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Promoting forgiveness in pre-school children: A cultural study of mothers' reasoning and strategies

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Professor Doctor Ana Tomas de Almeida

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Statement of integrity

I hereby declare having conducted my thesis with integrity. I confirm that I have not used plagiarism or any form of falsification of results during the thesis elaboration.

I further declare that I have fully acknowledged the Code of Ethical Conduct of the University of Minho.

University of Minho, _05/05/2016_

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Signature: _____

"He who is devoid of the power to forgive

is devoid of the power to love."

Martin Luther King

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ABSTRACT

Children in their daily peer relationships may encounter a situation in which a peer unjustly offends them, and as a result they need to make a decision on how to solve unjustified or unjust offences. In this regard, enhancing children's forgiveness skills is remarkably important for developing their peer competence and positive development.

Furthermore, forgiveness is associated with one's relief of anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, anger and resentment. Given that, fostering children's forgiveness skills is of great importance. How young children develop their understanding and proneness to forgive can be a demanding socialization task for parents' evaluations of the wrongdoing and needs-oriented forgiveness reasoning. Children's reasoning and justification regarding their decision-making in conflict resolution is dependent on their understanding of what authorities such as parents consider acceptable behavior. Thus, parents' beliefs, moral reasoning and educational strategies are key socialization processes and, alongside a number of positive outcomes in social, cognitive, moral and emotional development, they are critical in boosting the child's competence to forgive others' wrongdoing.

This study aimed at exploring mothers' reasoning and socialization strategies when helping their young children to forgive the harm caused by a peer, through a cultural lens. With this aim, and given the very few studies in this area, this project presents a model of mothers' reasoning and socialization strategies in promoting their child's forgiveness skills and the study that supported the development and validity of the mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies scale (MFSS). In order to compare mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies from a cultural perspective, two samples of Iranian and Portuguese mothers were collected, assuming that Iran and Portugal respectively represent cultural models oriented to interdependence and independence. A total of 253 mothers (n=129 Portuguese; n=124 Iranian) of 4 to 6 year-old children participated in the study. Results suggest that the MFSS demonstrated an early promise as an instrument for exploring the mothers' strategies in promoting the children's forgiveness skills, although further validity studies are required. In addition, multivariate analyses showed significant differences between Iranian and Portuguese mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies. Moreover, within and across the two cultures, mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies differed according to their socio-demographic status, including educational level and religious characteristics. Results are discussed in relation to their implications for parenting education and a culturally-oriented approach to the socio-moral development of children.

Key words: Forgiveness, Mothers' reasoning and strategies, Preschool-aged children, Socialization practices, Moral reasoning

RESUMO

As crianças, nos seus relacionamentos quotidianos, podem experimentar situações em que um companheiro as ofendem injustamente, tendo por esse motivo necessidade de vir a tomar uma decisão sobre como resolver as ofensas injustificadas ou injustas. Neste sentido, induzir a capacidade das crianças perdoarem é extremamente importante para o desenvolvimento de sua competência na relação com os pares e desenvolvimento positivo.

Além disso, o perdão está associado à recuperação pessoal de estados de ansiedade, depressão, baixa auto-estima, raiva e ressentimento. De acordo com esta assunção, promover a capacidade de perdão das crianças é de grande importância. Como as crianças pequenas desenvolvem a sua compreensão e predisposição para perdoar pode ser uma tarefa de socialização exigente para os pais que precisam de avaliar as maldades e orientar a necessidade de um perdão. O raciocínio e a justificação das crianças em relação à sua tomada de decisão na resolução de conflitos depende de sua compreensão do que figuras de autoridade como os pais consideram ser um comportamento aceitável. Assim, as crenças dos pais, o seu raciocínio moral e as estratégias educativas são processos principais de socialização, bem como para uma série de resultados positivos no desenvolvimento social, cognitivo, moral e emocional, são fundamentais para estimular a competência da criança para perdoar as maldades dos outros.

Este estudo teve como objetivo explorar o raciocínio e as estratégias de socialização usadas pelas mães para ajudar os filhos a perdoarem a maldade de um colega, numa perspetiva cultural. Com este objetivo, e tendo em consideração os escassos estudos nesta área, este projeto apresenta um modelo do raciocínio das mães e das estratégias de socialização usadas para promoverem as habilidades de perdão dos filhos e descreve os estudos realizados com vista ao desenvolvimento e validação da Escala das Estratégias das Mães na Promoção do Perdão (MFSS). A fim de comparar as estratégias de promoção do perdão das mães numa perspetiva cultural, reunimos duas amostras, uma de mães Iranianas e a outra de mães Portuguesas, assumindo que Irão e Portugal representam modelos culturais respetivamente orientados para a interdependência e para a independência. Um total de 253 mães (n = 129 Portuguesas; e n = 124 Iranianas) de crianças entre os 4 e os 6 anos de idade participaram no estudo. Os resultados sugerem que a MFSS (Mother's Forgiveness-promoting Strategies Scale) é uma medida promissora para a exploração das estratégias usadas pelas mães para promover as habilidades de perdão em crianças pequenas, embora sejam necessários mais estudos de validade. Adicionalmente, as análises multivariadas mostraram diferenças significativas entre as estratégias de promoção do perdão usadas pelas mães Iranianas e pelas Portuguesas. Além disso, dentro de cada uma das culturas e entre ambas, as estratégias de promoção do perdão a que as mães recorrem diferiram conforme o estatuto sócio-demográfico, designadamente com o nível educacional e as características religiosas. Os resultados são discutidos tendo em conta as suas implicações em termos de educação parental e de uma abordagem culturalmente orientada ao desenvolvimento sócio-moral das crianças.

Palavras chave: Perdão, raciocínio e estratégias maternas, crianças em idade pré-escolar, práticas de socialização, raciocínio moral

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Introduction

Across cultures and throughout history, the ability to forgive is considered a desirable individual characteristic (Sandage, Worthingon, Hight, & Berry, 2000). It is a positive individual characteristic as well as a prosocial behavior and problem solving skill since it is a voluntary behavior to benefit the offender (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006). Forgiveness is also a significant element for adjusting to many social situations, particular in interpersonal relationships. Moreover, it has proved to be a critical element for the young children's socioemotional competence and positive development.

Children in their daily peer relationships may encounter a situation in which a peer unjustly offends them, so they need to make a decision as to how to solve the offense and whether to maintain their relationship. Conflicts and interpersonal dilemmas are the social context for the development of children's relationships and the foundation of children's social and moral development (Rafman, 2007). Unjust offenses are especially troublesome and forgiveness is demanding in maintaining and repairing peer relationships and it is critical for children's positive development (Denham, Neal, Wilson, Pickering, & Boyatzis, 2005). Therefore, from early childhood, forgiveness becomes a key element of social competence to prevent weak and short-lived relationships as well as children's social isolation (Bassett, 2007). Besides, psychologically, forgiveness brings emotional release from anger and resentment

(Worthington & Drinkard, 2000), which is helpful and advantageous for both the victim and the offender. As far as implications, it has an important influence on one's physical, mental and social health (Worthington, Berry, & Parrott, 2001; Worthington, 2006). In addition, forgiveness ability is related to the individual's relief of anxiety, depression and low self-esteem (Flanagan, Hoek, Ranter, & Reich, 2012; Rafman, 2007). Therefore, promoting children's forgiveness skills from early childhood is of high value. In this respect, parental socialization strategies on fostering children's forgiveness skills are of significant importance.

Parenthood has a great impact on children's development and maturity. Every child in a family is immersed in a sociocultural context such as beliefs, values, expectations and goals of the family. In this regard, the family represents specific values and characteristics according to their role in a culture (Vieira, Martins, & da Rocha Lordelo, 2013). The cultural models of parenting influence children's socialization environments (Keller et al., 2007), and parents' personal characteristics (such as beliefs, motivations, values). Similarly, characteristics of the context (such as social class, culture) influence young children's everyday activities and interactions (Tudge et al., 2013). In addition, parenting is a daily activity in which parents communicate with the child to teach values (Rice, 2001). Amongst values, forgiveness plays a remarkable role in children's communication and development. Parents are the underlying and fundamental basis of children for acquiring and learning values (Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000). Yet, developing forgiveness poses a challenge to socialization practices across cultures. Such development is almost invariably a demanding educational goal for young children's parents, not only as an end itself but also for enhancing children's social competence and positive development. How young children develop their understanding and proneness to

forgive can be a demanding socialization task for parents' evaluation of the wrongdoing and needs-oriented forgiveness reasoning. While making use of guidance and instructions to promote their children's forgivingness, parents foreshadow distinct socialization goals and parenting strategies. In this respect, empirical researches revealed that parental socialization is relevant to children's social and emotional competence (Denham et al., 2000; Eisenberg et al., 2001; McDowell & Parke, 2005; Mize & Pettit, 1997) as well as the way children develop forgiveness (Bassett, 2007). Thus, how parents communicate with the child to forgive others along with their practices, reasoning and strategies play an important role in promoting children's forgiveness skills.

Parents' beliefs, moral reasoning and verbal rationale are key factors in influencing children's prosocial behavior and their rational thinking about moral issues (Deković & Janssens, 1992; Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002; Henderson, 2013). According to cognitive developmental perspectives, children's reasoning and justification regarding their decision-making in conflict resolution is dependent on their understanding of what the authorities, such as parents or teachers, consider to be acceptable behavior (Laupa & Turiel, 1993; Rique & Lins-Dyer, 2003). Thus, parents' justifications and reasoning in resolving their children's peer conflict situations play an important role in their children's decision-making and peer relationships. Given that how parents encourage their children to forgive a peer's aggressive behavior is critical for their children's forgiveness development. In this respect, a few recent researchers in the US have found evidence that positive parenting practices are associated with American children's higher propensity to forgive (Neal, 2005), while negative parenting practices are related to children's lower likelihood to behave in a forgiving way (Mincic, Kalb, Bassett, & Denham, 2004). In addition, it has been found that

children's judgement of forgiveness was highly influenced by their mothers' judgement of forgiveness (Shewark, 2012). Thus, parents' beliefs and strategies are key socialization processes and, alongside a number of positive outcomes in social, cognitive, moral and emotional development, they are critical in boosting a child's competence to forgive others' wrongdoing.

Furthermore, culture plays an important role in parents' reasoning, beliefs, socialization goals and practices (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Patterson & Fisher, 2002; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008; Tamminen, 2006). Cross-cultural studies indicated that child-rearing practices are highly related to sociocultural factors (Baumrind, 1972; Chao, 1996). Parents, according to the cultural context in which they live, have different child-rearing styles and practices (Darling & Steinberg, 1993) and they try to help their children to develop characteristics which are of worthiness in the society they live in (LeVine, 1974). In this regard, it is probable that across cultures, parents are likely to attribute different reasoning and strategies when helping their child to forgive other's wrongdoing.

Given the significant role of parents' forgiveness-promoting strategies and practices on their children's forgiveness development, and due to the small number of researches in this regard, this project aims at identifying mothers' reasoning and socialization strategies regarding promoting forgiveness in their preschool-aged children through a culture-oriented lens. To this aim, this study examined the development, validity and reliability of a newly-created self-report scale known as Mothers' Forgiveness-promoting Strategies Scale (MFSS). Moreover, in order to compare mothers' reasoning and strategies in promoting their children's forgiveness skills through a cultural lens, mothers living in Iran and Portugal were studied, as two

contrasting representatives of an interdependent as opposed to an independent cultural orientation (Keller, Demuth, & Yovsi, 2008). Accordingly, we hypothesize that these differences in cultural orientation should be reflected in mothers' moral reasoning, socialization goals and child rearing practices in these two different cultures. This research thus not only contribute to furthering our understanding concerning mothers' reasoning and strategies in promoting their children's forgiveness skills, but it can also shed more light on the role of culture in mothers' child-rearing strategies concerning children's forgiveness development using the newly-developed scale (MFSS).

This thesis includes five chapters. Chapter 1 is devoted to a literature review of forgiveness including the definition and elements of forgiveness, the importance of forgiveness in individuals' and especially in children's lives, the onset of children's forgiveness understanding, the process of forgiveness moral reasoning, and the relation of culture and religion to an individual's willingness to forgive. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the function of parenting and parents' role in children's moral development and internalization of values. It highlights the influence of different parental disciplines on children's moral development and the relation of parents' socialization strategies to children's forgiveness skills. Cultural variations in parents' strategies and socialization goals are also discussed. This chapter also describes parents' moral reasoning and introduces a newly-developed model of mothers' reasoning, reflected in their socialization strategies about promoting their children's forgiveness skills. At the end of this chapter, influences of culture, religiosity and educational level on parents' strategies and child developmentt are discussed. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the empirical research study including the objectives, rational for scale development, research questions and

hypotheses formulated according to the literature review explained in the previous

chapters, the rationale for sample recruitment, a description of instruments and the

procedure of data collection and analysis. Outcomes of the research and data analysis

are evaluated in chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a general discussion of the

results obtained in the empirical studies and presents the limitations as well as

recommendations for future work.

Chapter 1

Forgiveness

This chapter provides a literature review related to forgiveness including the definition and elements of forgiveness and its influence on individuals' and especially on children's lives. It also describes the relation of moral emotions to forgivness, as well as the onset of children's forgiveness comprehension. The process of forgiveness moral reasoning and the relation of culture and religion to an individual's willingness to forgive are other isuues that are addressed in this chapter.

1.1   Definition of Forgiveness

Forgiveness has only been an interest and focus of attention in moral development and positive psychology for the last three decades. In this regard, Smedes (1984), Enright, Santos and Al-Mabuk (1989), Worthington and DiBlasion (1990) are authors who uncovered the factors, elements, procedures and consequences of the subject of

forgiveness (Enright, Santos, & Al-Mabuk, 1989; Smedes, 1984; Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990; see also, Magnuson, 2009). The educational applications of this research were to be seen in the first empirical intervention program of forgiveness in the literature issued by Hebl and Enright (Hebl & Enright, 1993; see also, Magnuson, 2009). According to Enright and his associates (1991), the comprehensive and primitive behaviors of forgiveness originate from Judaism and Christianity but the other ancient religions and philosophies such as Buddhism, Confucianism and Islam mentioned about this notion as well (Magnuson, 2009).

Research studies considered forgiveness as a helpful instrument for enhancing emotional health and decreasing anger (Baskin & Enright, 2004; Klatt & Enright, 2011; Ripley & Worthington, 2002; Rye et al., 2005). In the definition of forgiveness, Enright and his colleagues (1998) accentuate behavioral facets of forgiveness. They examined forgiveness in interpersonal, individual, family and social relationships and perceived forgiveness as a volitional reaction towards the offender to overcome indifference or the inclination towards revenge with friendly and compassionate feelings or attitudes (Enright, Freedman, & Rique, 1998). On the other hand, Worthington and Wade (1999) underlined the emotional aspects of forgiveness. In their definition, forgiveness is regarded as the emotional substitute for negative emotions such as hatred and resentment with positive emotions including love and empathy (Worthington & Wade, 1999). In spite of different definitions of forgiveness, McCullough and his associates indicated that all of the different definitions of forgiveness have the same aspect, which is changes in a victim's reaction in relation to an offender including essential changes of cognition, emotion and behavior (McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2001).

Encompassing different definitions of forgiveness, Denham, Neal, Wilson, Pickering, and Boyatzis (2005) presented a dynamic definition of forgiveness highlighting emotional regulation, cognitive appraisals, motivation for change, and behavioral processes (Denham, Neal, Wilson, Pickering, & Boyatzis, 2005):

> "Forgiveness is a transformation of one's affect, cognitive judgments, and motivations toward an offender. The victim makes an assessment of the harm done and acknowledges the perpetrator's responsibility but voluntarily chooses to cancel the debt, giving up the need for revenge, punishments, or restitution. Importantly, one removes oneself from the negative emotions directly related to the transgression. Over time, there is a motivational transformation, including a reduction in negative motivations and an increase in constructive motivations toward the perpetrator. The forgiver may be motivated toward positive social behaviors toward the offender (pp. 129)".

According to this definition, forgiveness implies self-control, cognitive and affective empathy, a triad of motivational, cognitive and emotional capacities that achieve an adaptive function for one's social relationships. Understanding the other person's feelings, as well as his or her intentions, beliefs and expectations, are certainly crucial social skills; thereby empathy plays a crucial role in an individual's willingness to forgive. This definition also refers to the influence of reducing negative emotions and increasing positive motivations to cope with the offender's wrongdoing. The authors of this definition propose that children in their process of social-emotional development are also inclined to learn what the skill to forgive others entails (Shewark, 2012). From a different perspective, forgiveness in a situation

in which the offender does not apologize seems to be difficult. In this regard, previous research has illustrated the impact of the presence of an apology on an individual's willingness to forgive a wrongdoer (Zechmeister, Garcia, Romero, & Vas, 2004). In addition, there is a philosophical argument about whether to forgive an offender whose behavior was unjust, specifically when the wrongdoer does not repent (Haber, 1991; Holmgren, 1993). However, the forgiveness decision is not contingent on the offender's treatment or competence. Rather, at stake is the victim's emotional healing. When the victim refuses to forgive until the offender says sorry, he/she suffers more, first because of the primary transgression and next through the expectation that the offender should apologize. In this vein, forgiveness conception can be considered as a volitional decision which is according to the theories of human agency (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Brandtstadter & Lerner, 1999) and this matter helps the injured person to have an opportunity for positive alteration voluntarily and without any kind of imposition (Klatt & Enright, 2011).

In general, historical, philosophical, theological and psychotherapeutic literature has explored the importance of forgiveness (Park & Enright, 1997). Although, the importance of forgiveness was initially studied in theologies and philosophies, more recently, psychology and counselling fields of study have indicated the significant role of forgiveness (e.g. (Freedman & Enright, 1996; Kanz, 2000; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997) in an individual's life. Forgiveness has also been a concept of rich elaboration in clinical psychology (Reed & Enright, 2006) and social psychology (McCullough, Fincham, & Tsang, 2003; Takaku, 2001) and has been studied as a means of character development (Neng Lin, Enright, & Klatt, 2011). Psychologically, forgiveness is conceptualized as a helpful, advantageous and influential factor for both the victim and the offender since it emotionally brings about

the release of anger and resentment (Worthington & Drinkard, 2000). It has an important influence on one's physical, mental and social health (Worthington, Berry, & Parrott, 2001; Worthington, 2006). In addition, the ability to forgive is related to an individual's relief of anxiety, depression and low self-esteem (Flanagan et al., 2012; Rafman, 2007). In this regard, empirical research studies have shown that forgiveness brings about positive changes such as negative emotion regulation and psychological health recovery (Baskin & Enright, 2004; Coyle & Enright, 1997; Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Freedman & Enright, 1996; Hansen, 2002; Knutson, Enright, & Garbers, 2008; Ripley & Worthington, 2002). Thus, forgiveness plays a remarkable role in the communication of human beings and it is a significant skill for not only adults and parents but also children, which brings about positive social outcomes and healthy social development.

1.2   Moral emotions and forgiveness

According to researches, moral emotions including empathy, shame and guilt are related to the individual's likelihood to forgive (Bassett, 2007; McCullough et al., 1997). Previous studies proposed that empathy or perspective-taking competence is the principal incentive for forgiveness (Denham et al., 2005; McCullough et al., 1998; Worthington & Wade, 1999; Worthington, 1998a). Those who are able to take on board the other person's emotional perspective may better comprehend the others' motives, feelings and thoughts regarding the reason for their acts, thereby motivating them to behave in a forgiving way. In other words, understanding the other's intentions and feelings regarding his or her behavior facilitates an individual's forgiveness-proneness (Bassett, 2007; Falchi, 2014). In this vein, previous studies on children suggested that there is a relation between empathy and children's forgiveness

(Scobie & Scobie, 2000). In spite of small number of empirical studies on children's forgiveness, Wilson's (2004) research study on primary school children revealed that children's likelihood of forgiveness was associated with their empathic emotional skills. Thus, empathy plays an important role in promoting adult's and children's forgiveness skills.

Along with empathy, moral emotions of guilt and shame are also associated with forgiveness (Denham, Neal, & Bassett, 2004; Tangney, Fee, Reinsmith, Boone, & Lee, 1999). These are both negative feelings of self-evaluation. Nevertheless, the negative feeling of shame is completely on the whole inner self, not just a certain behavior. In other words, feeling of shame leads one to evaluate him/herself as a bad or failed person, which brings about avoidance (Bafunno & Camodeca, 2013; Bybee, 1998; Mills, 2003). However, the feeling of guilt is drawn from the negative judgment of the behavior which leads to individual's willingness to apology or repair (Bafunno & Camodeca, 2013; Bassett, 2007; Bybee, 1998; Tangney, Burggraf, & Wagner, 1995). People with the negative feeling of shame suffer more than people with the feeling of guilt because they think they are not worthy. Thus, they are more inclined to avoid or to act defensively (Bassett, 2007; Tangney et al., 1999). In addition, shame proneness has been found as an implication for higher internalizing and externalizing problems (Ferguson, Stegge, Miller, & Olsen, 1999), as well as lower levels of empathy and social skills (Walter & LaFreniere, 2007). A previous study on preschoolers found a relation between shame and children's emotional and behavioral problems (Bafunno & Camodeca, 2013). However, the feeling of guilt is accompanied by regret of the "bad thing done" and the center of attention is on the behavior not the self. People who nurture feelings of guilt upon wrongdoing are less self-centered and they give more importance to the impact of their manners on others (Bassett, 2007;

Tangney et al., 1999). In this regard, lower levels of guilt have been found as an implication for bullying and externalizing symptoms (Ferguson et al., 1999; Rieffe, Camodeca, Pouw, Lange, & Stockmann, 2012), whereas the study on preschoolers found an association between higher levels of guilt and children's adaptive characteristics (Bafunno & Camodeca, 2013). According to Tangney's (1991) study, empathetic responsiveness towards others had a positive relationship with guilt propensity and a negative association with shame propensity.

In addition, Tangney and associates' empirical research on adults revealed that feelings of shame and guilt had diverse associations with forgiveness. In this study, propensity of guilt had a positive relationship with forgiveness and absence of blame while propensity of shame was associated with unforgiveness and condemning others (Tangney et al., 1999). Also, this association and these results were found in few empirical researches on children. That is to say, children who had more guilt propensity were more likely to forgive in comparison with children who had a lower level of guilt tendency. On the other hand, children with more shame propensity were less likely to forgive in comparison with children who had less level of shame tendency (Denham et al., 2004; Neal, Bassett, & Denham, 2004).

Thus, according to theoretical and empirical studies, moral emotions including empathy, guilt and shame play a significant role in adults' and children's ability to forgive. In addition, findings suggest that parental supportive and inductive discipline provide important clues to distinguish shame from guilt feelings (Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002; Krevans & Gibbs, 1996).Therefore, parental socialization strategies and practices are effective catalysts for children's understandings and empathetic behaviors by supporting more focus on the individual child's self-evaluation skills.

1.3   Forgiveness as social Competence

Whenever children are unjustly offended by a peer they need to make a decision on how to solve the offense and whether to maintain the relationship. Children's peer relationships play an important role in constructing their social and moral world. When a child is harmed by a peer, the victim-child's moral decision on whether to forgive the peer or to maintain an attitude of revenge highly influences his/her social world development. In other words, such moral choices are the foundation of children's social and moral development (Rafman, 2007). According to research studies, children's positive peer relationship and social experiences influence their wellbeing (Kupersmidt, Coie, & Dodge, 1990) as well as their social, emotional and cognitive development (Bukowski, 2003; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006; Watanabe, 2011). Conversely, research illustrates that peer rejection in childhood leads to aggressive behavior in children's future life (Dodge et al., 2003) and low peer acceptance brings about school maladaptive problems (Almeida, 2000; Parker & Asher, 1987). Conflicts and moral dilemmas are inevitable aspects of adults' and children's social life. This being the case, forgiveness becomes a critical element for maintaining and repairing peer relationships and for developing peer competence and children's positive development (Denham et al., 2005). As age increases, children are more interested in spending time with their friends and peers. Thus, learning skills which foster sharing, negotiation, reconciliation and assertiveness in children is of great importance. Children's development of forgiveness enables them to build and keep close relationships with others in their adulthood while underdevelopment of this important element of social competence may cause children to have weak and short-lived relationships as well as social isolation (Bassett, 2007). Therefore, promoting children's forgiveness skills from early childhood is of high value. In this

respect, parental socialization strategies on fostering their children's forgiveness skills are of significant importance.

The subject of interpersonal forgiving in human relationships has been the focus of attention of social scientists (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Enright & North, 1998; McCullough et al., 2001; Worthington, 1998b, 2005). However, as Girard and Mullet pointed out, most of the studies focus on adult samples (Girard & Mullet, 2012), notwithstanding the comprehensive review studies on forgiveness between children and adolescents (Denham et al., 2005). As an example, Darby and Schlenker's (1982) study was the first empirical research on preschoolers' and young adolescents' forgiveness. According to this study, apologies play an important role in forgiveness-proneness of 6, 9 and 12-year-old children. This study concluded that children were more likely to forgive when the offender apologized and this matter was more obvious among12-year-old children than younger children. In this study, young adolescents were found to be more likely to behave in a forgiving way when the offender apologized while preschoolers were less affected by the transgressor's apology (Darby & Schlenker, 1982). Furthermore, Enright and his associates (1989) conducted empirical studies regarding young adolescents' development of forgiveness reasoning and they found that adolescents' willingness to forgive is related to their moral development. Thus, promoting children's forgiveness skills plays an important role in their socio-moral development. According to the significant role of parent's child-rearing practices and strategies on children's development and due to the small number of research studies on promoting children's forgiveness skills, further research on how parents develop their children's forgiveness-proneness is required.

1.4 The onset of children's forgiveness comprehension

A great number of researches in western and non-western countries (e.g. Smetana, 1994; Tisak, 1995; Turiel, 1998) noted that beginning in early childhood; children form different aspects of judgment in their social interactions. Across different phases and facets of social life, children are challenged by numerous social experiences with different people and through different activities. It has been illustrated that different kinds of experience with people, including peers and adults, are associated with the development of judgment in personal, social conventional and moral territories (Turiel & Wainryb, 2000). By definition, judgments related to the personal domain emphasize self-centered and personal interests, while social conventional judgments are concerned with rules and duties in social relationships and organizations. Finally, judgments related to the moral domain mirror prosocial incentives and behaviors including moral, welfare and justice.

According to the literature, children's moral judgment is shaped early in development (Rafman, 2007). Moral dilemmas are inevitable in individuals' social interaction and forgiveness plays an important role for children's as well as adult's development (Turiel & Wainryb, 2000). Research on narrative play techniques with children around the age of three has shown that they not only show a significant capability for moral reasoning but also have the ability to discuss other possible issues to solve a moral dilemma (Buchsbaum & Emde, 1990; Oppenheim, Emde, Hasson, & Warren, 1997). Piaget (1932) stated that at the age of four, children think and reason that fairness and law are attributes of the world that are immutable. Research studies evidence that four-year-old children are able to recognize moral transgressions deriving from inequity, physical hurt or psychological harm as serious matters that require punishment (Helwig, Zelazo, & Wilson, 2001; Rafman, 2007; Smetana et al.,

1999). In addition, numerous studies have depicted strong evidence that from early
childhood children differentiate morality and social convention (Killen, McGlothlin,
& Lee-Kim, 2002; Smetana, 1994, 2006; Turiel, 1998, 2002). According to Hoffman
(1975, 1983, 1984), children at an early age express their empathic feelings towards
others in their social interaction. They also indicate their understanding of moral rules
(Dunn, 1987). In an uncomplicated situation in which the moral rule is transgressed
(Turiel, 1983), preschool-aged children internalize moral issues by empathizing with
the others' feelings and considering moral norms as entirely authentic issues in
contrast to conventional norms (Keller & Edelstein, 1991). Darby and Schlenker
(1982) assessed children's understanding of forgiveness and they found that even
kindergarten children were able to understand the major and important criteria of
adult-like social judgment (e.g., intentions, motives, apologies) including forgiveness
and that they displayed similar judgments compared to older children (Darby &
Schlenker, 1982). In addition, a great number of studies have represented that
preschool-aged children have the ability to differentiate transgression from morality
and social convention regarding the rules in which they are familiar (Nucci & Turiel,
1978; Smetana & Braeges, 1990; Smetana, Schlagman, & Adams, 1993; Smetana,
1981, 1985). In the same vein, Turiel (1998, 2002) claimed that by the age of 4 years
children distinguish between personal, conventional and moral issues. Different kinds
of research were applied regarding this claim. As an example, Yau and Smetana's
(2003) study indicated that Chinese preschoolers apply the distinction between
personal issues, conventional norms and moral rules. The same results were also
found in a study of 3 to 5 year-old Colombian children (Ardila-Rey & Killen, 2001).
Likewise, Nucci and Weber (1995) found the same results with 3- and 4-year old
children at home and Killen and Smetana (1999) concluded similar findings with 3- to

5-year old children in the school (Killen & Smetana, 1999; Nucci & Weber, 1995; see also, Kuyel, 2007). Thus, regarding children's ability in understanding forgiveness and moral rules, how parents communicate and encourage forgiveness practices with children is a central key in developing their children's forgiveness skills.

1.5   Development of forgiveness reasoning

Enright has proposed a model of forgiveness development depicting how reasoning about forgiveness develops (Enright et al., 1989; Enright, 1994). This theory was based on Kohlberg's moral reasoning theory. According to Enright's cognitive development model of forgiveness, the process of forgiveness advances through six stages. The first and second stages are revengeful and conditional forgiveness. According to Kohlberg, these two stages require some kind of compensation such as punishment or restitution. As Enright claims, in these two stages people usually get confused with the concept of justice and forgiveness, meaning that they are willing to forgive on condition of getting back at a transgressor or being compensated by him or her. The third and fourth stages are claimed to be expectational forgiveness and lawful expectational forgiveness in which forgiveness occurs due to pressure of social drivers such as people, society or religion. The fifth stage is forgiveness as social harmony which contributes to the good relationships and harmony in the society as it lessens conflict. At this stage, forgiveness is a means of maintaining relationships, making peace and encouraging social unity. The last stage is forgiveness as love in which the 'doors' (motives) of revenge are closed and forgiveness takes place as releasing the offender just because of love without any revenge or condition. At this stage, forgiveness does not depend on the social context, as it does in the fifth stage. Forgiveness occurs unconditionally because it promotes a sense of true love.

This theory was empirically tested with 4th, 7th, 10th graders as well as college students and adults (Enright et al., 1989). In this theory, Enright and his associates (1989) particularly concentrated on the conditions and situations under which a person is likely to forgive. According to their analysis, children sometimes consider forgiveness after getting back at the wrongdoer or getting compensation from him/her. So, in this way, they misunderstand forgiveness, confusing it with revenge. On the other hand, social pressure has an important role in adolescents' forgiveness. For example, if peers or family suggest a person should forgive, it would be easier for him/her to forgive. However, unconditional forgiveness as moral behavior of love towards a wrongdoer can be seen in late adolescence and adulthood. As a first theory of social cognitive process of children's forgiveness development, Enright and his associates' empirical study found that the older participants had a higher level of forgiveness reasoning. However, this finding does not indicate that children have a deficiency in making mature moral reasoning. In this regard, there is some evidence from different empirical studies that have found that even preschool-aged children are able to make mature moral reasoning and judgements towards the person who committed a transgression (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Smetana et al., 1993). Moreover, a rich foundation of research has demonstrated that from early ages, children have the ability of reasoning and judgements to differentiate morality (refers to deeds that have inherent influences on human's welfare or rights) from social conventional norms (refers to social rules and expectations that construct social relationships) (Killen et al., 2002; Killen & Rutland, 2011; Nucci, 2001; Sanderson & Siegal, 1988; Smetana & Braeges, 1990; Smetana et al., 1993; Smetana, 1981, 1985, 2006).

