

Level of Forgiveness among Full-time Faculty and Students: Basis for a Forgiveness Intervention

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Abstract. Forgiveness promotes psychological well-being, healthy relationships, and positive learning environments. Despite its importance, limited research has compared forgiveness among faculty and students in higher education while examining its dimensions as a basis for intervention. This study determined the levels of forgiveness among full-time faculty and students, compared their forgiveness levels, and developed a forgiveness intervention program. A convergent mixed-methods design was employed involving 166 respondents (25 full-time faculty and 141 students). Quantitative data were collected using the Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS), while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were used to analyze quantitative data, whereas thematic analysis was applied to qualitative responses. Results showed that both faculty and students demonstrated moderate overall levels of forgiveness. Faculty obtained a higher overall HFS mean score ($M = 85.60$, $SD = 11.60$) than students ($M = 81.87$, $SD = 12.58$). MANOVA revealed a significant multivariate difference between groups (Wilks' $\Lambda = .945$, $p = .026$), with a significant difference only in self-forgiveness ($p = .016$), indicating greater self-forgiveness among faculty. Qualitative findings highlighted self-reflection, empathy, emotional maturity, and supportive relationships as key influences on forgiveness. The findings support the development of a context-specific forgiveness intervention program to strengthen self-forgiveness, empathy, emotional resilience, and constructive conflict resolution in higher education.

Keywords: empathy; forgiveness; Higher Education; intervention; sympathy

Introduction

Forgiveness has increasingly been recognized as a significant construct in psychology, education, and mental health because of its positive influence on emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, and institutional climate. Forgiveness is no longer considered a religious virtue but as a multi-faceted psychological process that helps self to let go of resentment, manage negative emotions, and heal broken relationships. The effects of forgiveness have been consistently shown to be related to reduced stress, anxiety, depression, psychological distress, increased resilience, increased life satisfaction and overall well-being (Worthington & Wade, 2020; Toussaint et al., 2022). Forgiveness plays a crucial role in education because it is a part of daily life in faculty and students' interactions. Forgiveness is an important aspect in the academic setting, where students and faculty engage in academic, professional and interpersonal relationships on a daily basis, as it is a factor that helps to keep relationships healthy, reduce conflict and create a positive learning environment.

Evidence-base researches in recent years have emphasized the role of forgiveness in higher educational institutions. Academic stress, miscommunication, conflict, perceived injustice, and communication problems are some of the many interpersonal stressors that faculty and students encounter in University settings. A lack of resolution in interpersonal conflict has been linked to adverse outcomes in the areas of commitment to school, commitment to work, teamwork, and mental well-being (Walton, 2022; Rasmussen, 2019). That being said, those with higher forgiveness are better able to regulate their emotions, have more inter-personal trust and have healthier ways of managing conflict (Wade et al., 2024). The results indicate that forgiveness can be considered as a personal attribute that is also an institutional asset that can foster a healthier school environment.

Empathy and sympathy have also been found as antecedents to forgiveness. Empathy helps people to identify others' feelings and viewpoints, which decreases negative responses and raises the chance for

forgiveness (Minow, 2020). Empathy leads to sympathy which acts as a mirror reflection of empathy, in that it provides a compassionate concern for those who have hurt him, and a desire to reconcile rather than retaliate. Empathy has been found to be associated with forgiveness of interpersonal transgressions and positive social relationships (Toussaint et al., 2022). In turn, fostering empathy and sympathy in educational environments can lead to a more supportive and harmonious atmosphere between teachers and students, which, in turn, can enhance forgiveness and relationships between them.

Forgiveness has received a great deal of research and study in the field of psychology, counselling and health sciences, but there are a number of empirical gaps. First, most of the studies conducted so far have been carried out in clinical populations, married couples, adolescents or in general adult samples, and only a few studies have been conducted in higher education institutions, targeting both faculty and students at once (Worthington & Wade, 2020). Second, previous research has mostly focused on forgiveness as a psychological phenomenon in isolation without adequately considering the interdependent nature of empathy and sympathy in the development of forgiving actions in educational settings. Third, although many international studies have determined the association between forgiveness and psychological well-being, there is a lack of empirical studies in HEIs, especially Catholic universities, where religious values may affect, but do not necessarily dictate forgiving attitude and behavior. Perhaps more importantly, previous research rarely translates empirical results into institution-based intervention programmes that universities can implement to boost emotional well-being and conflict management of their faculty and students.

This is a particular challenge as more and more higher education institutions have come to understand that student success and faculty effectiveness is not solely related to cognitive skills, but also emotional and relational skills. Even with the increasing awareness of mental health, emotional intelligence, and psychosocial support in Universities, structured interventions based on forgiveness are still not widely used. Therefore, there is little empirical support for guiding administrators, counselors, and educators in their efforts to intentionally foster programs that develop forgiveness in conjunction with empathy and sympathy.

