validated scales enhances the reliability and validity of the findings. Additionally, the study uses structural equation modeling, which allows for a comprehensive analysis of the relationships among the variables.

The study also addresses an important topic that has implications for parenting and psychological well-being. Understanding the relationships between perfectionism, forgiveness, cognitive distortions, and self-compassion in parents can help researchers and practitioners develop effective interventions to promote positive parenting and well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research aimed to investigate the relationship between self-compassion and forgiveness, perfectionism, and cognitive distortions related to relationships in married and divorced parents. The findings showed that self-compassion is an important predictor for the concepts of forgiveness, perfectionism, and cognitive distortions related to relationships. The

results indicated that parents with higher self-compassion levels tend to forgive themselves, others, and the situation. On the other hand, they also tend to have higher levels of perfectionism towards themselves, others, and socially perceived perfectionism tendencies. Additionally, high self-compassion negatively predicted parents' avoidance of intimacy, unrealistic relationship expectations, and mind-reading tendencies. Overall, the study findings suggest that promoting self-compassion could be beneficial in solving the problems encountered in maintaining a healthy marriage and family life. These findings are consistent with previous studies, indicating that self-compassion and forgiveness are positively related, while self-compassion and perfectionism are negatively related.

Implications And Future Directions

The current study has important implications for both clinical and non-clinical settings. One of the significant implications of this study is that interventions that aim to increase self-compassion in parents may help them overcome negative emotional states, such as guilt, shame, and self-blame, and improve their relationships with others. Specifically, helping parents develop self-compassion skills may enhance their ability to forgive themselves and others, reduce their unrealistic relationship expectations, and prevent cognitive distortions related to relationships.

Another implication of this study is that self-compassion may be a protective factor against divorce. It is well-documented that marital conflict is a significant predictor of divorce, and high levels of self-compassion may buffer against the negative effects of marital conflict on divorce. Therefore, interventions that target self-compassion could potentially reduce the incidence of divorce.

The present study provides a foundation for future research in several areas. First, it will be important to investigate the mechanisms through which self-compassion influences relationship quality. It is possible that self-compassion reduces negative emotions that can interfere with relationship functioning, such as anger, resentment, and bitterness. Alternatively, self-compassion may improve communication skills, empathy, and overall relationship satisfaction. Second, it will be important to explore the effects of self-compassion interventions on relationship outcomes. While the current study provides evidence that self-compassion is related to positive relationship outcomes, future research should examine whether self-compassion interventions can directly improve relationship quality. Third, future research should examine whether the relationship between self-compassion and relationship outcomes varies as a function of the parent's relationship status (i.e., married vs. divorced). It is possible that the benefits of self-compassion may be more pronounced in divorced parents, who may be more prone to negative emotions and cognitive distortions related to relationships. Finally, it will be important to investigate the role of self-compassion in other contexts, such as relationships with children, extended family members, and coworkers. This may help to clarify whether self-compassion is a general predictor of positive relationship outcomes or whether it is specific to intimate partner relationships.

Overall, the present study provides important insights into the role of self-compassion in promoting positive relationship outcomes in parents. Future research should build on these findings to further understand the mechanisms through which self-compassion affects relationship quality and to develop interventions that can improve relationship outcomes.

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