

Explanatory and Predictor Relationships Between Forgiving Behaviors, Social Anxiety Levels and Values of Convict-Prisoners in Penal Institutions

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Abstract

The purpose of the present research is revealing the correlations between social anxiety, forgiveness and values among convict-prisoners in penal institutions. Relational screening model was adopted in the present research. Relational screening is used to reveal the relationships between two or more variables, and cause-and-effect relationships. The universe of the present research consists of convicts and prisoners in Konya penal institutions in 2013-2014 years. The work group of the present research consists of 680 volunteer convicts and prisoners selected randomly among these. The data collection tool in research value scale, the scale of forgiveness and social anxiety scale was used. The results obtained from this study; The findings of the present research showed that the most important independent variable that affected values was forgiveness, In addition, the most important variable that affects social anxiety in the tested model is values variable and Additionally, second most important variable that affects social anxiety indirectly in the tested model is forgiveness variable.

Keywords: Values, Forgiveness Social Anxiety, Convicts and Prisoners.

JEL classification: A2

Human beings are social beings and they exist with the relationships they establish with other human beings. Because their personalities develop with the relationships they establish and these relationships ease the tension they experience. Individuals' awareness of that they are beings separate from their environment causes anxiety that they cannot meet their biological and security needs. Individuals try to get rid of this anxiety by meeting their biological and security needs as of the moment they are born, and therefore, they need to establish interpersonal relationships to feel secure (Sullivan, 1953, Cited in: Can, 1990). Humans as social beings come into the world as dependent on other people in their environments; they need other people's support to be able to maintain their lives, they develop, mature and start producing for both themselves and others and supporting their own lives. They need to exist and behave in social environments without feeling any threats while doing these. However, threat perceptions that result from expectation that they may feel humiliated or be evaluated negatively by others cause individuals experience social anxiety (Eren Gumus, 2010). Social anxiety is the feeling of disturbance and nervousness that present itself as shyness, social clumsiness etc. in social environments. In addition, it is the uneasiness about individuals' social status, role, behaviours etc. (Budak, 2000: 689). The case of anxiety can also be defined as the state of disturbance and nervousness that individuals experience, caused by the expectations that one may behave inappropriately, get into a scrape, make a negative impression, and be evaluated negatively (stupid, miserable, clumsy, unqualified etc.) by others in various social situations (Gumus, 2010).

Social anxiety is a matter of processing oneself as a social being rather than lacking a social skill. According to the first model suggested by Beck, social anxiety refers to over sensitivity to social acceptance and approval from other people, fear of unsuccessful performance, and automatic overstimulation resulting from these. Social anxiety occurs in social environments. It never happens when individuals are alone or with acquaintances. Strange situations, strangers, opposite sex, superiors may trigger this fear and anxiety. As of the moment this fear is felt, human brain responses as it knows and reinforces. This response is like an autopilot. The individuals know that this fear and anxiety are nonsense and too much; still cannot prevent it (Koyuncu, 2012: 42). The reasons for social anxiety are classified as intrinsic reasons and extrinsic reasons. The most important of the intrinsic reasons is genetic predisposition. Extrinsic reasons are; social environment, family factor, and the effects of peers (Deniz, 2006). Additionally, there have been some researches, which reported that the quality of the bond between the child and the parents affected anxiety (Ledley et al., 2006).

One of the interpersonal situations experienced by individuals in forgiveness, which means decrease in anger with somebody else. Forgiveness refers to the emotional attitudes based on cognitive evaluation and interpretation from one aspect. From another aspect, forgiveness is social behaviours between people. It is the step taken in order to reset the relationship between people to the state before the offense (Baumeister, Exline & Sommer, 1998). Forgiveness is considered as a virtue, but it may be against personal interests sometimes. After a deep offense, hateful thoughts, and revengeful fantasies instead of forgiveness can be considered rightful. Forgiveness is defined as cancelling a price that should have been paid (Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004). In other words, forgiveness requires some behavioural and ideational changes towards the individuals who give the offense (Cited in: Samataci, 2013). Forgiveness doesn't refer to completely forgetting an offense and acting like it never happened. It refers to overcoming hatred and giving up on the revenge. Offender is still an offender, and the offense is still an offense. Forgiveness involves the decrease in grudge and hatred, and motivation to feel good feelings for the offender again. Consequently, positive feeling replace negative feelings, and the individuals start hoping for "more positive developments". However, forgiveness is not just the words "I forgive you". It is reflected on the behaviours, life style, and relationships with others (Ayten, 2009). Forgiveness is effective on the permanence of the relationships between couples, friends and societies. If justice or grudge dominated all the difficulties in social relationships instead of forgiveness, the life would ne full of negative feelings. Forgiveness enables the possibility of existence and future of interpersonal relationships, besides making internal relationships easier. Forgiveness includes a intrapersonal dimension as well. Forgiveness is not possible without a healthy way of thinking, without which a happy future is unlikely (Sahin, 2013).