Following the Enright's developmental model of forgiveness (Enright et al., 1989),
Park and Enright (1997) proposed a developmental progression of understanding
forgiveness that they examined empirically and supported with Korean adolescents.
This developmental progression focuses more on the results of mutual perspective
taking as well as conversion of external feelings into internal. This model includes
people's reasoning of forgiveness, the conditions under which forgiveness is
suggested and the external and internal development of forgiveness. This model is
also based on the logic that Selman (1980; see also chapter 2 of this study) described
under social perspective-taking and according to Kohlberg's explanation of moral
development (Kohlberg, 1985; see also chapter 2 of this study). According to this
model, there is a developmental progression in understanding forgiveness, including
people's reasoning of forgiveness. The first or primitive level is revengeful
forgiveness; at this level, while words and gestures indicate forgiveness, there is
mental hostility that may be openly displayed. The second level is external
forgiveness, in which external indications reveal forgiveness, but there is an
awareness of inner frustrations which are suppressed. The third and highest level is
internal forgiveness, in which there is unconditional forgiveness for the sake of
beneficence and love, and one tries to take on the other person's perspective in order
to increase reconciliation. Furthermore, based on Park and Enright's (1997)
developmental expressions of forgiveness, Rique and Lins-dyer (Rique & Lins-Dyer,
2003) investigated teachers' views of forgiveness for resolving the conflicts between
students at school. The results supported the different justifications on forgiveness
including internal forgiveness, external forgiveness and prudential concerns (i.e. no
forgiveness), and indicated that teachers were more likely to endorse forgiveness as
social expectation and humanitarian ethics. Thus, according to this developmental

process of forgiveness, individuals apply different levels of reasoning and justification

for their behavior towards the transgressor. However, there is no study regarding

parents' view and reasoning of forgiveness for resolving their children's conflicts

with others. In this respect, research studies are required to explore parents' reasoning

and justification regarding promoting forgiveness in their children in order to examine

how parents encourage their child to forgive a wrongdoer.

1.6   Culture and individual's willingness to forgive

According to the research review (Sandage & Williamson, 2005), there are just a

few studies regarding the influence of culture on forgiveness in non-western contexts

(Suwartono, Prawasti, & Mullet, 2007) such as, studying the reaction of Japanese

children to harm and conflicts (Ohbuchi & Sato, 1994), comparing forgiveness in

Lebanon's communities (Azar & Mullet, 2002), investigating the interpersonal

forgiveness among Chinese people (Fu, Watkins, & Hui, 2004), investigating the

personality correlates of forgiveness in Nepal (Watkins & Regmi, 2004), and studying

adolescents' forgiveness reasoning in Korea (Park & Enright, 1997). On the other

hand, there is even less research on cultural distinctions in forgiveness (Suwartono et

al., 2007). As an example, the comparative study of dispositional forgivingness

between Indonesian (as a Southern Asian culture) and French (as a Western European

culture) students (Suwartono et al., 2007), as well as a Congo-France comparison

study of forgiveness (Kadiangandu, Mullet, & Vinsonneau, 2001), represented

differences in willingness to forgive between these different individualistic (French)

and collectivistic (Congolese, Indonesian) cultures (Suwartono et al., 2007). Also,

different cultures perceive the development of the self as an expression of different

influences, and, inherently, such influences will be reflected in beliefs and attitudes

towards forgiveness. Therefore, it is also plausible to conceive that forgiveness will reflect these cultural constructions. In collectivistic cultures the self is prone to have a stronger social expression mirroring its tight membership to society; thereby the collective relationships and norms are highly emphasized. As a consequence, forgiveness in these cultures has an interpersonal dimension that maintains and keeps social relationships between members of the group and incorporates the sense of wellbeing in the society (Fu et al., 2004; Ho, 1993; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Suwartono et al., 2007). However, in individualistic cultures, the self evolves in social contexts endorsing a stronger independent construction under which personal wellbeing, success and responsibility are highly valued. Accordingly, forgiveness in such these cultures has an intrapersonal component under which individuals are likely to forgive in order to release themselves from negative feelings (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Suwartono et al., 2007; Wade & Worthington, 2003). Taken together, individuals in more collectivistic cultures show a higher tendency to endorse social normative reasoning to resolve their conflicts than those in more individualistic cultures. Therefore, it is more probable that mothers in more collectivistic cultures (e.g. Iran) have a greater tendency to use social normative endorsing-strategies when teaching their child to forgive the harm done by a peer compared with mothers in more individualistic cultures (e.g. Portugal).

The above mentioned assumptions led us in the present study to explore the mothers' reasoning and justifications in promoting their children's forgiveness skills. Opposing interdependence to independence cultural orientations (Keller et al., 2008), this study will further compare the differences between mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies in Iran and Portugal.

1.7   Religious beliefs and individual's willingness to forgive

Throughout the world, apart from different kinds of worldviews that play a role as meaning systems, religion has its own specific ability to address moral standards and to search for meaning of life (Tsang, McCullough, & Hoyt, 2005). Amongst different values, forgiveness is the one that has been strongly recommended by major religions of the world (e.g., (Rye et al., 2000) and specifically by the great world monotheistic religions (e.g., McCullough & Worthington, 1999). Additionally, across different religions, forgiveness has been considered as a virtue and there has been found a positive relationship between individual's forgiveness and their religious orientation and church attendance (Sandage & Crabtree, 2012; Tsang et al., 2005). In the same vein, previous research studies (Edwards et al., 2002; Poloma & Gallup, 1991; Rokeach, 1973) have also indicated a positive correlation between individual's forgiveness and religious variables such as the importance of religion, religiousness, rate of personal prayers and frequency of attendance at the place of worship. Based on Silberman's (2005) study, religion plays an important role in forming people's beliefs, emotions, actions, and goals as part of their meaning systems. Given these aspects of religious meaning systems, the relation between religion and forgiveness is comprehensible (Tsang et al., 2005).

Religions give a high importance to the act of forgiveness, whereby they can transform individuals' worldviews by helping them to interpret events from the viewpoint of forgiveness (Pargament & Rye, 1998). In the same vein, compassion and empathy are important commandments of religions (e.g., Enright et al., 1991). Thus, religion can lead individuals to have a higher tendency to forgive (McCullough et al., 1997). Consistent with this viewpoint, Sandage and Crabtree (2012) claim that the often reported relationship between an individual's forgiveness and his or her

religiousness and church attendance (e.g. Sandage & Jankowski, 2010; Tsang et al., 2005) is understandable and comes as no surprise. In this respect and consistent with research findings (Gorsuch & Hao, 1993; McCullough & Worthington, 1999; Mullet et al., 2003; Poloma & Gallup, 1991; Rokeach, 1973; Shoemaker & Bolt, 1977), more religious people show a greater propensity to forgive and a stronger tendency to give importance to forgiveness than less religious people. Furthermore, research has demonstrated the relation between religion and reasoning about forgiveness. In this regard, Enright, Santos, and Al-Mabuk's (1989) study found a positive association between the religious involvement and the individual's moral reasoning on forgiveness. In this study, they reported that people who considered themselves more religious had higher comprehensive forgiveness reasoning than those who considered themselves less religious. The present research study probed mothers living in Iran and Portugal as countries of two different predominant religious affiliations, specifically Islam for Iranian mothers and Christianity for Portuguese mothers. Thus, forgiveness is also studied particularly in the context of these two religious mindsets.

1.7.1   Forgiveness in Islam and Christianity

Islam and Christianity have similar origins and their foundational principles value forgiveness highly. They both have the same justification for valuing forgiveness. They encourage individuals to forgive regardless of the transgressor's act and whether he or she has indicated repentance or not. In both of these religions the messengers of God are depicted as the best examples of forgiveness in their personal life. For example, Jesus, as the messenger of Christianity, forgave those who executed him and likewise, Mohammad, the messenger of Islam, forgave those who persecuted him. In Islam, forgiveness is highly admired. First, one of God's attributes in Islam is the

Forgiving One (Rye et al., 2000). Moreover, it is a highly regarded virtue of good

Muslims and a key element in an individual's relationships and in smoothing the way

for peace. Similarly, in Christianity, forgiveness is as a basis and ethical core of

principles. In this religion, individuals are highly advised to forgive because God

forgave them, and it is highly valued to forgive regardless of the condition of whether

the offender displays repentance or not. In addition, forgiveness is found in Catholic

teaching in which individuals expect God's forgiveness during confession (Tsang et

al., 2005). Taken together, forgiveness in both Islam and Christianity is highly valued.

1.7.2   Different views on relationship between religion and forgiveness

Despite the enmeshment of virtues associated with a religion, of which

forgivingness is a core element, there remain a few controversial issues that weaken

the relationship between religiousness and the propensity to forgive. One area of

discredit is the many examples of religious conflicts throughout history, such as the

ongoing war between Palestinian Moslems and Israeli Jews or the recent conflict

between Irish Catholics and Protestants, mirroring how religious people can be

unlikely to forgive (Tsang, McCullough, & Hoyt, 2005). The research agenda has also

documented weak associations between religious involvement and forgiveness. Apart

from the aforementioned studies of a positive relationship between religiousness and

forgiveness (Edwards et al., 2002; Gorsuch & Hao, 1993; McCullough &

Worthington, 1999; Mullet et al., 2003; Poloma & Gallup, 1991; Rokeach, 1973;

Sandage & Crabtree, 2012; Shoemaker & Bolt, 1977; Tsang et al., 2005), some other

research studies (e.g. McCullough & Worthington, 1999; Subkoviak et al., 1995)

countered this relationship. In this regard, Tsang, McCullough, and Hoyt's (2005)

study suggested a rationalized clarification of the religion-forgiveness discrepancy

asserting that religions include diverse and different principles for individuals' lives. Every individual has his/her own interpretation and understanding of religious teachings that may lead to different reactions of people in different situations. For more clarification, forgiveness and justice are both prescribed in religious principles. Based on different personal rationalizations of justice and forgiveness, individuals may act according to their own perceptions. In this situation, those individuals who have a greater propensity to forgive understand forgiveness as a religious prescription. However, rationalizations are more frequent among those who are less likely to forgive. As an alternative, they refer to the principle of justice in religion (Tsang et al., 2005). In major world religions including Islam and Christianity forgiveness come with the principle of retributive justice such as "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, the slave for the slave." In this respect, individuals can refer to different religious principles in order to rationalize their wish for forgiveness or revenge. In this vein, Tsang, McCullough and Hoyt's (2005) study indicated that people who were less prone to forgive had a higher propensity to find the retribution principle relevant and a lower propensity to endorse the forgiveness principle as relevant. Accordingly, as both forgiveness and retributive justice are highly valued in the religious scriptures, it is plausible for individuals to use them as rationalizations based on their personal desires. This moral rationalization helps to explain the weak association between religion and forgiveness in past research as well as the circumstances in which religion has failed to promote forgiveness (Tsang et al., 2005).

Chapter 2

Parenting

T his chapter describes the role of parenting and parents' socialization strategies in children's moral development and forgivness skills. In addition, cultural variations in parents' moral reasoning and socialization goals are discussed. This chapter also introduces a newly-developed model of mothers' reasoning and strategies related to promoting their children's forgiveness skills. Finally, the relation of culture, religiosity and educational level to parents' strategies and child development are discussed.

2.1 The function of parenting

Parents have a significant role and a great influence on children's development and maturity as "instructors, inhibitors, disinhibitors, facilitators, stimulus enhancers, and emotional arousers" (Bandura, 1986). Research studies in the 1920s defined children as vulnerable. In the early forties, Freud theorized about the important role of mothers

in the early childhood development and, in the fifties, Bowlby, with his attachment model, described the significant role of parents in their children's development (Bidjari & Zahmatkesh, 2011). The family has changed quickly in recent years (Aizpurúa, Jablonski, & Féres-Carneiro, 2007), and the twentieth century's calamities such as war, crisis and divorce rate increase have brought about some indirect or direct changes to the family structure and behavior (Elder, 1974, 1994). According to Geary and Flinn (2001), the evolutionary perspective has confirmed that the family and, more particularly, parental care are features of the co-evolution of different human characteristics; as an example the prolonged term of dependence is considered to be due to the immaturity of the child. Therefore, in this era, which is subject to deep historical and social changes, being a parent has different aspects.

Since the formative work of Hoffman (e.g., 1970) and Baumrind (e.g.,1971), there has been great interest in parenting methods and practices. In general, acceptance, support, responsivity, firmness and warmth are considered as impressive parental behavior (Grusec et al., 2000). Ainsworth and her associates defined parenting as distinctive patterns of parent-child interactions that mirrors the qualities - warmth, responsivity, structure, and protection among other dimensions - of parental behavior and of the parent-child relationship (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Ainsworth, 1967). Solid evidence from empirical research supports the fact that parenting practices are a good predictor of children's socio-emotional development (Cummings & Cummings, 2002; Grusec et al., 2000). As an example, maternal responsivity has been found to be related to different positive influences on children, including socio-moral development (Kochanska, 2002; Narvaez et al., 2013; Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1990). In addition, it has been found that acceptance and supportive parenting bring about self-esteem (Loeb, Horst, & Horton, 1980),

children's willingness to forgive (Neal, 2005), and prosocial skills (Rothbaum, 1988), whilst neglectful parenting has been associated with different kinds of abnormal consequences such as aggressiveness (Egeland, Pianta, & O'brien, 1993), children's unwillingness to forgive (Neal, 2005) and solitude or a child's isolation, exclusion, or rejection by the peer group (Bakeman & Brown, 1980).

2.1.1   Parents' role in children's moral development

Parents are key factors in influencing children's moral development. In other words, children's sense of right or wrong is primarily and highly affected by their interaction with parents. According to Sigmund Freud, the most important part of individual's personality is shaped during the first 6 years of life, so parents as moral socializers are influential and crucial figures in shaping the significant parts of their children's personality and moralization. Integrative social and cultural points of view, cultural learning, socialization of moral principles, individuality and cognitive patterns form the fundamental basis of moral development (Berkowitz & Grych, 1998; Magnuson, 2009). The primitive and prominent basis of moral development is the family (Baumrind & Thompson, 2002; Okin, 1989). According to Vygotsky (1962), everyone's cognition is located within his or her own cultural contexts which are empowered and deepened through communication with other people, particularly more knowledgeable adults. In this respect, parents are leading agents of moral development and have a great and unique role in children's moral socialization (Magnuson, 2009). Children are acquainted with moral standards of the social community in the context of family relationships. According to Walker and Taylor (1991), parents play a significant role in their children's moral development by helping them to behave in morally appropriate ways. Consistent with this notion,

scholarly work has found that in the early years, parents and family relations have a particular role in children's internalization of morality (Laible & Thompson, 2000). In addition, authoritative and supporting parenting styles including support, induction, and giving explanations or suggestions have been associated with children's higher level of moral reasoning and development (Janssens & Deković, 1997; Pratt, Arnold, Pratt, & Diessner, 1999). Children learn morality through behavioral example as well as those in authorities' (e.g. parents) rational thinking and reasoning. In this respect, positive parental modeling along with their verbal rationale play a crucial role in children's acquisition of morality (Henderson, 2013). In many societies forgiveness is considered as a virtue and a moral issue. Previous studies have found that parenting style and parental socialization processes such as modeling, as well as their moral reasoning and verbal rationale, significantly influence children's moral development including their forgiveness-proneness (Bassett, 2007; Shewark, 2012).

2.1.2 Parents' role in children's internalization of values

Internalization is an intrinsically motivated process in which children naturally acquire the knowledge of internal and external worlds. In this process, children, with their natural motivation and without excessive interference of their environment, automatically develop their beliefs, behaviors, values and regulations. Based on this theory, feeling autonomous, feeling competent and being related to others are three natural incentive needs that reinforce internalization (Grolnick & Farkas, 2002). Caring, warm and loving environments that promote a sense of relatedness increase the probability of internalization. In such caring and secure circumstances, it is more probable that the child desires to develop values and manners which are formed and approved by those surrounding them (Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997; Grolnick &

Farkas, 2002). In terms of the internalization of moral issues, children are committed
to their moral standards even in spite of the absence of their parents or other
authorities who may praise or punish them (Henderson, 2013; Hoffman, 1970).
According to Freud, the extent to which children are likely to internalize their parents'
moral standards and values is related to the kind of emotional relationship they have
with their parents (Henderson, 2013). In this respect, research studies (Steinberg &
Silverberg, 1986) found that children's sense of relatedness to their parents is of
pivotal importance in promoting and accelerating the process of internalizing their
parent's values and goals. When children regard their parents as a basis of reassurance
and emotional support, it is more probable that in times of difficulty, they will tend to
consider their parent's desires instead of being susceptible to their peer influence.
Particularly, maternal discipline is more likely to be influential in children's moral
development since mothers are generally the primary figures in a child's discipline
and socialization (Henderson, 2013).

2.1.3   Parental discipline and children's moral development

Hoffman (1983, 2000) stated that in terms of moral internalization, meaning that
children practice moral principles emanating from their inner motives, it is likely that
children will learn moral values in interaction with others and outside the specified
framework; however, the disciplinary behavior of parents with children plays a much
more considerable role. Hoffman (1970, 1983) defined different kinds of discipline
including inductive techniques, power-assertive discipline and love-withdrawal
techniques. In this vein, inductive techniques refer to the outcomes of the child's
manner on other people. In many inductions, parents generally encourage the child to
correct and improve his or her behavior without any punitive actions which, in turn,

will make a child more accountable for the consequences. In this regard, Hoffman (1970, 1983) concluded that those techniques that are unlikely to create a high degree of anger or anxiety, encourage moral internalization. However, in terms of power-assertive discipline, parents apply physical punishment, threatening remarks and depriving the child of his/her property, whereby fear of theses disciplines is related to children's moral attitude. Also, love-withdrawal techniques such as displaying anger, ignoring or rejecting the child because of his or her unpleasant manner are not consistently associated with moral internalization. According to Hoffman (1970, 1983), induction disciplines lead children to consider the consequence of their behavior on others and promote children's feeling of empathy and guilt. Thus, when encountering the same circumstances the next time, it is probable that children will remember those feelings, thereby motivating them to behave based on morality. However, strong power-assertive or love-withdrawal parental disciplinary techniques induce in children a fear of punishment or worry about deprivation of the parent's love. Through these techniques, the child is not inclined to keep those feelings, and even at a later time, the child is not likely to remember the reasons for keeping away from those deviant behaviors. Also, these techniques lead children's attention to the negative outcomes of their behavior towards themselves instead of others. Thus, in this circumstance, the child is not even willing to have feelings of empathy and guilt (Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002). Taken together, through inductive disciplinary techniques, parents facilitate their children's moral development and internalization of value by promoting children's sense of empathy and guilt. Therefore, parents' verbal rationale and moral reasoning are leading factors in their inductive techniques which play an important role in children's moral development and socialization.

2.1.4   Parents' socialization strategies

An important role of socialization is to prepare the child to acquire values and behaviors which are appropriate, necessary and acceptable in the culture (Harkness & Super, 2002; LeVine, 1974). Baumrind (1998) declared that parents, based on their socialization endeavors, play a crucial role in children's moral and ethical development. Parenting ideas and beliefs stemming from their cultural context have a significant influence on children's attitudes by forming their understanding through their parent child-rearing socialization efforts (Baumrind & Thompson, 2002). Thus, parental socialization goals and strategies which are according to the requirements of the culture and desired social behavior play an important role in children's socialization. From a different perspective, according to Grusec, Goodnow and Kuczynski (2000), it is now recognized that the nature of parents' socialization goals does not always focus on acceptance and application of parental values but instead can be a desire that a child recognizes how to express and discuss a contrast with the right behavior. In line with the above, there is a wide spectrum of socialization goals from compliance with the parental values to self-generated and autonomous internalization of parental standards. Indeed, some parental goals aim for the child's capacity to reason, recognize, and express appropriate moral behavior - distinguishing from inappropriate behavior and simply complying with social norms and conventions. Parents' early socialization attempts have an important role in children's socialization and internalization of values. Studies have reported that parents' socialization beliefs lead to children's social competence (Mills & Rubin, 1990; Rubin, Mills, & Rose-Krasnor, 1989). These socialization beliefs include parental goals, attributions and strategies (Cheah & Rubin, 2003). In other words, parenting socialization strategies are strategies that parents regard as the most adequate

techniques for their children's development. In this vein, moral socialization strategies are strategies to promote children's social and emotional development, and mothers' strategies in this respect include internal and external attributions. According to studies (Nucci & Smetana, 1996; Smetana, 1995), mothers' goals and strategies for social skills may be classified as personal (e.g., advantageous for the child), moral (e.g., equal behavior for all, according to the belief that a child must be kind to others) and social conventional (addressing the group's expectations). Young children's emotional and social competence is of pivotal importance for their positive development, and forgiveness is a significant element for adjustment in multiple social situations, particular in interpersonal relationships. How children move through developmental tasks, which involve their understanding and proneness to forgive, calls for parents' evaluations of the wrongdoing and needs-oriented forgiveness reasoning. While making use of guidance and instructions to promote their children's forgivingness, parents foreshadow distinct socialization goals and parenting strategies.

2.1.5   Influence of parental socialization on children's forgiveness

It seems that many parents know that it is important to encourage their children to have values, but perhaps not many have thought specifically of encouraging them to have an attitude of forgiveness. Children are sensitive to unequal and unjust behavior which engenders their negative feelings and revenge-proneness. Children's negative reaction and tendency to retaliation may lead to interpersonal conflicts and unhealthy relationships. Given that, parents' strategies in encouraging their children to forgive another's mistake help them to be able to regulate their negative emotions and manners when encountering unfairness.

The first place where children experience forgiveness is in the family (Mullet, Girard, & Bakhshi, 2004; Walrond-Skinner, 1998; Worthington, 1998a). Across cultures and throughout history, the ability to forgive has been considered a desirable individual characteristic (Sandage et al., 2000) in which parents play an important role in promoting their children's forgiveness. Children learn how to behave in a forgiving way through their daily and direct interactions with their parents (Neal, 2005). Due to the number of family interactions and the strong emotional ties between parent and child, many forgiveness episodes take place in the family through which children encounter many situations to learn and practice forgiveness (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). For example, when forgiveness in a family is practiced with a motivation for reducing negative emotions and increasing positive motivations towards the offender, and parents are likely to forgive other people's faults and regard forgiveness as an important moral value in their attitude and behavior; in this environment, children learn how to give up their negative emotions and desire for revenge towards the perpetrator.

In this regard, empirical researches have demonstrated that parental socialization is relevant to children's social and emotional competence (Denham et al., 2000; Eisenberg et al., 2001; McDowell & Parke, 2005; Mize & Pettit, 1997) as well as children's developing forgiveness (Bassett, 2007). In addition, it has been found that parenting styles are associated with children's social development, such as prosocial behavior (Brody & Shaffer, 1982), emotion regulation (Chang, Schwartz, Dodge, & McBride-Chang, 2003; Eisenberg et al., 2005; Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Smith, 2004), peer relationships (Domitrovich & Bierman, 2001; Pettit, Harrist, Bates, & Dodge, 1991), attachment security (Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005) and children's internalization of values, such as forgiveness (Grusec, 1997). Grusec (1997) stated that parental

socialization processes such as modeling, parenting practices and parenting styles have a remarkable role in children's socialization values and internalization of forgiveness. In addition, Mullet and her associates (2004) found empirical evidence for parent-child transmission of forgiveness in which children and their parents had a similar conception of forgiveness. In spite of scarce empirical research regarding parental influence on children's forgiveness, some research findings have been reported (Bassett, 2007; Getman, 2004; Neal, 2005; Roby, 1998; Shewark, 2012; Subkoviak et al., 1995; Watanabe, 2011).

Neal's (2005) empirical study has found that mothers' positive conduct and child rearing practices towards their children were related to children's willingness to forgive their peer's mistake. In this regard, it has been found that positive parenting practice, such as positive reinforcement, comfort, time together, and positive evaluation were associated with children's higher propensity to forgive, while negative parenting practices, such as criticism, physical punishment, yelling, threatening and ignoring, were related to a lower tendency of children to behave in a forgiving way (Mincic et al., 2004). Moreover, according to the evidence, there is a positive relationship between a mother's forgiveness and their children's likelihood to behave in a forgiving way. However, no relation was found between father's forgiveness and children's forgiveness-proneness (Denham et al., 2004). In addition, previous research has shown that children's understanding of interparental conflict, as well as mothers' feelings and attitudes towards the offender, are highly related to children's forgiveness behavior (Shewark, 2012). Therefore, parents and especially mothers have a significant influence on children's development and socialization of forgiveness. Nevertheless, it has been found that not only parental (Neal, 2005; Shewark, 2012) but also, family environmental factors (such as marital conflicts and

solution strategies; Getman, 2004) were relevant to children's willingness to forgive (Bassett, 2007). Thus, parents and family relations are the first resources of children's forgiveness practices.

In this vein, how parents, particularly mothers, communicate forgiveness practices and encourage their children to behave in a forgiving way plays an important role in children's forgiveness development. Thus, it is important to study how parents, particularly mothers, try to foster their child's development of forgiveness according to their moral reasoning and verbal rationale.

2.2   Cultural variation in parents' strategies and socialization goals

Culture has a significant role in parenting socialization goals, beliefs, values, parenting practices and childrearing ideas (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Patterson & Fisher, 2002; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008; Tamminen, 2006). A well-established body of literature acknowledged the role of culture in development and socialization (Bornstein, 2002; Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003; Kagitcibasi, 1996a, 2007; Keller, 2003, 2007; Keller et al., 2007, 2008; LeVine, 1990). In line with the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979), child-rearing practices occur in five environmental systems including microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. Microsystem is related to immediate environment and social interactions (such as family, school, friends, teachers, neighbors) that directly influence a child's development, and macrosystme defines the cultural context such as heritage, customs and values which also affects a child's development. Thus, studies of parenting strategy and socialization goals should consider the parent-child relationships within microsystems, as well as the beliefs,

reasoning, and perception of socialization within macrosystems, stemming from the cultural context (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Pearson & Rao, 2003).

Parents try to help their children to develop characteristics which are of worthiness in the society in which they live (LeVine, 1974). According to cross-cultural studies, child-rearing practices have great association with sociocultural factors (Baumrind, 1972; Chao, 1996). Parents, according to the cultural context in which they live, have different child-rearing styles and practices (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). An example of cultural differences in parenting practices can be seen in African American versus European American mothers. According to Heffer and Kelley's (1987) study, the majority of African American mothers, who were in middle and lower-economic status compared to just a small number of middle-income European American mothers, perceived physical punishment as an acceptable disciplinary method. Also, Mosby and her associates in their study stated that generally, African American parents, apart from their intense inclination to physical punishment, did not consider this method as maltreatment and abuse (Mosby, Rawls, Meehan, Mays, & Pettinari, 1999). In this vein, Bornstein and his associates have done cross-cultural studies in seven different cultures demonstrating the differences of parental practices and child rearing values between these cultures (Bornstein et al., 1998). As an example, one of these studies (Bornstein et al., 1996), by comparing parenting ideas of American, Argentine and French mothers, revealed that American mothers regarded themselves as more affectionate and describes themselves as those who give more importance to rules compared with French and Argentine mothers. Similarly, other research studies have found different socialization values among Japanese and American mothers of infants (Caudill & Weinstein, 1969). According to their findings, American mothers motivated their children to express emotions while Japanese mothers highlighted

reasoning and guilt induction (Zahn-Waxler, Friedman, Cole, Mizuta, & Hiruma, 1996). Congruent with evidence of cultural differences in parental practice, it has been found that, although within European-American societies personal interests (individualistic) are valued, in Asian and African societies, group interests (collectivistic) are of priority and greater importance (Triandis, 1990). According to Kagitcibasi (1996a), these different socialization and characteristics within different cultures begin from early childhood. Thus, since early childhood, individual's characteristics are influenced by the cultural context of their society, and parents are likely to endorse different parenting socialization values and strategies according to their cultural contexts.

From a different point of view, some studies have questioned how universal specific "parenting characteristics" are and suggest that the susceptibility of its influence on children is shaped by culture. According to this view, parenting practices lead to different results across different cultural contexts. As an example, some kinds of parenting practices in a secure middle-class situation would be regarded as excessively imposing severe in imposing restrictions on children's activities and freedom, while the same parenting practices may result in favorable views of safe-keeping and support in dangerous destitute districts (Baldwin, Baldwin, & Cole, 1992; Baumrind & Thompson, 2002). Baldwin, Baldwin, and Cole's (1992) studies revealed that in deprived and poor circumstances, parental demands with more rules and regulations brought about positive influences on children while this kind of parenting had negative impacts on children living in better circumstances. Furthermore, according to interdependence cultural orientation of China, it has been found that parenting characteristics supporting a child's autonomy has positive influences on the child's development in Chinese (Chen, Dong, & Zhou, 1997)

culture. Also, interestingly, the same results were found for Russian (Chirkov &
Ryan, 2000; Grolnick & Farkas, 2002) culture. Taken together, different parenting
socialization and childrearing practices have different consequences on children
across different cultures. Thus, culture plays an important role in parents'
socialization strategies and children's development.

2.2.1 Parenting cultural models of independence, interdependence and autonomy-relatedness

Based on the literature, the family has a remarkable role in the development of
children in most social contexts, since it is the environment where a child can promote
personal, social and intellectual development (Keller, 1998; Kreppner, 2000). In this
regard, the family represents specific values and characteristics according to their role
in a culture (Vieira et al., 2013).

Tudge and his associates (2000) stated that parents' beliefs and values regarding
their child-rearing practices have an important influence on their endeavors to shape
their children's development. Every child born in a family is immersed in a
sociocultural context such as beliefs, values, expectations and goals, so understanding
the child's development necessarily requires knowledge of the primary background of
the child and the situation in which a child joins a social world - that is the
family - including practices of care that children experience, the beliefs and values
that are implicit in daily treatments, as well as the reasoning, choices and decisions of
parents.

The cultural models of parenting impress children's socialization environments
(Keller et al., 2007). For instance, personal characteristics (beliefs, motivation, values,
etc.) and the characteristics of the context (social class, culture, etc.) both influence

young children's everyday activities and interactions (Tudge et al., 2013). Based on these findings, the significant role of the culture in the development of these values has been the focus of cross-cultural psychologists as well as cultural anthropologists (Chen & French, 2008; Harkness & Super, 2002; Hofstede, 2001; Kagitcibasi, 2007; Keller, 2007).

The study of cultural models of parenting emphasizes the importance of understanding the daily lives of children, their habits and routine cares according to the environment where they live (Kagitcibasi, 2007; Keller, 2003). Cultural patterns are also influenced by aspects of the socioeconomic environment such as the level of parents' education and profession as well as their social and cultural experiences of parenting throughout their lives. In order to understand this diversity, Kagitcibaci's (1996b, 2005) and Keller's (2007) studies represented models of parental behavior and socialization values concerning different parental characteristics and the cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism (IC). In this model, Kagitcibaci (1996b, 2005) combines the self within the socialization process and the broader culture. According to these investigations, cross-cultural psychology defines two dominant and different cultural models in societies: the independent or individualistic and the interdependent or collectivist dimension (Keller, 2007).

The independent dimension puts the emphasis on self-realization, self-regulation, self-control, positive self-esteem and personal competence. This dimension, which highlights the autonomy and separation from others, has been identified especially in families who are more educated, more urbanized and more industrialized (Keller et al., 2004; Keller, Borke, Yovsi, Lohaus, & Jensen, 2005). In contrast, regarding the second dimension - interdependence or collectivism - empathy, respect, careful

relationships with others, and obedience are significant group goals and social roles. This dimension that aims at harmony in social group relationships is characteristic of traditional collectivist families who are less educated, less urbanized and less industrialized (Kagitcibasi, 1996b, 2005, 2007; Keller et al., 2004, 2005).

By examining different processes of family socialization, based on cultural models of individualism and collectivism (IC), Kagitçibasi (1996b, 2005, 2007) proposed a third model including two dimensions of agency (autonomy and heteronomy) and interpersonal (relationship and separation) distance. This third dimension is called autonomy and relatedness, which are considered as basic human needs. According to the author, all human beings not only need to relate with others (interdependency), but also need to separate from others and become independent (autonomy or agency). However, these needs are not necessarily contradictory. Increasing research studies have found evidence for the autonomy-relatedness family model (Kagitcibasi, Ataca, & Diri, 2010; Kim, Park, Kwon, & Koo, 2005; Koutrelakos, 2004; Park & Kim, 2006; Sabatier & Lannegrand-Willems, 2005; Schwarz, Trommsdorff, Kim, & Park, 2006).

