

## Forgiveness as a Moderator between Perceived Unfair Treatment and Anger with own Children

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**Abstract.** Referring to National Commission for Child Protection (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia/KPAI), the highest perpetrators in family violence were mothers (22%), but there has not been much research on the violence transmission from parents to children and the role of forgiveness as a protective factor. This study aims to examine the role of forgiveness as a moderator of the relationship between the perceived unfair treatment by family members of origin and anger with their own children. Participants involved in this study were 63 mothers who perceived unfair treatment by family members of origin and had children aged between two to seven years old. Data were collected using three scales: Personal Forgiveness Scale, Family of Origin Hurt Scale, and Attitude toward Child Scale. The multiple regression analysis showed that there was a significant positive relationship between the perceived unfair treatment and anger with one's own child (gender similarity transmission sample,  $r = .75, p = .000, n = 31$ ; all sample,  $r = .77, p = .000, n = 63$ ). The analysis for gender similarity transmission sample showed that 56.7% (and for all samples, 58.4) of the variance in anger with one's own child was explained by the perceived unfair treatment by the mother. Meanwhile, forgiveness does not play as a moderator variable in the association of both variables. The implications of the results of this study are discussed.

**Keywords:** anger with own children; forgiveness; family of origin; perceived unfair treatment

Family should be a place for someone to feel safe and protected, but unfortunately not everyone can feel it. Unfair treatment is often found within families, and children can be victims. Unfair treatment is not limited to physical, mental, and sexual violence (World Health Organization, 2020). According to Enright (2012) there are at least 21 kinds of unfair treatment including: emotional and physical absence; anger displacement; emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; excessive punishment, teasing, and demands; harsh judgement; ignoring; insensitivity; lack of love, cooperation, and understanding; poor decision making, and being self-absorbed.

Reported acts of violence to National Commission for Child Protection (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia/KPAI) showed that the prevalence of violence against children increases every year. In the period of 2010-2017 there were 26,954 cases, which were calculated based on reported cases only (Sahroji, 2017). When there are cases of violence against children in the family, people easily refer to the father as the "suspect", but findings in Indonesia say differently. Based on KPAI data in 2018 (Lismartini & Nugraha, 2018), on cases of violence against children that led to death, most suspects were biological

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mothers (44% of total cases), followed by stepfathers and stepmothers (22%), biological fathers (18%), caregivers (8%), then aunts and other relatives (8%).

Past studies showed that there were several antecedents of unfair treatment in families (Fajrini et al., 2019; Meinck et al., 2016). These antecedents include gender, age, residence, economic status, and education level (Fajrini et al., 2019), too young becoming a parent, single parent status, overcrowded housing conditions, financial problem, domestic violence between couples which then affects their children, and the intention of revenge indirectly as a manifestation of anger to their own parents who have treated them unfairly in their childhood (Meinck et al., 2016). People from lower education tend to be less sensitive to inequality issues like discrimination. Injustice due to obedience is a moral obligation taught in schools, and in the family as well (Fajrini et al., 2019).

Some data showed that the same gender effects could influence unfairly treatment of parents to their children. Mothers tend to unfairly treat their daughters, and fathers tend to do the same with their sons (Oshio & Umeda, 2016). Those findings are in-line with the situation in Indonesia. The results of a survey conducted in 2013 by Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, National Development Planning Agency, Central Bureau of Statistics Republic of Indonesia and UNICEF Indonesia showed that physical and emotional violence against daughters were more often perpetrated by biological mothers (physical: 66.34%, emotional: 49.81%), the rest were by fathers and other family members (Kurniasari et al., 2019). This is also confirmed by the same gender effect in modelling theory (Bandura & Walters, 1977). The treatment of parents of the same gender as their children has a stronger effect than those of a different gender (Bandura & Walters, 1959; Lee & Enright, 2009).