Virtue level of an individual is equal to their level of forgiveness for other individuals who offend them. For centuries, forgiveness has been associated with positive personality features. Forgiving of the offenders by the offended is related with the concepts of compassion and conscience. A compassionate individual doesn't feel grudge of revenge for the offenders while forgiving them. From this aspect, forgiveness is associated with moral in religions and philosophy.

Value is one of the concepts that are considered to play a part in relationship based social anxiety and forgiveness situations. Values are closely related

with feelings, ideas and behaviours of humans. Social scientists state that values have an important place in explaining the human behaviours. Values form the measures of social experiences. They play an important part in preferring one way of behaviour to the other. From another perspective, values form the sources of the behaviours and also set the measures for them. The determinant value in creating one certain behaviour, also decides how that behaviour is. Values are the standards, beliefs or moral principles adopted by an individual or a social group. Social and cultural forms of values affect the individuals in different ways. From this aspect, the relationships between values and humans are not one-way and one-to-one. Concordantly, it is possible to associate values with existing or re-adopted human behaviours. Values occur as a measure for thoughts, attitudes, behaviour, and structures of individuals; and constitute an integral element of social holism (Dilmac, Deniz, Deniz, 2009; Sari, 2005). According to Yilmaz (2009), values refer to generalized moral principles or beliefs that are accepted as true and necessary by most of the members of a group or society in order to maintain functioning; and that reflect the feelings, ideas, objectives, and interests of the members. Values are social representatives of objectives that are accepted as principles that direct lives and motives of individuals. In other words, values are a kind of belief, and measures or standards that define good, right and beautiful (Bacanli, 1999: 35). Values are factors that affect human behaviours. They are consistent and deep beliefs on that a behaviour or a life objective is superior than another (Bilgin, 2007: 81). Values are the primary measures used in evaluating humans and events. From this perspective, values consist of general principles that help people making decisions, and therefore values have an important role for humans in perceiving the outer world (Avcı, 2007: 3). In the light of above stated information, the purpose of the present research is revealing the correlations between social anxiety, forgiveness and values among convict-prisoners in penal institutions.

METHODS

This section presents the research model, universe, work group, data collection tools, and statistical techniques used in data analysis.

Research Model: Relational screening model was adopted in the present research. Relational screening is used to reveal the relationships between two or more variables, and cause-and-effect relationships (Buyukoztürk, Kilic-Cakmak, Akgun, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2008). The purpose of the present research is revealing the predictor relationships between values, forgiveness, and social anxiety levels among convict-prisoners in penal institutions.

Work Group: The universe of the present research consists of social anxiety in Konya penal institutions in 2013-2014 years. The work group of the present research consists of 680 volunteer convicts and prisoners selected randomly among these.

Data Collection Tools:

Values Scale: Values scale developed by Dilmac, Aricak, and Cesur (2014) is based on scoring the statements related to values which best reflect the feelings and ideas in accordance with their meaning and importance in the participants' lives. It consists of 39 value statements and 9 sub-dimensions. These are Social Values, "Career Values" as the second factor, "Intellectual Values" as the third factor, "Spiritual Values" as the fourth factor, "Materialistic Values" as the fifth factor, "Honour of Humanity" as the sixth factor, "Romantic Values" as the seventh factor, "Freedom" as the eighth factor, and "Futuwwat/munificence&courage" as the ninth value. Values scale is a likert type scale in which items are scores from 0 to 9. The lower scores for a value on the scale indicate that, that value is not important for the individual, and higher scores indicate the importance of the value in the individual's life.