In a Christian perspective, forgiveness is a basic virtue that is the hallmark of God's mercy and human reconciliation. In his address, *Misericordia et Misera* (2016), Pope Francis affirmed that forgiveness is the visible face of God's never ending love, while mercy is the road to healing broken relationships as presented in *Misericordiae Vultus* (2015). Likewise, in *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (1984) St. Pope John Paul II stressed that true reconciliation is dependent on genuine conversion and freedom from sinful roots. These theological views give Catholic education its ethical and spiritual basis as it relates to forgiveness. The present study, however, is grounded first and foremost on empirical evidence that demonstrates that forgiveness is a measurable psychological construct with significant implications for emotional, interpersonal and educational outcomes.

Given the empirical and practical deficits, the purpose of this study was to first determine the forgiveness levels of full-time faculty and students of the University of La Salette, Inc., second to see if there were differences in forgiveness across the dimensions, and third to examine the role of empathy and sympathy in fostering forgiving attitudes. The results will guide the creation of a forgiveness intervention program tailored to the specific context that will be designed to enhance emotional resilience, conflict resolution, healthy interpersonal relationships, and psychological well-being for the university community. It combines empirical evidence with the mission of Catholic higher education, making a contribution to the growing literature on forgiveness and offering some practical suggestions for educators, counselors and institutional leaders.

Research Questions

This study seeks to determine the level of forgiveness among full-time faculty members and students in the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of La Salette, Inc. Specifically, it aims to examine differences in forgiveness between the two groups, identify the factors influencing forgiveness, and develop an evidence-based intervention program to strengthen forgiveness and promote healthier interpersonal relationships within the academic community. Particularly, it will seek to answer the following queries:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:

1.1. Teachers

1.a. Age

1.b. Sex

1.c. Civil Status

1.d. Educational background

1.e. Religion

1.2 Students

2.a. Age

2.b. Sex

- 2.c. Civil Status
- 2.d. Educational background
- 2.e. Religion

2. What are the current levels of forgiveness among full-time faculty and students in the College of Arts and Sciences?
3. Is there a significant difference in the forgiveness levels between the teachers and students?
4. What intervention program can be designed to enhance forgiveness?
5. What are the factors affecting their forgiveness?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study examined the level of forgiveness among full-time faculty members and students in the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of La Salette, Inc., Santiago City, during the Academic Year 2024–2025. It assessed forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness of situations using the Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) and explored the factors influencing forgiveness through qualitative inquiry. The study also compared the forgiveness levels of faculty and students and developed a context-specific forgiveness intervention program based on the findings. It was limited to full-time faculty members and enrolled students of the College of Arts and Sciences, excluding part-time faculty, non-teaching personnel, and students from other colleges. Furthermore, the study focused on developing the intervention program and did not include its implementation or evaluation.

Literature Review

Forgiveness as a basis for emotional health

There is a considerable amount of empirical evidence that confirms forgiveness as a significant predictor of psychological well-being. Research across the years has shown that forgiveness is associated with reduced stress, anxiety, resentment, and depression and increased emotional resilience and life satisfaction (Worthington & Wade, 2019; Singh, 2023; Yilmaz, 2023). The results generally agree with the view of forgiveness as a protective factor associated with emotional healing and adaptive coping. Most of these studies, however, have taken place in the clinical, counseling, or community setting with little evidence of how forgiveness works among faculty and students in higher education institutions. The question of forgiveness in academic settings where interpersonal conflicts impact teaching, learning, and wellbeing has not been explored in-depth.

Giving Forgiveness in an Educational Institution

Studies consistently show that forgiveness is related to positive educational outcomes, such as better teacher-student relationships, improved conflict resolution, and more supportive school climates (Dickson-Deane, 2020; Rothmann & Janse van Rensburg, 2020; Abu-Nimer & Nasser, 2022). These studies concur that forgiveness is vital for social-emotional learning and institutional harmony, but they tend to concentrate on school-wide programmes and/or students. There are few studies that have investigated faculty and students together in the same institutional environment, especially in the context of Catholic higher education. Thus, evidence comparing forgiveness between these two groups is sparse.

Empathy and Sympathy as predictors of forgiveness

Empathy and sympathy are consistently found to be important precursors to forgiveness as they can promote perspective taking, decrease hostility and promote reconciliation (Summers et al., 2022; Santiago, 2023; Gutierrez & Han, 2023). General agreement has been reached about their positive effect, but the current research has focused mainly on interpersonal or counseling settings, with little attention paid to educational settings. Furthermore, there have been few studies that have considered the role empathy and sympathy play in the design of forgiveness interventions for university communities and most of this research has been conducted in other settings, leaving an important gap in the literature that is addressed by the present study.