Unfair treatments to children in families have physical, psychological, and social impacts (Meinck et al., 2016). Children who are victims of physical violence will have scars or other effects that attack the body and its functions. Bruising or swelling, burns or blisters, tearing cuts, broken bones, and various other physical disorders depending on the type of abuse. A large observational study showed that children who are exposed to violence will more easily experience mental health disorders than those who are not. Allen (2008) and Adams (2010) mention that individuals who have been a victim of family violence in their childhood are shown to have signs of mental health disorders as adults. The social impact felt by children is emotional distance with parents, aggressive behaviour towards family and peers (Meinck et al., 2016). Long term effects showed that the victims tend to develop poor parenting for the next generation, and there is a high prevalence of displacing their anger to their own children as their parents used to (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Lee & Enright, 2009). The experience of being unfairly treated can lead the victims to be a perpetrator for others. Additionally, a study by Lang et al. (2004) showed that child maltreatment affected the ability to make a good relationship with other people.

KPAI data in 2012 showed that 78.3% (the number of participants were not mentioned by the source) perpetrators of violence in the family were victims, or witnesses of violence (Setyawan, 2015). This transmission of violence in the family needs to be a concern, and it is necessary to break this cycle of violence transmission. Literature reviewed showed that children who are exposed to violence

directly within personal relationships such as family, are indicated to be able to behave aggressively in other personal relationships, such as in romantic relationships or later in their own family relationships (Izaguirre & Calvete, 2016; Lang et al., 2004). The experience of being abused in childhood is associated with disruption of the process of giving affection to others. The victims of violence do not easily establish positive relationships with others in every social relationship (Lang et al., 2004). A research done by Fitzgibbons in 1998 demonstrated that when anger develops from unfair treatment, there are at least three primary mechanisms for dealing with this emotion: conscious or unconscious denial of anger, active or passive-aggressive expression of anger, and forgiveness, as cited by Enright et al. (1998).

Empirical research in forgiveness has revealed that forgiveness can be a restorative and emotionally healing process in resolving anger (and related negative emotions) and in improving family relationships (Lee & Enright, 2014; Worthington, 2007). Some studies showed that forgiveness given by a mistreated son to his father can reduce the intensity of conflict between them and their relationship will become better (Katz, 2002; Paleari et al., 2003). Forgiveness is effective in building positive attitudes, hopes, self-esteem, and motivations to achieve some life achievements that give benefit to themselves and many people (Al-Mabuk et al., 1995; Thomas & Hall, 2008). Lee and Enright (2009) have studied fathers' forgiveness as a moderator between unfair treatment and anger with their own children. This study showed that participants who have experienced unfair treatments by their own fathers and forgiven him have lower levels of anger towards their own children and being able to have a loving relationship with their own son, compared to participants who have not forgiven their fathers.

From literature review it could be inferred that forgiveness gives many valuable benefits for mental and physical health. However, not many studies focused on the role of forgiveness and its long-term effects in families who experienced unfair treatment.

Research conducted by Lee and Enright (2009) is the first study to examine the role of forgiveness in three generations of families (grandfather, father, and grandson). While for similar research on mothers no one has ever done it. Therefore, researchers see the urgency to do replication of study by Lee and Enright (2009), on mothers. The additional reason for doing replication study on mothers is based on findings in Indonesia, which showed that perpetrators of unfair treatment in families whose victims are children, are mostly mothers. This research will also involve participants with diverse levels of education, considering that most of the participants of Lee and Enright's studies were more highly educated. Whereas the study by Fajrini et al. (2019) showed that one of the factors causing unfair treatment in the family is the low level of education.

*The Role of Mother's Forgiveness as a Moderator of the Relationship between Unfair Treatment in Her Family of Origin during Her Childhood and Anger towards her Children*

The release of anger is not to the right target (anger displacement) can be explained by various psychological theories, one of them is social learning theory proposed by Bandura (Lee & Enright, 2009). From the perspective of social learning, displacement of anger and aggressiveness is the result

of learning, in this case children modelling the parents who do the same (Bandura & Walters, 1973). Anger can lead an individual to act of revenge against people who have hurt him, as compensation for his hurt feelings (Fitzgibbons, 1998). Therefore, it is very important to consider ways to reduce and relieve the anger felt by the victims to increase their emotional well-being (Lee & Enright, 2009).