First, exploratory factor analysis was conducted for all value statements in the context of principal components analysis. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was found as .926; and Bartlett Sphericity Test approximate chi-square value was found as 14543.11 ($p < .001$). Rotated component matrix conducted with component matrix and Varimax methods showed that all values explained were gathered under 13 factors that explained the 65.37% of the total variance. All the common variances except for "time" (.431) were found over .50. Besides, it was observed that 14 values in the rotated component matrix had load values over .32 under one factor with a difference of less than .10, or left alone under one factor (Family, Time, Personal Internal Integrity). For this reason, explanatory factor analysis was repeated two more times under the same conditions after removing these 14 values. Five more values were removed in the third factor analysis, and two more values were removed in the fourth factor analysis. Then the remaining 39 factors gathered under nine factors that explained the 64.74% of the total variance without a problem. In the last factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was found as .910 and Bartlett Sphericity Test approximate chi-square value was found as 9133.26 ($p < .001$). common variance all values except for Justice (.466) ranged between .50 and .80.

Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients of the Values Scale were calculated on the basis of factors. Internal consistency coefficients were calculated .90 for “Social Values”, .80 for “Career Values”, .78 for “Intellectual Values”, .81 for “Spiritual Values”, .78 for “Materialistic Values”, .61 for “Honour of Humanity”, .66 for “Romantic Values”, .65 for “Freedom”, and .63 for “Futuwwa”. Consequently, first psychometric findings of Values Scale indicate that the scale is a reliable and valid measurement tool.

Trait Forgivingness Scale: Trait Forgivingness Scale adapted to Turkish by Akin, Gediksiz, and Akin (2012) consists of one dimension and 10 items. It has a five level scoring system as; strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. Items 1, 3, 6, 7, and 8 are reverse scored. The highest score to be obtained from the scale is 50; and the lowest is 10. Higher scores indicate tendency for forgivingness. Ten item Trait Forgivingness Scale is a sub-scale of 15-item scale of Berry, and Worthington (2001).

Social Anxiety Scale: Scale and Palanci Ozbay (2001) by the content of social anxiety experienced by students has been developed to determine problems. To be used for student populations scale development of university students according to their skills and social situation in this case is prepared to work to measure the concerns that may arise. Subject to the scale and construct validity criteria was held. Criterion validity of the SCL-90-R (Derogatis, 1994) about the scale of five scale, Rathu Assertiveness Inventory (Rathus, 1973) and the MMPI (Butcher et al, 1989) Social Introversion lower test was used. 30-item three-factor structure as a result of the factor analysis for construct validity formed. These three factors, social avoidance, anxiety and criticism as individual worthlessness was called. 32.9% total variance is explained by three factors. Cronbach alpha internal consistency .83't coefficient. Five-point Likert-type scale has a rating of 0-4. Of received points shows that the rise of social anxiety level rises. In this study, the Cronbach alpha internal reliability coefficient was found to be .81.

Data Analysis

The predictor correlations between values, forgivingness, and social anxiety levels among convict-prisoners in Penal Institutions were analysed in accordance with “Structural Equation Model” using AMOS 19 software. Structural equation modelling is a statistical approach used to reveal causal correlations between observed and latent variables in order to test a theoretical model (Shumacker and Lomax, 2004). The model suggested in the present research about the correlations between values, forgivingness, and social anxiety levels is presented in Figure 1.

Findings

In the last obtained model ($X^2 = 165.71$, $df = 58$, $p < .001$), there are six exogenous (Social values, career values, intellectual values, spiritual values, materialistic values, honour of humanity, romantic values, freedom value, and futuwwa value), and two endogenous (forgivingness, and social anxiety) data. Each of the ways suggested in the model were found statistically significant. The Bentler-Bonett normed fit index (NFI), The Tucker-Lewis coefficient fit index (TLI) and other fit indexes indicate a good model fit (Table 1). Each of the two-way correlations between endogenous data in the model is statistically significant with high values.

Table 1. *Statistical Values on the Fit of The Structural Equation Model*

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Good Fit</i>	<i>Acceptable Fit</i>	<i>Fit Index Values of the Model</i>
(X^2/sd)	≤ 3	≤ 4.5	2,857
RMSEA	$\leq 0,05$	0,06-0,08	0,052
SRMR	$\leq 0,05$	0,06-0,08	0.036
NFI	$\geq 0,95$	0,94-0,90	0,962
CFI	$\geq 0,97$	$\geq 0,95$	0.975
GFI	$\geq 0,90$	0,89-0,85	0,965
AGFI	$\geq 0,90$	0,89-0,85	0,944
TLI	$\geq 0,95$	0,94-0,90	0,966