Accordingly, Kagitçibasi (1996b) identifies three models of family socialization: (a) the independence model in which children are socialized to be autonomous, self-sufficient, and relatively separated from their families; (b) a model of interdependence, where children are socialized to be obedient and interdependent to the family; and (c) a model of autonomy and relatedness, where children are socialized to become increasingly autonomous in the material aspect, while remaining interdependent in emotional or interpersonal aspects. Based on these models, Kagitçibasi (1996b, 2005) represented three types of self, in different family types according to the society and family socialization process:

1) Traditional families are characteristic of interdependence among their members and this type is more common in rural societies where they are distinguished by heteronomy and relational dimensions (interdependent self). In this type of family, children are supposed to take care of and responsibility for their aging parents and, in some aspects, children are of economic value in supporting the family. Also, obedience, as a sign of loyalty, is very important for parents in this kind of family.

2) Modern families represent the model of individualism (independence) characteristic of the Western middle-class family, whose personal goals and focus are based on individualist values. In this model, the dimensions of autonomy and independence are prevalent, and promoting the children's self-confidence and independence are of important value.

3) Families in traditionally collectivist characteristics within a process of economic development integrate the two previous models including independence and interdependence. These families of urban societies appreciate autonomy in their child-rearing practices, because it is no longer a threat to their family economics. However, they also highly respect obedience, parental control and emotional aspects related to interpersonal relationship. Therefore, relatedness as a priority in their care practice is integrated with developing the child's autonomy as autonomy-relatedness in their child rearing practices (Kagitcibasi et al., 2010; Vieira et al., 2013).

Taken together, based on the above identified cultural models, starting from a cultural orientation of individualism and collectivism as well as personal conception of self-independent/autonomous, interdependent/relatedness and autonomous relatedness, it can be seen that parents, as members of their own culture, share cultural models of parenting and have common understandings about their system of

parenting. In this sense, parents' beliefs and values concerning their child rearing practices have a direct influence on the development of the sense of agency (level of autonomy in individual affairs), autonomy (to be oriented by own rules) or heteronomy (to be oriented by other's rules) and interpersonal distance (degree of connection to others).

2.2.2 Parenting strategies in Western and Asian cultures

Cross-cultural studies on parent-child relationships provide support to the distinction between cultural models of parenting in Western and Asian society. Research studies concerning individualism and collectivism indicate different cultural orientations (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998; Green, Deschamps, & Paez, 2005; Hofstede, 2001; Kagitcibasi et al., 2010; Keller et al., 2008; Keller, 2007; Triandis, 1995). According to previous studies, independence is a cultural model of individualistic Western society (Western Europe, North America, Australia) while non-Western society (Asian, South American, African) is characterized by interdependence and collectivist traits. As an example, studies on Chinese parents indicated that they were likely to attribute relatedness as well as autonomy in their child rearing practices (Jose, Huntsinger, & Huntsinger, 2000; Lin & Fu, 1990). Similar findings were found among Korean parents (Cha, 1994) as well as Turkish minority families living in Germany (Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001), who endorsed autonomy-relatedness. In the same vein, it has been found that families in Turkey highly respect closely-knit relationships and interdependence (Kagitcibasi et al., 2010). Triandis (1990) stated that the cultural differences between Western and Asian countries are due to distinctions in Western and Asian cultures. Thus, regarding this distinction, it is plausible to assume that individuals in Western cultures are taught to

value independence and individualism while Asian cultures strongly value social responsibility towards the group (interdependence) (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). More recently, some researchers have noted that one dimension cannot differentiate cultures since cultures are complicated systems which include aspects of both individualism and collectivism, such as in modernized societies (Keller, Edelstein, Krettenauer, Fu-xi, & Ge, 2005; Turiel, 1998). Nevertheless, it can be seen that parent-child relationships in Western and Asian societies vary because of the cultural traditions and functional necessities of life (Keller et al., 2005). Thus, in the present study, we expect these differences to be expressed in Iranian and Portuguese mothers' reasoning and strategies towards promoting their children's forgiveness skills as two representatives of interdependent and independent cultural orientations.

2.3   Parents' moral reasoning

Parents' beliefs, moral reasoning and verbal rationale are important factors in influencing children's prosocial behavior and their rational thinking about moral issues (Deković & Janssens, 1992; Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002; Henderson, 2013). According to scholarly work of Walker and associates, parents' emotional and supportive attitude during their moral reasoning and discussion of moral issues with their children promote children's level of moral reasoning and attitude (Walker & Hennig, 1999; Walker & Taylor, 1991). Children in their daily peer relationships may encounter situations in which a peer unjustly offends them, so they need to make a decision whether to maintain their relationship with that person or not. According to cognitive developmental perspectives, children's reasoning and justification regarding their decision-making in conflict resolution is dependent on their understanding of what authorities (e.g. parents or teacher) consider acceptable behavior (Laupa &

Turiel, 1993; Rique & Lins-Dyer, 2003). Thus, parents' justifications and reasoning in resolving their child's peer conflict situation play an important role in their child's decision-making and peer relationship. In other words, parents' verbal rational and moral reasoning help the child to see the situation from a different perspective and enable the child to interpret and utilize environmental information for better decision making. Thus, parents' reasoning regarding the importance and outcomes of behavior and morality is highly likely to foster children's moral growth and empathic behavior. In this respect, it seems necessary for parents to consider forgiveness in their ethos of responsibility to foster their children's forgiveness development. How parents encourage their child to forgive a peer's aggressive behavior plays an important role in their child's forgiveness development.

Summing up, the model perceives that mothers' reasoning will be reflected in their socialization strategies, thereby influencing the development of their child's forgiveness skills. Such a model adds upon contributions of Kohlberg's (1969) developmental stages of moral reasoning, Selman's (1980) stages of perspective-taking, Keller and Edelstein's (1991) developmental levels of socio-moral meaning making, Turiel's (1983) moral domain theory, Enright's cognitive development model of forgiveness (Enright et al., 1989; Enright, 1994), Newberger's (1980) four qualitative different levels of parental reasoning complexity, and the categories of mothers' reasoning for the importance of the social skills by Smetana and associates (e.g., Nucci & Smetana, 1996; Smetana, 1995), which are explained as follows.

2.3.1   Socio-moral reasoning

The cognitive theory of moral development was basically illustrated by Jean Piaget (1932) and later was extended by Lawrence Kohlberg (1969). In this respect, socio morality considers that behaviors have aims "for the self, others, the relations and institutions that regulate interactions between self and other" (Kohlberg, 1984; Rique & Lins-Dyer, 2003). Also, socio-moral reasoning is related to a person's explanation and argument for moral or non-moral behaviors (Rique & Lins-Dyer, 2003). According to Kohlberg (1969), developmental stages of moral reasoning are specified by the capacity to discriminate and integrate perspectives of self and other. It is expected that in higher levels of moral reasoning, individuals have the ability to view situations not just from their own perspective but from the perspectives of the other party in the conflict as well. Afterward, Kohlberg (1976) defined the concept of socio-moral perspective, in which self considers social norms as well as moral obligations in his/her perspective taking. In other words, socio-moral perspective describes the kind of relation between the self and the society's moral values as well as social obligation and expectations. Kohlberg developed six levels of moral reasoning which can be categorized into three levels of pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional, each of these levels including two stages. At the pre-conventional level, self in stage 1 does not recognize and consider others' interests, feelings and emotions. In this stage, good and bad actions are determined based on punishment and rules of obedience. In stage 2, self has the ability to predict the others' positive or negative reaction while making his/her feelings and emotions the priority over the others. In this stage, the self acts based on his/her own interests and lets others do the same. In addition, the self intends to reciprocate the fair treatment in personal relationships. At the conventional level, stage 3 refers to shared

expectations, interests and feelings as priority over self-interest and feelings. In this stage, self refers to mutual norms and relationships. At stage 4, moral judgement is based on society's rules and obligations. At this stage, right action is on the basis of maintaining social rules and society's welfare. At stage 5, the post-conventional level, the self refers to a social contract even if it is against group rules. That is to say, the values and rules of society are seen as having priority over the laws of a group. Finally, stage 6 regards universal moral principles to be considered and applied to all people around the world. According to these principles, basic human rights and society's rules are based on universal moral and ethical principles which have priority over any individual and societal perspectives (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987; Keller & Edelstein, 1991).

Perspective-taking as a framework of the relationship between the self and others is a cognitive skill which plays an important role in socio-moral reasoning and social relationships (Keller & Edelstein, 1991). Following Kohlberg's moral reasoning theory, Selman (1980) described five developmental levels of social perspective-taking which indicate sequential aspects of social perspective, moving from the lower levels to more complex and discriminated levels. These levels range from:

- Level 0: The child does not differentiate the perspective of self and others.

- Level 1: The child discriminates between the perspective of self and others.

- Level 2: The child is able to have reciprocal perspectives. At this level, self can take the other person's perspective, feelings and thoughts. At this stage, the self can also think over his or her own subjectivity from the other's viewpoint.

- Level 3: Self and other have mutual perspectives on each other's feelings and thoughts.

- Level 4: Mutual perspective between the self and other is shaped at a higher level of societal perspective and deeper levels of social reasoning including moral or legal perspective or society's viewpoint.

Furthermore, in 1991, Keller and Edelstein's study represented the structure and aspects of socio-moral reasoning. In this study, they argued that social and moral reasoning are integrated into socio-moral meaning making, and on the basis of their results, they defined four developmental levels of socio-moral meaning making:

- Level 0. There is no distinction between the subjective perspectives of self and other. There is neither perception of action conflicts nor sense of agency related to the conception of moral agency.

- Level 1. There is a start of differentiation between the subjective perspectives of self and other concerning the particular needs, interests and expectation. In this level, the outcomes of a decision for both self and other are considered. In terms of moral agency, cognitive expectation is elaborated between the self and other.

- Level 2. There is a differentiation between the subjective perspectives in terms of intersubjective perspectives. This level is the start of relationship perspective in light of shared standard and interpersonal rules. Moral agency is on the basis of normative expectation.

- Level 3. There is better differentiation regarding intersubjective rightness. Also, integration between norms of reciprocity and individuation is

established. Actions are focused towards the construction and maintenance of reliability and trustworthiness. At this level, ideal role-switch of self plays an important role in considering probable interaction from others' perspective. In other words, both self and other try to have the other's perspective in order to understand how each one should act towards the other. Also, at this level, agency is on the basis of moral responsibility.

In contrast with Kohlberg's (1976) and Selman's (1980) theory, in which moral reasoning is developed through sequential levels, Turiel (1983) developed frameworks of moral and social reasoning signifying how individuals have different thoughts about fairness, justice and other's welfare in their social relationships from early in development throughout life. This moral domain theory indicates how each domain is separate and distinguished from other forms of knowledge (Keller & Edelstein, 1991) which are defined as follows:

- The psychological domain includes understanding of self and others in terms of psychological aspects;

- The societal domain consists of knowledge about conventional rules, traditions, group relationships and social norms that direct social relations;

- The moral domain involves principles of how individuals should treat one another based on fairness, equality and people's right and welfare. This domain refers to the understanding that all mankind have equal rights and dignity which should be treated on the basis of fairness and equality by each other and society.

2.3.2   Parenting reasoning complexity applied to the moral sphere

From a different perspective, in 1980, Newberger constructed a semi-structured interview to ask parents about their conceptions of the child and parent-child relationship when encountering a situation in which they have to make a decision about the child. Based on the results, Newberger defined four different qualitative levels of parental reasoning complexity.

- Level 1. *Egoistic self-orientation:* Parents pay attention only to their own needs and feelings. They define the child according to their personal experience, and from their point of view, the child is supposed to behave according to the wishes and desires of the parents.

- Level 2. *Conventional-norm orientation:* The child is defined according to external drivers such as customs, rules and the culture of society. Parenting is based on social norms and rules that teach children to conform in the appropriate manner.

- Level 3. *Subjective child-orientation:* The child is defined in terms of a unique person, and parenthood is on the basis of respecting the child's needs and interests.

- Level 4. *Mutual orientation:* Parents understand that they are in mutual relationships with their child in a path of development. They consider not only their own needs and interests but also the child's. They know that children and parents have their own unique needs and desires and that both should be regarded in a moderate way.

According to the author (Newberger, 1980), these four levels are constructed within a developmental stage sequences which grows to a higher flexibility and ability to combine information from various viewpoints and to take others' perspectives into account.

2.4 The rationale of parents' forgiveness-promoting strategies as the framework of the current study

The research reviewed in the previous section indicated that parents' reasoning complexity is differentiated according to their perspective taking, either oriented by compensation (punishment or obedience), self-regulation, conventional norms or moral agency concerns. Thus, the present study develops a new rationale for the parents' reasoning and strategies concerning promoting forgiveness in preschool-aged children. Based on different theories of moral reasoning (Keller & Edelstein, 1991; Kohlberg, 1969; Newberger, 1980; Selman, 1980; Smetana, 1995; Turiel, 1983) and a cognitive developmental model of forgiveness theory (Enright et al., 1989; Enright, 1994) as described above, the reasoning of mothers' strategies in fostering their child's forgiveness skills is distinctively conceptualized accordingly to four different constructs including:

- Punishment-obedience orientation: forgiveness is conditional on a retributive action (excuse or punishment). In other words, in this category, parents aim at helping their child realize the consequences of bad behavior and breaking the law, so that the child will not imitate or reciprocate the offence.

- Self-regulation orientation: forgiveness is perceived as a regulatory mechanism inducing self-control, soothing or placating the resentment, either through cognitive restructuring or emotional appeasement. Alongside this,

forgiveness brings about the consciousness that the one who misbehaves should apologize;

- Social-normative orientation: forgiveness is perceived as a social expectation abiding by the societal and cultural norms for acceptable behavior. Likewise, forgiveness can turn into an instrumental resource for resolving conflict and encouraging normative and socially-regulated behavior;

- Autonomous morality orientation: forgiveness is linked with agency or agentic concerns and is oriented by a sense of moral obligation and personal responsibility regardless of the other personal and social pressures;

According to this study, the reasoning and strategies underlying the different forgiveness orientations depend upon: i) drawing the child's attention to the consequences of actions as in the punishment-obedience orientation; ii) promoting the child's conscience about his/her feelings and cognitions (attributions, expectations, beliefs on justice) as in the self-regulation orientation; iii) encouraging the socially expected behavior for the sake of interpersonal relationship and 'nice' acceptable behavior as in the social-normative orientation; and iv) emphasizing the moral agency and personal responsibility regardless of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships as in the autonomous morality orientation.

In sum, parents play a central role in promoting, developing and internalizing the practices of forgiveness in children. Thus, by identifying the mothers' reasoning categories in fostering the child's development of forgiveness and the major role of mothers in children's forgiveness development, it is necessary to better understand how mothers try to endorse forgiveness-promoting strategies to their preschool-aged children within their reasoning model. The negative reactions of a child (such as

getting angry and yelling) towards the harm done by peers has a negative impact on

his/her social-emotional development and future social relationships (Duman &

Margolin, 2007; Shewark, 2012; Worthington, 2006). Given that, mothers' reactions

towards their child in reducing the child's anger and negative emotions are of pivotal

importance. Through identifying the mothers' reasoning model, the present research

study aimed at exploring how mothers are likely to foster the child's development of

forgiveness and to communicate forgiveness practices to their children. Thus, based

on this newly-developed rationale of mother's reasoning, the question here is whether

mothers encourage their child to forgive a peer's aggressive behavior on justification

for the punishment-obedience orientation, self-regulation orientation, social

normative, or autonomous morality orientation.

2.5 Cultural values, social norms and parents' moral reasoning and strategies

Cultural values and developmental goals play leading role in shaping parents' child

rearing practices and ideas (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). Scholars have defined the

most remarkable classification of cultural variation between 'collectivism' and

'individualism' (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1988). Parents' childrearing ideas and

practices are influenced by cultural values and social norms (Tamis-LeMonda et al.,

2008). Thus, parenting beliefs and practices in various cultures are different

(Harwood, Miller, & Irizarry, 1995; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008).

Scholars agree that parenting ideas and child rearing practices are connected to

cultural value systems of individualism and collectivism as well as developmental

goals of autonomy and relatedness (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). According to

cultural psychology studies, European culture is based on individualistic orientation

while Asian culture is defined as a collectivistic culture (Kuyel, 2007; Wainryb,

2006). Social scientists state that parents' socialization goals as well as childrearing ideas and practices in western society, characterised by individualistic cultures, are based on developing the child's autonomy, while in most Asian countries they are based on relationship and collectivism (Hofstede, 1980; Lieber, Yang, & Lin, 2000; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008; Triandis, 1995, 2000). Contrary to giving importance to child autonomy in individualistic cultures, parents in collectivistic culture's dominant orientation try to socialize the child according to the society's rules and to promote their child's sense of interdependence and relatedness (Grotevant, 1998; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). Thus, culture has a significant influence on individuals' attitudes, beliefs and thoughts.

Additionally, literature reviews on moral development indicates that morality has basically different definitions within individualistic and collectivist cultures. In this vein, it has been discussed that conceptions of morality in individualistic society is on the basis of equality, justice, individual's right and freedom, while in collectivistic society it is based on interpersonal and social responsibility as well as interdependent roles (Kuyel, 2007; Miller, 1994; Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1990). Moreover, Iran is mainly recognized as a collective interdependent culture (Frank, Plunkett, & Otten, 2010; Rudy & Grusec, 2001; Shahaeian, Nielsen, Peterson, Aboutalebi, & Slaughter, 2014; Sharifzadeh, 2004), and in society with a dominant orientation of collectivistic culture, respect and obedience are assumed as prominent and leading values. Concerning this, parents try to socialize their child to respect others and obey elders and authorities. In this society, parents and elders have the right to define dos and don'ts for the younger generation (Kagitcibasi, 1996a; Keller, 2003; Rudy & Grusec, 2001; Shahaeian, Nielsen, Peterson, & Slaughter, 2014; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008; Triandis, 1995). Similarly, Iranian parents encourage their children to

respect adults and to not show their apathy and disrespect to other family members (Frank et al., 2010; Shahaeian, Nielsen, Peterson, & Slaughter, 2014). Particularly, politeness, respect and obedience are significant aspects of social life interaction and interpersonal relationship in Iranian culture (Behzadi, 1994). Therefore, people in non-Western collectivist societies such as Iran admire the agreement and settling the disputes more than disagreement. In this environment children are also asked to be careful about expressing their disagreement to others especially elders (Shahaeian, Nielsen, Peterson, & Slaughter, 2014). Additionally, people in collectivist cultures are aware of the consequences of their actions in society and relationships (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008).

On the other hand, there are some critiques proposing that nowadays, as globalization increases, childrearing practices are conceptualized as a universal task with a more complex understanding of child development. Thus, individualism versus collectivism and autonomy versus relatedness are not perceived as a dichotomous framework of culture since different cultural values and developmental goals can be found in diverse cultures (Harkness, Super, & Tijen, 2000; Keller, 2003; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). However, cultural norms and values have their own specific influence on parent's child rearing practices and beliefs (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008), whereby these differences in parenting strategies are based on a family's conformity to the descriptions of collectivist or interdependence relatedness and an individualistic or independence cultural model (Kagitcibasi, 1997; Keller et al., 2006; Shahaeian, Nielsen, Peterson, Aboutalebi, et al., 2014).

2.6 The relation among religiosity, individual's attitudes and rational thinking

Religion is one of the major factors in the development of human society and a remarkable facet of social life. It has fostered people's relationships in a community and influenced different parts of life including family, economic, politics and community. Religion has two aspects: individual and social, in which the social dimension is a significant part of religion (McGuire, 2008). Religious principles define dos and don'ts and advise individuals about good and bad behaviors. In this regard, religion plays an important role in forming evolving attitudes, norms and values (McGuire, 2008). Studies have revealed that religiosity is one of the important sociocultural forces in influencing an individual's behavior and attitudes (Cukur, De Guzman, & Carlo, 2004; Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009; Lau, 1989). In this respect, Turiel (1983; see also Kuyel, 2007) identified cultural values and religious beliefs as two significant factors in influencing individual's rational thinking and moral reasoning.

2.6.1 Religiosity and individual's social normative attitudes

Research studies illustrated a great association between religiosity, preserving traditional attitudes (Wilkes, Burnett, & Howell, 1986) and having conservative values (Barton & Vaughan, 1976). Religion also plays an important role in the individual's sense of interdependence and collective identity (Cohen, Hall, Koenig, & Meador, 2005). In 1951, Durkheim, formed a theory about the relationship between religion and social links and speculated that religion advances social relationships (Cohen et al., 2005). According to Durkheim (1995), religion unites different people to one community and it is basically social: ''A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—

beliefs and practices which united into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them'' (p. 44). Consistent with Durkheim's functionalist theories of religion (1912), Levy and Razin's (2006) new theory of religion proposes that religion paves the way for social ties and relationships whereas social rituals are a means for achieving an aim of social integration. Religious rituals and practices accompany social aspects of religion and advance a sense of collective identity (Cohen et al., 2005). The basis of religious communities relies on social integration and cohesions (Ellison & McFarland, 2013). Religious collective rituals play an important role in promoting social integration and a cooperative attitude (Berggren & Bjørnskov, 2011; Ruffle & Sosis, 2007).

In addition, research studies found a relationship between religiosity and individualism-collectivism (I-C) values within the communities and individuals (Cukur et al., 2004). Consonant with previous study (Barton & Vaughan, 1976), Cukur and associates' (2004) empirical cross-cultural research study demonstrated that religiosity had a positive relationship with collectivism and conservative values (conforming, tradition and security). In this respect, it has also been found that religiosity is associated with a higher tendency of people to preserve traditional attitudes (Wilkes et al., 1986).

According to Kagitcibasi (1997), monotheistic religions such as Islam and Christianity tend to value collective identity. Collectivism puts significant importance on obligation and prefers the good of the collective group over that of the individual (Cohen & Hill, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Collectivists also, tend to value conforming to social and group norms and rules (Cukur et al., 2004). Cohen and Hill (2007) developed a theory that the characteristics of the collectivistic

religions seem to be similar to the collectivist cultures(Cohen & Hill, 2007)(Cohen &

Hill, 2007)(Cohen & Hill, 2007)(Cohen & Hill, 2007)(Cohen & Hill, 2007)(Cohen &

Hill, 2007)(Cohen & Hill, 2007)(Cohen & Hill, 2007). In spite the fact that

collectivistic religious identities tend to value social relationships and rituals, they

also include individualistic and personal aspects (Cohen & Hill, 2007; Markus &

Kitayama, 1991). The characteristic of collectivist religious beliefs are the same as

collectivistic societies (such as those of some East Asian countries) that admire social

cohesion and interdependence (Cohen & Hill, 2007). In these cultures, relationships,

social norms and family expectations are the basis for the evaluation of life

satisfaction and the contented state (contentment) (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, &

Broadnax, 1994).

Catholicism is a collectivistic religious culture which gives high importance to

social cohesion and assumes people as an integral part of the community. The

collective identity of Catholics can also be seen in their communal religious cultures

and collective worship (Cohen et al., 2005; Cohen & Hill, 2007). Different studies

have revealed Catholic religious identity as more socially and community oriented

religion (Cohen & Hill, 2007). Both Catholicism and Islam have collectivistic

orientation (Cukur et al., 2004) though Islam has somewhat tendency to individualism

as well. Similarly, Roman Catholicism, apart from giving importance to individuals'

emotional incentives, has strong collectivistic and social orientation and gives high

importance to social links and rituals (Cohen et al., 2005; Lynch, 2001; Milbank,

2008). Thus, religion plays a major role in the individuals' social normative attitudes

and rational thinking, thereby influencing their child rearing strategies and parenting

orientations. For example, Christian "conservatism" gives great emphasis to child

obedience (Rodriguez & Henderson, 2010). In the same vein, according to the

association between religiosity and individual's collectivism cultural identity,
research studies revealed that parents who attended church more often, as an indicator
of their religiosity, had a greater tendency to emphasize child obedience as one of the
characteristics of the collectivist identity (Alwin, 1986; Rodriguez & Henderson,
2010). Thus, religion plays an important role in shaping individual's rational thinking
and moral reasoning. According to significant influences of religion on individual's
rational thinking and social normative attitude, it is probable for religious parents to
be more likely to endorse social normative strategies in their child rearing practices.

2.6.2   Religiosity and individual's morality

Theologians and philosophers have discussed about the links between morality and
religiosity since Plato's time (Kuyel, 2007; Nucci, 1985). According to scholars (e.g.
Burris & Navara, 2002; Keljo & Christenson, 2003; Wiebe & Fleck, 1980), there is a
link between religious beliefs, morality and moral standards. In this respect, Putnam
and associates (2010) proposed that religiosity and religious teachings had a positive
influence on religious American to make them better neighbors. Many religions such
as Christianity and Islam promote their believers' sense of generosity and moral
reciprocity. In addition, immorality and unethical behavior such as cheating is
forbidden in religious teachings (Berggren & Bjørnskov, 2011). Taken together,
according to a positive relationship between religiosity and morality, this study aims
to explore the influences of Iranian and Portuguese mothers' religiosity on their
forgiveness-promoting strategies.

2.7   The relation between educational level and parents' moral reasoning and strategies

Previous research has found a positive correlation between moral judgement and educational level attained, signifying that level of formal education was found as a strong predictor for increasing the development of moral reasoning (Colby et al., 1983; Leming & Yendol-Hoppey, 2004; Lind, 1986; McNeel, 1994; Myyry, Juujärvi, & Pesso, 2013; Rest, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999). In addition, parental education has been found as a significant variable in influencing children's behavior and educational achievement (Davis-Kean, 2005; Dearing, Mccartney, & Taylor, 2001; Dubow, Boxer, & Huesmann, 2009). Different studies have reported that more educated parents are found to have higher inspirations concerning their children's educational achievement (Davis-Kean, 2005; Machida, Taylor, & Kim, 2002; Suizzo, 2007). Within and across cultures, maternal education has been found to be an important factor that influences parenting (Bornstein & Bradley, 2003; LeVine, 2003). It has been revealed that maternal educational level can influence children's development and their intellectual outcomes (Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003; Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994). Individuals with a higher educational level may acquire personal qualities regarding autonomy, confidence and independence (LeVine et al., 1991) which affect their parenting strategies and child rearing practices. In this respect, it has been found that parents with a higher level of education tend to develop their child's sense of autonomy, and self-sufficiency (Bornstein & Bradley, 2003; Kagitcibasi et al., 2010; Kagitcibasi, 2005; Suizzo, 2007; Vieira et al., 2013). Therefore, parental education plays an important role in their moral reasoning and child rearing strategies, as well as their children's achievement. Thus, in accordance with the influences of education level on parenting strategies, this study aims to

explore the relation between mothers' educational level, their verbal rationale and socialization strategies in fostering their children's forgiveness skills. The next chapter will discuss the methodology and procedures of all data analysis.

Chapter 3

Methodology

T his chapter describes the methodology of the empirical research study, including the objectives and research questions, along with the hypotheses, which are formulated according to the literature review explained in the previous chapters.

3.1 Aims of the Current Study

The present research is the first study which aims to identify parenting socialization practices with an emphasis on forgiveness-promoting strategies and comparing the forgiveness-promoting strategies used by Iranian and Portuguese mothers when helping their child to forgive the harm done by a peer. Mother's strategies in fostering the child's development of forgiveness are differentiated according to their reasoning complexity, perspective-taking orientation and moral

agency. Family, culture and religion function as a social reference for individuals regarding evaluating rights and wrongs as well as defining social norms and expected standards (Massey & Abu-Baker, 2009). In order to compare mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies through a cultural lens, mothers living in Iran and Portugal, as two representatives of an interdependent as opposed to an independent cultural orientations (Keller et al., 2008), were studied. Taking the Western and the Middle-East countries of Iran and Portugal with two different cultures and religious orientation, we sought to find whether mothers in these two sociocultural contexts indicate similar or different cultural models of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies regarding their preschoolers.

3.1.1   Rationale for scale development

In order to explore the strategies that mothers use to encourage forgiveness in their preschool children, this study aimed to create a new self-report instrument to assess mothers' reasoning and socialization strategies based on socio-moral reasoning theories. This newly developed self-report instrument was named the Mothers' Forgiveness-promoting Strategies Scale (MFSS).

3.1.2   Research questions and hypotheses

In this respect, the present study explores the theoretical assumptions of the socio-moral reasoning through the following hypotheses:

- The mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies regarding their preschool-aged children are differentiated according to four constructs which underline different socio-moral orientations to forgiveness, namely: punishment-obedience; self regulation; social-normative; and autonomous morality forgiveness orientations.

Furthermore, this study examines the relation between mothers' forgiveness orientations and socio-cultural variables in a cultural perspective. The following research questions are explored:

1. Are there any different patterns in mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies regarding the punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social-normative, and autonomous morality orientations between Portuguese and Iranian mothers as two different Western and Middle-East cultures?

   In this regard, considering the cultural values and the social background typically in line with collectivist societies, it is hypothesized that Iranian mothers will be more likely to endorse social-normative forgiveness orientation than Portuguese mothers.

2. Is educational level associated with mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies?

   In this regard, considering the influences of education on parenting practices and individual's moral reasoning, it is hypothesized that higher-educated mothers will be more likely to feature autonomy values and socialization goals, thereby endorsing more the self-regulation and autonomous morality orientations compared to the less educated mothers.

3. Is religiosity associated with mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies?

   In this regard, considering the influence of religion on individual's morality and normative behavior, it is hypothesized that more religious mothers will feature more normative and morality facets of religion, thereby endorsing

more the social normative and autonomous morality orientations compared to

less religious mothers.

3.2   Rationale for sample recruitment

Participants of this research are mothers as principal care taking figures in

childrearing ideology because of their gender-specific role, recognized across all

cultures. In addition, there is a much greater volume of information available

regarding the more important role of mothers than fathers in children's moral

development and socialization (Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002). Previous research has

shown that women have a greater tendency to forgive in general compared to men.

This gender difference in forgiveness is based on the theory that women are more

likely to emphasize emotions and to maintain relationships, while men put more

emphasis on justice and fairness (Gilligan, 1988; Root & Exline, 2011). Moreover, it

has been found that mothers have a more significant influence than fathers on their

children's attitudes and beliefs (Demirutku, 2007; Flor & Knapp, 2001; Noller &

Callan, 1991). In addition, mothers play a major role in children's socialization and

social-emotional development (Dunsmore & Karn, 2001; Garner, Jones, Gaddy, &

Rennie, 1997; Orta, Corapci, Yagmurlu, & Aksan, 2013; Shewark, 2012). According

to Garner and associates (1997), children learn significant skills regarding emotional

situation knowledge and emotional role-taking ability from their mothers. As an

example, previous research has found that children's emotional understanding was

highly influenced by their mothers' beliefs about emotions (Dunsmore & Karn, 2001)

and children's judgement of forgiveness was related to their mothers' judgement of

forgiveness (Shewark, 2012). In addition, it has been found that mothers' judgement

on punishing the offender was highly influential on children's judgement as to

whether to punish the transgressor or not (Neal, 2005). Similarly, it has been found that children's propensity to forgive was highly influenced by their mother's propensity to forgive (Getman, 2004; Neal, 2005). Taken together, according to this gender differences and based on the unique role of mothers in children's social-emotional and forgiveness development, mothers are likely than fathers to have a greater influence on communicating forgiveness practices to their children. Furthermore, it is more difficult to recruite fathers than mothers in empirical research studies. Therefore, as an initial step regarding the topic of research, the present study probed only mothers.

The age range of recruiting mothers of 4 to 6-year old children was chosen as the criterion for selecting participants in the sample for two main reasons. First, there are already many studies regarding the parental beliefs and values of children of 0 to 3-year olds (Keller, 2007). Second, the age of 4 years, is an important time of children's transition to more independent social affairs (Davé, Sherr, Senior, & Nazareth, 2008). According to Tudge and his associates (2013), parental values such as independency and dependency differ according to the age ranged of children, specifically, 0-3 years old, 4-6 years old and onwards. In this regard, age is considered as a developmental marker. The onset of passage to elementary school may contribute to the parents' socialization concerns in developing children's morality and social relationships. Therefore, age is a significant factor in child development.