Forgiveness, Emotional Intelligence and Resilience

Research consistently shows that forgiveness is positively linked to emotional intelligence and resilience (Braun et al., 2020; Bacani, 2022; Samson et al., 2022). People with emotional awareness and self-regulation tend to be more likely to get over interpersonal abuse and forgiveness. While there were similarities in these findings across populations, the majority of studies are on emotional intelligence or resilience as outcomes or correlates of forgiveness rather than studying forgiveness itself in the higher

education context. This implies the importance of institution-specific studies to directly investigate forgiveness between faculty-students.

Forgiveness in Professional and Organizational Contexts

Forgiveness has implications that go beyond the personal level, especially in the context of education and organization. Studies have shown that forgiveness can help to alleviate work stress, foster better teamwork, boost work efficiency and foster better working relationships. Forgiveness promotes positive organizational culture and employee wellness, particularly in high-stakes jobs like teaching and counselling (Śliwa & Prasad, 2022; Dahiya & Rangnekar, 2020; Carter, 2024).

Measurement of forgiveness as a psychological construct

Forgiveness is a multi-dimensional construct, and there is a need for valid and reliable measurement of forgiveness as recognized in the literature. There are cognitive, emotional, behavioral and relational aspects of forgiveness, according to scholars. Therefore, it is important to differentiate assessment instruments from similar concepts like reconciliation, excuse making and suppression and also include self-forgiveness and forgiveness of others (Thompson et al., 2019; Dahiya & Rangnekar, 2020).

Forgiveness Interventions and Programs of Education

Recent research suggests that structured forgiveness interventions are effective for supporting emotional development and conflict resolution. Research shows that the programs that include mindfulness, counseling, empathy training, storytelling, and social-emotional learning have proven effective in promoting greater levels of forgiveness among students and teachers. These interventions help create more caring learning environments, and offer concrete suggestions for promoting peace, empathy, and mental health (Braun et al., 2020; Karahan, 2023; Abu-Nimer & Nasser, 2022).

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of forgiveness among full-time faculty members and students. The quantitative component used a descriptive-comparative, non-experimental design to determine forgiveness levels and examine differences between groups using the Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS). Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The qualitative component utilized purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews, with responses analyzed through thematic analysis to identify factors influencing forgiveness. Finally, quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated through triangulation to develop a context-specific forgiveness intervention program.

Sampling Design

This study employed a mixed sampling strategy appropriate for the convergent mixed-methods design. For the quantitative component, total enumeration was used for the 25 full-time faculty members, while proportionate random sampling was employed to select 141 student respondents from the College of Arts and Sciences. The sample size was determined using an appropriate sample size computation at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was utilized to select participants who could provide rich and relevant information regarding their experiences of forgiveness. Data collection continued until sufficient information was obtained to address the research objectives.

Research Locale

This study was conducted at the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of La Salette, Inc., located in Santiago City, Isabela, Philippines, during the Academic Year 2024–2025. The University of La Salette, Inc. is a Catholic higher education institution committed to academic excellence, holistic formation, and Christian values. The College of Arts and Sciences was selected as the research locale because it has a diverse population of full-time faculty members and students whose academic and interpersonal interactions provide an appropriate setting for examining forgiveness. The locale was deemed suitable for the study as it offered relevant participants and a context in which the findings could serve as the basis for developing a context-specific forgiveness intervention program.

Research Participants

The respondents of this study are full-time faculty and students of the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of La Salette, Inc. during the first semester of the Academic Year 2024-2025. In identifying and selecting the participants, they must be: (1) Officially teaching in the school for 1 to 2 years, (2) officially teaching during the school year 2024-2025, (3) Willing to participate in the survey process, (4) officially enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 2024-2025 and with (5) Informed Consent Form.

Research Instruments

The Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) developed by Laura Yamhure Thompson et al. (2005) was used as the instrument for this study. It is a 18- item standardized self-report scale for dispositional forgiveness, which includes forgiveness of self, others, and situations. The instrument has proven to have good validity and reliability and it has been extensively applied in forgiveness studies (Ilker et al., 2018). The questionnaire was pilot tested and reliability checked in collaboration with a professional statistician to verify its suitability to the target population before it was given to the respondents.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers followed a systematic procedure in collecting the data. One formal letter requesting permission to carry out the study was sent to the University authorities and was approved before data collection was done. The researcher agreed with the survey schedule and administration with the relevant offices and respondents as soon as the survey was approved. Then the selected respondents were given the Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) questionnaires, which explained the purpose of the study and promised that their responses were to be kept confidential. The questionnaires were returned and semi-structured interviews were carried out with a sample of participants to elicit more information regarding their experiences and factors that influence forgiveness. Lastly, quantitative data was coded and analysed using relevant statistical methods and thematic analysis was applied to the transcripts from the interviews. The results of both phases were merged together using triangulation to gain a holistic understanding of forgiveness, as well as to guide the development of the proposed forgiveness intervention program.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of teachers’ and students’ age, sex, civil status, educational background, and religion?