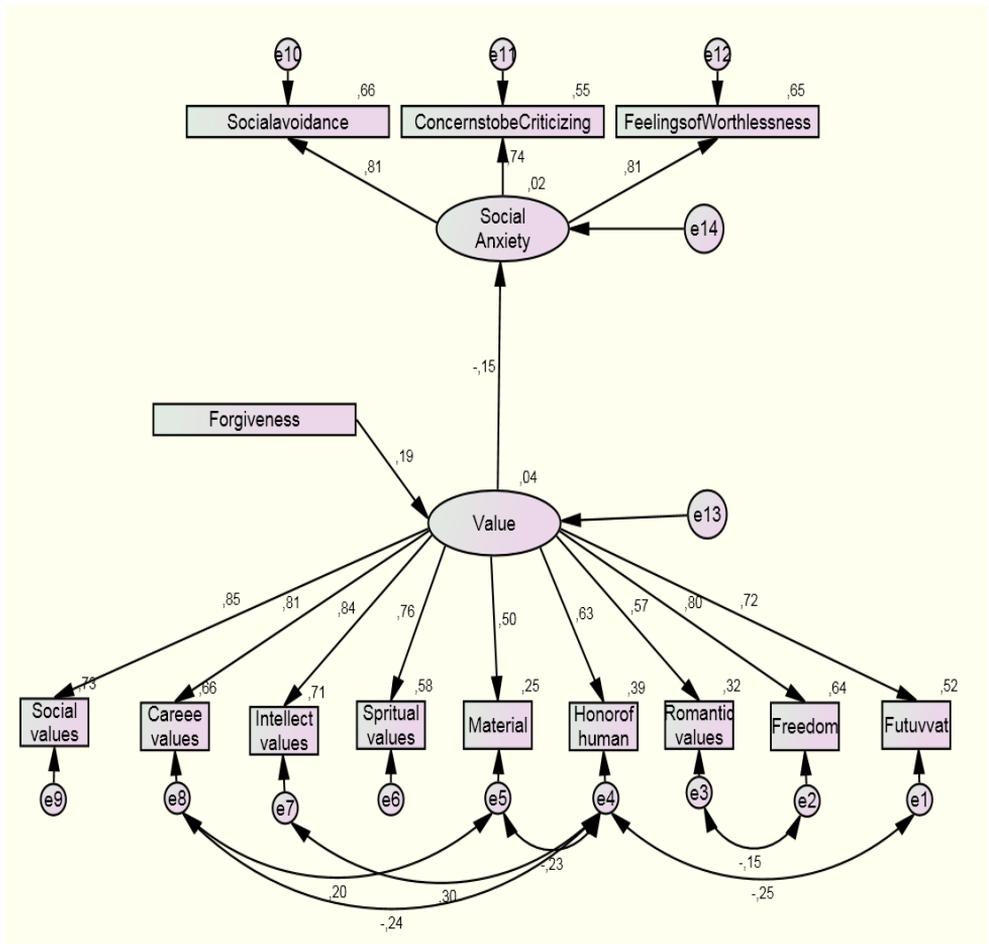


Figure 1. Way analysis on the direct and indirect correlations between confirmed and unconfirmed related variables of the hypothesized model (n=680) way analysis values for all numbers standardized.

<i>Predictor Variable</i>	<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Total Effect</i>	<i>Direct Effect</i>	<i>Indirect Effect</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>Critical Value</i>
Forgiveness	Value	0,187	0,187	0	0,014	4,709*
Value	Social Anxiety	-0,146	-0,146	0	0,165	-3.347*

Forgiveness	Social Anxiety	- 0,27	0	- 0,27	0.013	-2.227*
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^aTotal effect = Direct effect + Indirect effect, *p <0.01, **p < 0.05.

Table 2. Model on the predictor correlations between values and forgiveness behaviours and social anxiety levels among convict-prisoners in penal institutions.

The model in the figure above shows that the most important independent variable that affects values ($t=4.71$, $p<0.01$) is forgiveness. Correlation coefficient value related to this factor was found as $\beta =0,19$. A positive linear correlation was found between forgiveness and values among convicts and prisoners. In other words, as the values scores increase for convicts and prisoners, forgiveness tendency increases for them as well.

In addition, the most important variable that affects social anxiety in the tested model ($t=-3.35$, $p<0.01$) is values variable. Correlation coefficient for this factor was found as $\beta=0.12$. A negative linear correlation was found between values and social anxiety among convicts and prisoners. In other words, as the values scores increase for convicts and prisoners, social anxiety tendency decreases for them.