There are at least three primary mechanisms for dealing with anger because of unfair treatment (Fitzgibbons, 1998). The three mechanisms are conscious or unconscious denial, active or passive-aggressive expression of anger, and forgiveness.

The denial mechanism is often done by children to deal with their anger. When an individual consciously or unconsciously chooses to deny their anger towards the person who has hurt them, they will unconsciously establish a relationship since there is still a buried anger with that person.

The second mechanism is active or passive-aggressive expression of anger. In the mechanism of active expression of anger, people tend to immediately take actions that express anger in verbal (swearing, protesting, or shouting) and nonverbal (hitting, throwing, and hurting people who make them angry) behaviours. Active expression of anger often causes many negative effects on physical, emotional, and social. Meanwhile, people who carry out passive-aggressive mechanisms tend to act aggressively but indirectly towards people who make them angry, or to others. In this mechanism, people tend to reject requests made by people who hurt them or accepting requests but often stalling time to fulfil them. Stubbornness can also be a form of this mechanism. This mechanism makes others see the victim as a person who is tough and not easily angry or as someone who always takes revenge.

The third mechanism is forgiveness. According to Fitzgibbons, this mechanism is the best way to maintain mental health and a good relationship between victims and perpetrators. Forgiveness is the result of work processes of affection, cognition, and behaviour, which fought for by their own will without the interference or manipulation from others. By forgiving their perpetrators, the victim will not use the mistakes of perpetrators as a tool to attack them in the future. The person who decided to forgive their offender assumed that they already let go of hatred, bitterness, and their need for revenge. Enright et al. (1998) state that people who have truly forgiven those who hurt them willing to abandon their right to resentment, negative judgement, and indifferent behaviour toward their perpetrators, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward the offender.

Research conducted by Lee and Enright (2009) showed that forgiveness given by participants to their father who treated them unfairly can moderate his anger towards his son. Participants with a high level of forgiveness tend to have low levels of anger towards their children. Whereas participants who have a low level of forgiveness, have a high level of anger towards their son. According to Bandura and Walters (1971, 1973), this was common for victims of unfair treatment in the family of origin, who were unable to resolve their problems and hurt their parents. Victims who are unable to forgive, when they are married will tend to displace anger towards the perpetrators to their own children. Conversely, participants who have a high level of forgiveness have a low level of anger towards their sons.

Some literatures showed that forgiveness is a process that occurs in a person, which is part of another process of emotional healing and recovery in resolving anger and other negative emotions that are similar, and improve family relationships (Enright, 2012; Katz, 2002; Lee & Enright, 2009; Paleari

et al., 2003). No matter how unfair the treatment they felt, if they forgive the offender, they will not be controlled by anger or worse, displacing anger to their children. Forgiving the offender means that the individual has eliminated all negative thoughts, affections, and behaviours to the offender, and also has understood that the unfair treatment was not worth to be modelled (Bandura & Walters, 1971; Enright et al., 1998). Lee and Enright (2009) research results also showed that forgiveness effectively changed the participants' attitudes (who were victims of unfair treatment) to their perpetrators and loved their children.

Based on literatures review have been presented previously, then the hypothesis of this study be formulated as follows: (1) Participants (mothers) who think that they were treated unfairly (perceived unfair treatment) will tend to have high anger towards their children (anger with own children) (2) Forgiveness of the mother about her own unfair treatment will weaken the relationship between Perceived Unfair Treatment (PUT) and Anger Own Children (AWC).

## Method

### *Research Design*

This is quantitative research using a survey method. Regression analysis is applied to test the moderation effect of forgiveness on association between Perceived Unfair Treatment (PUT) and Anger With own Children (AWC).

### *Procedure and Ethical Consideration*

First, to call participants, the researchers uploaded an announcement on social media about this study. Researchers also visited several places that are usually used by mothers to gather around. With permission from the authorities, the researchers visited several places such as churches, Al-Quran study sites, residents' houses that were recommended by relatives, and offices. Thus, the questionnaire was distributed in two ways, first using a printed questionnaire which was inserted in a sealed envelope, and Google Form questionnaire.