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Demographic Profile of the Teacher Respondents

Teachers	Variable	Frequency	Percent
Age	25-34	15	60
	35-44	2	8
	45-54	5	20
	55-64	2	8
	65+	1	4
Sex	Male	11	44
	Female	14	56
Civil Status	Single	13	52
	Married	10	40
	Widowed	2	8
Educational Background	Bachelor's Degree	10	40
	Master's Degree	12	48
	Doctorate	3	12
Religion	Catholic	21	84
	Non-Catholic	4	16
Total		25	100

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the demographic profile of faculty respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational background, and religion. Regarding age, 60% of faculty respondents are between 25 and 34 years old, 20% fall within the 45–54 age range, while 8% are in both the 35–44 and 55–64 age groups. Only one respondent (4%) is over 65 years old. In terms of sex, female faculty respondents comprise the majority at 56%, while the remaining 44% are male. When it comes to civil status, 52% of faculty respondents are single, 40% are married, and 8% are widowed. As for their educational background, 40% hold a Bachelor’s degree, 48% hold a Master’s degree, and 12% have a Doctorate degree.

This distribution of educational qualifications among faculty respondents suggests that a majority (60%) have pursued graduate studies. In terms of religion, 84% of faculty respondents are Catholic, while the remaining 16% belong to various religious affiliations, including Iglesia Ni Cristo, Adventist, Born Again, and Hinduism.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Demographic Profile of the Student Respondents

Students	Variable	Frequency	Percent
Age	18-20	78	55
	21-23	58	41
	24-27+	5	4
Sex	Male	31	22
	Female	110	78
Civil Status	Single	141	100
	Married	0	0
Educational Background	On-going Bachelor's degree	141	100
Religion	Catholic	110	78
	Born Again	12	9
	Iglesia Ni Cristo	5	4
	Methodist	3	2
	Others	11	8
Total		141	100

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the demographic profile of student respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational background, and religion. As shown in Table 2, 55% of respondents are between 18 and 20 years old, 41% are between 21 and 23, and only 4% are 24 or older. In terms of sex, female student respondents make up the majority at 78%, while males account for 22%. All the student respondents are single and currently pursuing their bachelor's degree. As for their religious affiliation, majority are Catholics comprising of 78% while the remaining 22% are distributed among Born Again (9%), Iglesia Ni Cristo (4%), Methodist (2%), and other religious groups.

Research Question 2: What are the current levels of forgiveness among full-time faculty and students in the College of Arts and Sciences?

Table 3. Level of HFS Forgiveness of Self Among Full-time Faculty

Item	Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Although I feel bad at first when I mess up, over time I can give myself some slack.	4.96	1.57	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Self
2	I hold grudges against myself for negative things I've done.	4.72	1.72	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Self
3	Learning from bad things that I've done helps me get over them.	5.48	1.71	High Level of Forgiveness of Self
4	It is really hard for me to accept myself once I've messed up.	4.92	1.78	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Self
5	With time I am understanding of myself for mistakes I've made.	5.24	1.59	High Level of Forgiveness of Self
6	I don't stop criticizing myself for negative things I've felt, thought, said, or done.	4.40	1.92	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Self
Total		4.95	1.71	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Self

Table 3 presents the faculty respondents' level of Forgiveness of Self, reflecting how inclined they are to forgive themselves. Results of the findings show that the faculty respondents had a moderate level of self-forgiveness; that is, they have general understandings of their mistakes and continue to move forward, but they have not been able to completely discard self-critical thoughts and negative feelings. The most positive statement was, "Learning from bad things that I've done helps me get over them" ($M = 5.48$, $SD = 1.71$), in which faculty members see their mistakes as more positive learning experiences that help them grow. Similarly, the high mean of "With time I am forgiving myself for things I did wrong" ($M = 5.24$, $SD = 1.59$) suggests that self-forgiveness is a process of reflection and acceptance over time, not immediate emotional recovery. The results herein corroborate Thompson et al.'s (2005) multidimensional view of forgiveness, wherein self-forgiveness entails self-condemnation eradication by recognizing one's wrongdoing and replacing it with self-acceptance. Results in the current study align also with those of Worthington and Wade (2019) who discovered that people who score higher on self-forgiveness showed higher emotional wellbeing by being able to learn from their mistakes without being consumed by guilt or shame. In a similar fashion,

Singh (2023) found that self-forgiveness helps foster resilience by aiding people to manage negative emotions and bounce back from personal failures. The present study findings are in line with these adaptive qualities as the faculty members' attitudes toward errors were mostly positive and looked at them as opportunities for improvement instead of as permanent failures. Overall, there appeared to be a generally positive orientation toward self-forgiveness, although the lowest rated statement, "I stop criticizing myself for negative things I've felt, thought, said, or done" (M = 4.40, SD = 1.92), suggests that there are challenges with self-criticism even among these respondents. This result is found to be consistent with that of Yilmaz (2023), who found that self-forgiveness was more difficult than others' forgiveness due to the higher standards set to oneself in personal and professional life. The moderate rating doesn't mean that the faculty members feel unable to forgive themselves, it may be because they still feel responsible for themselves and their own personal accountability as they continue in their roles with considerable academic and moral responsibilities. Overall, the results suggest that faculty have adaptive self-forgiveness; interventions focused on increasing self-compassion and healthy emotional functioning could be beneficial for further enhancing faculty psychological well-being and interpersonal effectiveness.

