Introduction

Forgiveness has been studied by philosophers and theologians for hundreds of years. God's forgiveness and seeking forgiveness from God have generally been studied in the context of theology; however, the possibility of interpersonal forgiveness is discussed independently of God's forgiveness in the context of philosophy. In this regard, while some philosophers have evaluated forgiveness as an aspect of weakness, others have interpreted it as a sign of bravery or power (Enright & Coyle, 1998). In recent decades, the number of studies on forgiveness has increased rapidly in psychology (e.g., Pargament & Rye, 1998; McCullough, Pargament & Thoresen, 2000; Krause & Ellison, 2003; Powers, Nam, Rowatt & Hill, 2007; Romero & Mitchell, 2008; Reich, 2009; Riek, 2010). During the early period of psychology, psychologists mainly studied anti-social attitudes and behaviours such as 'rigidity', 'dogmatism', and 'aggression', comparing them with such concepts as 'love', 'helpfulness', 'forgiveness', and 'tolerance'. For instance, although Freud mentions themes such as 'punishment', 'vengeance', 'shame' and 'guilt', he rarely discusses 'forgiveness' in his works (Akhtar, 2002).

Especially after the 1960s, the number of studies on pro-social attitudes and behaviours such as forgiveness increased in psychology. The first empirical studies on forgiveness were conducted in the 1960s (e.g., Emerson, 1964), and the number of such studies proliferated during the 1980s. Now, in the 21st century, forgiveness has become one of the most popular subjects in the field of psychology of religion (McCullough, Bono & Root, 2005). From 2000 to 2005, as many as 634 studies were conducted, in contrast to 362 studies carried out during the period between 1988 and 1999 (Lewis, 2005).

Up to the present, researchers have examined forgiveness in different ways. While some researchers have focused on people's thoughts about God's forgiveness and the process of seeking forgiveness from God (Krause & Ellison, 2003), others have examined self-forgiveness (Snow, 1993; Mills, 1995; Vitz &
Meade, 2011), interpersonal forgiveness (McCullough, Worthington & Rachal, 1997; Azar & Mullet, 2001; Ahmed, Azar & Mullet, 2007; Romero & Mitchell 2008), intergroup forgiveness (Neto, Pinto & Mullet, 2007; Mullet, Nann & Kadiangandu, 2010), seeking forgiveness from others (Riek, 2010), forgiveness or reconciliation with the inevitable occurrence of negative life events (Egan & Todorov, 2009; Reich, 2009), and forgiveness or ceasing to reproach God (Exline, 2004; Exline, Park, Smyth & Carey, 2011). In addition, researchers have also studied the correlations between forgiveness and themes such as personality (McCullough & Worthington, 1999; Brose, Rye, Lutz-Zois & Ross, 2005; Lawler-Row & Piferi, 2006), well-being (Toussaint & Friedman, 2009), health/mental health (Witvliet, Worthington, Pietrini & Lerner, 2007; Rijavec & Jurcec, 2010), religion/religiosity (Rhoades et al., 2007; Hui, Watkins, Wong & Sun, 2006; Webb, Chickering, Colburn, Heisler & Call, 2005), and religious affiliation (Paz, Neto & Mullet, 2007; Fox & Thomas, 2008).

The main goal of this study is to investigate the relation between the Turkish-Muslim propensity towards interpersonal forgiveness and the subdimensions of their inclination (e.g., avoidance, vengeance and hopefulness). First, this study attempts to generate an Interpersonal Forgiveness Scale, suitable for application to Turkish Muslims, by including several cultural elements such as proverbs and idioms. Second, it seeks to investigate the relation between demographic variables (gender and age) and interpersonal forgiveness. Third, it examines the correlations between forgiveness, on the one hand, and religiosity, humility and pride, on the other hand. The following four research hypotheses (H1–4) were constructed to address the aims of this study:

- H1: There is a positive relationship between gender difference and forgiveness. Women will score higher than men in interpersonal forgiveness.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between age and forgiveness. People become more forgiving as they grow older.
- H3: There is a positive relationship between religiosity and forgiveness.
- H4: There is a positive relationship between forgiveness and humility. In contrast, there exists a negative relationship between forgiveness and pride.

**What Is Forgiveness?**

Despite several scholarly attempts to define forgiveness, no consensual definition of forgiveness has been reached (Anderson, 2007: 71; Dyke & Elias, 2007: 398). Definitions vary according to scholars’ differing perspectives. (For definitions of forgiveness, see Snyder & Lopez, 2007.) Many psychologists have emphasised the differentiation between forgiveness and other similar con-