Questionnaires were given directly by researchers to participants who voluntarily participate in this study. The researchers explain the goal of this study, procedure, obligation and rights of participants, potential risks and benefits of participation. Participants are also told that they are allowed to withdraw from participation if they feel uncomfortable with the questions. The researcher will provide relaxation for their emotional stabilization. For participants who were unable to complete the questionnaire or those who were able to complete it but felt uncomfortable were allowed to contact the researchers through cell phone then they will be referred to the psychologist who had collaborated with the researcher. All information is clearly stated in the informed consent. After completing the questionnaire, the anonymous questionnaire will be put back into the same envelope and sealed with glue by the participant to guarantee the confidentiality of private data and the participant's identity. Questionnaires can be returned right away or brought home and returned to researchers later. While the Google Form questionnaire was distributed to participants in the form of a link that was sent by

researchers to participants personally via WhatsApp and Instagram.

#### *Sampling Technique*

Recruitment of research participants is done by asking for recommendations from researchers' colleagues who have acquaintances that meet the research criteria. Thus the sample is collected incidentally, i.e. anyone who incidentally met by researchers and met the study criteria was chosen as a participant (Sugiyono, 2011).

#### *Participant Criteria*

The criteria of participants for this study were mothers who have children aged 2-7 years, and in their childhood (ages 5-15 years) these mothers had experience of being treated unfairly by one of their family members. The reason why researchers involved mothers who have children aged 2-7 years is based on the consideration that children at this age are physically more vulnerable to anger or physical discipline by parents. Children at an early age have greater potential to be abused by their parents compared to older children (Ateah, 2003; Slep & OLeary, 2007).

#### *Instruments*

Instruments used in this study have received permission from Yu-Rim Lee and Robert Enright via electronic mail sent by researchers previously. Independent variables and dependent variables are measured using the same scale as that used by Lee and Enright (2009) in their previous study. Independent variables are measured using the Family of Origin Hurt Scale (FOHS), dependent variables are measured by Attitude toward Child Scale (ACS), and moderator variables are measured by a shortened version of the forgiveness scale used in Lee and Enright (2009) research. This Personal Forgiveness Scale (PFS) could be found in the appendix of the book titled *The Forgiving Life* (Enright, 2012).

All scales used in this study are in English, so the researchers carried out the translation procedure using the back-translation method based on the procedure suggested by Munday et al. (2022). The scales were translated by two translators who mastered English. The first translator is an Indonesian citizen of British descent who daily uses two languages (English-Indonesian) in communication. The second translator is a Foreign Citizen (UK) who has moved citizenship to become an Indonesian citizen, who daily communicates in two languages (English-Indonesian). After the scale is translated, the researchers and translators then discuss the translation guarantee that each question and statement does not differ from the original scale. Then the researchers also discussed the results of the translation with a clinical psychologist with a master's degree who is interested in relations and sexuality topics, and works as a lecturer at Sanata Dharma University. The purpose of the discussion is so that the translation results are following to guarantee that all translated items are in line with the measurement objectives, and to adjust several terms so that they are more easily understood by the participants. Before the questionnaires were used for data retrieval, researchers conducted a sentence comprehension test (cognitive debriefing or cognitive interview) (Azwar, 2018). The cognitive debriefing is carried out to several people from diverse-backgrounds.

*The Personal Forgiveness Scale*

Personal Forgiveness Scale is a shortened version of the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI), which is a measure of forgiveness variables used in previous research by (Lee & Enright, 2009). With the advice and approval of the previous researcher who was also the author of the questionnaire, Prof. Robert D. Enright, researchers used this questionnaire as a substitute for EFI. Personal Forgiveness Scale is one of the appendices in the book *The Forgiving Life* and is a measure of forgiveness that is intended as a measure of personal forgiveness, which can be directly calculated by the filler. The questionnaire consisted of 21 items, and the response choices for each item consisted of 6 Likert scale points (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = agree, and 6 = strongly agree). From the total score acquisition, the higher the score obtained based on the chosen response number, the higher the level of forgiveness. In this questionnaire there are also three additional items included in the pseudo forgiveness subscale (items 19-21). These three items are useful for identifying random responses. The total score above 12 indicates that participants answer randomly, so this response cannot be analysed (Enright, 2012). In this study, The Personal Forgiveness Scale shows a good internal consistency ( $\alpha = .96$ )