Table 4. Level of HFS Forgiveness of Self Among Student Respondents

Item	Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Although I feel bad at first when I mess up, over time I can give myself some slack.	4.82	1.55	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Self
2	I hold grudges against myself for negative things I've done.	3.68	1.73	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Self
3	Learning from bad things that I've done helps me get over them.	5.54	1.49	High Level of Forgiveness of Self
4	It is really hard for me to accept myself once I've messed up.	3.87	1.55	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Self
5	With time I am understanding of myself for mistakes I've made.	5.23	1.43	High Level of Forgiveness of Self
6	I don't stop criticizing myself for negative things I've felt, thought, said, or done.	3.82	1.75	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Self
Total		4.49	1.58	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Self

Table 4 presents the student respondents' level of Forgiveness of Self, reflecting how inclined they are to forgive themselves. As shown in Table 4, the statement, "Learning from bad things that I've done helps me get over them" has the highest mean of 5.54 (SD=1.49) indicating a high level of forgiveness of self among student respondents. This highlights that student respondents are inclined to get past bad experiences easily which makes them easy to forgive themselves. This confirms what Singh (2023) said that "the effect of forgiveness on individual happiness and well-being, underscoring that forgiveness is not only restorative in relational contexts but also positively affects the individual's internal emotional state." Thus, the 'individual's internal emotional state' gives the student respondents driving force to get past bad experiences easily and forgive themselves from a bad experience. Moreover, the statement "With time I am understanding of myself for mistakes I've made" has a mean of 5.23 (SD=1.43) also indicating high level of forgiveness. It highlights that time is also an important factor in forgiving oneself for well-being. Aydin and Yerin Güneri (2022) further elaborated this, "who analyze self-forgiveness in the context of psychological inflexibility, rumination, and cognitive test anxiety." The statement, "Although I feel bad at first when I mess up, over time I can give myself some slack" has a mean of 4.82 (SD=1.55) indicating a moderate level of forgiveness among student respondents. This statement supports Śliwa and Prasad (2022): "...they argue that forgiveness can liberate individuals from the burden of resentment, enabling healthier interpersonal relationships..." Indeed, student respondents are not hard on themselves when they mess up because they understand the reality of imperfection among them when it comes to forgiveness. The statement "I hold grudges against myself for negative things I've done" has the lowest mean of 3.68 (SD=1.73) which indicates a moderate level of forgiveness of self. This idea compliments the work of Worthington & Wade (2019), "forgiveness is often essential to human intimacy and functioning." The inability to forgive oneself sometimes affects the social sphere of forgiveness. This means that respondents who are unforgiving of oneself are also hard up in forgiving others. In general, student respondents indicate a moderate level of forgiveness of self. This suggests that while they recognize and take responsibility for their mistakes to some degree, they may still struggle with self-criticism, guilt, or letting go of past actions completely.

Table 5. Level of HFS Forgiveness of Others Among Faculty Respondents

Item	Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I continue to punish a person who has done something that I think is wrong	4.92	1.66	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others
2	With time I am understanding of others for the mistakes they've made.	4.52	1.05	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others
3	I continue to be hard on others who have hurt me.	4.84	1.52	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others
4	Although others have hurt me in the past, I have eventually been able to see them as good people.	4.80	1.32	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others
6	If others mistreat me, I continue to think badly of them	3.72	1.43	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others
7	When someone disappoints me, I can eventually move past it.	4.16	1.38	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others
Total		4.49	1.39	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others

The results showed that the faculty respondents had a moderate forgiveness rating of others suggesting that the faculty is generally ready to forgive others' interpersonal transgression, but they still have some problems in completely forgetting negative feelings towards others who have transgressed them. The best item, "I continue to punish a person who has committed some interpersonal wrongdoing that I think is wrong" (M = 4.92, SD = 1.66) suggests that some faculty members are still feeling resentful after interpersonal transgressions. Similarly, the item "I keep being critical of others who have hurt me" (M = 4.84, SD = 1.52) indicates that forgiveness is not a quick and easy process for many people. These findings support Thompson et al. (2005), who said that forgiveness toward others includes: "the lessening of negative feelings and thoughts toward the other person, and a simultaneous increase in positive thoughts and feelings toward the self. Likewise, Worthington and Wade (2019) found forgiveness to be a gradual process, as people manage their emotions and use understanding instead of resentment. The present findings corroborate these studies in that faculty members, in general, are willing to forgive but experience difficulties in overcoming reactions to interpersonal offenses. The most poorly rated statement was, "If others treat me badly I still think poorly of them" (M = 3.72, SD = 1.43), suggesting that negative thinking may not abate even with intentions to forgive. In accordance with Yilmaz (2023), the severity of the offense and the emotional processing of the individual impact forgiveness of others, not being automatic. The present findings do not support the previous interpretation since age and educational level were not statistically analyzed, and thus do not provide evidence that these factors have an effect on forgiveness. Overall, the moderate level of forgiveness indicates that professors have the potential to forgive others, but may need interventions to increase their empathy, emotional control and positive approaches to conflict.