3.3   Participants

A total of 253 Portuguese (n = 129) and Iranian (n = 124) mothers of 4 to 6 year-old children participated in the study. Participants were recruited from kindergartens in urban area. Participants in these both countries responded the paper

and pencil questionnaires individually. The sample of mothers was composed by mothers aged between 22 and 44 years old (M = 33.65, SD = 4.597) in Iran and between 24 and 48 years old (M = 36.88, SD = 4.868) in Portugal. In total, 26% of Iranian mother were 30 years old and younger while this percentage was 9.4% in Portugal. In both Iran and Portugal mothers had between 1 to 3 children. In total, 54% of Iranian mothers had one child compared to 35.7% of Portuguese mothers at the time of the data collection. Of a total sample, 98.4% of Iranian mother were married compared with 81.4% of mothers in Portugal. In Iran, mothers were more educated than Portugal. In total, 35, 5% of Iranian mothers had an average educational level (less than bachelor's degree) versus 64.5% with high level of education (completion of a bachelor's degree or higher). However, in Portugal, 50.4% of mothers had an average educational level versus 48.8% with high level of education. In total, 92.7% of Iranian mothers stated that they have a religious belief and their religious affiliation was predominantly Moslem (91.9%). In Portugal, 88.3% of mothers mentioned they have a religious belief and 86.8% of them were Christian.

3.4   Instruments

In this study participants were presented a background information questionnaire along with a newly developed Mothers' Forgiveness-promoting Strategies Scale.

3.4.1   A Background Information Questionnaire

This questionnaire included demographic information and religious characteristics variables.

3.4.1.1   Demographic variables

Questions of this part included age of mothers, number of children, family configuration, mothers' educational level, marital status, marriage years, employment or unemployment of mothers. In order to evaluate the maternal educational level, a 7-point scale (0= no schooling, 1= less than 7th grade, 2= junior high school, including 9th grade, 3=partial high school, 10th or 11th grade, 4= high school graduate, 5= partial college (at least one year of specialized training), 6= standard college or university graduation (Bachelors),7= graduate/professional training (Master or PhD) adapted from Hollingshead (1975) was applied. After data analysis conducted by SPSS, mother's educational level was distinguished into 5 categories including obtaining less than high school degree, high school graduate, associates (at least one year of specialized training), bachelors (standard college or university graduation) and graduate professional training (master or doctorate degree). These categories were used to compare educational level of Iranian and Portuguese mothers.

3.4.1.2   Religious characteristics

In this part, several questions addressed the participants' religious characteristics. First, mothers were asked to identify their current religious affiliation. Then, they were asked to report the frequency of attendance at a place of worship and frequency of prayer. They also were asked to rate the importance of a religious practice in their own lives. Frequency of place of worship attendance was assessed by asking mothers "How often do you attend place of worship?" (rarely, less than once a month, less than once a week, once a week or more, once a day or more) and frequency of prayer was assessed by asking mothers "How often do you pray either individually or collectively?" (rarely, less than once a month, less than once a week, once a week or

more, once a day or more). In addition, importance of religious practice was assessed by asking mothers to rate from 1 to 5 how important religious practice is to them (unimportant, a little important, somewhat important, important, and very important). Self-reported religious worship attendance has been used as an independent measure of religiosity in different research studies (Grossman, Tracy, & Noonan, 2013; Hills, Francis, & Robbins, 2005; Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2001; Rodriguez & Henderson, 2010) and it has been one of the most frequently measures of religiosity in social science research (Donahue, 1985; Ellison & McFarland, 2013). Also, frequency of prayer activity has been explored in several studies as a pattern of personal religious belief (Baker, 2008; Ellison & McFarland, 2013; Grossman et al., 2013; Roof & McKinney, 1987). Thus, in this study mothers' report of frequency of attendance at a place of worship, frequency of prayer, and importance of religious practice were used as control variables concerning mothers' religious characteristics in order to explore their influence on mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies.

3.4.2 Mothers' Forgiveness-promoting Strategies Scale

Mothers' Forgiveness-promoting Strategies Scale (MFSS) was designed for the purpose of this study. A two-stage procedure was selected for developing the MFSS. At Stage 1, definitions were developed for the different constructs of MFSS. At Stage 2, items were generated for inclusion in MFSS.

3.4.2.1 Definitions of constructs

Following a comprehensive exploration of the literature on theoretical and empirical studies concerning forgiveness and the examination of different interpersonal forgiveness instruments (Denham et al., 2005; Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Enright & North, 1998; Enright et al., 1989; Govier, 2002; Hargrave & Sells,

1997; Lamb & Murphy, 2002; McCullough et al., 2003, 2001; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002; Mullet, Houdbine, Laumonier, & Girard, 1998; Park & Enright, 1997; Rye, 1998; Rye et al., 2001; Sastre, Vinsonneau, Chabrol, & Mullet, 2005; Subkoviak et al., 1995; Worthington, 1998b, 2005), this study attempted to capture the essentials of the construct of forgiveness and related factors. As a result of this comprehensive research literature on forgiveness constructs (See **Table 3-1**), four constructs were retained and organized in coherence with mother's strategies to promote their preschooler's forgiveness skills. As earlier discussed (See chapter 2 of the present study), these strategies endorse different reasoning about forgiveness, which led us to assess how mothers' reasoning are related to their forgiveness-promoting strategies. As such, we propose in this study to identify:

- Punishment-obedience orientation: in which parents try to draw the child's attention to the consequences of actions and offence;

- Self-regulation orientation: in which parents try to promote the child's proneness to forgive and develop a conscience about his/her feelings and cognitions (attributions, expectations, beliefs on justice) by accentuating and reflecting the consequences of his/her behavior;

- Social-normative orientation: in which parents try to encourage the child's forgiveness for the sake of interpersonal relationship and socially-acceptable behavior;

- Autonomous morality orientation: in which parents try to emphasize on the importance of forgiveness according to moral agency and personal responsibility regardless of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships and roles.

3.4.2.2 **Item development**

Using the above definitions of the constructs identified in the literature, items were generated to be used in a preliminary version of MFSS. Items were reviewed to be sure that they are adherent to the four mentioned constructs. In this respect, newly-developed items were under supervision and reviewed by some scholars. After discussion and revision, the preliminary MFSS was also tested with a group of mothers to assess the validity of the scale, the mothers' comprehension and opinion of the total scale and each individual item of the scale. Finally, based on the results of discussion and preliminary test, 19 items out of 30 were selected for inclusion in the MFSS.

The 19 items of MFSS aimed at assessing mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies in the context of harm done to her child, with an emphasis on the reasoning, emotions and behaviors she expresses to promote "forgiveness" in the child. These items were selected based on different reasoning and rationalization that mothers are likely to endorse according to punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality orientation. All items were put together in random order and worded, so that they represented the different aspect of each component in almost equal proportions. Then, the scale was translated in both Portuguese and Persian language with the supervision of an idiom specialist. Phrasal idioms were adapted according to each country's linguistic usage. Then, in each country a pilot study was undertaken in order to analyze the efficiency of the instrument. Mothers were instructed to place themselves in the specific written hypothetical scenario designed regarding preschoolers' peer conflict, in which their child was offended by a peer at kindergarten, and to indicate how they would encourage their child to forgive a peer's aggressive behavior. Mothers rated on a 5

point scale ("I never say" to "I always say") the frequency with which they employed

each behavior. Finally, a 19-items questionnaire (MFSS) covering four constructs of

punishment-obedience orientation (items 4, 7, 8, 10, 19), self-regulation orientation

(items 6, 13, 18), social normative orientation (items 3, 9, 11, 12, 15) and autonomous

morality orientation (items 1, 2, 5, 14, 16, 17) aimed to measure whether mothers

encourage their child to forgive a peer aggressive behavior on justification for

punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative or autonomous morality

orientations.

Table 3-1:   Summary of forgiveness constructs in literature review

Forgiveness related constructs	Reference	Example
Revenge	(McCullough et al., 2003; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002)	"I'll make him/her pay"
Avoidance		"I live as if he/she doesn't exist, isn't around"
Benevolence		"Even though his/her actions hurt me, I have goodwill for him/her"
Absence of Negative	(Rye, 1998; Rye et al., 2001)	"I feel resentful toward the person who wronged me".
Presence of Positive		"I have compassion for the person who wronged me"
Propensity to lasting resentment	(Chiaramello, Mesnil, Sastre, & Mullet, 2008; Mullet et al., 1998; Sastre et al., 2005)	"I cannot forgiven even if the offender has apologized"
Willingness to revenge		"I always apply the Lex Talionis (an eye for an eye) when someone has offended me"
Sensitivity to circumstances		"I feel easier to forgive when my family or my friends have suggested to me that I do so"
Willingness to avenge		"I can truly forgive even if the consequences of harm are serious"
Positive affect	(Subkoviak et al., 1995)	"I feel kindness toward him/her"
Positive behavior		"Regarding this person I do or would show friendship"
Positive cognition		"I think he/she is a good person"
Negative affect		"I feel resentment toward him/her"
Negative behavior		"Regarding this person I do or would avoid"
Negative cognition		"I think he/she is immoral"

Forgiveness related constructs	Reference	Example
Revengeful forgiveness	(Enright et al., 1989; see also Enright, Gassin, & Wu, 1992; Enright, 1994)	"I can forgive someone who wrongs me only if I can punish him to a similar degree to my own pain"
Restitutional or compensational forgiveness.		"If I get back what was taken away from me, then I can forgive" Or, "if I feel guilty about withholding forgiveness, then I can forgive to relieve my guilt"
Expectational forgiveness		"I can forgive if others put pressure on me to forgive. It is easier to forgive when other people expect it"
Lawful expectational forgiveness		"I forgive when my religion demands it"
Forgiveness as social harmony		"I forgive when it restores harmony or good relations in society"
Forgiveness as love		"I forgive unconditionally because it promotes a true sense of love"
Revengeful Forgiveness	(Park & Enright, 1997; Rique & Lins-Dyer, 2003)	"It is not right for John to forgive Marc so quickly. Mark made a threat"
External Forgiveness		"They have been good friends, and at that age they should rely on one another" or "Because they are friends, forgiveness means something; it is the key to forgetting the incident"
Internal Forgiveness		"It is important for all of humans to forgive and be forgiven" or "Forgiveness is the greatest good of humanity"
Insight	(Hargrave & Sells, 1997)	" I have trouble sorting out my emotions with regard to this person"
Understanding		"when this person is cruel to me, it has more to do with his/her problems than it does with me"
Giving the opportunity for compensation		" I believe we are on the road to restoring our relationship"
Over act of forgiving		"I believe this person would not intentionally hurt me again because he or she is now trustworthy in our relationship"

3.5   Procedure for data collection and analysis

First, all instruments were translated in both Portuguese and Persian language with
the supervision of professional specialist. Phrasal idioms were adapted according to
each country's linguistic usage. In each country a pilot study was applied in order to
analyze the efficiency of total measures. Mothers were interviewed regarding the

items of newly-developed scale (MFSS) in order to examine the clarity and fluency of each item and mothers' opinion concerning the all instruments.

Before contacting mothers, in each country, a meeting with kindergartens' director was appointed by the researcher to explain the aim of the research study and to ask for their collaborations. Besides, a letter with an instruction form was developed including information about the aim of the project, instructions of materials, role of mothers' contribution in the research project and the confidentiality of answers, and was presented to the kindergarten's principals and mothers. Through the cooperation of kindergartens' directors, mothers were contacted by teachers. After obtaining the mothers' consent to participate in a research project, most of the interviews occurred in the kindergartens. Each mother responded to the instruments individually in a quiet place with the researcher pesent to explain the mothers how to respond to the items and answer any question regarding the terms used in the questionnaire. It took approximately 20 minutes for the participants to complete the questionnaires and they did not report any difficulties in answering the questions.

3.6   Data analysis

In this part, SPSS version 22.0 was applied for generating data sets and for analyzing the descriptive statistic including frequencies and means of data for both countries separately. In addition, T-test, chi-square and multivariate analysis of variance for comparing the cultural differences were statistically tested. Moreover, exploratory factor analysis and internal consistency by Cronbach alpha was applied by SPSS 22.0 in order to investigate the hypothesized four-factor structure of newly-constructed MFSS. For this purpose, also exploratory structural equation modeling (ESEM) and factorial invariance using the Mplus computer program version

7.0 (Muth´en & Muth´en, 1998-2012) was carried out to explore the fit of four- hypothesized factor structure of the MFSS for overall sample and across groups respectively. The next chapter reports the results of the statistical analysis.

Chapter 4

Results

T his chapter presents the results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the sample and an evaluation of the the newly-developed scale, as well as the relationship between socio-cultural factors and mothers' forgiveness reasoning and strategies.

4.1 Description of samples

Descriptive statistics were applied to characterize mothers' demographic and religious characteristics and to explore the distributions of predictor variables for both groups of mothers. In order to assess the differences ad similarities between Iranian and Portuguese mothers' characteristics, two tests were applied: a chi-square test for independence regarding two categorical variables (country) and an independent-samples t-test to compare the mean score of continuous variables for the two groups of Iranian and Portuguese samples.

4.1.1 Demographic characteristics

Table 4-1 presents the descriptive statistic of mothers' demographic characteristics. According to statistically significant results, mothers living in Portugal were older than those living in Iran [M = 36.88, SD = 4.868 and M = 33.65, SD = 4.597, respectively] [t (249) = -5.40; p < .001]. Also, the mean for the number of children in Portugal (M = 1.81 2, SD = .73) was greater than in Iran (M = 1.53, SD = .63), [t (251) = -3.190; P < .01, Cohen's d = .41]. In this respect, mothers were divided into two groups according to the number of children they had (one child and more than one child). A chi-square test for independence indicated significant differences between the country and mothers' number of children, [x^2 (1, n = 253) = 8.636, p < .01, Phi = .19]. According to descriptive statistics, 46% of Iranian mothers had more than one child compared to 64.3% of Portuguese mothers. In addition, there was a statistical significant difference between mothers' employment across the two countries. The majority (82.2%) of mothers in Portugal had a job, while only 36.3 % of them were employed in Iran, [x^2 (1, n = 253) = 53.872, p < .001, Phi= .46]. However, nuclear family was the predominant type of family configuration, [Portugal: 93.8% and Iran: 95.2%] in both countries and no significant differences [x^2 (1, n = 253) = .225, p = .636, Phi = .03] were found in this condition. Referring to maternal marital status, a chi-square test for independence indicated significant differences between the country and mothers' marital status, [x^2 (2, n = 253) = 24.661 p < .001, Cramer's V = .28]. In Portugal, 81.4% of mothers were married compared to 98.4% of mothers in Iran. Yet, according to the data analysis one of the assumptions of chi-square for independence was violated. This violated assumption was concerning the 'minimum expected cell frequency', which should be 5 or greater (or at least 80 percent of cells have expected frequency of 5 or more). As can be seen in **Table 4-1**,

this violated assumption is due to the fact that none of the Iranian mothers had single marital status and neither Iranian nor Portuguese mothers were widows. In addition, mothers' marriage years were compared in two categories of 10 years or less versus 11 years or more in both countries and a chi-square test for independence indicated no significant differences between the country and mothers' marriage years, [x^2 (1, n = 229) = 1.881 p = .11, Phi = .09]. The percentage of each category in both groups was approximately the same, 54% (Iran) and 38.8% (Portugal) of mothers were married for 10 years or less versus 43.5% (Iran) and 45% (Portugal) of mothers who were married for 11 years or more.

Moreover, a chi-square test for independence indicated significant differences between the country and mothers' educational levels, [x^2 (4, n = 252) = .18.659 p < .001, Cramer's V = .29]. Mothers in Iran had higher levels of education: 64.5% of them reported completion of a bachelor degree or higher versus 48.8% of mothers in Portugal. In Iran only 5.6% of mothers had uncompleted high school education versus 22.5% of mothers in Portugal. To summarize, there can be seen large differences between mothers living in Iran and Portugal. Compared to Iranian mothers, mothers in Portugal were older and they had significantly lower level of education. They had more children and they mostly were employed. However, similar characteristics can be seen between the two countries including the prevalence of nuclear family configuration.

Table 4-1:   Demographic characteristics of participants (Iran: N=124, Portugal: N=129)

Mother's demographic Characteristic	Iran		Portugal	
	n	%	n	%
Mothers' number of children				
Only one child	67	54%	46	35.7%
More than one child	57	46%	83	64.3%
Mothers' educational level				
Less than High School	7	5.6%	29	22.5%
High School	26	21.0%	29	22.5%
Associate	11	8.9%	7	5.4%
Bachelor	60	48.4%	52	40.3%
Master or Doctorate	20	16.1%	11	8.5%
Mothers' job				
Unemployed	79	63.7%	23	17.8%
Employed	45	36.3%	106	82.2%
Family configuration				
Nuclear family	118	95.2%	121	93.8%
Extended family	6	4.8%	8	6.2%
Marital Status				
Single	0	0%	8	6.2%
Married	122	98.4%	105	81.4%
Divorced	2	1.6%	16	12.4%
Widow	0	0%	0	0%
Marriage years				
10 years or less	67	54%	50	38.8%
11 years or more	54	43.5%	58	45%

4.1.2   Religious Characteristics

The predominant mothers' religious affiliation for Iranian mothers was Islam (91.9%) and for Portuguese mothers was Christianity (86.8 %). In total, 8.1% of Iranian mothers did not mention any particular religion compared to 13.2% of Portuguese mothers. Akin to these figures, 7.3% of Iranian mothers reported no religious affiliation compared to 10.9% of Portuguese mothers.

Furthermore, three variables were used to explore the mothers' religious characteristics. The first was mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship. A descriptive statistical analysis was applied to explore the distribution, descriptive and summary statistics of the sample. The result indicated evidence of substantial skew in the data; thereby the six coding schemes of this variable were transformed to three coding schemes including rarely, less than once a month, and at least once a month. A chi-square test for independence indicated significant association between country and mothers' attendance at a place of worship, [x^2 (1) = 9.568 p < .01, Cramer's V = .2]. In Iran, 43.5% of mothers rarely attended a place of worship against 23.3% of mothers in Portugal. Thus, Iranian mothers were less likely to attend a place of worship compared to Portuguese mothers.

The second variable was the mothers' frequency of prayer (i.e., actual praying activity). A descriptive statistical analysis was applied to explore the distribution, descriptive and summary statistics of the sample. The same as frequency of mothers' attendance at a place of worship variable, the result indicated evidence of substantial skew in the data; thereby the six coding schemes of mothers' frequency of prayer variable were transformed to three coding schemes including rarely, at least once a month, and at least once a day. A chi-square test for independence indicated no

significant association between country and mothers' frequency of prayer either individually or collectively, [x^2 (1) = 3.586, p = .16, Cramer's V = .12]. In total, 42.7% of Iranian mothers say a prayer at least once a day compared to 39.5% of Portuguese mothers which is almost similar percentage across the two countries.

Mothers' report concerning the importance of their religious practice was a third variable for assessing mothers' religious characteristics. A descriptive statistical analysis was applied to explore the distribution, descriptive and summary statistics of the sample. Similar to the previous variables, the results indicated evidence of substantial skew in the data; thereby the six coding schemes of this variable were transformed into four coding including unimportant, somewhat important, important and very important. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between country and mothers' view concerning the importance of religious practice. A significant difference was found across countries, [x^2 (3) = 36.186 p < .000, Cramer's V = .38]. In total, 43.5% of Iranian mothers rated religious practice very important versus 14.7% of Portuguese mothers. Based on this result, Iranian mothers gave more importance to the religious practice than Portuguese mothers did.

To summarize, Iranian and Portuguese mothers had quite similar percentages in the frequency of prayer; however, statistically significant differences were found concerning the frequency of attendance at a place of worship and their reports about the importance of religious practice. Although Iranian mothers rated the importance of religious practice higher than Portuguese mothers, they were less likely to attend a place of worship. **Table 4-2** presents the descriptive statistics of mothers' religious characteristics in both countries.

Table 4-2:   Religious characteristics of participants (Iran: N=124, Portugal: N=129)

Mother's religious characteristic	Iran		Portugal	
	n	%	n	%
Mother's frequency of attendance at a place of worship				
Rarely	54	43.5%	30	23.3%
Less than once a month	32	25.8%	41	31.8%
At least once a month	38	30.6%	50	38.8%
Mothers' frequency of prayer				
Rarely	35	28.2%	21	16.3%
At least once a month	36	29.0%	42	32.6%
At least once a day	53	42.7%	51	39.5%
Mothers' report concerning the importance of religious practice				
unimportant	26	21.0%	19	14.7%
somewhat important	19	15.3%	52	40.3%
important	25	20.2%	39	30.2%
very important	54	43.5%	19	14.7%

4.2   Mothers' Forgiveness-promoting Strategies Scale

According to the theoretical analysis, it was hypothesized for this newly-developed
scale to include four constructs concerning mothers' reasoning and socialization
strategies when promoting their children's forgiveness skills. In order to assess the
hypothesized four-factorial model and to evaluate suitability, consistency and
construct validity of the scale, a first exploratory factor analysis and internal
consistency check were applied by using IBM SPSS version 22, and then exploratory

structural equation modeling (ESEM) was performed using the Mplus computer
program version 7.

4.2.1   Exploratory Factor Analysis

In order to evaluate the suitability of the sample data for factor analysis, the
correlation matrix was applied to estimate the correlations at .30 or above (See
Table 4-3). The Bartlett's (1954) test of sphericity was specified (which should be
significant at p < .05) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Okline (KMO) value was applied.
Correlations of .30 or above were discerned for this newly-developed Mothers'
Forgiveness-promoting Strategies Scale (MFSS). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was
significant (p < .001), which supports the factorability of the correlation matrix. Also,
the value of KMO was .83, exceeding the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1970,
1974) which supported the fitness of the data for factor analysis.

After assessing and confirming the suitability of data for factor analysis, the 19
items of the Mothers' Forgiveness-promoting Strategies Scale (MFSS) were subjected
to principal components analysis (PCA) for the four-factor solution, and the oblique
rotations using the Promax approaches was performed. Oblique methods are
recommended when the underlying factors are correlated (Leever, 2006; Pallant,
2001; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Thus, in this study, promax approach as one of the
commonly used oblique techniques was selected, because it was assumed that each of
the hypothesized underlying constructs would be correlated.

Table 4-3: MFSS Items Correlations (N=253)

Items	MFSS1	MFSS2	MFSS3	MFSS4	MFSS5	MFSS6	MFSS7	MFSS8	MFSS9	MFSS10	MFSS11	MFSS12	MFSS13	MFSS14	MFSS15	MFSS16	MFSS17	MFSS18
MFSS1	-																	
MFSS2	.56**	-																
MFSS3	.49**	.33**	-															
MFSS4	-.18*	-.28**	-.06	-														
MFSS5	.46**	.41**	.47**	.08	-													
MFSS6	.25**	.23**	.22*	-.03	.36**	-												
MFSS7	-.18*	-.35**	-.12	.47**	.04	.05	-											
MFSS8	-.20*	-.44	-.10	.32**	-.12	-.09	.55**	-										
MFSS9	.31**	.26**	.31**	-.15	.31**	.26**	-.06	-.04	-									
MFSS10	-.17	-.05	-.04	.31**	.05	-.19*	.34**	.33**	-.11	-								
MFSS11	.38**	.24**	.67**	.10	.42**	.21*	-.08	.10	.43**	.11	-							
MFSS12	.39**	.23**	.47**	-.04	.31**	.33**	-.09	.04	.55**	-.10	.43**	-						
MFSS13	.30**	.14*	.34**	.09	.36**	.49**	-.09	.22**	.43**	-.14*	.32**	.52**	-					
MFSS14	.62**	.58**	.46**	-.14	.55**	.34**	-.17	-.18*	.41**	-.14	.33**	.60**	.46**	-				
MFSS15	.46**	.40**	.47**	-.10	.39**	.40**	-.12	-.09	.53**	-.23**	.43**	.77**	.61**	.65**	-			
MFSS16	.45**	.53**	.45**	.23**	.36**	.42**	-.20*	-.21*	.38**	-.04	.35**	.49**	.39**	.69**	.54**	-		
MFSS17	.41**	.44**	.43**	-.20*	.47**	.40**	-.19*	-.23**	.32**	-.11	.29**	.35**	.47**	.53**	.42**	.66**	-	
MFSS18	.26**	.20*	.37**	-.09	.45**	.40**	-.09	-.10	.30**	-.18*	.26**	.32**	.54**	.40**	.44**	.42**	.48**	-
MFSS19	-.24**	-.26**	.10	.49**	.10	-.13	.41**	.35**	-.11	.31**	.11	-.15	-.10	-.23**	-.19*	-.31**	-.28**	-.09

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In addition, in order to more fully examine the fitness of the hypothesized four-factorial structure, the number of significant factors was estimated by Cattell's (1966) scree test. Cattel suggests that the "right" number of factors can be determined through looking at the drop which the shape of the curve changes to become more horizontal (like elbow). Factors before that change are assumed to present the initial factors which contribute most to the explanation of variance compared to those extracted later.

According to the results, the four-factor solution explained a total of 58.2 % of the variance, with factor 1 contributing 28.22%, factor 2 contributing 16.33, factor 3 contributing 7.72% and factor four contributing 5.96%. According to Kaiser's (1960) eigenvalue-greater-than-one rule, the eigenvalues of four factors ranged from 5.36 to 1.13 (See **Table 4-4**). In addition, an inspection of the scree plot indicated a clear break after the fourth factor.

Thus, in this step, the suitability, strength and acceptability of the four hypothesized constructs of the scale are confirmed according to the simple structure of the four-factor model, the clarity provided by the principal factor distinction based on the item expression, the strong loading factors, total variance and Cattell's screeplot test.

Table 4-4:   Summary of Factor Loadings (N=253)

MFSS item	Factor loading 1	2	3	4	Communality
1. I tell him/her not to take the matter very seriously and to remain friends.	.81				.68
2. I tell him/her not to take offense because his/her classmate did not mean to hurt him/her on purpose.	.82				.72
3. I tell him/her to continue being friends so his/her other classmates will not call him/her a 'crybaby'.				.80	.65
4. I tell him/her that this child is rude and that it would be better to stay away from him/her.			.73		.54
5. I tell him/her to forget the matter because the scratches will soon go away.	.58				.49
6. I tell him/her to forget the matter and to continue being friends as long as the other child apologizes.		.62			.42
7. I tell him/her the other child deserves to be punished for doing a naughty thing.			.73		.56
8. I tell him/her to talk to the teacher who can decide what punishment that the other child deserves.			.67		.56
9. I tell him/her not to cry but instead to pray for the child who hurt him/her.				.57	.47
10. I tell him/her to defend him/herself and not to let the matter pass.			.62		.43
11. I tell him/her not to be angry so that his/her teacher will say that he/she is a good boy/girl.				.86	.76
12. I tell him/her that, if he/she pardons the child who did the harm, God will be pleased with him/her.				.53	.65
13. I tell him/her to be kind-hearted and to understand that there are some children who do not know how to behave well.		.79			.64
14. I tell him/her to make peace and continue being friends.	.86				.77
15. I tell him/her not to stay angry because God taught us to be good hearted.				.54	.71
16. I tell him/her not to get angry and to be friends.	.78				.66
17. I tell him/her to forget and ask the other child to play on the swing, taking turns.	.58				.49
18. I tell him/her not to stay angry as this only makes him/her feel bad.		.56			.43
19. I tell him/her to stop playing with the child who pushed him/her.			.66		.54
Eigenvalue	5.36	3.10	1.47	1.13	-
% of Variance	28.22	16.33	7.72	5.96	58.23
Cronbach alpha	.84	.64	.71	.81	.82

4.2.2 Internal Consistency

In order to estimate the reliability of each subscale, first a statistical analysis was conducted in order to explore the correlations between the items in each four factors (See **Table 4-5** to **Table 4-8**). All items had positive item-total correlations. Also, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was assessed to evaluate the internal consistency of the total MFSS score along with the internal consistency of each of the four factor scores separately. Reliability analysis showed high internal consistency of the scale. Coefficient alpha for the total MFSS scale was $\alpha = .82$. In addition, Cronbach's alpha levels of four factors were $\alpha=.84$ for autonomous morality orientation (including 6 items), $\alpha = .81$ for social normative orientation (including 5 items), $\alpha = .64$ for self-regulation orientation (including 3 items) and $\alpha = .71$ for punishment-obedience orientation (including 5 items).

Accordingly, at this stage, the results of factor analysis and a high level of internal consistency of the four factors, measured by Cronbach's alpha, concluded that MFSS can be a reliable scale for measuring mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies in fostering their preschoolers' forgiveness skills within the four factors of autonomous morality, social normative, self-regulation, and punishment-obedience orientations. Furthermore, in order to reconfirm the validity and reliability of the hypothesized four-structural model, the exploratory structural equation modeling (ESEM) was conducted in the next part.

Table 4-5: Inter-Item Correlations of autonomous morality orientation (N=253).

Items	MFSS1	MFSS2	MFSS5	MFSS14	MFSS16
MFSS1	-				
MFSS2	.67**	-			
MFSS5	.38**	.33**	-		
MFSS14	.63**	.60**	.57**	-	
MFSS16	.45**	.50**	.35**	.69**	-
MFSS17	.32**	.31**	.36**	.47**	.57**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4-6: Inter-Item Correlations of Social normative orientation (N=253).

Items	MFSS3	MFSS9	MFSS11	MFSS12	MFSS15
MFSS3	-				
MFSS9	.30**	-			
MFSS11	.64**	.43**	-		
MFSS12	.36**	.51**	.42**	-	
MFSS15	.40**	.51**	.43**	.77**	-

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4-7: Inter-Item Correlations of child-centered orientation (N=253)

Items	MFSS6	MFSS13
MFSS6	-	
MFSS13	.38**	-
MFSS18	.31**	.42**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4-8:   Inter-Item Correlations of punishment-obedience orientation (N=253)

Items	MFSS4	MFSS7	MFSS8	MFSS10
MFSS4	-			
MFSS7	.39[**]	-		
MFSS8	.32[**]	.55[**]	-	
MFSS10	.31[**]	.37[**]	.32[**]	-
MFSS19	.50[**]	.41[**]	.31[**]	.32[**]

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.2.3   Exploratory Structural Equation Modeling

In the next step, in order to assess the fit of hypothesized factorial structure of the newly-constructed MFSS, the recently developed exploratory structural equation modeling (ESEM) was performed using the Mplus computer program (Version 7; (Muth´en & Muth´en, 1998-2012). ESEM integrates many advantages of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and traditional CFA. For example, compared to traditional CFA, ESEM does not include the condition of non-target factor loadings constrained to be zero. In addition, the ESEM reports the standard errors of the parameter estimates in an exploratory analysis and it also indicates overall test of model fit in structural equation modeling procedure (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2009; Marsh et al., 2010). In this study, the ESEM model used weighted least squares means and variance adjusted (WLSMV) estimation for modeling categorical data and oblique geomin rotation. According to the scholars of methodology, the oblique geomin rotation is preferred in social sciences, since it permits the factors to be intercorrelated (MacCallum, 1998).

Furthermore, model fit was evaluated based on an overall assessment of the following goodness-of-fit indices (Hu & Bentler, 1999): Bentler's (1990) comparative

fit index (CFI); Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The CFI and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) range between 0 and 1 and values more than .9 are considered acceptable fit, though values more than .95 display excellent fit (Hu & Bentler, 1995). The RMSEA estimates lack of fit per degree of freedom, and value smaller than .05 represents good fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1992).

According to the result, the four-factor ESEM model indicated a good fit to the data (See **Table 4-9**) and all MFSS items had practically significant loadings on one factor. The factor loading matrix of the four-factor ESEM model is shown in **Table 4-10**. The same as exploratory factor analysis, the four factors were punishment-obedience orientation (items 4, 7, 8, 10, 19, α = .71), self-regulation orientation (items 6, 13, 18, α = .64), social normative orientation (items 3, 9, 11, 12, 15, α = .81) and autonomous morality orientation (items 1, 2, 5, 14, 16, 17, α = .84). Thus, the results displayed the satisfactory reliability and adequate fit for the four-factor structure of the MFSS as a valid measure for exploring mothers' reasoning and strategies in promoting their preschooler's forgiveness skills. Moreover, the correlations among the ESEM factors ranged from .13 to .48 (See **Table 4-11**). These meaningful inter-factor correlations acknowledge the use of oblique geomin rotation rather than orthogonal varimax rotation to avoid distortion of the factor structure. As can be seen, there is a negative correlation between punishment-obedience and autonomous-morality factor. This negative correlation shows that amongst four factors, the autonomous morality factor indicates the underlying valence for positively worded items, and the punishment-obedience factor demonstrates the underlying valence for negatively worded items that were proposed to reflect punishment-obedience orientation in mothers' forgiveness strategies. To sum up, the

results of satisfactory reliability and moderate to strong correlations among the MFSS

factors suggest satisfactory discriminant validity for this newly-developed scale.