*The Family of Origin Hurt Scale*

This FOHS was first developed by Lee and Enright in their study in 2009. This scale is meant to measure perceived unfair treatment (PUT), which is the level of unfairness treatments perceived by someone from their family of origin (Lee & Enright, 2009). This scale comprises 20 items and was divided into two subscales: positive behaviour (10 items), and negative behaviour (10 items). The response choices for each item consist of 5 Likert scale points (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). Total score range for this scale is from 20 to 100. Based on the chosen response number, higher scores indicate higher degrees of perceived unfair treatment perpetrated by a member of the family of origin (Lee & Enright, 2009). In this study, The Family of Origin Hurt Scale shows a good internal consistency ( $\alpha = .92$ )

*The Attitude toward Child Scale*

The ACS was developed by Lee and Enright (2009) to measure anger with own children (AWC), by assessing the participants' angry feelings and behaviours towards one's children. To answer this scale, participants were asked to choose their children aged 2-7 years, and if the respondent had more than one child aged 2-7 years then he was asked to choose one child who misbehaves the most compared to their other children who are in this age range (Lee & Enright, 2009). Initially, ACS consisted of 12 items which were included in two subscales (6 items in the angry behaviour subscale and 6 items in the angry affect subscale), which were then also divided into two categories; positive behaviour (3 items), negative behaviour (3 items), positive effects (3 items), and negative effects (3 items). However, when ACS was given to the participants in their research, Lee and Enright (2009) found that item number 9, "I would like to be less angry with my child" (in the angry affect subscale of the negative affect category) was interpreted ambiguously by the participants. Therefore, this item was excluded from the reliability

analysis by Lee and Enright (2009). This scale's responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not very typical of me, 2 = a little typical of me, 3 = somewhat typical of me, 4 = moderately typical of me, 5 = very typical of me). Total score range for this scale is from 12 to 60. Based on the chosen response number, higher scores indicate higher levels of anger with one's own child (Lee & Enright, 2009). In this study, The Attitude toward Child Scale shows a good internal consistency ( $\alpha = .85$ )

#### *Participants*

Participants' data analysed in this study were 63 out of a total of 91 mothers (average age 33.5 years old) who had children aged 2-7 years and had experienced unfair treatment by a family member from their childhood, at the age of 5-15 years. In the previous study, Lee and Enright (2009) selected 56 participants who reported parents as the perpetrators of unfair treatments (father,  $n = 38$ ; mother,  $n = 18$ ) out of a total of 80 participants. The purpose of selecting 56 study participants is to look at the gender similarity effect of forgiveness as a moderator of association between perceived unfair treatment (PUT) and anger with own children (AWC) (Lee & Enright, 2009). This research is a replication of Lee and Enright (2009) study, then the researchers selected 63 participants who chose parents as perpetrators of unfair treatments (mothers,  $n = 43$ ; fathers,  $n = 20$ ) from a total of 91 participants. From the total of 91 mothers, most of them came from the Javanese ethnic group (28%), followed by the Minahasa ethnic (25%), while the rest came from 10 different ethnicities in Indonesia, each with a percentage below 10%. The educational background of the participant in this study was more diverse than in previous studies. As many as 41% of participants have a bachelor's degree, 32% of participants had a high school education and equivalent. The rest, with the percentage of each under 20% with a diploma degree, master's degree, and only one person went to junior high school. Most participants (total 67%) are Christians (Protestant 47%; Catholic 17%).

#### *Data Analysis*

The multiple regression analysis with enter method used to test the hypothesis. The goal of using this method is to find which independent variable gives the best contribution. By entering research variables in a particular order, the enter method will produce data in several models which will show which model is most suitable for the study.

#### *Assumptions of Linear Regression*

The assumptions of the linear regression test meant to check the feasibility of the data before carrying out multiple regression analysis. There are five tests: normality test, linearity test, autocorrelation test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test. From those five tests it is known that the data collected is feasible to be tested using multiple regression analysis (see Table 1).