Table 6. Level of HFS Forgiveness of Others Among Student Respondents

Item	Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I continue to punish a person who has done something that I think is wrong	5.24	1.72	High Level of Forgiveness of Others
2	With time I am understanding of others for the mistakes they've made.	4.84	1.51	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others
3	I continue to be hard on others who have hurt me.	4.90	1.79	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others
4	Although others have hurt me in the past, I have eventually been able to see them as good people.	4.50	1.75	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others
5	If others mistreat me, I continue to think badly of them	4.51	1.72	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others
6	When someone disappoints me, I can eventually move past it.	4.26	1.25	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others
Total		4.71	1.62	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Others

Table 6 presents the level of Forgiveness of Others among student respondents, reflecting how forgiving they are of others. The results showed that the students' forgiveness of others was in the moderate range, meaning that they are generally willing to forgive interpersonal offenses, but forgiveness is a gradual process that is affected by their emotional response to conflict. The highest-rated statement is "I go on to punish a person who has done something I think is wrong" (M = 5.24, SD = 1.72), where some students reported that they still have trouble fully forgiving someone after they have done something they think is wrong. This finding indicates that students have a positive attitude towards forgiveness but may experience negative emotions following interpersonal conflicts. The present results are similar to those of Thompson et

al. (2005) who defined forgiveness of others as the process of decreasing resentment and replacing retaliatory motives with more positive actions. Likewise, Worthington and Wade (2019) highlighted that forgiveness is a process and not an immediate act of forgiveness, but a process where individual attempts to control negative emotions. The present findings are supported by these studies which revealed that forgiveness is a process and that it involves emotional adjustment and does not just happen in an instant. The lowest rated statement was also at a moderate level: "When someone disappoints me, I can move past it often, but it takes time" ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.25$), which suggests that students recover from interpersonal disappointments, but it takes time to recover. This finding aligns with Yilmaz (2023), which found emotional maturity and coping strategies are related to forgiveness. Generally, the students showed moderate amount of forgiveness of others indicating that they have the ability to forgive others but they need interventions within the university context which will improve their empathy, emotional control, and constructive conflict resolution skills.

Table 7. Level of HFS Forgiveness of Situations Among Faculty Respondents

Item	Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	When things go wrong for reasons that can't be controlled, I get stuck in negative thoughts about it.	4.52	1.48	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Situations
2	With time I can be understanding of bad circumstances in my life.	5.12	1.42	High Level of Forgiveness of Situations
3	If I am disappointed by uncontrollable circumstances in my life, I continue to think negatively about them	4.52	1.64	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Situations
4	I eventually make peace with bad situations in my life.	4.96	1.40	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Situations
5	It's really hard for me to accept negative situations that aren't anybody's fault.	4.48	1.50	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Situations
6	Eventually I let go of negative thoughts about bad circumstances that are beyond anyone's control.	5.32	1.28	High Level of Forgiveness of Situations
Total		4.82	1.45	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Situations

Table 7 shows the level of Forgiveness of Situations among faculty respondents, reflecting how they are inclined to forgive difficult and unfortunate situations. As shown in Table 7, the statement, "Eventually I let go of negative thoughts about bad circumstances that are beyond anyone's control" has the highest mean of 5.32 ($SD=1.28$) indicating a high level of forgiveness of situations. Also, the statement, "With time I can be understanding of bad circumstances in my life" has the second highest mean of 5.12 ($SD=1.42$) indicating a high level of forgiveness of situations. This indicates that faculty respondents have a high level of forgiveness of situations among themselves. This contradicts their forgiveness level towards others from which they struggle to practice. They are more likely to forgive unfortunate situations that they cannot control. This supports what Śliwa and Prasad (2022) said who "delve into the nuances of forgiveness in the realm of management, emphasizing the importance of letting go is a cognitive and emotional process. They argue that forgiveness can liberate individuals from the burden of resentment, enabling healthier interpersonal relationships and improving workplace dynamics." Among all the indicators in Table 7, the statement, "It's really hard for me to accept negative situations that aren't anybody's fault" has the lowest mean of 4.48 ($SD=1.50$) indicating a moderate level of forgiveness of situations. In total, faculty respondents have a moderate level of forgiveness of situations.