Table 4-9:   Model fit for ESEM four-factor model

Model	x^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA (90 % CI)
ESEM Four-factor	4462.027**	171	.985	.974	.036

df degree of freedom, CFI comparative fit index, TLI Tucker–Lewis index, RMSEA root mean square
error of approximation, ** $p < .01$

Table 4-10: Factor loading matrix of the four-factor ESEM model with geomin rotation

MFSS item		Factor loading		
	1	2	3	4
1. I tell him/her not to take the matter very seriously and to remain friends.				.84
2. I tell him/her not to take offense because his/her classmate did not mean to hurt him/her on purpose.				.88
3. I tell him/her to continue being friends so his/her other classmates will not call him/her a 'crybaby'.			.47	
4. I tell him/her that this child is rude and that it would be better to stay away from him/her.	.77			
5. I tell him/her to forget the matter because the scratches will soon go away.				.58
6. I tell him/her to forget the matter and to continue being friends as long as the other child apologizes.		.43		
7. I tell him/her the other child deserves to be punished for doing a naughty thing.	.54			
8. I tell him/her to talk to the teacher who can decide what punishment that the other child deserves.	.47			
9. I tell him/her not to cry but instead to pray for the child who hurt him/her.			.75	
10. I tell him/her to defend him/herself and not to let the matter pass.	.57			
11. I tell him/her not to be angry so that his/her teacher will say that he/she is a good boy/girl.			.60	
12. I tell him/her that, if he/she pardons the child who did the harm, God will be pleased with him/her.			.93	
13. I tell him/her to be kind-hearted and to understand that there are some children who do not know how to behave well.		.60		
14. I tell him/her to make peace and continue being friends.				.80
15. I tell him/her not to stay angry because God taught us to be good hearted.			.95	
16. I tell him/her not to get angry and to be friends.				.42
17. I tell him/her to forget and ask the other child to play on the swing, taking turns.				.68
18. I tell him/her not to stay angry as this only makes him/her feel bad.		.41		
19. I tell him/her to stop playing with the child who pushed him/her.	.76			

Factor 1 corresponds to punishment-obedience orientation,
Factor 2 corresponds to self-regulation orientation,
Factor 3 corresponds to social normative orientation,
Factor 4 corresponds to autonomous morality orientation

Table 4-11: MFSS factor correlations

factors	Punishment-obedience	Self-regulation	Social-normative
Punishment-obedience	-		
Self-regulation	.129*	-	
Social-normative	.149*	.372**	-
Autonomous morality	-.222**	.175*	.475**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.2.4 Factorial invariance analysis

Factorial invariance aimes to test if all items have the same constructs across groups (e.g., country). Configural invariance indicates that items of each latent factor are the same in each group. In other words, in configural invariance all parameters are free and the structure is the same across groups. If the configural invariance model fit is achieved then the weak factorial invariance is tested to examine whether the factor loadings between each items are invariant across groups. Given to the fact that the satisfactory fit for the baseline model was concluded for the overall sample, the four-factor model was then examined for group invariance including configural, and weak invariance; that is the same number of factors and the same pattern of item loadings should be indicated in both groups separately. However, due to the small number of sample in each group separately, as shown in **Table 4-12**, the configural invariance model did not fit well; thereby weak invariance was not achieved respectively. Overall, as an initial study of this newly-created scale, according to the satisfactory results of exploratory factor analysis, suitable internal consistency of factors and good fit of ESEM four-factor model, the four-factor hypothesized model of newly-developed MFSS was obviously reported and explained. Due to its coherent delineation of factors based on item expression, MFSS showed an early promise as an

instrument for exploring how mothers promote their preschoolers' forgiveness skills. Thus, in this study, the four-factor model was confirmed as a suitable model of the present scale, and it is considered as a measure for evaluating Iranian and Portuguese mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies concerning punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality orientations.

Table 4-12: The factorial invariance test across country groups

Model	x^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA (90 % CI)
Configural invariance model	359.681**	198	.908	.841	.080

df degree of freedom, CFI comparative fit index, TLI Tucker–Lewis index, RMSEA root mean square error of approximation, ** $p < .01$

4.3 Relation of culture to mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies

According to the statistical analysis, the four-factorial model of MFSS was confirmed as a valid scale for measuring how mothers promote their preschoolers' forgiveness skills. Thus, this scale is confirmed for comparing Iranian and Portuguese mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVAs) was conducted with culture (two) as the between-subject factors and four factors of MFSS scale including punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality orientations in mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies as dependent variables. There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .01$ level in punishment-obedience scores for the Iranian and Portuguese mothers: ($F(1, 252) = 6.723$, $p < .01$). Despite reaching statistical significance, the effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .03 which declared very small effect size. In addition, there was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .001$ level in self-regulation

orientation scores for the two cultural groups of mothers (F (1,252) = 21.544, p < .001). The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .08. Moreover, there was a statistically significant difference at the p < .001 level in social normative scores for Iranian and Portuguese mothers (F (1, 252) = 117.701 p < .001). The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .32 which indicates quite large effect size. Similarly, statistically significant difference was indicated at the p < .001 level concerning autonomous morality forgiveness-promoting strategies scores for the two group of countries (F (1,252) = 12.304, p < .001) with small effect size of .05. An inspection of the mean scores indicated that Iranian mothers reported slightly higher levels of punishment-obedience, self-regulation and social normative forgiveness-promoting strategies than Portuguese mothers. Although there were quite small mean differences and effect size regarding the punishment-obedience and self-regulation orientations, there was a significantly large mean difference and effect size concerning the social-normative orientation. As a result, the cultural differences between Iranian and Portuguese mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies are clearly indicated. On the other hand, referring to the autonomous morality forgiveness-promoting strategies, an inspection of mean square illustrated that Portuguese mothers reported slightly higher levels of autonomous morality orientation than Iranian mothers which again might be due to the different parenting cultural orientations of these two countries (See **Table 4-13** and

Figure 4-1). To summarize, the statistically significant difference with large effect size was concerning the social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategies across countries, indicating that Iranian mothers were more likely than Portuguese mothers to endorse social normative orientation in their reasoning and socialization strategies regarding their children's forgiveness skills. In addition, statistically

significant differences were found concerning self-regulation, punishment-obedience, and autonomous morality indicating that Iranian mothers were more likely than Portuguese mothers to give importance to self-regulation and punishment-obedience orientation. However, Portuguese mothers endorsed the importance of autonomous morality more often than Iranian mothers did, though small effect size was associated.

Table 4-13: Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analyses of Variance for the Effects of country on mothers' forgiveness strategy

MFSS	Iran		Portugal				
Measure	M	SD	M	SD	F(1,252)	sig	Eta Squared
Punishment-obedience	2.269	.811	2.012	.766	6.723	.01	.03
Self-regulation	3.534	.933	2.980	.961	21.544	.000	.08
Social normative	3.257	.898	1.982	.968	117.701	.000	.32
Autonomous morality	3.361	.868	3.722	.770	12.304	.001	.05
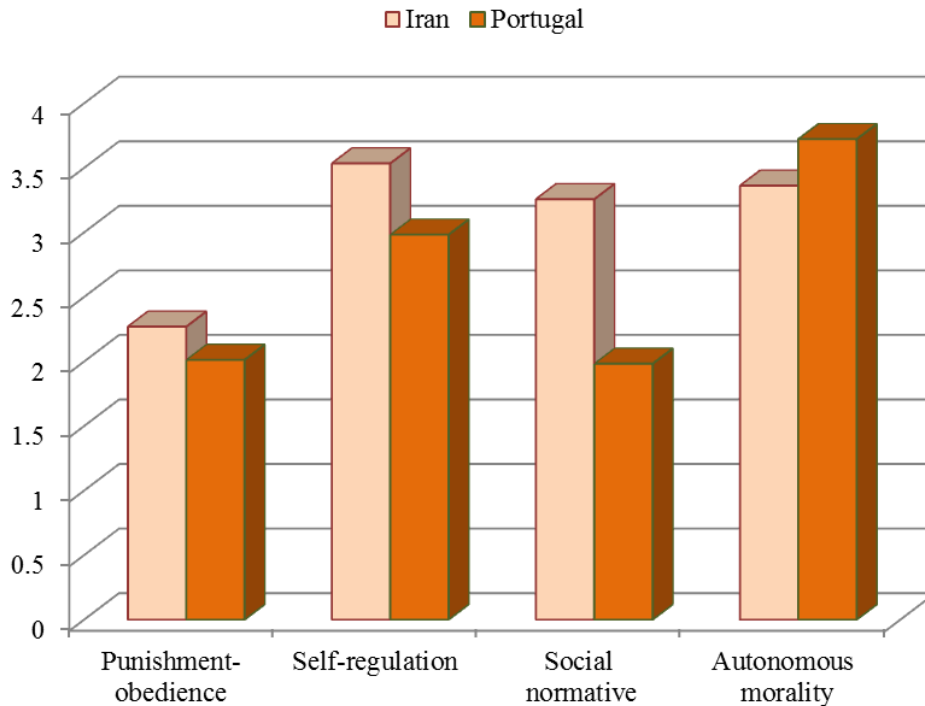
Figure 4-1: Differences in mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies by country.

Furthermore, in order to compare the means of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies in Iran and Portugal separately, the Restructure Data Wizard was applied for restructuring selected variables into cases. Variables include information which is to be analyzed. Each variable is located in a column in a simple data structure while a case is an observation or a participant which is presented in a row. This type of restructure is chosen to restructure groups of related columns (four variables of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies (including punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality) in groups in rows, that is, the mothers' strategies. Thus, in order to measure test scores for all mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies in Iran and Portugal separately, all score values would be presented in only one column, and each mother would be appeared in a row in the new data file.

The result indicated that there was a statistically significant difference at the p < .001 level in four dimensions of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies scores in Iran (F (3, 495) = 51.917, p < .001; Eta-squared = .24) and Portugal (F (3, 515) = 119.291, p < .001; Eta-squared = .41) separately. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for Iranian mothers' self-regulation orientation (M = 3.534, SD = .93) was not significantly different from social normative orientation (M = 3.257, SD = .898) and autonomous morality orientation (M = 3.361, SD = .87) in their forgiveness-promoting strategies and their score values were quite similar. However, the mean score of mothers' self-regulation orientation, social normative and autonomous morality orientation in their forgiveness-promoting strategies were significantly higher than punishment-obedience orientation of forgiveness-promoting strategy (M = 2.269, SD =.81). As a result, Iranian mothers gave similar importance to the self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality orientations in their forgiveness-promoting strategies, and they were more likely to endorse these three forgiveness-promoting strategies than the punishment-obedience orientation.

On the other hand, Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test illustrated that the mean score of Portuguese mothers' autonomous morality forgiveness-promoting strategy (M = 3.72, SD = .77) was significantly higher than punishment-obedience orientation (M = 2.01, SD = .77), social normative orientation (M = 1.98, SD = .96) and self-regulation orientation (M = 2.98, SD = .96). Similarly, the mean score of self-regulation orientation (M = 2.98, SD = .96) was significantly higher than the score value of punishment-obedience and social normative forgiveness promoting strategies. However, the score value of punishment-obedience and self-regulation orientations did not reach statistical difference. Based on these results, Portuguese

mothers were more likely to endorse autonomous morality and self-regulation orientations in their forgiveness-promoting strategies than social normative and punishment-obedience orientations. Thus, different forgiveness-promoting strategies of Iranian and Portuguese mothers are likely to be due to their cultural values and parenting orientations (See **Figure 4-2**).
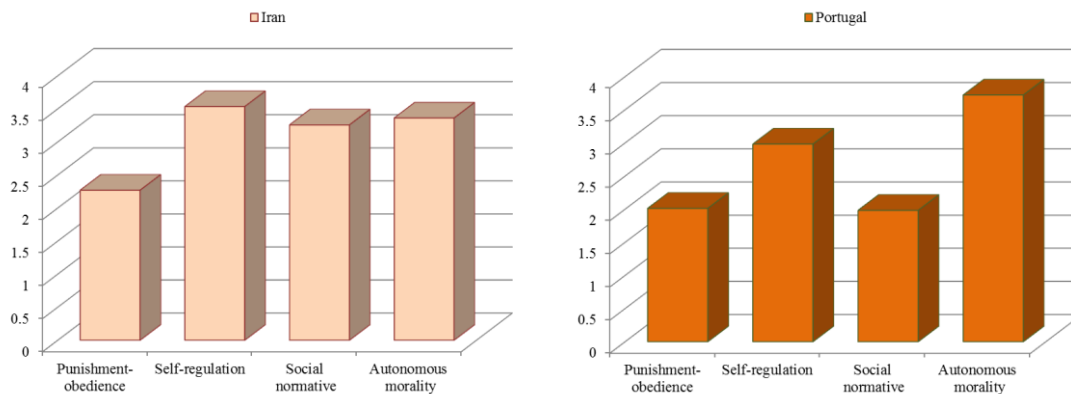
Figure 4-2: Differences in mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies in Iran and Portugal.

Furthermore, in the next parts, a mixed-model analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multivariate analysis (MANOVA) were conducted to assess whether there were statistical significant differences in mothers' strategies in promoting forgiveness in their preschool-aged children as a function of culture and educational level as well as mothers' religious characteristics between and within countries.

4.4 Relation of mothers' educational level to their forgiveness-promoting strategies

Participants were divided into two groups according to their educational level (Group 1: average-educated mothers who had less than bachelor's degree); Group 2: high-educated mothers who had bachelor's degree or higher). A one-way

between-groups multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate the interaction between country, educational level and mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies. Four dependent variables were used, punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality orientation in mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies. The independent variables were country and mother's educational level including two categories of average educational level (less than a bachelors) and high-educational level (bachelors and higher than a bachelors). Preliminary assumption testing was applied to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity. No violation was found accordingly. The country * Mothers' Education Level * mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies, three-way interaction was significant at $p < .10$ level $[(F (3, 252) = 2.32, p < .10$, Eta Squared $= .04]$. Thus, there was a statistically significant difference between Portuguese and Iranian mothers' educational level on their forgiveness-promoting strategies, though the effect size was very small.

This result gives us permission to further investigate whether Portuguese and Iranian mothers differ on all of the dependent measures, or just some of them. In order to reduce a chance of Type 1 error meaning that significant result is found while in reality there is not significant differences, a Bonferroni adjustment was applied. According to this algorithm, higher alpha level is set through dividing the original alpha level of .05 by the number of dependent variables (Pallant, 2001). When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, the only statistically significant difference, applying Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .0125 (.05/4) was for punishment-obedience oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy, $[F (1, 252) = 6.67, p < .01$, partial eta-squared $= .03]$. An inspection of mean scores illustrated that

with the small effect size high educated Iranian mothers reported a slightly higher
level of punishment-obedience forgiveness-promoting strategy (M = 2.38, SD = .86)
than high educated Portuguese mothers (M = 1.91, SD = .67) (See **Table 4-14** and
Figure 4-3 to **Figure 4-6**).

Table 4-14: Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance F Ratios for country x Mothers' educational level for MFSS Measure

| | Multivariate | | | Univariate | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | Punishment-obedience | | | Self-regulation | | | Social normative | | | Autonomous morality | | |
Variable	F^a	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2
Country* Mothers' educational level	2.32	.06	.04	6.67	.01	.03	3.83	.54	.00	.13	.91	.00	2.69	.10	.01

Note. Multivariate F ration was generated from Pillai's statistics.
^{a}Multivariate df = 3, 252. ^{b}univariate df = 1, 252.
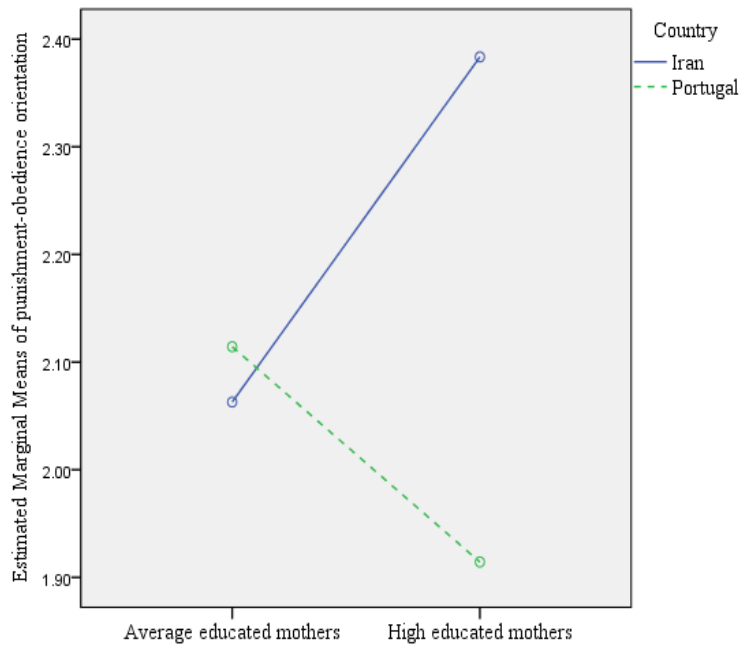
Figure 4-3: Relation of mothers' educational level to their punishment-obedience forgiveness-promoting strategy across countries
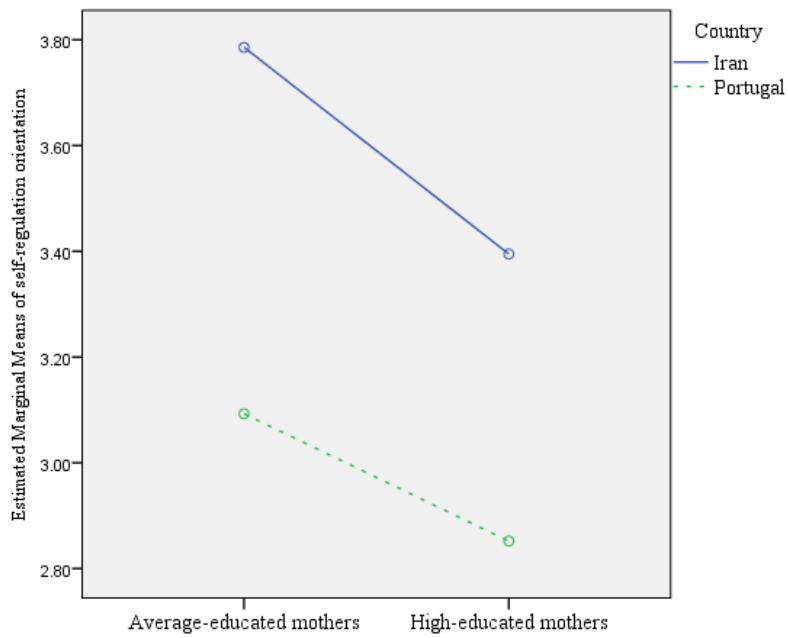
**Figure 4-4:** Relation of mothers' educational level to their self-regulation forgiveness-promoting strategy
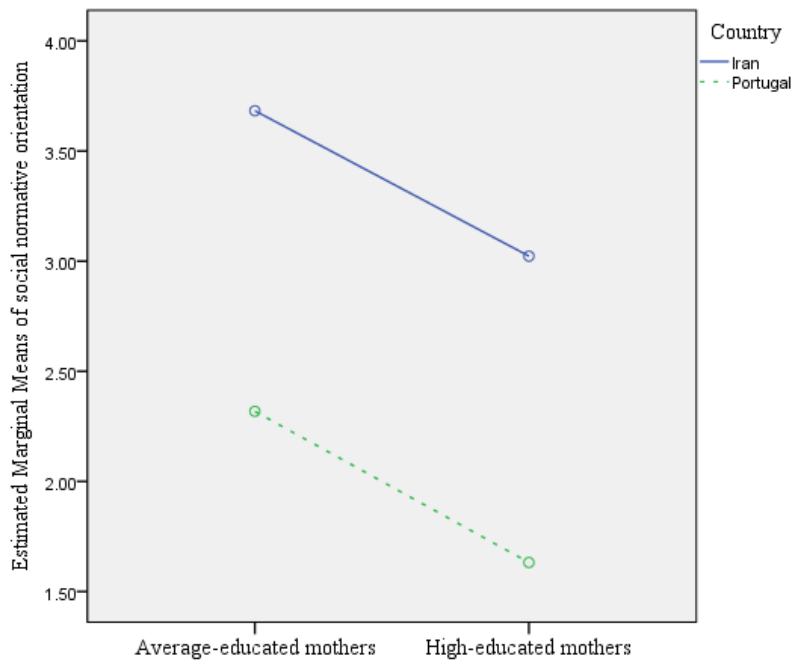
Figure 4-5: Relation of mothers' educational level to their social normative-oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy
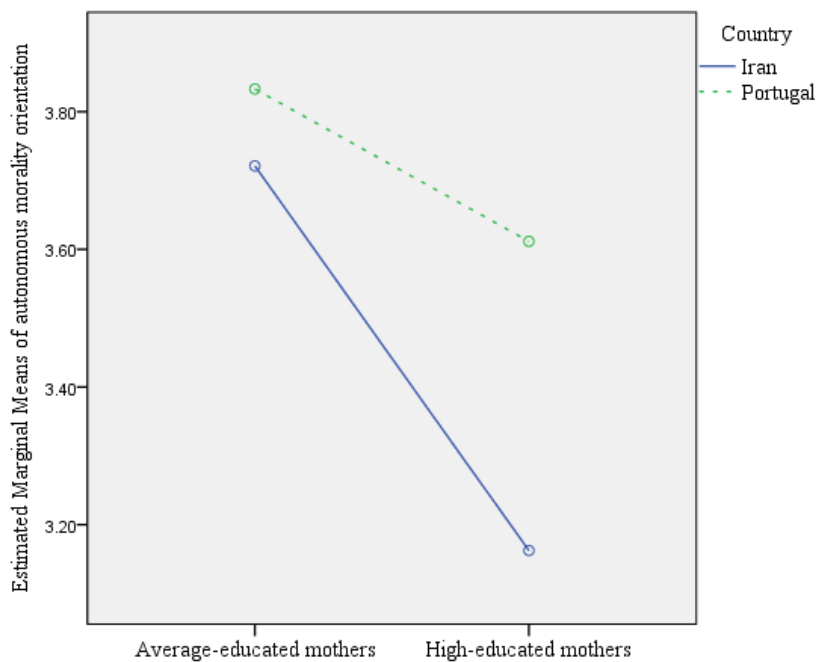

Figure 4-6: Relation of mothers' educational level to their autonomous morality forgiveness-promoting strategy

Furthermore, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the influence of mothers' educational level on their forgiveness-promoting strategies including punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality forgiveness-promoting strategies in Iran and Portugal separately. According to the result of Iranian sample, there was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in punishment-obedience and in self-regulation orientation between average-educated and high-educated mothers. In addition, statistically significant differences at the $p < .001$ level were found in social normative and autonomous morality orientations in forgiveness-promoting strategies between average-educated and high-educated Iranian mothers. On the other hand, concerning the Portuguese sample, the only statistically significant difference was found in social normative forgiveness-promoting strategy at the $p < .001$ between average and high educated Portuguese mothers.

According to the result, high educated Iranian mothers (M = 2.38, SD = .86) endorsed higher level of punishment-obedience forgiveness-promoting strategy compared with average-educated mothers (M = 2.06, SD = .67), [F (1, 123) = 4.56, $p < .05$]; however the mean difference and the effect size were small (partial eta squared= .03). On the other hand, average-educated Iranian mothers (M = 3.79, SD = .98) were more likely to give importance to self-regulation orientation in forgiveness-promoting strategy than high-educated mothers (M = 3.39, SD = .88), [F (1, 123) = 5.15, P < .05, Partial Eta-Squared = .04], though the effect size and the mean difference were very small. In addition, statistical analysis indicated that average-educated Iranian mothers (M = 3.68, SD = .89) were more likely to endorse social normative forgiveness-promoting strategies than high-educated mothers (M = 3.02, SD = .81), [F (1, 123) = 17.37, $p < .001$, Eta-Squared = .12]. The same result

was also found concerning autonomous morality orientation, in which average-educated Iranian mothers (M = 3.72, SD = .82) were also more likely to endorse autonomous morality compared with high educated mothers (M = 3.16, SD = .83), [F (1, 123) = 12.89, p < .001, Eta-Squared = .09] (See also **Figure 4-7** and **Table 4-15**).

Referring to the Portuguese mothers, the result indicated that average-educated mothers (M = 2.31, SD = .80) were more likely to endorse social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy than high-educated mothers (M = 1.63, SD = .61), [F (1, 127) = 18.09, P < .001, Eta-Squared = .13]. However, regarding punishment-obedience, self-regulation and autonomous morality forgiveness-promoting strategies no significant differences were found between high-educated and average-educated mothers in Portugal (See also **Table 4-15** and **Figure 4-8**).

To summarize, educational level was found as a significant variable in influencing mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies between and across countries. Across countries, the result indicated that high-educated Iranian mothers were more likely to endorse punishment-obedience orientation in their forgiveness-promoting strategies than Portuguese mothers, though the effect size and mean difference were small. In addition, within country, average-educated Iranian mothers were found to be more likely than high-educated mothers to give importance to self-regulation, social normative and to autonomous morality forgiveness-promoting strategies, while high-educated mothers were more likely to endorse a punishment-obedience orientation. On the others hand, referring to the Portuguese sample, it has been found

that average-educated mothers were more likely to endorse social normative

forgiveness-promoting strategy than high-educated mothers.
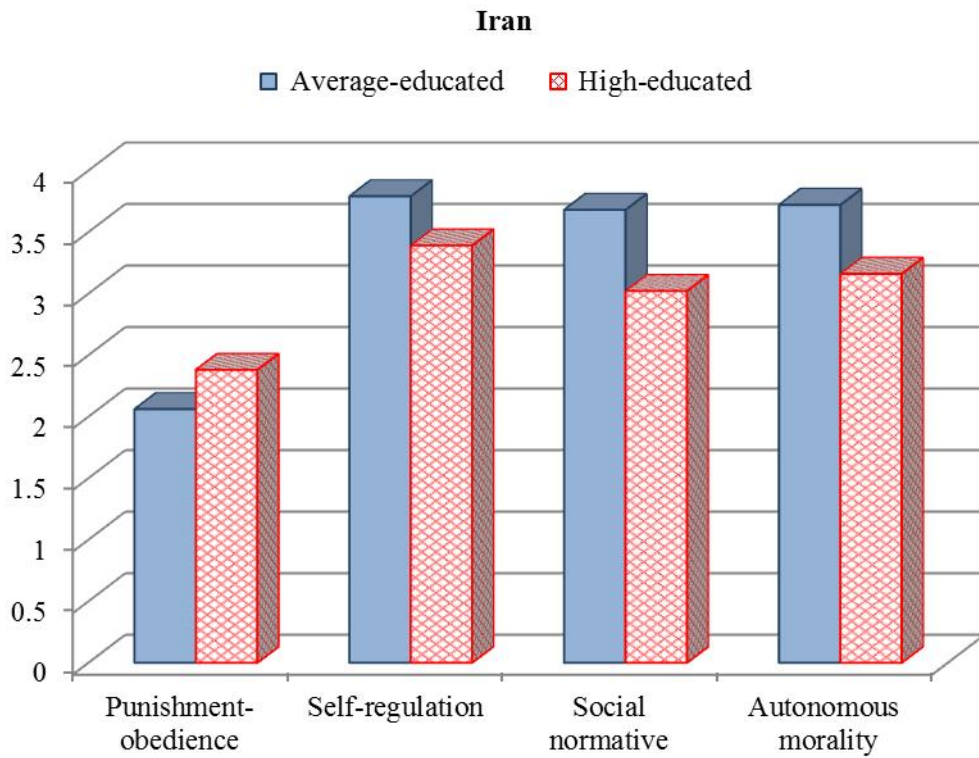
Iran

Figure 4-7: Relation of mothers' educational level to their forgiveness-promoting strategies in Iran

Table 4-15: Descriptive Statistics for Mothers' educational level on their forgiveness-promoting Strategies

Forgiveness Strategy	Country	Mothers'educational level	M	SD	N
Punishment-obedience	Iran	Average-educated	2.06	.67	44
		High-educated	2.38	.86	80
	Portugal	Average-educated	2.11	.84	65
		High-educated	1.91	.67	63
Self-regulation	Iran	Average-educated	3.79	.98	44
		High-educated	3.39	.88	80
	Portugal	Average-educated	3.09	.89	65
		High-educated	2.85	.91	63
Social Normative	Iran	Average-educated	3.68	.89	44
		High-educated	3.02	.81	80
	Portugal	Average-educated	2.31	.80	65
		High-educated	1.63	.61	63
Autonomous morality	Iran	Average-educated	3.72	.82	44
		High-educated	3.16	.83	80
	Portugal	Average-educated	3.83	.77	65
		High-educated	3.61	.76	63
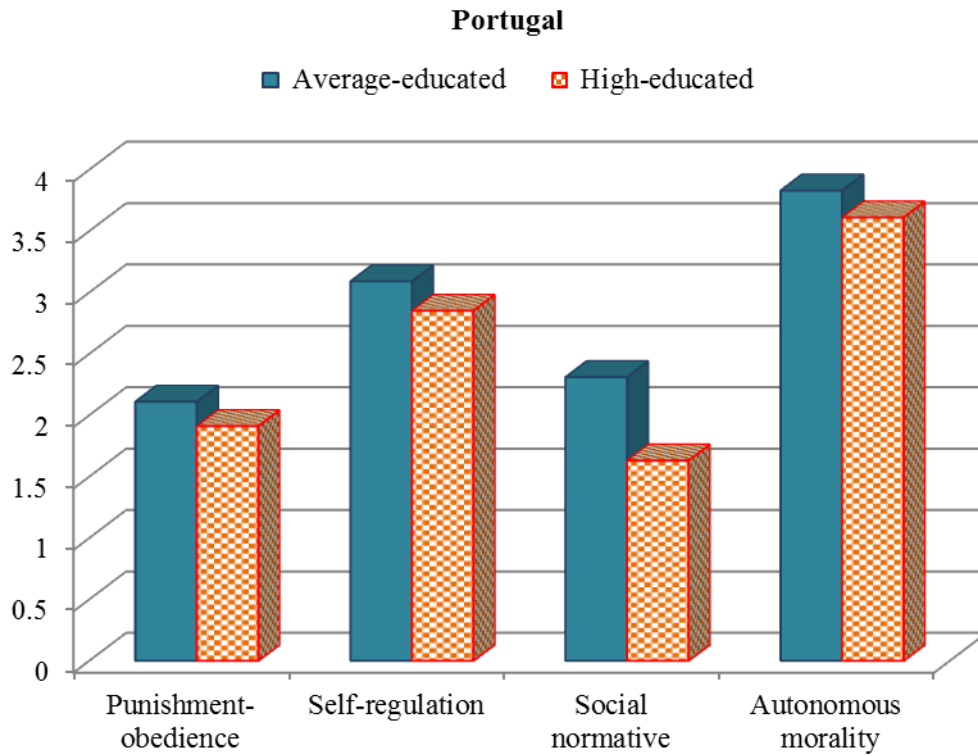
Figure 4-8: Relation of mothers' educational level to their forgiveness-promoting strategies in Portugal

4.5 Relation of mothers' religious characteristics to their forgiveness-promoting strategies

A one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate the interaction between country and three variables of mothers' religious characteristics (Mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship, mothers' reports of the importance of religious practice, and their frequency of prayer) as control variables on mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies. Four dependent variables were used including punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality orientation in mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies. The independent variables were country and mothers' self-report concerning the frequency of attendance at a place of worship, frequency of prayer, and their reports about the importance of religious practice. Preliminary assumption

testing was applied to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity. No violation was found accordingly.

4.5.1 Frequency of mothers' attendance at a place of worship

Frequency of mothers' attendance at a place of worship was divided into three groups (Group 1: rarely; Group 2: less than once a month; Group 3: at least once a month). There was a significant interaction between country * frequency of mothers' attendance at a place of worship as independent variables and mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies including punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality orientations as dependent variables, (F (5, 239) = 1.90, P < .10, Partial Eta-Squared = .03).