**Table 1**  
*Summary of the Assumptions of Linear Regression Tests*

Assumption Test	Results	Criterion
Normality	- Significance 0,2	- Significance score of Kolmogorov-Smirnov > .1
	- The graph curve is ascending in the middle	- The histogram chart curve is not skewed on the right or left side
Linearity	Significance 0	Significance score of linearity must be .05
Autocorrelations	Durbin-Watson Score 1.655	Durbin Watson score must be $1 < DW < 3$
Multicollinearity	$r = .469$ , significance $p < .0001$	$r < .9$
Heteroscedasticity	The distribution of dots spreads above and below the number 0 and Y axis	Distribution of dots is spread throughout the graph

## Result

Descriptive Statistics. Table 2 showed that the correlation between independent and dependent variables is positive and significant. So, it can be concluded that the perceived unfair treatment increases the tendency to anger with own children.

**Table 2**  
*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations*

Variable	Sample size	Score	Mean	Standard Deviation	$\alpha$	Correlations (r)		
						1	2	3
1. Forgiveness	63	18-109	79	18.09	.955	-	-	-
2. Perceived Unfair Treatment	63	20-100	60.95	15.09	.924	-.469***	-	-
3. Anger with own children	63	12-55	31.71	9.06	.849	-.370***	.770***	-

\*\*\*  $p < .0001$

To determine the level of participants' scores in all three variables, the researcher made criteria of categorization. The method of creating categories assumes that the population score of participants is normally distributed. Thus, we can make a theoretical score that is distributed according to the normal model. The normal distribution is divided into six standard deviation units (Azwar, 1993). The categorization criteria in this study are divided into three categories, high, average, and low (see Table 3). The categorization is calculated based on the minimum and maximum score of each instrument.

**Table 3**  
*Categories of Forgiveness, Perceived Unfair Treatment, and Anger with Own Children*

Category	Forgiveness	Perceived Unfair Treatment	Anger with own children
Low	$X < 30$	$X < 27$	$X < 15$
Average	$30 \leq X < 60$	$27 \leq X < 53$	$15 \leq X < 29$
High	$60 \leq X$	$53 \leq X$	$29 \leq X$

The results of the categorization show that the majority of the participants' scores on the three scales were above average. From table 4, 84.1% of participants have a high level of forgiveness, 71.4% of participants have a

high level of perceived unfair treatment, and 65.1% of participants have a level of anger with their own children which is also high. Of the three variables, there were no participants included in the low category.

**Table 4**  
*Percentage of Participants in each Categories (sample size = 63 participants)*

Category	Forgiveness	Perceived Unfair Treatment	Anger with own children
Low	0%	0%	0%
Average	15.9%	28.6%	34.9%
High	84.1%	71.4%	65.1%

Multiple Regression Analysis. Multiple regression analysis was conducted on 31 participants who had gender similarities (intragender) with the perpetrator of unfair treatments and their child who were used as references in filling out the questionnaire (grandmother, mother, daughter, see Table 5).

**Table 5**  
*Regression Analysis on 31 Participants (Intragender: Grandmother, Mother, Daughter)*

	Anger With own Children (AWC)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$
Perceived unfair treatments (PUT)	.753 <sup>***</sup>	.766 <sup>***</sup>	.762 <sup>***</sup>
Forgiveness		.030	.023
Perceived unfair treatment (PUT) × Forgiveness			.019
$R^2$	.567	.568	.568
F	37.944	.048	.020
dF	1.29	1.28	1.27
$\Delta R^2$	.567 <sup>***</sup>	.001	.000
$\Delta F$	.000 <sup>***</sup>	.829	.888

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>  $p < .0001$ .