Table 8. Level of HFS Forgiveness of Situations Among Student Respondents

Item	Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	When things go wrong for reasons that can't be controlled, I get stuck in negative thoughts about it.	3.67	1.81	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Situations
2	With time I can be understanding of bad circumstances in my life.	5.16	1.30	High Level of Forgiveness of Situations
3	If I am disappointed by uncontrollable circumstances in my life, I continue to think negatively about them	4.22	1.68	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Situations
4	I eventually make peace with bad situations in my life.	4.54	1.59	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Situations
5	It's really hard for me to accept negative situations that aren't anybody's fault.	4.14	1.71	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Situations
6	Eventually I let go of negative thoughts about bad circumstances that are beyond anyone's control.	4.94	1.61	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Situations
Total		4.44	1.62	Moderate Level of Forgiveness of Situations

Table 8 presents level of Forgiveness of Situations among student respondents, reflecting how forgiving they are in difficult situations. As shown in Table 8, the statement, "With time I can be understanding of bad circumstances in my life" has the highest mean of 5.16 (SD=1.30) indicating a high level of forgiveness of situations. This highlights that student respondents are forgiving of themselves especially in unfortunate situations that they cannot control. This also implies that time is an essential element in the practice of forgiveness among these respondents. This supports what Lipat, et. al. (2022) said, "two types of forgiveness have been formed, which include decisional and emotional forgiveness. As a person becomes more hopeful in his or her, he or she can also be resilient in facing adversities in life. Hope can be a source of resilience. However, it is not at all times that hope can influence the likelihood of forgiving people who have offended someone. There can be other factors that can make people forgive. Hope and forgiveness do not differ in terms of sex." However, while hope can enhance resilience, it doesn't always directly influence whether someone will forgive an offender or not. Other factors may also contribute to the decision to forgive. Among all the indicators, the statement, "When things go wrong for reasons that can't be controlled, I get stuck in negative thoughts about it" has the lowest mean of 3.67 (SD=1.81) indicating a moderate level of forgiveness of situations. This implies that some student respondents still struggle in forgiving and letting go of things that they don't have control of. Overall, student respondents have a moderate level of forgiveness of situations, which implies that though they struggle in practicing forgiveness, at times they can still forgive unfortunate situations.

Table 9. Total HFS Score Among Faculty and Student Respondents

	Full-time Faculty		Students		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
HFS Forgiveness of Self	29.72	5.12	26.95	5.29	27.37	5.34
HFS Forgiveness of Others	26.96	4.33	28.25	6.16	28.05	5.92
HFS Forgiveness of Situations	28.92	5.36	26.67	5.39	27.01	5.43
Total HFS	85.60	11.60	81.87	12.58	82.43	12.47

The descriptive results provided some interesting differences between faculty and student respondents with respect to the forgiveness dimensions. Students' mean score for forgiveness of others (M = 28.25, SD = 6.16) was slightly higher than the mean score for forgiveness of self (M = 29.72, SD = 5.12) and forgiveness of situations (M = 28.92, SD = 5.36) obtained by faculty members. In general, the two groups' scores on the total Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) were very similar, with the faculty group reporting a higher score (M = 85.60, SD = 11.60) than the student group (M = 81.87, SD = 12.58), indicating a generally higher level of dispositional forgiveness. A higher score in the faculty group on the self-forgiveness scale aligns with previous findings that self-forgiveness is a gradual process that emerges from increased emotional maturity, self-reflection, and the ability to adapt to life and work experiences (Worthington & Wade, 2019; Yilmaz, 2023). Similarly, the higher mean for forgiveness of situations indicates that faculty members might be more tolerant of situations that they cannot control, which has been linked to

psychological resilience and emotional regulation (Singh, 2023). The difference with the mean of the students was relatively small, however, they showed a slightly higher mean in the factor ****forgiveness of others****. It needs to be taken with a pinch of salt as descriptive statistics do not indicate significant differences in groups. However, it is consistent with Thompson et al. (2005), who pointed out that forgiveness is multi-faceted and that the people might vary in terms of forgiveness on one aspect but not another. Overall, faculty and students report moderate forgiveness levels, with faculty reporting relatively higher levels of self-forgiveness and situational forgiveness and students reporting higher levels of forgiving others. All these findings highlight the need to develop interventions that build up all aspects of forgiveness in the university community.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference in the forgiveness levels between the teachers and students?