This result allows us to further investigate whether Portuguese and Iranian mothers differ on all of the dependent measures, or just some of them. In order to reduce a chance of a Type 1 error meaning that a significant result is found while in reality there is no significant difference, a Bonferroni adjustment was applied. According to this algorithm, higher alpha level is set through dividing the original alpha level of .05 by the number of dependent variables (Pallant, 2001). When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .0125 [.05/4], no statistical significance was found concerning four different forgiveness-promoting strategies including punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous-morality across countries. Taken together, the interaction between country and mothers' attendance at a place of worship was not significantly different regarding mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies (See **Table 4-16** and **Figure 4-9** to **Figure 4-12**).

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Table 4-16: Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance F Ratios for country x Mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship for MFSS Measure

Variable	Multivariate			Punishment-obedience			Self-regulation			Social normative			Autonomous morality		
				Univariate											
	F^a	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2
Country* Mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship	1.90	.06	.03	.98	.38	.01	3.53	.03	.03	3.62	.03	.03	2.78	.06	.02

Note. Multivariate F ration was generated from Pillai's statistics.
[a]Multivariate df = 5, 239. [b]univariate df = 2, 245.
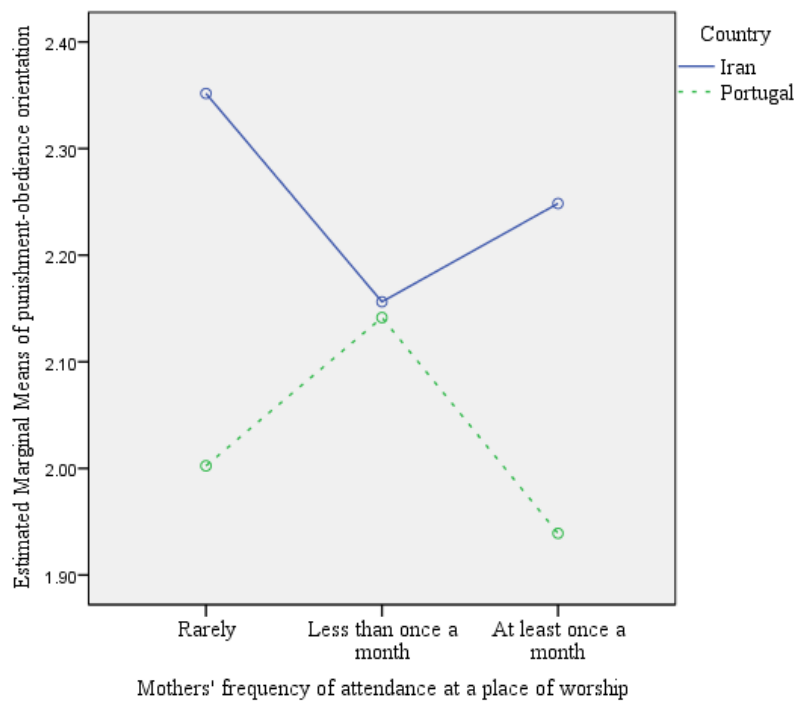
Figure 4-9: Relation of culture and mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship to their punishment-obedience oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy
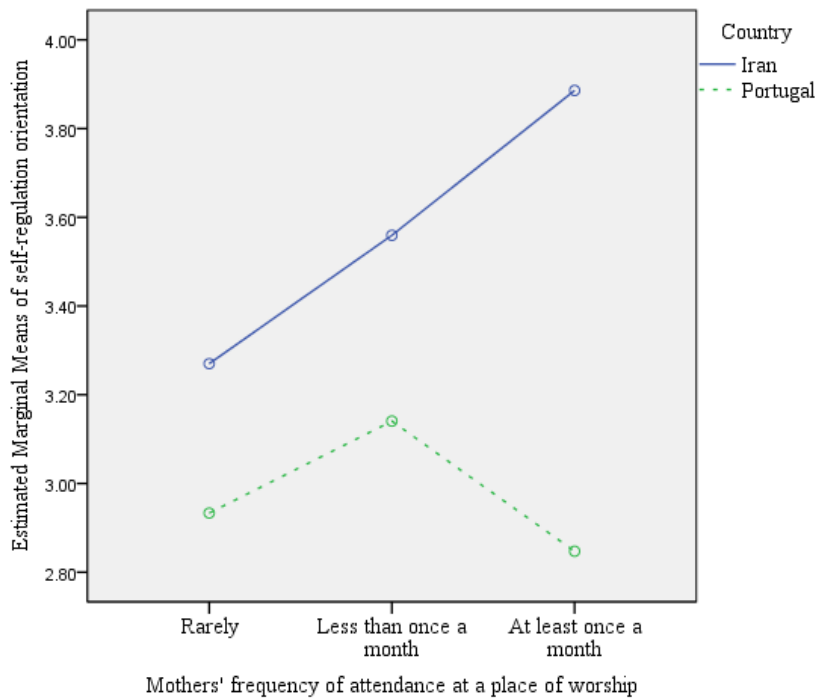
Figure 4-10: Relation of culture and mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship to their self-regulation oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy
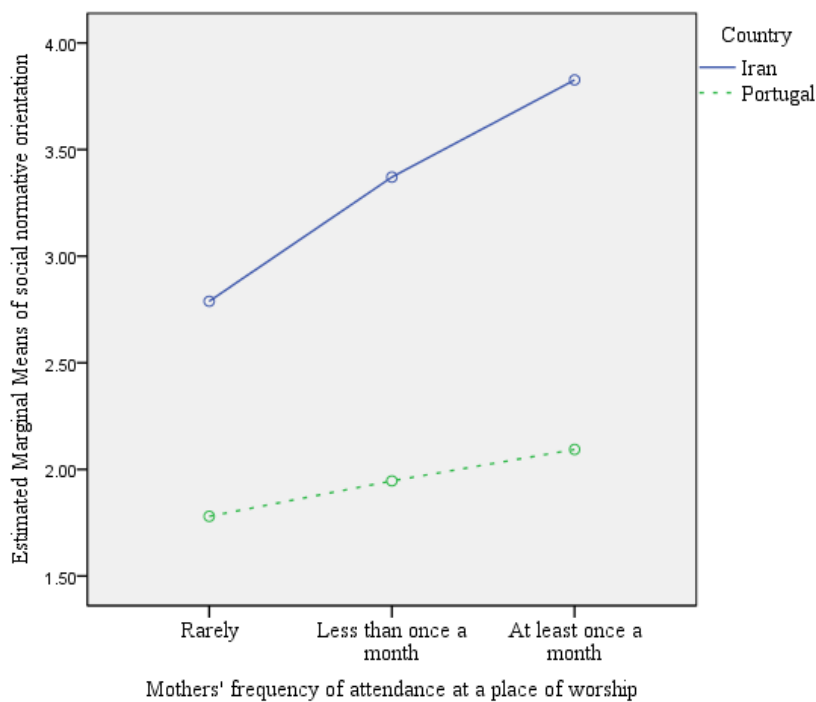
Figure 4-11: Relation of culture and mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship to their social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy
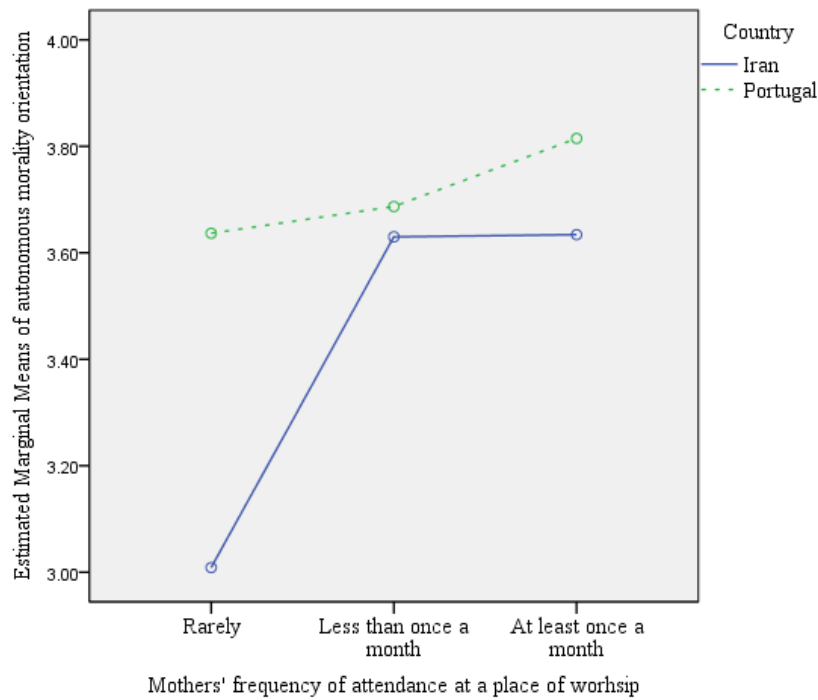
Figure 4-12:   Relation of culture and mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship to their autonomous morality oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy

Furthermore, a one-way between groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the relation of mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship to their forgiveness-promoting strategies including punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality in Iran and Portugal separately.

According to the result of the Iranian sample, there was a statistically significant interaction at the $p < .01$ between the self-regulation orientation and mothers' frequency of religious attendance [$F (2, 123) = 5.207$, $P < .01$, Partial Eta-Squared= .08], as well as at $p < .001$ level between the social normative orientation and mothers' frequency of religious attendance, [$F (2, 123) = 19.943$, $P < .001$, Partial Eta-Squared= .25]. Similarly, a significant difference at $p < .001$ level was indicated between the autonomous morality forgiveness-promoting strategy and mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship, [$F (2,123) = 8.86$, $P < .001$, Partial

Eta-Squared = .13]. However, no statistically significant difference was found between the punishment-obedience forgiveness-promoting strategy and mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship, [F (2, 123) = .60, p = .55].

Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score of the self-regulation orientation for mothers who go to a place of worship at least once a month (M = 3.89, SD = .84) was significantly higher than mothers who rarely go to a place of worship (M = 3.27, SD = .90). Referring to the social normative forgiveness-promoting strategy, post-hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for Iranian mothers who rarely go to a place of worship (M = 2.79, SD = .78) was significantly different from mothers who go to a place of worship less than once a month (M = 3.37, SD = .78) as well as mothers who go to a place of worship at least once a month (M = 3.83, SD = .78). In addition, the mean score of social normative forgiveness-promoting strategies concerning mothers who attend their religious worship place at least once a month (M = 3.83, SD = .78) was significantly higher than those who attend less than once a month (M = 3.37, SD = .78). Referring to the autonomous morality forgiveness-promoting strategy, post-hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for Iranian mothers who rarely go to a place of worship (M = 3.01, SD = .87) was significantly lower than those who go to a place of worship less than once a month (M = 3.63, SD = .70) as well as those who attend at least once a month (M = 3.63, SD = .84). However, the mean score of the autonomous morality forgiveness-promoting strategy for mothers who attend a place of worship less than once a month (M = 3.63, SD = .70) was the same as those who attend at least once a month (M = 3.63, SD = .84). Taken together, Iranian mothers who went more frequently (at least once a month) to a place of worship were more likely to endorse the self-regulation,

social-normative and autonomous morality oriented forgiveness-promoting strategies than those who rarely go to a place of worship. Similarly, statistical analysis indicated that mothers who preferred to occasionally (less than once a month) attend a place of worship were more likely to endorse the social-normative as well as autonomous morality forgiveness-promoting strategies than those who rarely were likely to go to a place of worship. In addition, the mean score of the social normative orientation for mothers who were likely go to a place of worship at least once a month was significantly higher than those who occasionally (less than once a month) were likely to attend a place of worship. Thus, religious practice plays an important role in influencing Iranian mothers' moral reasoning and socialization strategies in promoting their preschoolers' forgiveness skills (See **Figure 4-13** and **Table 4-17**).

On the other hand, referring to the results of the Portuguese sample, the interaction between frequency of Portuguese mothers' activity in going to a place of worship and their forgiveness-promoting strategies was not significant, indicating that Portuguese mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship did not show any statistically significant relation to their forgiveness-promoting strategies scores (See **Table 4-17** and **Figure 4-14**).
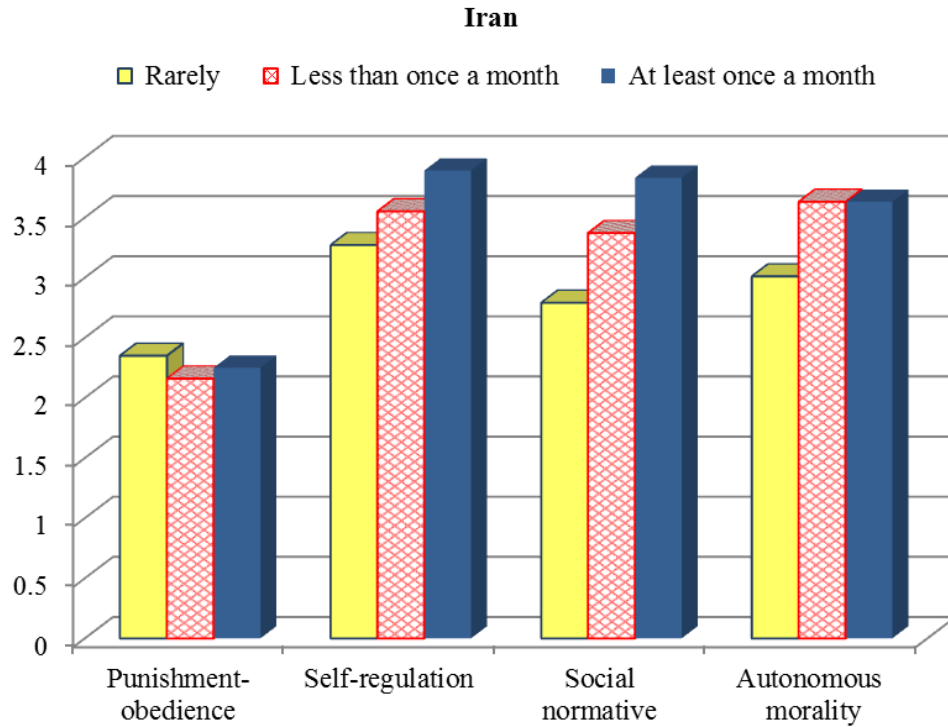
Iran

Figure 4-13: Relation of mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship to their forgiveness-promoting strategies in Iran
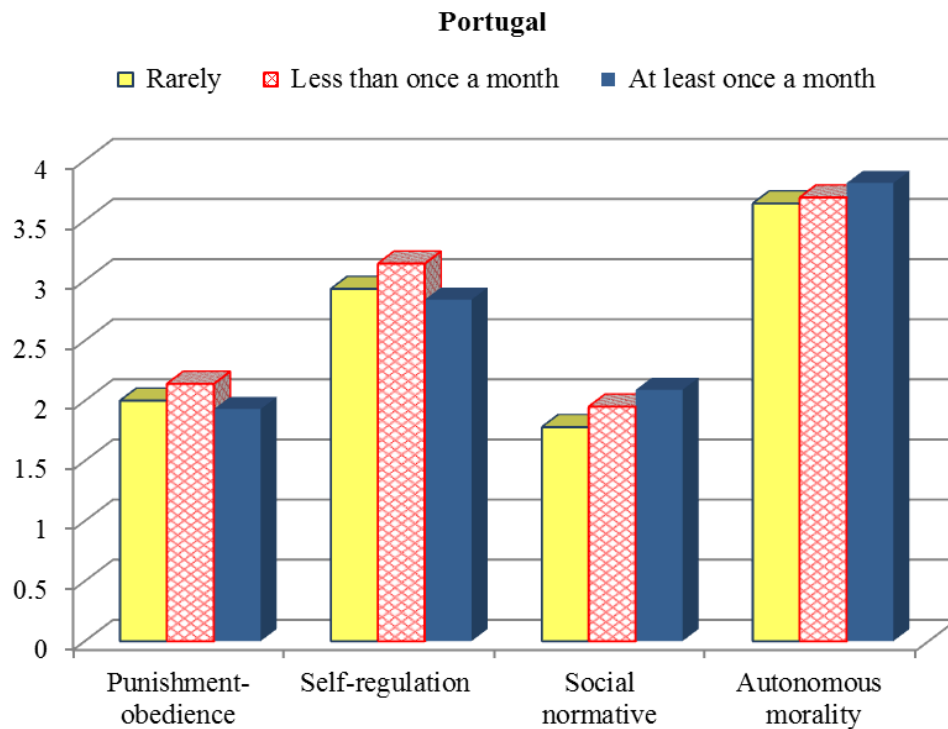
Portugal

Figure 4-14: Relation of mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship to their forgiveness-promoting strategies in Portugal

Table 4-17: Descriptive Statistics for Mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship on their forgiveness-promoting Strategies

Forgiveness Strategy	Country	Mothers 'frequency of attendance at a place of worship	M	SD	N
Punishment-obedience	Iran	Rarely	2.35	.84	54
		Less than once a month	2.16	.75	32
		At least once a month	2.25	.81	38
	Portugal	Rarely	2.00	.94	30
		Less than once a month	2.14	.79	41
		At least once a month	1.93	.66	50
Self-regulation	Iran	Rarely	3.27	.90	54
		Less than once a month	3.55	.97	32
		At least once a month	3.89	.84	38
	Portugal	Rarely	2.93	.97	30
		Less than once a month	3.14	.90	41
		At least once a month	2.84	.90	50
Social Normative	Iran	Rarely	2.79	.78	54
		Less than once a month	3.37	.78	32
		At least once a month	3.83	.78	38
	Portugal	Rarely	1.78	.94	30
		Less than once a month	1.95	.92	41
		At least once a month	2.09	.79	50
Autonomous morality	Iran	Rarely	3.01	.87	54
		Less than once a month	3.63	.70	32
		At least once a month	3.63	.84	38
	Portugal	Rarely	3.64	.70	30
		Less than once a month	3.69	.85	41
		At least once a month	3.81	.70	50

4.5.2 Mothers' report concerning the importance of religious practice

A one-way between-group multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate the influence of cultural differences and mothers' views about the importance of religious practice as independent variables on their forgiveness-promoting strategies. Four different variables were used: punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality. Mothers' rating of the importance of religious practice were divided into four groups (Group 1: unimportant; group 2: somewhat important; Group 3: important; Group 4: very important). The interaction between country and mothers' report concerning the importance of religious practice on the combined dependent variables of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies was not statistically significant, $[F (7, 253) = 1.13,$ $p = .33$; Wilks' Lambda $= .95$, Partial Eta Squared $= .02$] (See **Table 4-18** and **Figure 4-15** to **Figure 4-18**). Thus, the interaction between country and mothers' view about the importance of religious practice did not have a statistically significant effect on the mean score of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies.

Table 4-18: Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance F Ratios for country x Mothers' report concerning about the importance of religious practice for MFSS Measure

				Univariate											
	Multivariate			Punishment-obedience			Self-regulation			Social normative			Autonomous morality		
Variable	F^a	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2
Country* Mothers' report about the importance of religious practice	1.13	.33	.02	1.07	.36	.01	.36	.78	.00	.40	.76	.00	1.03	.38	.01

Note. Multivariate F ration was generated from Pillai's statistics.
[a]Multivariate df= 7, 253. [b]univariate df= 3, 253.
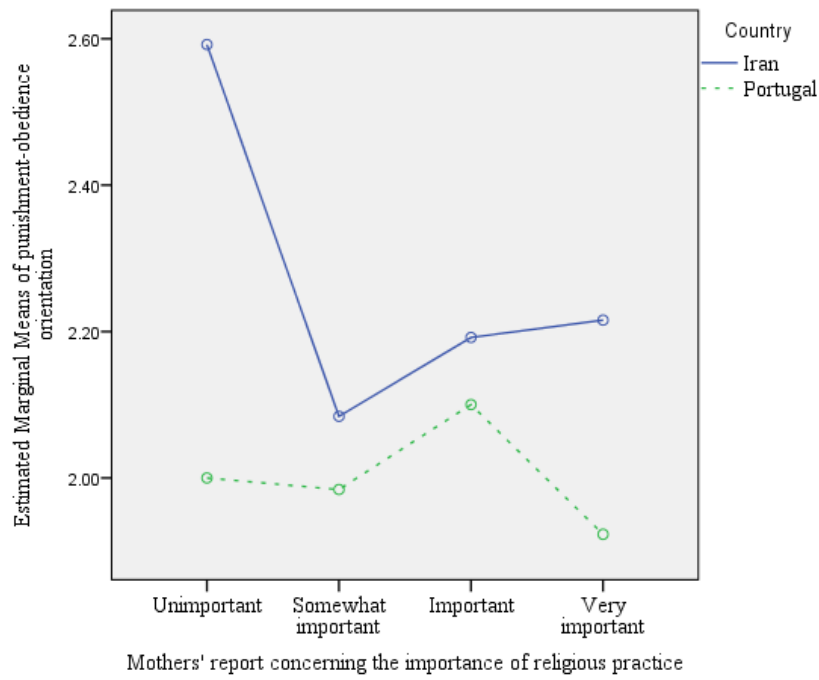
Figure 4-15: Relation of culture and mothers' report concerning the importance of the religious practice to their punishment-obedience oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy
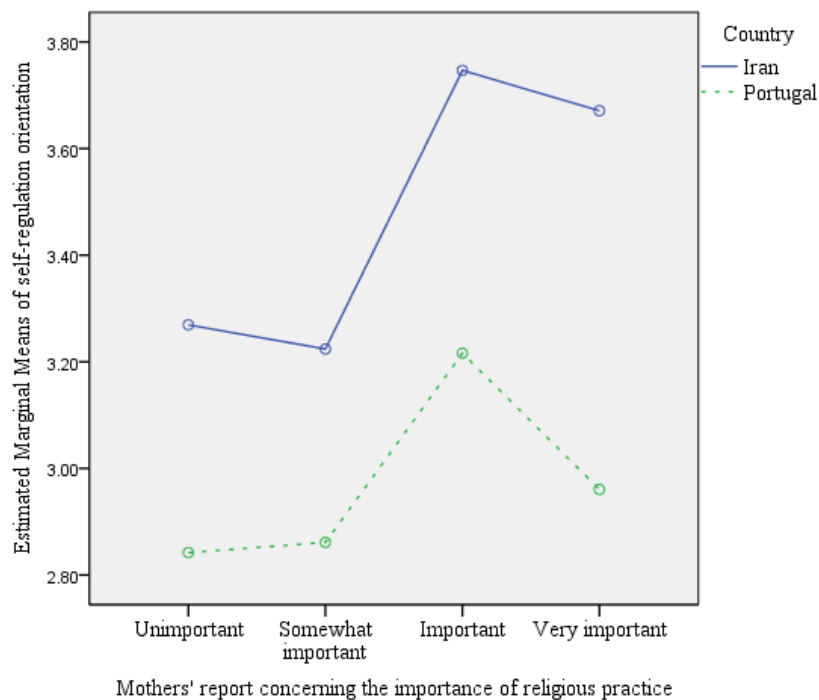
Figure 4-16: Relation of culture and mothers' belief about the importance of the religious practice to their self-regulation oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy
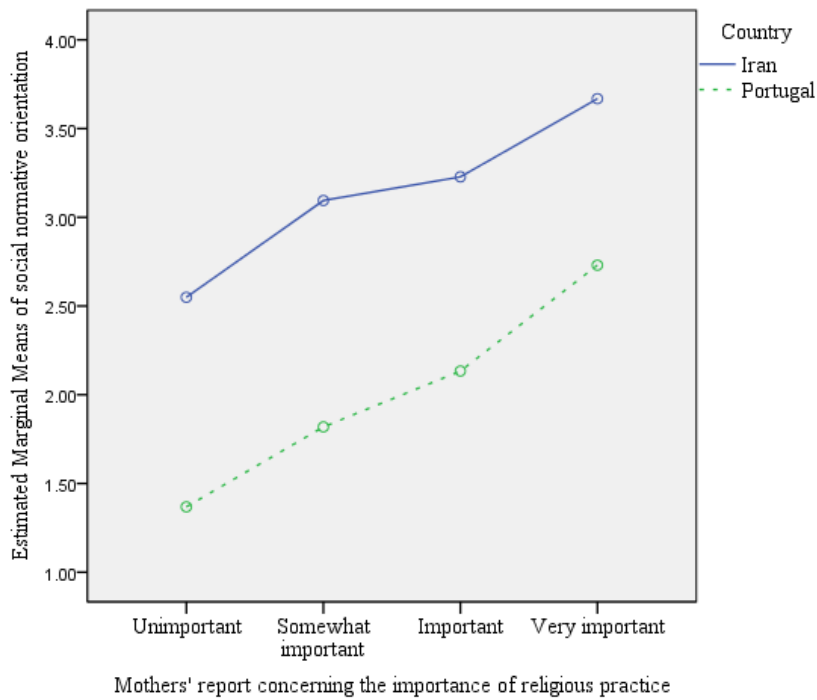
Figure 4-17: Relation of culture and mothers' belief about the importance of the religious practice to their social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy
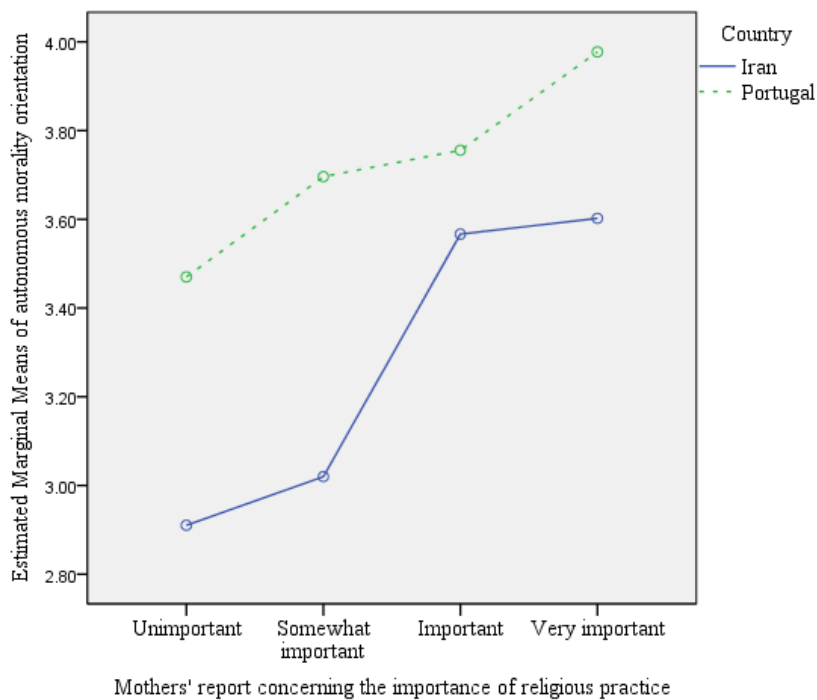

Figure 4-18: Relation of culture and mothers' belief about the importance of the religious practice to their autonomous morality oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy

Afterwards, a one-way between groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the relation of mothers' belief about the importance of religious practice to their forgiveness-promoting strategies including punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality in Iran and Portugal separately. Referring to Iranian sample, the data analysis indicated that the interactions between mothers' view about the importance of religious practice * their social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy, [$F (3, 123) = 11.845$, $P < .001$, Partial Eta-Squared= .23], as well as their autonomous morality oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy, [$F (3, 125) = 5.771$, $P < .01$, Partial Eta-Squared= .13] were statistically significant within Iranian mothers.

Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score of social normative orientated forgiveness-promoting strategy for mothers who rated religious practice very important ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .90$) was significantly higher than those who rated unimportant ($M = 2.54$, $SD = .60$), as well as those who rated somewhat important ($M = 3.09$, $SD = .90$). Similarly, mothers who reported religious practice as being important ($M = 3.23$, $SD = .63$) were more likely to endorse social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy than those who reported it as being unimportant. Referring to autonomous morality oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy, Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test concluded that the mean score of autonomous morality oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy for mothers who rated their religious practice very important ($M = 3.60$, $SD = .81$) was significantly higher than those who rated unimportant ($M = 2.91$, $SD = .72$) as well as those who rated somewhat important ($M = 3.02$, $SD = .86$). Similarly, mothers who reported religious practice as being important ($M = 3.57$, $SD = .77$) were significantly more likely to endorse autonomous morality oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy

than those who reported it as being unimportant. To summarize, Iranian mothers who reported religious practice as being very important and important were significantly more likely to endorse the social normative and autonomous morality orientations than those who rated unimportant. In other words, the more they gave importance to religious practice, the more they were likely to endorse social normative and autonomous morality oriented forgiveness-promoting strategies (See **Figure 4-19** and **Table 4-19**).

On the other hand, referring to the Portuguese sample, a one-way between groups analysis of variance indicated that the interaction between mothers' view about the importance of religious practice * their social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy, [F (3,128) = 8.369, P < .001, Partial Eta-Squared = 17] was statistically significant within the Portuguese mothers.

Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test concluded that the mean score of the social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy for mothers who rated religious practice very important (M = 2.73, SD = .89) was significantly higher than those who rated somewhat important (M = 1.81, SD = .85). Similarly, mothers who reported religious practice as being important (M = 2.13, SD = .99) were more likely to endorse social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategies than those who reported it as being unimportant (M = 1.36, SD = .75). In summary, similar to the Iranian sample, Portuguese mothers who rated religious practice very important and important were significantly more likely to endorse the social normative orientation in their forgiveness promoting strategies than those who reported it as being somewhat important and unimportant (See **Table 4-19** and **Figure 4-20**).
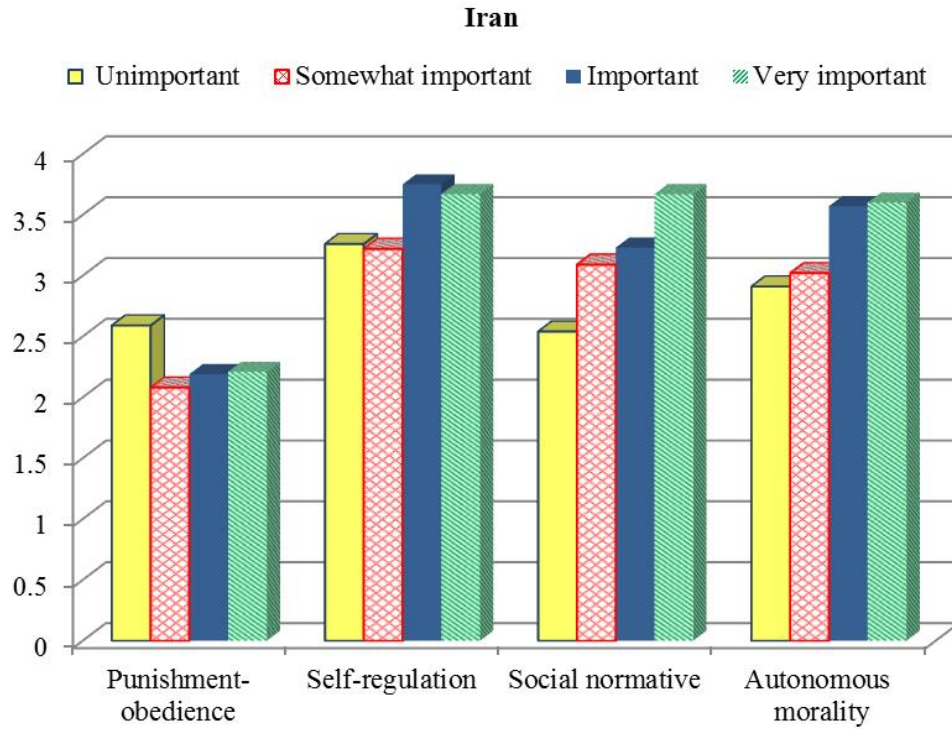
Figure 4-19: Relation of mothers' report concerning the importance of religious practice to their forgiveness-promoting strategies in Iran
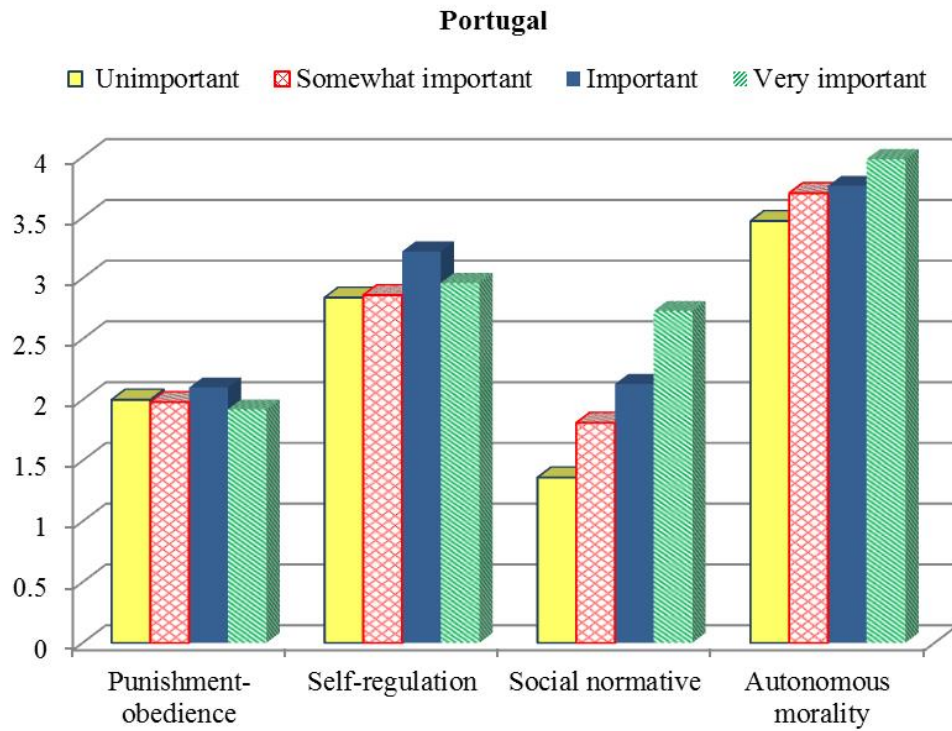
Figure 4-20: Relation of mothers' report concerning the importance of religious practice to their forgiveness-promoting strategies in Portugal

Table 4-19: Descriptive Statistics for Mothers' report concerning the importance of religious practice on their forgiveness-promoting Strategies

Forgiveness Strategy	Country	Mothers' report about the Importance of religious practice	M	SD	N
Punishment-obedience	Iran	Unimportant	2.59	.90	26
		Somewhat important	2.08	.86	19
		Important	2.19	.86	25
		Very important	2.21	.70	54
	Portugal	Unimportant	2.00	.71	19
		Somewhat important	1.98	.80	52
		Important	2.10	.77	39
		Very important	1.92	.77	19
Self-regulation	Iran	Unimportant	3.26	.72	26
		Somewhat important	3.22	.93	19
		Important	3.75	.85	25
		Very important	3.67	.97	54
	Portugal	Unimportant	2.84	.83	19
		Somewhat important	2.86	.96	52
		Important	3.22	.82	39
		Very important	2.96	.96	19
Social Normative	Iran	Unimportant	2.54	.60	26
		Somewhat important	3.09	.90	19
		Important	3.23	.63	25
		Very important	3.67	.90	54
	Portugal	Unimportant	1.36	.75	19
		Somewhat important	1.81	.85	52
		Important	2.13	.99	39
		Very important	2.73	.89	19
Autonomous morality	Iran	Unimportant	2.91	.72	26
		Somewhat important	3.02	.86	19
		Important	3.57	.77	25
		Very important	3.60	.81	54
	Portugal	Unimportant	3.47	.88	19
		Somewhat important	3.70	.75	52
		Important	3.76	.74	39
		Very important	3.98	.76	19

4.5.3 Mothers' frequency of prayer

A one-way between-group multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate the relation of cultural differences and mothers' frequency of prayer as independent variables to their forgiveness-promoting strategies. Four different variables were used: punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality. Mothers' frequency of prayer was divided into three groups (Group 1: rarely; group 2: at least once a month; Group 3: at least once a day). The interaction between country and mothers' frequency of prayer on the combined dependent variables of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies was not statistically significant, $[F (5, 238) = 1.18, p = .31$; Wilks' Lambda = .96, Partial Eta Squared = .02] (See **Table 4-20** and **Figure 4-21** to **Figure 4-24**). Thus, the interaction between country and mothers' views about the importance of religious practice did not evidence a statistically significant effect on the mean score of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies.

Table 4-20: Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance F Ratios for country x Mothers' frequency of prayer for MFSS Measure

| | | | | Univariate | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Multivariate | | | Punishment-obedience | | | Self-regulation | | | Social normative | | | Autonomous morality | | |
Variable	F^a	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2	F^b	P	η^2
Country* Mothers' report about the importance of religious practice	1.18	.31	.02	.78	.46	.00	.48	.62	.00	.90	.41	.00	.55	.58	.00

Note. Multivariate F ration was generated from Pillai's statistics.
^{a}Multivariate df =5, 238. ^{b}univariate df= 2, 238.
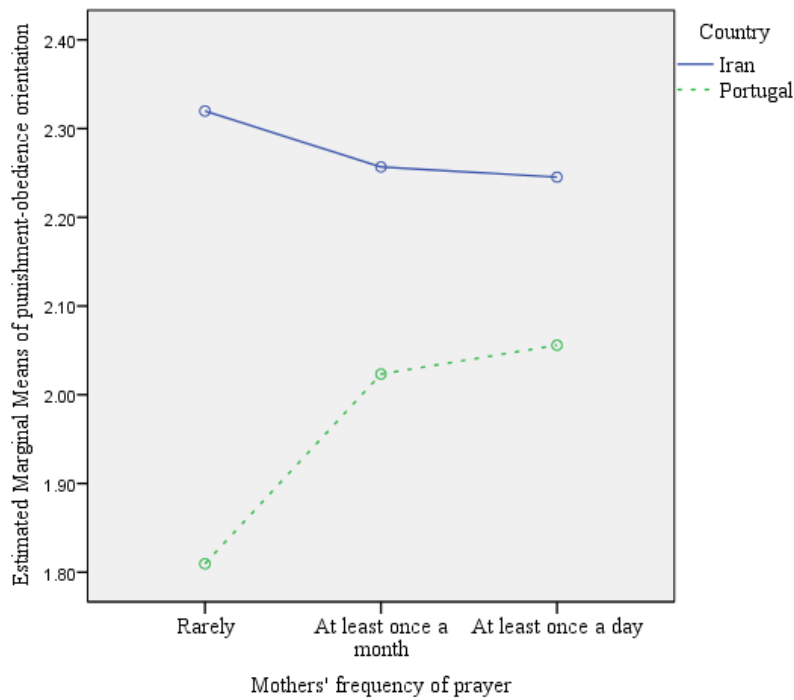
Figure 4-21: Relation of culture and mothers' frequency of prayer to their punishment-obedience oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy
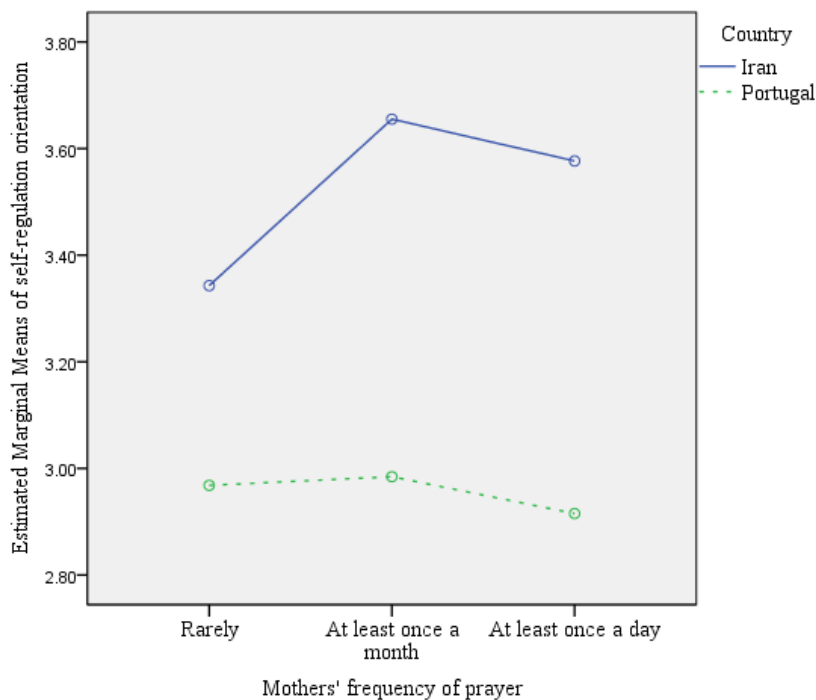
Figure 4-22: Relation of culture and mothers' frequency of prayer to their self-regulation oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy
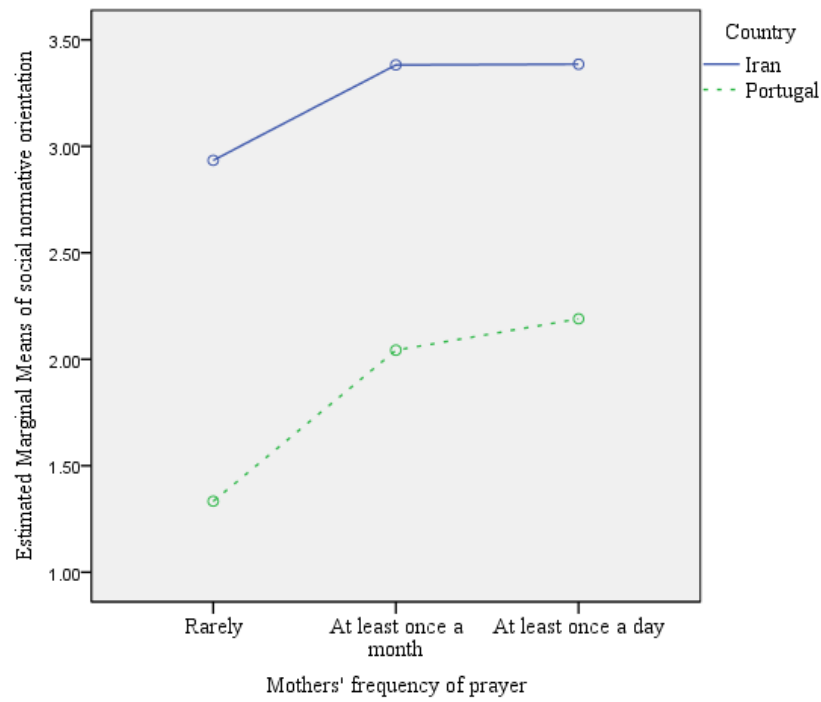
Figure 4-23: Relation of culture and mothers' frequency of prayer to their social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy
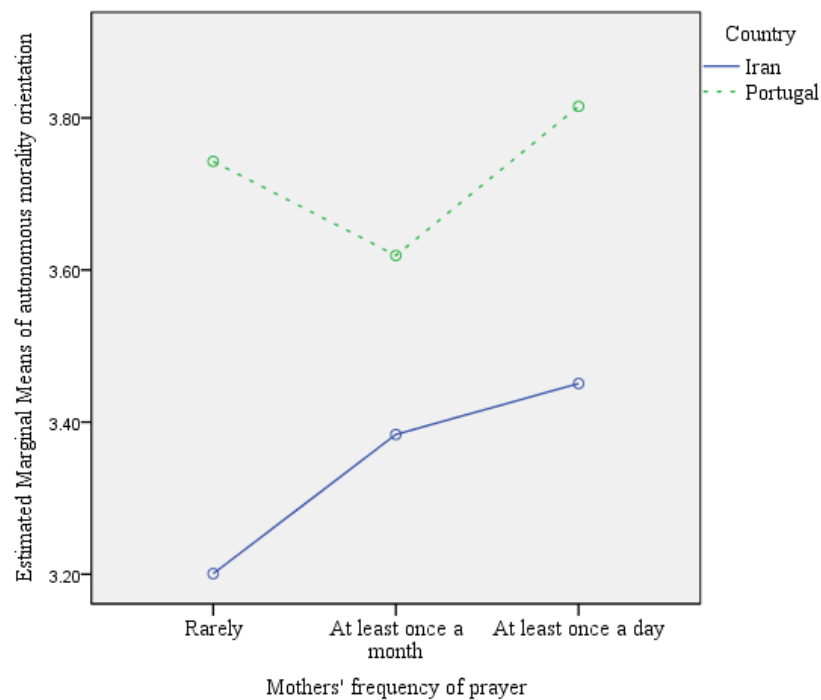
Figure 4-24: Relation of culture and mothers' frequency of prayer to their autonomous morality oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy

Afterwards, a one-way between groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the relation of mothers' frequency of prayer to their forgiveness-promoting strategies including punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality in Iran and Portugal separately.

Referring to Iranian sample, the data analysis indicated that the only significant interaction was the interaction between mothers' frequency of prayer * their social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy, [$F_{(2, 123)} = 3.72$, $P < .05$, Partial Eta-Squared = .05], though the effect size was small. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score of social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy for mothers who rarely prayed (M = 2.93, SD = .89) was significantly lower than those who prayed at least once a month (M = 3.38, SD =.89), as well as those who pray at least once a day (M = 3.39, SD = .86). However, the mean score of group 2 (M = 3.38, SD = .89) and group 3 (M = 3.39, SD = .86) did not differ significantly. Thus according to the statistical analysis, frequency of prayer was found as a significant variable in influencing mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies. The result indicated that Iranian mothers who prayed more frequently were significantly more likely to endorse social normative orientation than those who rarely prayed. In other words, the more they prayed, the more they were likely to endorse the social normative orientation in their forgiveness-promoting strategies (See **Figure 4-21** and **Figure 4-25**).

Referring to the Portuguese mothers, similar to the Iranian sample, the data analysis indicated that the only significant interaction was the interaction between mothers' frequency of prayer * their social normative-oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy, [$F_{(2, 113)} = 6.86$, $P < .01$, Partial Eta-Squared= .11] with almost large effect

size. As with the Iranian sample, Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score of social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy for mothers who rarely prayed (M = 1.33, SD = .71) was significantly lower than those who prayed at least once a month (M = 2.04, SD = .99), as well as those who prayed at least once a day (M = 2.18, SD = .89). The mean score of group 2 (M = 2.04, SD = .99) and group 3 (M = 2.18, SD = .89) did not differ significantly. Thus, the frequency of prayer was found as a significant variable in influencing mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies for both Iranian and Portuguese mothers. Similar to the Iranian sample, the result indicated that Portuguese mothers who prayed more frequently were significantly more likely to endorse social normative orientation than those who rarely prayed. In other words, the more likely mothers were to pray, the more likely they were to endorse the social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy (See **Table 4-21** and **Figure 4-26**).
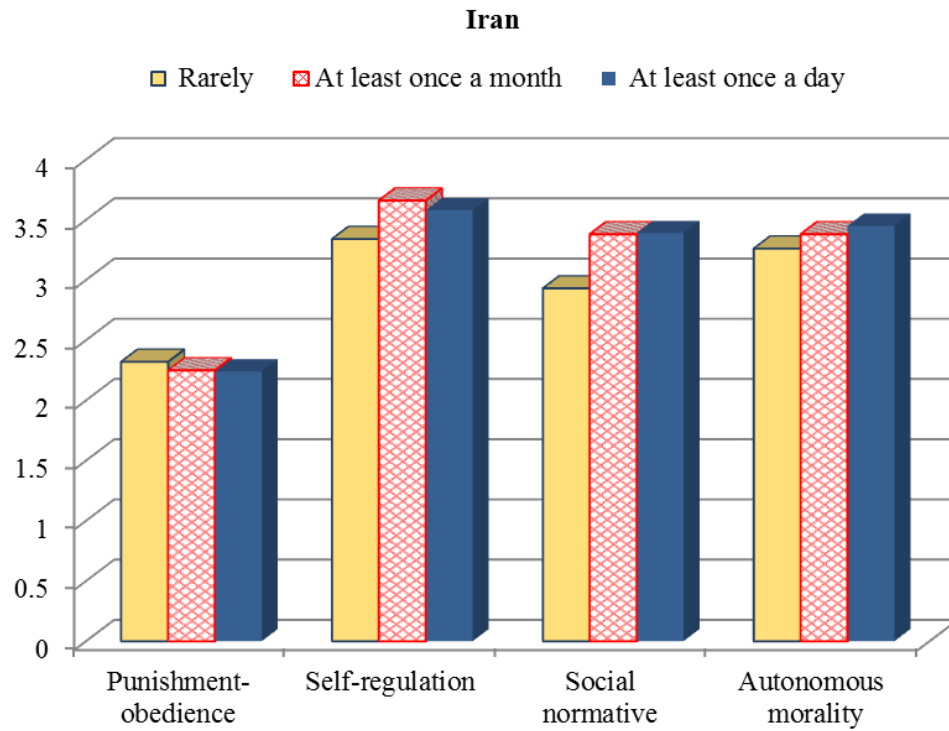
Iran

Figure 4-25: Relation of mothers' frequency of prayer to their forgiveness-promoting strategies in Iran
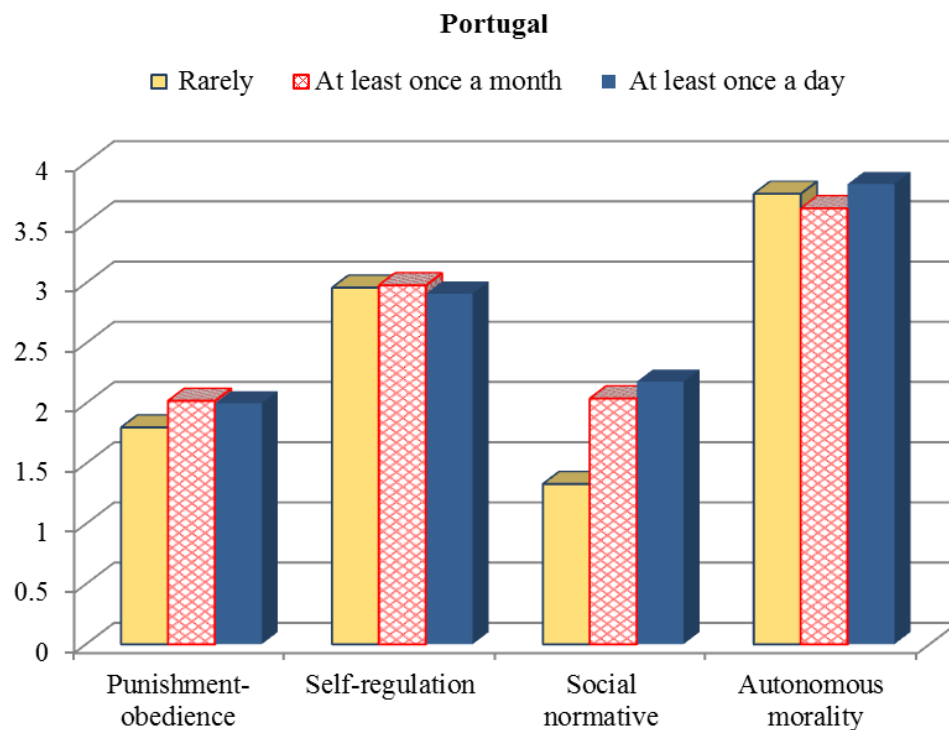
Portugal

Figure 4-26: Relation of mothers' frequency of prayer to their forgiveness-promoting strategies in Portugal

Table 4-21: Descriptive Statistics for Mothers' frequency of prayer on their forgiveness-promoting Strategies

Forgiveness Strategy	Country	Mothers' frequency of prayer	M	SD	N
Punishment-obedience	Iran	Rarely	2.32	.95	35
		At least once a month	2.25	.67	36
		At least once a day	2.24	.80	53
	Portugal	Rarely	1.80	.61	21
		At least once a month	2.02	.75	42
		At least once a day	2.00	.73	51
Self-regulation	Iran	Rarely	3.34	.93	35
		At least once a month	3.66	.78	36
		At least once a day	3.58	.94	53
	Portugal	Rarely	2.96	.74	21
		At least once a month	2.98	.96	42
		At least once a day	2.91	.96	51
Social Normative	Iran	Rarely	2.93	.89	35
		At least once a month	3.38	.89	36
		At least once a day	3.39	.86	53
	Portugal	Rarely	1.33	.71	21
		At least once a month	2.04	.99	42
		At least once a day	2.18	.89	51
Autonomous morality	Iran	Rarely	3.20	.92	35
		At least once a month	3.38	.86	36
		At least once a day	3.45	.84	53
	Portugal	Rarely	3.74	.71	21
		At least once a month	3.62	.76	42
		At least once a day	3.82	.78	51

To summarize, no significant interaction was found between country and three variables of religious characteristics, namely mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship, reports on the importance of religious practice and the frequency of prayer on mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies. However, mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship was found as a significant variable in influencing

Iranian mothers' self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality oriented forgiveness-promoting strategies. In other words, Iranian mothers who were more likely to attend at a place of worship were more likely to endorse the self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality orientations in promoting their preschoolers' forgiveness skills. Furthermore, mothers' report concerning the importance of religious practice was found as a significant variable in influencing the autonomous morality orientation of Iranian mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies as well as social normative orientation of both Iranian and Portuguese mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies. Similarly, frequency of prayer was found as a significant variable in influencing both Iranian and Portuguese mothers' social normative forgiveness-promoting strategies. In other words, in both countries, the more likely mothers were to pray, the more likely they were to enhance social normative strategies to foster their child's forgiveness skills.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Promoting children's forgiveness skills equips them to deal with distressing situations, particularly nowadays as very young children are encountering the pressures of an institutionalized world (Shewark, 2012; Worthington, 2006). It seems that many parents know that it is important to encourage their children to have values, but perhaps not many have thought specifically of encouraging them to have an attitude of forgiveness. Parents' beliefs, moral reasoning and verbal rationale are important factors in influencing children's prosocial behavior and their rational thinking about moral issues (Deković & Janssens, 1992; Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002; Henderson, 2013). According to cognitive developmental perspectives, children's reasoning and justification regarding their decision-making in conflict resolution is dependent on their understanding of what authorities (e.g. parents or teacher) consider acceptable behavior (Laupa & Turiel, 1993; Rique & Lins-Dyer, 2003). Thus, parents' justifications and reasoning in resolving their child's peer conflict situation

play an important role in the child's decision-making and peer relationships. How parents encourage their children to forgive a peer's aggressive behavior greatly influences their children's forgiveness development. In this respect, promoting forgiveness in children can be a demanding socialization task for parents in evaluating wrongdoing and reasoning about forgiveness. While making use of guidance and instructions to promote their children's forgivingness, parents foreshadow distinct socialization goals and parenting strategies.

Accordingly, this study conceptualized a model for the rationale behind mothers' reasoning as reflected in their socialization strategies in developing their child's forgiveness skills. This new framework is based upon the contributions of Kohlberg's (1969) moral reasoning theory, Selman's (1980) stages of perspective-taking, Keller and Edelstein's (1991) developmental levels of socio-moral meaning making, Turiel's (1983) moral domain theory, Enright's model of forgiveness (Enright et al., 1989; Enright, 1994), Newberger's (1980) parental reasoning complexity model, and studies of mothers' reasoning about children's social skills by Smetana and collaborates (e.g., Nucci & Smetana, 1996; Smetana, 1995). Based on this model, the reasoning of mothers' rationale is distinctively conceptualized according to four different constructs as follows:

- Punishment-obedience orientation: forgiveness is conditional on a retributive action (excuse or punishment). In other words, in this category, parents aim at helping their child realize the consequences of bad behavior and breaking the law, so that the child will not imitate or reciprocate the offence.

- Self-regulation orientation: forgiveness is perceived as a regulatory mechanism inducing self-control, soothing or placating the resentment, either

through cognitive restructuring or emotional appeasement. Alongside this, forgiveness brings about the consciousness that the one who misbehaves should apologize;

- Social-normative orientation: forgiveness is perceived as a social expectation abiding by the societal and cultural norms for acceptable behavior. Likewise, forgiveness can turn out into an instrumental resource for resolving conflict and encouraging normative and socially-regulated behavior;

- Autonomous morality orientation: forgiveness is linked with agency or agentic concerns and is oriented by a sense of moral obligation and personal responsibility regardless of the other personal and social pressures;

The purpose of the current study was to measure mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies when helping their preschool-aged children to forgive the harm done by a peer. With this aim, this study conceptualized, developed and examined a new scale of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies with a structure of four-hypothesized factor based on the new framework of mothers' forgiveness reasoning and strategies described in chapter 2. This study is one of the first to examine mothers' reasoning and strategies in developing forgiveness in children and to present the newly-created scale of MFSS. Besides, the study aimed to report a cultural study of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies in Iran and Portugal, and thus extends our knowledge in this area. The first aim was to examine whether the four-hypothesized factor structure (punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social-normative and autonomous-morality orientations) was confirmed in mothers' reasoning and strategies. The data analysis indicated that this was the case.

The study also examined whether mothers in these two different cultures (Iran and Portugal) endorse different reasoning and strategies. This was also found to be the case; data analysis indicating differences of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies between the two cultures. In addition, it was found that mothers are likely to endorse different forgiveness-promoting strategies according to their educational level and religious characteristics, between and within the two countries. These results therefore provided support for the proposed hypothesis.

5.1 Mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies scale (MFSS)

The present study reports the development of a scale to assess mothers' reasoning and strategies in promoting forgiveness in children based on the developed four-factor structure (punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social-normative and autonomous-morality orientations). The final set of nineteen items of the MFSS, representing the four-hypothesized constructs, was carefully developed and derived from the comprehensive studies on forgiveness, parenting, and preschool children's socio-moral development, as well as the views of researchers, scholars and mothers of preschool-aged children.

According to the results, the MFSS shows significant strong reliability based on the factor analysis applied to the initial sample of 253 subjects in this study and indicates that the items had good psychometric properties. Through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, the MFSS has strong reliability, and as hypothesized, the four-factor structure of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies has acceptable levels of reliability. Exploratory structural equation modeling also confirmed these four constructs and the four-factor ESEM model indicated a good fit to the data. In addition, according to Cronbach's coefficient of internal consistency, the four

subscales have quite acceptable levels of reliability. Although the factor of self-regulation orientation showed an acceptable level of internal consistency, it did not indicate high internal consistency. However, as pointed out earlier in the text, this can be likely due to the small number of items (three items) in this factor. Thus, more studies are required to increase the number of items related to this factor and to evaluate the internal consistency of this factor as well as the MFSS. Moreover, as an initial validation, the MFSS did not show factorial invariance across the two cultures, due to the small sample size in each country. In spite of this, the MFSS shows an early promise of becoming a valid instrument that can make a contribution to the study of mothers' reasoning and strategies in developing children's forgiveness skills. In conclusion, this newly-created scale has been validated for further examining similarities and differences in mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies between Iranian and Portuguese mothers and for exploring whether mothers' socio-demographic variables, including their educational level and religious characteristics, have significant influences on their forgiveness-promoting strategies.

5.2   Relation of culture to mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies

The result of the present study supported the hypothesis that mothers are likely to endorse different forgiveness-promoting strategies across the two cultures, Iran and Portugal. As hypothesized, results revealed that the most significant difference between Iranian and Portuguese mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies was regarding the social normative orientation. According to this finding, Iranian mothers were more likely to endorse social-normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategies than Portuguese mothers. This result supports earlier findings that Iranian mothers are likely to educate their children through culturally valued behaviors and

thoughts (Frank et al., 2010; Shahaeian, Nielsen, Peterson, Aboutalebi, et al., 2014).
Similarly, previous research has indicated that Asian mothers are traditionally likely
to train their child to behave on the basis of social expectations and rules (Stimpfl,
Zheng, & Meredith, 1997). Forgiveness in collectivist cultures is strongly influenced
by interpersonal reasoning as well as collective norms, and relationships in these
types of societies are highly emphasized (Fu et al., 2004; Suwartono et al., 2007).
Thus, it is understandable that mothers in Iran with more collectivistic cultures are
more likely to endorse social normative oriented forgiveness-promoting strategies
concerning their preschool-aged children.

In addition, with medium and small effect size, this study found that across the two
cultures, Iranian mothers were also more likely to endorse the self-regulation and
punishment-obedience orientations in their forgiveness-promoting strategies than
Portuguese mothers. These findings also support previous identified cultural
orientations of Iranian mothers towards an autonomous-relatedness cultural model
(Kagitcibasi, 1997), as well as an interdependence (Keller et al., 2006) through their
social normative, self-regulation and punishment-obedience oriented
forgiveness- promoting strategies. These results are also consistent with the findings
that Iranian parents are likely to socialize their child to respect others and to obey
elders and authorities (Behzadi, 1994; Frank et al., 2010; Shahaeian, Nielsen,
Peterson, & Slaughter, 2014). Interestingly, peer relationships are a context for
learning the importance of respect for others and a stage for applying the skills of
important social regulation behaviours and understandings.

From a different perspective, the finding of the present study, indicating that
Iranian mothers are more likely to endorse punishment-obedience orientation in their

forgiveness-promoting strategies, can also be discussed within the framework of how Iranian culture and society is influenced by Islamic religious beliefs.

5.2.1   Relation of Islamic religion to Iranian culture and society

Islam is the state religion in Iran. After the 1979 Islamic revolution, Iranian authorities have seriously applied Islamic rules and regulations (Cheng & Beigi, 2012). Given that Islamic religious beliefs have been mixed with politics, economy, culture and different aspects of daily life, people's thought and life are likely to be influenced by Islamic religious beliefs and cultural ideology (Cheng & Beigi, 2012; Nabipour, Khanjani, Nakhaee, Moradlou, & Sullman, 2015). One of the important Islamic principles is "commanding right and forbidding wrong". This principle is written in the Qur'an (Muslim scripture). As an example, the most important verses in the Qur'an regarding this matter state: ''Let there be one community *(ummah)* of you, calling to good, and commanding right and forbidding wrong; those are the prosperers" (Q3:104), and "You are the best community *(ummah)* ever brought forth to men, commanding right and forbidding wrong" (Q3:110) (Cook, 2003; Meijer, 2009). Therefore, due to the sociopolitical and religious climate of Iran, this principle may influence individuals' thoughts and their approach to living.

In Iran, cultural and religious norms play a central role in defining individuals' beliefs, reasoning and relationships. Thus, the results of the present study, demonstrating that Iranian mothers endorsed a punishment-obedience oriented forgiveness-promoting strategy to a greater extent than Portuguese mothers did, might be due to the role of the Islamic rules including "commanding right and forbidding wrong" that influence peoples' different aspects of life. These findings may also be due to Iranian mothers' application of religious meaning systems in order to

rationalize their forgivingness-promoting strategies. Beyond the scope of this thesis, the analysis of the intricate way that religion is enmeshed with the Iranian social structure and deep stratification of ethnic identities within the country is also a possible influence of the discussed prominence for the punishment-obedience and social normative strategies of Iranian mothers.

On the other hand, as hypothesized, the results revealed that across the two cultures, Portuguese mothers endorsed the importance of moral agency more often than Iranian mothers did, supporting the earlier findings that in western cultures, mothers tend to encourage their children to develop their own beliefs independently (Shahaeian, Nielsen, Peterson, Aboutalebi, et al., 2014). This finding is also in line with previous studies, indicating that forgiveness in individualistic cultures is highly inspired by intrapersonal motives as independent self (Suwartono et al., 2007; Wade & Worthington, 2003; Worthington, 2001). In conclusion, these results supported the independent cultural parenting of Portuguese mothers as individualistic Western society through their autonomous morality forgiveness-promoting strategies (Kagitcibasi, 1997; Keller et al., 2006).

Furthermore, within country, the results indicated that Iranian mothers give similar importance to the self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality orientations in their forgiveness-promoting strategies, and they are more likely to endorse these three forgiveness-promoting strategies than the punishment-obedience forgiveness-promoting strategy, which is according to their interdependent and autonomy-relatedness cultural model of parenting (Kagitcibasi, 1997; Keller et al., 2006). However, Portuguese mothers give more importance to the autonomous-morality orientation than the punishment-obedience, self-regulation and

social normative orientations. In addition, compared to social normative and punishment-obedience orientations, they are significantly more likely to endorse self-regulation orientation, which is according to their independent and individualistic cultural models of parenting (Kagitcibasi, 1997; Keller et al., 2006).