Table 5 showed that 56.7% of the variance in anger with own daughter was explained by perceptions of unfair treatment by the mother (table 5 model 1;  $R^2 = .567$ ;  $p = .000$ ), but when the forgiveness variable was entered (Table 5 of model 2), it was seen that the value of  $R^2$  changed to .001. Furthermore, the interaction between unfair treatments felt by the mother when she was a child (PUT) and forgiveness (table 5 of model 3) did not succeed in predicting anger towards her daughter (AWC)  $R^2 = .000$ . Multiple regression analysis results showed that only the first hypothesis was supported. The moderator hypothesis was unsupported by statistical analysis results.

Further exploration conducted in this study for 63 participants without taking intragender similarity into account. The results of the second regression analysis showed similarity with the first analysis, 58.4 % of the variance in anger with own child was explained by perceptions of unfair treatment by the mother ( $R^2 = .584$ ;  $p = .000$ ; Table 6 model 2).

**Table 6**  
*Regression Analysis on 63 Participants (The perpetrator is their parent: Mother or Father)*

Anger With own Children (AWC)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$
The Perpetrator	.024	.021	.024	.025
Gender of the child	.187	.165	.165	.165
Perceived unfair treatment (PUT)		.765***	.757***	.751***
Forgiveness			-.017	-.024
Perceived unfair treatment (PUT) $\times$ Forgiveness				.024
$R^2$	.037	.621	.621	.622
F	1.155	90,993	.033	.083
dF	2. 60	1.59	1.58	1.57
$\Delta F R^2$		.584***	.000	.001
$\Delta F$		.000***	.857	.774

\*\*\*  $p < .0001$ .

Regression analysis (Table 6 model 3) also showed that participants' anger towards their own child was not explained by forgiveness of the mother about her own unfair treatment ( $R^2 = .000$ ;  $p = .857$ ). The interaction between unfair treatment felt by the mother when she was a child (PUT) and forgiveness (table 6 model 4) shows that forgiveness does not act as a moderator of the association between the unfair treatment and anger to their child ( $R^2 = .001$ ;  $p = .774$ ).

## Discussion

This study showed that the pattern of gender similarity transmission of unfair treatments in families was supported by data. Multiple regression analysis of 31 participants who chose their mother as the perpetrator and their daughter when filling out the questionnaire (see Table 5), showed that 56.7% of the variance in anger with own daughter was explained by perceptions of unfair treatment by the mother. These findings are consistent with the theory of gender similarity in modelling by Bandura and Walters (1959). Role modelling or behaviour can be influenced by gender identification by people who see the model. Children who model the behaviour of their parents will have a stronger effect if both are in the same gender. Children also tend to imitate aggressiveness from their same-gender parents (Kalmuss, 1984).

The results of the second regression analysis showed the same thing, 63 participants who chose parents (fathers or mother) as the perpetrator were predicted by 58.4% to be angry with their child (see table 6). The findings are in line with the modelling social learning theory by Bandura and Walters (1973) which states that children who are exposed to violence in their family will assume that aggressive action is a usual thing to be done and later will be imitated when they are married. This finding also supports previous studies that showed that victims of violence in families tend to be perpetrators of violence in their families, both towards spouses and children (Doumas et al., 1994; Laporte et al., 2009; Slep & OLeary, 2007).

The results showed that the relationship between perceptions of unfair treatments and anger with one's own child were not moderated by forgiveness irrespective of the perpetrator (similar gender or cross gender). This finding differs from the previous studies by Lee and Enright (2009), which shows that forgiveness of fathers will moderate the relationship between perceived unfair treatment and anger with their own children. To analyse the cause of forgiveness that fails to moderate association between perceived unfair treatments and anger with one's

own children, it can be seen from the factors that influence someone giving forgiveness itself. Worthington (2007) explains three factors that influence a person to forgive others: (1) situational factors, (2) relational factors, and (3) value factors.

Forgiveness that cannot moderate the relationship between perceived unfair treatment and anger with one's own children can be caused by two things, the relational factor, and the value factor. When viewed from the relational factor, if the perpetrator is a person who has a close relationship with the victim, then the victim will tend to forgive him/her (Worthington, 2007). However, if the motivation of giving forgiveness is only to make the victim be seen as a good person, to maintain good relationship with the perpetrator, then this action can be categorized as a pseudo forgiveness - the forgiveness just for getting personal gain (Enright et al., 1991).