Additionally, second most important variable that affects social anxiety indirectly in the tested model ($t=-2.227$, $p<0.01$) is forgiveness variable. Correlation coefficient for this factor was found as $\beta=-0.27$. A negative correlation was found between forgiveness levels and social anxiety among convicts and prisoners. In other words, as forgiveness levels increase, social anxiety tendency decreases among convicts and prisoners.

DISCUSSION

This section presents discussions on the findings of the present research. However, we couldn't find any similar researches in terms of both the subject and the method in the literature. The discussions were done in accordance with the variables of the present research.

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Even not directly related with the problem of the present research, Sahin (2013) studied that relationship between forgiveness and psychological wellbeing, and found a positive significant correlation between forgiveness and psychological wellbeing levels. In the model tested in the present research, forgiveness behaviour explained the values of convicts and prisoners. Another research, which studied forgiveness variable, was conducted by Samatci (2013), who studied whether there was a correlation between forgiveness reaction and TA Ego between the individuals and their partners when they encounter a offensive situation in a romantic relationship among young adults. It was found that, the ego of the individuals and their partners was affective in perceiving the offended levels among young adults. However, the perceived forgiveness levels and the reaction after the offense varied in accordance with the ego of the partners, not the individuals. Another research was a descriptive study conducted by Halisdemir (2013), who studied whether retrospective mother-acceptance-denial levels and demographic variables (gender, faculty studied at, class level, and perceived academic achievement) predicted psychological wellbeing levels among university students. This research found that, forgiving oneself, retrospective mother-acceptance-denial perception, perceived academic achievement and faculty variables were significant predictors of psychological wellbeing. Ayten (2009) examined the correlations between forgiveness tendency and demographic variables (gender, age, etc.), and religiousness. Positive correlation between religiousness and general forgiveness tendency, and its “*optimism*” sub-dimension; and negative correlations between “*escape*” and “*revenge*” sub-dimensions were found. The model tested in the present research, suggested the

existence of a correlation between forgiveness behaviour and values. This finding suggested the existence of a correlation between modesty, as a value, and forgiveness behaviour. In this context, these findings are in agreement even directly. Forgiveness behaviour was observed to be correlated with religiousness, ego, retrospective acceptance-denial, and psychological wellbeing; and the increase in the forgiveness was effective on the increase in these behaviours. The finding of the present research that forgiveness behaviour among convicts and prisoners predicted their values is in agreement with this finding.

Another problem of the present research was about social anxiety. The findings related to this variable are discussed below. The research conducted by Kurtyilmaz (2011) studied the relational aggressive behaviours among university students in terms of self-respect, social addiction and social anxiety. That research found that self-respect and social addiction variables were directly effective on social anxiety variable, and therefore directly affected relational aggression variable. In addition, social anxiety was found to be directly effective on aggression. From this aspect, self-respect and social addiction predicted social anxiety, and social anxiety predicted relational aggression. One of the findings of the present research was that, there was a negative correlation between social anxiety and values. The values of convicts and prisoners cause decreases in social anxiety levels, and therefore ease their lives in this period. The finding of the research conducted by Kurtyilmaz (2011) is in agreement with this finding of the present research. Another research conducted by Tosun (2014) studied the predictor correlations between the values of the married individuals and their indomitableness, and conflict solving styles; and tested the model set in accordance with these correlations. In this research, Tosun (2014) found a positive linear correlation between values and indomitableness among married couples. The couples, who protected their values, have higher levels of indomitableness/psychological wellbeing. The values of the convict and prisoners who formed the work group of the present research caused decrease in their social anxiety levels. Another research that supports the findings of the present research was conducted by Bas (2014), who studied the correlations between values and the meaning of life among university students. Bas (2014) found positive significant correlations between existing meaning and social values, spirituality, honour of humanity, freedom, futuwwa, career values and intellectual values; and negative significant correlations between search for meaning and social values, materialistic values, romantic values, freedom, career values, and intellectual values. Spirituality, futuwwa and materialistic values were found to be important predictors of existing

meaning. Important predictors of search for meaning were romantic values, spirituality, and freedom.

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Sıdıka İşler, Bülent Dilmaç

Explanatory and Predictor Relationships Between Forgiving Behaviors, Social Anxiety Levels and Values of Convict-Prisoners in Penal Institutions

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