Table 10. MANOVA Results for the Level of HFS Forgiveness Between the Teachers and Students

	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pillai's Trace	.055	3.157 ^b	3.000	162.000	.026	.055
Wilks' Lambda	.945	3.157 ^b	3.000	162.000	.026	.055
Hotelling's Trace	.058	3.157 ^b	3.000	162.000	.026	.055
Roy's Largest Root	.058	3.157 ^b	3.000	162.000	.026	.055
b. Exact statistic						
Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
HFS Forgiveness of Self	162.892	1	162.892	5.874	.016	.035
HFS Forgiveness of Others	35.240	1	35.240	1.004	.318	.006
HFS Forgiveness of Situations	107.821	1	107.821	3.712	.056	.022
Total HFS	296.193	1	296.193	1.915	.168	.012

One-way MANOVA was conducted to determine the significant difference in the forgiveness levels (HFS Forgiveness of Self, Others, Situations, and Overall HFS) between the teachers and students. As shown in Table 10, the results revealed a significant multivariate difference in the level of HFS forgiveness between the teachers and students (Wilks' $\Lambda = .945$, $F(3, 162) = 3.157$, $p = 0.026$, $\eta^2 = .055$). Specifically, there is a statistically significant difference on the scores of faculty and students in the HFS Forgiveness of Self ($F(1,164)=5.874$; $p=0.016$; partial $\eta^2 = .035$). This suggests that teachers are generally more capable of accepting their mistakes, and moving forward without excessive guilt. On the other hand, students tend to struggle more with self-forgiveness and feel prolonged guilt. This gap may result from factors like maturity, life experience, emotional regulation, or coping skills that teachers have developed over time. More importantly, this highlights the importance of supporting students in developing their self-compassion and resilience both in their academics and personal lives. The teachers' HFS Forgiveness of Self scores indicate that teachers are usually forgiving of oneself. This is important as this also results to high level of self-compassion. The study conducted by Uyanık and Çevik (2022) shows that as teachers' self-compassion levels increase, their forgiveness levels may also increase. Similarly, in the studies of Neff and Germer (2017), they state that self-compassion is related to forgiveness. The compassion and kindness a person shows to himself/herself will also extend to others. In teaching and learning setting, teachers' compassion and kindness toward themselves can contribute to a more supportive and nurturing classroom environment. When teachers practice self-forgiveness and self-compassion, they are more likely to demonstrate patience, empathy, and encouragement toward their students. This, in turn, helps create a positive learning atmosphere where students feel safe to make mistakes and grow academically and emotionally.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles for research involving human participants, namely respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, as outlined in the Belmont Report and the Declaration of Helsinki. The researchers asked the permission to the owner of the Heartland Forgiveness Scale and it was granted to used on March 13, 2025. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of La Salette Research Office under Ethics Approval, approved on March 15, 2025. Permission to conduct the study was likewise secured from the appropriate authorities of the University of La Salette, Inc. Participation in the study was voluntary. All respondents were provided with an informed consent form explaining the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality

measures, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The anonymity and confidentiality of participants were strictly maintained by excluding personal identifiers from the research records and ensuring that all collected data were used solely for academic and research purposes. Electronic and printed data were securely stored and made accessible only to the researchers.

Conclusion

This study determined the level of forgiveness among full-time faculty and students in the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of La Salette, Inc. by examining forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others, forgiveness of situations, and overall forgiveness. The findings revealed that both faculty and students demonstrated ****moderate levels of forgiveness****, indicating a general willingness to forgive while highlighting opportunities to strengthen forgiveness across its different dimensions. Faculty members obtained higher levels of self-forgiveness and overall forgiveness than students, while students showed a slightly higher level of forgiveness of others. A significant difference was found only in ****self-forgiveness****, indicating that faculty members exhibited greater self-forgiveness than students. These findings contribute to the understanding of forgiveness as a multidimensional construct by demonstrating that its dimensions vary between faculty and students within a higher education setting. The study also provides empirical evidence on forgiveness in a Philippine Catholic university, an area that remains relatively underexplored in the literature. Practically, the findings serve as the basis for the development of a context-specific forgiveness intervention program that may assist university administrators, counselors, and educators in promoting self-forgiveness, emotional well-being, healthy interpersonal relationships, and constructive conflict resolution among members of the academic community. The proposed intervention offers a framework for fostering a more compassionate, resilient, and supportive educational environment.

Reccomendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that higher education institutions integrate forgiveness education into student development programs, faculty development initiatives, guidance services, and mental health programs to promote self-forgiveness, empathy, emotional resilience, and constructive conflict resolution within the academic community. Guidance counselors and student affairs practitioners are encouraged to implement forgiveness-based counseling, self-compassion exercises, mindfulness activities, and psychoeducational seminars, particularly for students who demonstrated lower levels of self-forgiveness. Faculty members are likewise encouraged to model forgiveness, empathy, and restorative approaches in their interactions with students and colleagues, while university administrators and policymakers may adopt the proposed forgiveness intervention program as part of institutional wellness and values formation initiatives to foster a more compassionate and supportive educational environment. Future researchers are encouraged to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed intervention program using experimental or quasi-experimental designs, replicate the study in other educational institutions and organizational settings, and examine additional variables such as empathy, sympathy, emotional intelligence, resilience, spirituality, and personality traits that may influence forgiveness. Longitudinal and mixed-methods studies are likewise recommended to further explain the development of forgiveness over time and strengthen the evidence base for forgiveness interventions in educational settings.

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