The value factor is also assumed to contribute to the rejection of moderator hypotheses. Most of the participants in this study are Christian. A previous study conducted by Christina et al. (2017) showed the influence of Christian religiosity orientation in Indonesia towards forgiveness. It is known that 89.29% of the participants considered that forgiveness is a necessity because that is an important value and mandatory in Christianity. This study showed that 150 participants stated that the forgiveness they gave was a manifestation of religious obligations. In Christianity there is a teaching that states "God has already forgiven our sins, so we must forgive those who have wronged us". This mandatory was practiced as a ritual and for the benefit of oneself (Christina et al., 2017).

Another factor that can also be assumed to contribute to the rejection of moderator's hypotheses is the possibility of biased responses of the Personal Forgiveness Scale (PFS) due to social desirability. In items 7-12 (behaviour subscales), statements such as, "*I will ignore the person*", or "*I will not talk to the person*", may be not in line with Indonesian cultural values that uphold relationships with others, especially with their own parents. This response bias might affect the participants' forgiveness scores on PFS. If it is seen that there are 84.1% (table 4) participants who are included in the high category that means this score should indicate that they have forgiven the perpetrators. But if we pay further attention to the participants' answers in item 1 on the opening questionnaire ("*Now, how deep do you feel the pain to people and events?*"), the answers showed an average score of 3.74 (on a scale of 1-5) which means participants still feel hurt by the perpetrators to this day.

The social desirability bias that is likely to occur in this study may be related to the participant's cultural background. Even though the participants of this research consisted of various ethnic groups in Indonesia, in fact they had similarity, that they lived in a collectivist culture. Oishi and Diener (2001) show that the happiness of people who hold a collectivist culture can be achieved by fulfilling their cultural guidelines that lead to harmonious relationships and being able to fulfil the desires of others. The possibility of the occurrence of social desirability bias in this study that leads to pseudo forgiveness, could be assumed that they are not truly forgiving. If someone has not truly forgiven, there are still negative effects from the unpleasant experience he or she feels related to the actions of the perpetrator. Potential risks of pseudo forgiveness are manipulative behaviour, denial, long-lasting pain, and imitating unfair treatment (Enright et al., 1991). On the other hand, when the victim truly forgives, then they will see the perpetrators and other people as equals with them, not a bad person who deserves to be punished or as a "target" of further unfair treatment (Enright et al., 1998).

## Conclusion

This study finds different results from previous studies conducted by Lee and Enright (2009). Forgiveness has proven to not play a role as a moderator in the association between the perceived unfair treatment and anger with one's own children. This may be caused by three different factors; the relations between participants and their perpetrator, the mind-set of them who are influenced by the values they hold and can be caused by social

desirability biases that affect respondents in answering the scale of forgiveness (Personal Forgiveness Scale). Because this conclusion is only based on an researchers' assumption, further research is needed to explore this conclusion.

Although in this study forgiveness does not function as a moderator variable, according to the literature, forgiveness has many benefits, including fostering a positive attitude, hope, self-esteem, and a motivation to achieve life goals that are beneficial for themselves and others. Therefore, practitioners especially those engaged in therapy or intervention are expected to consider true forgiveness as a part of a program for victims of violence.

This research is also expected to be able to give, especially to the victims and perpetrators of unfair treatments in the family. It is expected that the victims who are also perpetrators will be able to provide true forgiveness, to those who have treated them unfairly, the situation, and themselves. Thus, the chain of violence can be broken, so that can reduce incidence of unfair treatment in the family in Indonesia.

#### *Recommendation*

This study also has several limitations, including the relatively small number of samples. Another limitation is the use of scale adopted from Western culture. Perhaps the items on these scales do not suit the participant's culture and thus influence the participant's response. Based on these two limitations, caution is needed in generalising the findings of this study. Future research on cultural adaptation of these scales is also recommended.

## **Declarations**

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#### *Author's Contributions*

TS and CMD designed study and constructed the manuscript. CMD did data analysis. Both authors have read and agreed the final draft.

#### *Conflict of Interest*

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the research, writing, and/or publication of this article.

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