In line with the discussed results, morality has different expressions in individualistic and collectivistic cultures and gives rise to different expressive behaviors and understandings. Previous research studies have found that individualistic society defines morality on the basis of equality, justice, individual's right and freedom. However, the concept of morality in collectivistic culture is based on interpersonal and social responsibility (Kuyel, 2007; Miller, 1994; Shweder et al., 1990). Consistent with these findings, it seems understandable for the present research to find that Iranian mothers who are influenced by the dominant orientation of Asian collectivistic culture give the same importance to the self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality orientations. In contrast, Portuguese mothers, coming from an individualistic Western culture, give more importance to autonomous morality orientation in their forgiveness-promoting strategies. In addition, congruent with these results, it has been found that family, culture and religion function as a social reference for individuals regarding evaluating right from wrong, as well as defining social norms and expected standards (Massey & Abu-Baker, 2009).

In conclusion, it makes sense that Iranian and Portuguese mothers with different cultural orientations and religious affiliations are likely to endorse different forgiveness-promoting reasoning and strategies regarding. Finally, it is necessary to realize how peer relationships are stage-setting precursors of socialization standards

and important normative beliefs and values. Indeed, forgiveness is fundamental to
children's peer relationships.

5.3 Relation of educational level to mothers' forgiveness-promoting reasoning and strategies

The present study provided further evidence for the fact that maternal educational
level influences parenting and child-rearing practices within and across cultures
(Bornstein & Bradley, 2003; LeVine, 2003; Suizzo, 2007). The result of this study
found that with small effect size, across the two cultures, an effect of educational level
was detected on the punishment-obedience orientation in mothers'
forgiveness-promoting strategies: The high-educated Iranian mothers indicated a
higher level of punishment-obedience forgiveness-promoting strategy than the
high-educated Portuguese participants, which supports previously identified cultural
orientations of Iranian mothers towards an interdependence (Keller et al., 2006) and
autonomous-relatedness cultural model (Kagitcibasi, 1997). This finding is also
congruent with the previous findings that respect and obedience are highly valued in
Iranian culture (Behzadi, 1994; Frank et al., 2010; Shahaeian, Nielsen, Peterson, &
Slaughter, 2014), whereby mothers try to teach their child what is right and wrong. In
this respect, previous research acknowledged that parent's childrearing ideas and
attitudes are influenced by cultural values and social norms (Darling & Steinberg,
1993; Harwood et al., 1995; Kagitcibasi, 1996a, 2007; Keller et al., 2008; Keller,
2003, 2007; Patterson & Fisher, 2002; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008; Tamminen,
2006), as wel as religious orientation (Danso, Hunsberger, & Pratt, 1997; Greven,
1977; Wiehe, 1990). In addition, alongside with education, Turiel (1983; see also
Kuyel, 2007) identified cultural values and religious beliefs as two significant factors

in influencing individual's moral reasoning and rational thinking. Thus, the significant effect of education on mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies across the two cultures seems to be due to mothers' different cultural context and religious orientation.

Within the two countries, the hypothesis that educational level would have a significant effect on mothers' reasoning and strategies was supported. However, an unexpected finding of this result was that within Iranian mothers, as for the educational level differences, high-educated mothers (with bachelors' or higher than a bachelors' degree) were more likely to endorse the punishment-obedience orientation; whereas average-educated mothers (with less than bachelors' degree) were more likely to endorse the self-regulation, social normative and autonomous-morality orientations that high-educated mothers. On the other hand, within the Portuguese sample, result found that average educated mothers were more likely to endorse the social normative orientation than high-educated mothers. Consonant with the significant effect of educational level on individual's moral reasoning (Doyle & O'Flaherty, 2013), these findings show that how mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies is influenced by their formal education level in both Iran and Portugal. However, these results are contrary to the Solomon's (1993) study that European American mothers with higher level of education were more likely to give importance to autonomy values, while less educated European American mothers preferred successful interpersonal relationship for their children in the future. Previous studies found that individual's educational level has been related to improve one's independence quality such as empowerment, confidence and self-efficacy (Greenfield, 1999; LeVine, LeVine, & Schnell, 2001). However, the same as the present study, this finding was not significantly supported in all cultures (Suizzo, 2007).

In addition, mothers' social networks, relatives, friends, neighborhood ecology and marital relations are likely to influence mothers' socialization goals and strategies (Belsky, 1984; Solomon, 1993; Suizzo, 2007). In this regard, Kusserow's (1999) study indicated that despite the fact that European American mothers were more likely to give importance to autonomy goals, their interpretation of autonomy was different according to their educational level, socioeconomic status as well as neighborhood environment. In the same vein, previous studies have found that in addition to parental education, neighborhood characteristics and family income were associated with parents' child-rearing practices and characteristics (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Duncan et al., 1994; Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, & Duncan, 1994).

A possible explanation for the findings of the present study may also be due to the influences of family income, neighborhood residence and mothers' social environment, given the small effect size of educational level on mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies within both countries. Future research investigating the association between family, social environment and mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies is required.

From a different point of view, these results are also contrary to the previous findings that indicated a positive correlation between moral judgement and educational level attained (Colby et al., 1983; Leming & Yendol-Hoppey, 2004; Lind, 1986; McNeel, 1994; Rest et al., 1999). In this respect, the result of the present study is probably due to the fact that maternal education may have a different influence on the individual's moral judgement and parenting reasoning and strategies. Furthermore, it is probable that mothers endorse different forgiveness-promoting strategies with their preschoolers compared with their adolescents or teenagers. These

results suggest interesting questions for future studies. On the other hand, there are other studies that found no relationship between educational attainment and moral reasoning (Beltramini, Peterson, & Kozmetsky, 1984; Bouhmama, 1988; Munhall, 1980; Nather, 2013; White, 1999). Even, Bloom's (1976) study found that master's degree students had a lower level of moral judgement compared to other groups of college students. In essence, in light of the conflicting findings concerning the relation of educational level to moral reasoning development, the findings of the present study about the influence of mothers' educational level on their forgiveness-promoting strategies seem understandable.

Furthermore, previous studies have provided evidence that different types of education have different influences on moral reasoning development (Cummings, Dyas, Maddux, & Kochman, 2001; McNeel, 1994; Ponemon & Glazer, 1990). In this respect, a great deal of research has shown that a liberal arts education contributes to the individual's moral reasoning development (Good & Cartwright, 1998; King & Mayhew, 2002; McNeel, 1994; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Ponemon & Glazer, 1990). In addition, it is widely acknowledged that graduates from technical disciplines such as accounting had a lower level of moral reasoning as opposed to those who graduated from other fields of study (Abdolmohammadi, Fedorowicz, & Davis, 2009; Abdolmohammadi, Read, & Scarbrough, 2003; Armstrong, 1987; Fisher & Ott, 1996; Lampe, Finn, Gaa, & Malley, 1992; Ponemon & Glazer, 1990; Shaub, 1995). Therefore, the unexpected finding of the present study may also be attributed to the type of maternal education. In this respect, additional research is required to examine the influence of mothers' education type on their reasoning and forgiveness-promoting strategies. Thus, these findings raise interesting questions for future research and should be further examined with larger sample size.

In summary, there are other different variables in addition to educational level which influence mothers' reasoning and strategies. Thus, additional research seems necessary to clarify the impact of educational level along with other important factors on mothers' reasoning and forgiveness-promoting strategies.

5.4 Relation of mothers' religious characteristics to their forgiveness-promoting strategies

Across the two cultures, three variables of mothers' religious characteristics, namely frequency of attendance at a place of worship, reports on the importance of their religious practice and frequency of prayer, did not have a significant effect on mothers' reasoning and forgiveness strategies. However, as hypothesized, these variables had a significant effect on mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies within both the Iranian and Portuguese samples separately.

5.4.1 Frequency of attendance at a place of worship

Consistent with the expectations, the effect of the mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship was detected on the social normative and autonomous morality-oriented factors: Iranian mothers who attended a place of worship (mosque) at least once a month were more likely to endorse the social normative orientation in their forgiveness-promoting strategy than those who did so rarely or less than once a month. Similarly, mothers who attended a place of worship less than once a month had a higher level of social normative orientation than those who rarely attended. In other words, these results indicate that the more likely mothers were to attend a mosque, the more likely they were to endorse the social normative-orientated strategies when promoting forgiveness in their preschool children. These findings are consistent with the previous studies that indicated a

positive relationship between religiosity and individuals' interdependence, cooperative attitude and collective identity (Berggren & Bjørnskov, 2011; Cohen et al., 2005; Cukur et al., 2004; Ruffle & Sosis, 2007). In addition, Iranian mothers who were used to attend a place of worship less than once a month or at least once a month were more likely to endorse the autonomous morality orientation in their forgiveness-promoting strategies than those who rarely attended. Thus, the finding of the present study indicated that mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship, as one of their religious characteristics, significantly enhances their autonomous-morality orientated reasoning and strategies in developing their children's forgiveness skills. These findings further support the previous studies on the association between religious beliefs and tendency for morality (Burris & Navara, 2002; Keljo & Christenson, 2003; Kuyel, 2007; Nucci, 1985; Wiebe & Fleck, 1980). In addition, within the Iranian sample, the effect of frequency of attendance at a place of worship was detected on the self-regulation orientation as well: mothers who were used to attend a place of worship at least once a month were also more likely to endorse self-regulation orientation in their forgiveness-promoting strategies than those who rarely attended. This finding also indicates the effect of personal aspects of religion on an individual's life (Cohen & Hill, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In other words, individuals' religiosity is also linked to the development of their personal life, which is reflected in their parenting reasoning and strategies in emphasizing their children's emotional health.

On the other hand, within the Portuguese sample, mothers' frequency of attendance at a place of worship did not have significant effects on their forgiveness-promoting strategies. However, as discussed below, the other two variables of mothers' religious characteristics (their reports of the importance of religious practice and the frequency

of prayer had a significant influence on their forgiveness-promoting strategies. These findings suggest interesting questions for future studies.

5.4.2   Mothers' report concerning the importance of religious practice

Consistent with the hypothesis, and similar to the frequency of attendance at a place of worship, the effect of mothers' reports concerning the importance of their religious practice was detected on the social normative and autonomous morality-oriented factors within the Iranian sample. Iranian mothers who reported religious practice as being very important were more likely to give importance to the social normative as well as autonomous morality orientations than those who rated religious practice somewhat important or unimportant. Similarly, those who considered religious practice important were more likely to endorse the social normative and autonomous orientations in their forgiveness-promoting strategies than those who rated it as unimportant. These findings also further support the previous studies regarding the association between religious beliefs and individuals' interdependence and collective identity (Berggren & Bjørnskov, 2011; Cohen et al., 2005; Cukur et al., 2004; Ruffle & Sosis, 2007), as well as willingness to morality (Burris & Navara, 2002; Keljo & Christenson, 2003; Kuyel, 2007; Nucci, 1985; Wiebe & Fleck, 1980), which is reflected in their parenting reasoning and strategies.

Similar to the Iranian sample, the effect of the mothers' report concerning the importance of religious practice was detected on the social normative-oriented factor within the Portuguese sample; Portuguese mothers who rated religious practice very important and important were more likely to endorse the social normative orientation than those who reported it as being unimportant. Taken together, findings of the present study indicate that mothers' religious characteristics influence their social

normative orientation with their reasoning and strategies in developing their children's forgiveness skill.

5.5   Frequency of prayer

In line with expectations, and similar to mothers' reporting concerning the importance of religious practice, the effect of the mothers' frequency of prayer was detected on the social normative orientation factor within both Iranian and Portuguese participants; those mothers who used to pray every day were more likely to give importance to the social normative orientation in their forgiveness-promoting strategies than those who rarely did it. Similarly, Iranian and Portuguese mothers who were likely to pray at least once a month had a higher propensity to endorse social normative orientation than those who rarely prayed. In other words, the more likely mothers were to pray, the more willing they were to promote their children's forgiveness, according to the normative and socially-regulated behavior. These findings also further support previous studies regarding the relation between religious beliefs and individuals' interdependence, cooperative attitude and collective identity (Berggren & Bjørnskov, 2011; Cohen et al., 2005; Cukur et al., 2004; Ruffle & Sosis, 2007), which is reflected in their parenting reasoning and strategies.

To summarize, analysis of the data suggests that mothers' religious characteristics have a significant influence on their reasoning and strategies in promoting their children's forgiveness skills.

5.6   Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research

The present study is the first to develop a scale to explore mothers' reasoning and strategies in promoting forgiveness in preschool-aged children and to indicate cultural

differences in mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies. This study provided fundamental information on developing children's forgiveness in relation to mothers' reasoning and strategies, as well as to their cultural and socio-demographic characteristics. However, there are some limitations that need to be noted.

5.6.1   Mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies scale (MFSS)

The present study shed a light on the early development of mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies scale and suggests that the MFSS shows an early promise as a scale for exploring mothers' reasoning and strategies in developing children's forgiveness. However, there were several limitations to this study and further validity studies are required. One of the limitations of this study was the sample size. Due to the small sample size in each group separately (Iran: n=124; Portugal: n=129), the ESEM model did not show measurement equivalence (configural invariance). Future research with larger sample size is required to further validate this scale and to develop measurement approaches to study mothers' reasoning and strategies in developing children's forgiveness. In addition, further studies are needed to verify cross-validity of this newly-created scale by applying in another sample with different characteristics. Another aspect to consider in future studies is a concurrent validity test of the MFSS. Concurrent validity is a measure of validity which aims to measure the degree to which the results of the scale are related to the results of another scales with confirmed reliability and validity (Gay, 1981). In this respect, future studies are required to examine the correlations between the MFSS and other instruments of parenting practices and socialization goals and to test whether mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies are related to their parenting practices and socialization goals. Moreover, it is suggested for future studies to apply

test-retest reliability in order to further support the internal consistency reliability of
the MFSS.

In conclusion, regarding the results of the newly-created scale, this study serves as
an insightful beginning for further exploration of mothers' forgiveness-promoting
strategies in preschool-aged children, relating to four constructs of
punishment-obedience, self-regulation, social normative and autonomous morality
orientations. More studies are still required to further support these four constructs
and to examine whether they are salient across different groups. The MFSS is a
newly-developed scale that, with further validation, may contribute to help
researchers to explore mothers' reasoning and strategies as key factors in promoting
preschool-aged children's forgiveness skills.

5.6.2 Socio-demographic of participants

The effects of mothers' educational level and religious characteristics variables on
their forgiveness-promoting strategies were found in the present study. However, due
to the small number of participants in each category of variables, a replication of the
present study with a larger demographic of participants is suggested. In addition, it
would be interesting to assess the relation of family income, neighborhood level and
social environment along with educational level to mothers' forgiveness-promoting
strategies concerning their preschoolers.

The design of the present study included mothers as important agents in
developing children's forgiveness skills. However, given the significant role of fathers
in children's development (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Lamb, 2004; Marsiglio, Amato,
Day, & Lamb, 2000; Parke, 1996, 2002; Rohner, 1998), further study is also

suggested to examine fathers' reasoning and strategies in developing children's forgiveness skills.

Previous studies have found that parents' socioeconomic status (SES) (Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010; Hoff, Laursen, & Tardif, 2002; Piccinini, Tudge, Marin, Frizzo, & Lopes, 2010; Vieira et al., 2013), as well as their social class (Grusec, 1997; Kohn, 1977; Tudge et al., 2013; Weininger & Lareau, 2009), influence their parental values, beliefs and strategies. These factors were not addressed in the present study. Thus, further research is also needed to examine the relation of socioeconomic status and social class to mothers' reasoning and strategies in fostering children's forgiveness skills.

5.7   Conclusion

The present study is the first study concerning mothers' reasoning and strategies in promoting children's forgiveness. In spite of several limitations, the results suggest that the newly-created MFSS shows early promise as a scale for exploring mothers' forgiveness-promoting strategies concerning their preschoolers. The MFSS is now ready for further testing and validation among different populations and cultures. As literature on the role of parents in children's forgiveness skills continues to develop, the MFSS contributes to shedding light on exploring mothers' reasoning and strategies in relation to fostering forgiveness in their preschool children. To our current knowledge and at this point in time, no study has examined cultural patterns of mothers' reasoning and strategies in children's forgiveness in Iran and Portugal. Thus, the cultural study of Iranian and Portuguese mothers contributes to the understanding of cultural differences in relation to parents' reasoning and strategies specifically on forgiveness. In addition, the findings of the present study further

support the important influences of educational level attainment and religiosity in influencing mothers' beliefs and forgiveness strategies. To sum up, in spite of the limitations in the present study, the findings make a significant contribution to the literature of parental reasoning and strategies relating to children's forgiveness. However, further studies in this new area are required to address the aforementioned limitations and extend the scope.

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Appendix I

(Description of the study in English)

Universidade do Minho
Instituto de Educação

Doctoral student
Nava Naeimi

Doctoral programe
Educational Sciences - Specialization in Educational Psychology

Scientific supervisor
Ana Maria Tomás de Almeida (PhD)
Associate Professor of the Institute of Education, University of Minho

Thesis title
Promoting forgiveness in pre-school children: A cultural study of mothers' reasoning and strategies.

RESEARCH STUDY ON MOTHERS' REASONING AND STRATEGIES

CONCERNING PROMOTING FORGIVENESS IN PRESCHOOL-AGE

CHILDREN

Mothers' reasoning and strategies play an important role in promoting children's forgiveness skills. At Minho University's Educational Psychology Department, we aim to study mothers' reasoning and strategies when helping their preschool-aged children to forgive others' wrongdoing. This study is focused on collecting information from a cultural perspective, based on comparison between a country of Western culture (Portugal) and the other from the Middle East (Iran). Previous research studies have found differences in mothers' reasoning and strategies across cultures; however, this is the first study focused on exploring mothers' reasoning and strategies in relation to developing children's forgiveness skills within and across cultures.

Aiming at these goals, your participation in this study is of high value. We are interested in gathering information from mothers of 4 to 6 year-old children in both countries. In this regard, we would like to invite you for an interview being held in your child's kindergarten which will take about 20 minutes. During the visit the researchers are available to answer any doubts or questions. Abiding by ethical standards, all information will remain anonymous and will only be used in an aggregated form in the present study.

Appendix II

(Portuguese Translation of the description of the study

for Portuguese sample)

Universidade do Minho
Instituto de Educação

Doutoranda
Nava Naeimi

Programa doutoral
Ciências da Educação – Especialização em Psicologia da Educação

Orientador Científico
Ana Maria Tomás de Almeida (PhD)
Professora Associada no Instituto de Educação da Universidade do Minho

Título da tese
A promoção do perdão em crianças de idade pré-escolar: Um estudo cultural do raciocínio e estratégias das mães.

INVESTIGAÇÃO SOBRE O RACÍOCINIO E AS ESTRATÉGIAS MATERNAS
RELATIVAS À PROMOÇÃO DO PERDÃO EM CRIANÇAS DE IDADE
PRÉ-ESCOLAR

O raciocínio e as estratégias educativas das mães têm um papel muito importante na promoção de competências de perdão nas crianças. No Departamento de Psicologia da Educação da Universidade do Minho pretendemos estudar o modo como as mães explicam a importância do perdão aos filhos quando alguém os magoa ou lhes faz mal. Este estudo pretende investigar do ponto de vista cultural o raciocínio e as estratégias educativas das mães num pais de cultura ocidental (Portugal) e outro país do médio oriente (Irão). Em estudos anteriores encontraram-se diferenças nas perceções e estratégias usadas para explicar a importância do perdão em função da cultura à qual as mães pertenciam. No entanto, este é o primeiro estudo com o objetivo de explorar a influência do raciocínio e das estratégias maternas no desenvolvimento de capacidades de perdão em crianças dentro e em ambas as culturas.

Para a concretização deste objetivo, a sua participação neste estudo é muito importante. Estamos interessados na participação de mães de ambos os países com filhos entre os 4 e os 6 anos de idade, convidando-a para uma entrevista, que terá lugar no Jardim-de-Infância que o seu filho ou filha frequenta e demorará cerca de 20 minutos. Durante este tempo, os investigadores estão disponíveis para responder a todas as dúvidas e perguntas que possam surgir. A confidencialidade e o anonimato serão garantidos e os seus dados exclusivamente utilizados para o desenvolvimento do presente estudo.

Appendix III

(Farsi translation of the description of the study for the

Iranian sample)

Universidade do Minho
Instituto de Educação

دانشجوی دکتری
نوا نعیمی

دوره دکتری
علوم تربیتی - تخصصی در روان شناسی تربیتی

سرپرست علمی
آنا ماریا توماس د آلمیدا (دکترا)
استاد موسسه علوم تربیتی، دانشگاه مینهو

عنوان پروژه
پرورش بخشش و گذشت در کودکان پیش دبستانی: مطالعه فرهنگی استدلال و استراتژی های مادران.

مطالعه تحقیقاتی در رابطه با استدلال و استراتژی مادران در پرورش بخشش و گذشت در کودکان

پیش-دبستانی

استدلال و استراتژی مادران نقش مهمی در پرورش مهارتهای بخشش و گذشت کودکان ایفا می کند. در گروه تخصصی روانشناسی تربیتی دانشگاه مینهو، تصمیم داریم استدلال و استراتژی مادران در زمانی که به کودک پیش دبستانی خود کمک می کنند که خطای دیگران را ببخشد را مورد مطالعه قرار دهیم. این پژوهش مبتنی بر جمع آوری اطلاعات از دیدگاه فرهنگی است، بر اساس مقایسه یک کشور از فرهنگ غرب (پرتغال) و دیگری از خاورمیانه (ایران). مطالعات تحقیقاتی پیشین نشان داده اند که تفاوت قابل توجهی در استدلال و استراتژی مادران در میان فرهنگها وجود دارد. با این وجود، این نخستین مطالعه تحقیقاتی با هدف بررسی استدلال و استراتژی مادران در خصوص پرورش مهارتهای بخشش و گذشت کودکان در فرهنگ داخلی و خارجی می باشد.

جهت نیل به این اهداف، مشارکت شما در این مطالعه تحقیقاتی حائز اهمیت بسیار است. علاقه مندیم اطلاعات را از مادران کودکان بین ۴ تا ۶ سال در هر دو کشور جمع آوری نماییم. بدین منظور از شما دعوت می کنیم برای مصاحبه ای که در مهد کودک فرزندتان برگزار خواهد شد و در حدود ۲۰ دقیقه به طول می انجامد شرکت نمایید. در حین ملاقات ، محققان برای پاسخگویی به هر نوع ابهام و سوالی حضور دارند. بر اساس اصول اخلاقی، تمام پاسخها بی نام و محرمانه باقی خواهند ماند و تنها به صورت گروهی دراین پژوهش گزارش خواهند شد.

Appendix IV

(English translation of the questionnaire of the study)

Interview Code:_____
Date of Completion: _____

Socio-Demographic information

Please answer the following questions. All information will be kept confidential.

IDENTIFICATION OF YOUR CHILD

1. Sex: ☐ male ☐ female

2. Age: _____

3. Date of birth: _____/_____/_____

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF MOTHER:

1. Age: _____.

2. Current work status: ☐ Employed ☐ Unemployed

3. Marital status:

☐ Single   ☐ Married / Stable Relationship   ☐ Separated / Divorced

☐ Widow

 If you are married,

3.1. How many years are you married? _____

4. Do you live with just your family?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

4.1. If you live with your family along with others, with whom do you share your house?

_____

	Boys	Girls
5.1. Number of children		
5.2. Age of children (if needed, report separately)		

6. Level of education:

☐ No schooling

☐ less than 7th grade

☐ junior high school, including 9th grade

☐ partial high school, 10th or 11th grade

☐ high school graduate

☐ Associate, partial college, at least one year of specialized training

☐ standard college or university graduation (Bachelors),

☐ graduate/professional training (Master or PhD)

7. Do you have a religion or belief?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

7.1. If yes, which?
_____

8. How often do you attend place of worship?

☐   Rarely

☐   Less than once a month

☐   Less than once a week

☐   Once a week or more

☐   Once a day or more

9. How often do you pray either individually or collectively?

☐   Rarely

☐   Less than once a month

☐   Less than once a week

☐   Once a week or more

☐   Once a day or more

10. How important religious practice is to you?

Unimportant				Very important
1	2	3	4	5

MFSS

During recess time at school, a classmate told your child that she/he didn't want your child to play on the swing and pushed your child with considerable force. Your child fell off and scraped some skin from both face and knees. When you picked your child up from school, he/she was short of breath and on the brink of tears, telling you what happened and that he/she does not want to go back to school. What do you say to him/her?

Please **note the frequency** with which you would make each of the following responses to your child.

	I always say 5	I usually say 4	I sometimes say 3	I rarely say 2	I never say 1
1. I tell him/her not to take the matter very seriously and to remain friends.					
2. I tell him/her not to take offense because his/her classmate did not mean to hurt him/her on purpose.					
3. I tell him/her to continue being friends so his/her other classmates will not call him/her a 'crybaby'.					
4. I tell him/her that this child is rude and that it would be better to stay away from him/her.					
5. I tell him/her to forget the matter because the scratches will soon go away.					
6. I tell him/her to forget the matter and to continue being friends as long as the other child apologizes.					
7. I tell him the other child deserves to be punished for doing a naughty thing.					
8. I tell him/her to talk to the teacher who can decide what punishment that the other child deserves.					
9. I tell him/her not to cry but instead to pray for the child who hurt him/her.					
10. I tell him/her to defend him/herself and not to let the matter pass.					
11. I tell him/her not to be angry so that his/her teacher will say that he/she is a good boy /girl.					
12. I tell him/her that, if he/she pardons the child who did the harm, God will be pleased with him/her.					

	I always say	I usually say	I sometimes say	I rarely say	I never say
	5	4	3	2	1
13. I tell him/her to be kind-hearted and to understand that there are some children who do not know how to behave well.					
14. I tell him/her to make peace and continue being friends.					
15. I tell him/her not to stay angry because God taught us to be good hearted.					
16. I tell him/her not to get angry and to be friends.					
17. I tell him/her to forget and ask the other child to play on the swing, taking turns.					
18. I tell him/her not to stay angry as this only makes him/her feel bad.					
19. I tell him/her to stop playing with the child who pushed him/her.					

Appendix V

(Portuguese translation of the questionnair of the

study for Portuguese sample)

Código da entrevista:_____

Data de preenchimento:_____

Informações sócio-demográficas

IDENTIFICAÇÃO DA CRIANÇA

1.. Sexo: ☐ Masculino ☐ Feminino

2. Idade: _____

3. Data de nascimento: _____/_____/_____

DADOS SOCIODEMOGRÁFICOS DA MÃE

1. Idade: _____

2. Condição laboral: ☐ Empregada ☐ Desempregada

3. Estado civil:

☐ Solteira ☐ Casada /Relação estável ☐ Separada / Divorciada ☐ Viúva

Se está casada ou numa relação:

3.1. há quantos anos está junto com o seu marido/ companheiro?

_____

4. A família vive só? ☐ Sim ☐ Não

4.1.Se coabita com outros, com quem partilha
casa?_____

	Rapazes	Raparigas
5.1. Número de filhos		
5.2. Idade dos filhos (se necessário, separar por ;)		

6. Nível de escolaridade:

☐ Sem escolaridade

☐ Menos de 3º ciclo (Menos 7º ano)

☐ 3º ciclo completo (9º ano)

☐ Secundário InCompleto (10º ao 11º ano)

☐ Secundário Completo (12º ano)

☐ Curso superior incompleto (Universidade ou Politécnico

☐ Curso Superior completo (Universidade ou Politécnico)

☐ Pós-graduação – (Mestrado ao Doutoramento)

7. Identifica-se com uma religião ou fé? ☐ Sim ☐ Não

7.1. Se sim, qual? _____

8. Com que frequência vai à igreja /mesquita / lugar de culto?

☐   Raramente

☐   Menos do que uma vez por mês

☐   Menos do que uma vez por semana

☐   Uma vez por semana ou mais

☐   Uma vez por dia ou mais

9. Com que frequência reza ou faz orações? (só ou com outras pessoas)

☐   Raramente

☐   Menos do que uma vez por mês

☐   Menos do que uma vez por semana

☐   Uma vez por semana ou mais

☐   Uma vez por dia ou mais

10. Que importância dá a sua prática religiosa?

Extremamente importante				Nada importante
1	2	3	4	5

MFSS

No recreio da escola, um colega da sala de seu filho/sua filha disse-lhe que não queria que ele brincasse no baloiço e empurrou-o/a com toda a força, fazendo-o cair e esfolar-se na cara e no joelho. Quando o/a vai buscar à escola, ele/a conta-lhe o que aconteceu com a respiração entrecortada, à beira de soluçar. O seu filho/sua filha diz que não quer mais vir à escola. O que é que você lhe diz?

Por favor indique com que **frequência costuma** dar as seguintes respostas ao seu filho ou à sua filha.

	Digo sempre	Digo muitas vezes	Digo algumasvezes	Digo poucas vezes	Nunca digo
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Digo-lhe que não dê importância e fiquem amigos.					
2. Digo-lhe que não leve a mal porque a outra criança não tinha intenção de magoá-lo/a.					
3. Digo-lhe que continuem a ser amigos para que os outros colegas não o chamem 'piegas' (choramingas ou menino/a da mamã).					
4. Digo-lhe que essa criança é mal-educada e que é melhor ficar longe dela.					
5. Digo-lhe que esqueça porque os arranhões passam rápido.					
6. Digo-lhe que deve esquecer e ser amigo se a outra criança lhe pedir desculpa.					
7. Digo-lhe que a outra criança merece ser castigada porque uma coisa errada..					
8. Digo-lhe que fale com a educadora para que o outro tenha o castigo que merece.					
9. Digo-lhe que não fique a chorar e reze pela criança que lhe fez mal.					
10. Digo-lhe que se defenda e não se deixe ficar.					
11. Digo-lhe que não fique com raiva para que a sua/seu professor/a digam que ele/ela é um/a bom menino/a.					

	Digo sempre	Digo muitas vezes	Digo algumasvezes	Digo poucas vezes	Nunca digo
	5	4	3	2	1
12. Digo-lhe que desculpe quem lhe fez mal, que Deus ficará contente com ele/ela.					
13. Digo-lhe que tenha bom coração e compreenda que há crianças que não se sabem comportar bem.					
14. Digo-lhe que façam as pazes e continuem amigos.					
15. Digo-lhe que não guarde raiva porque Deus nos ensinou-nos a ser bons.					
16. Digo-lhe para não ficar com raiva e serem amigos.					
17. Digo-lhe que esqueça e convide a outra criança para andar no baloiço, um de cada vez.					
18. Digo-lhe que não fique zangado para não se sentir mal.					
19. Digo-lhe que pare de brincar com essa criança que o empurrou.					

Appendix VI

(Farsi translation of the questionnaire of the study for

Iranian sample)

کد مصاحبه:------------

تاریخ تکمیل:------------

موسسه:------------------

اطلاعات فردی-اجتماعی

مشخصات کودک:

۱-جنسیت: دختر ☐ پسر ☐ ۲ ـ سن--------- ۳ـ تاریخ تولد: روز-------ماه---------سال-------

مشخصات فردی مادر:

۱ ـ سن------------

۲ـ وضعیت اشتغال: شاغل ☐ غیر شاغل ☐

۳ـ وضعیت تاهل:

متاهل: ☐ مطلقه: ☐ بیوه: ☐

اگر متاهل هستید،

چند سال است که ازدواج کرده اید: -------------------------------

۴.آیا فقط با خانواده خود زندگی میکنید؟ □بلی □خیر

در صورت زندگی خانواده با افراد دیگر، با چه کسانی منزل خود را سهیم کرده اید------------------------------.

	پسر	دختر
۵,۱.تعداد فرزندان		
۵,۲.سن فرزندان(در صورت لزوم به صورت جداگانه مرقوم فرمایید)		

۶.میزان تحصیلات:

□ بیسواد

□ ابتدایی

□ راهنمایی

□ متوسطه

□ دیپلم

□ فوق دیپلم

□ لیسانس

□ کارشناسی ارشد یا دکترا

۷.آیا به دین و یا آیینی اعتقاد دارید؟ □بلی □خیر

در صورت جواب مثبت،به کدام؟------------

۸-هر چند وقت یکبار به مسجد،کلیسا و یا محل عبادت میروید؟

□   به ندرت

□   کمتر از یک بار در ماه

□   کمتر از یک بار در هفته

□   یک بار در هفته یا بیشتر

□   یک بار در روز یا بیشتر

۹- هر چند وقت یکبار به صورت انفرادی یا جمعی دعا میخوانید؟

□   به ندرت

□   کمتر از یک بار در ماه

□   کمتر از یک بار در هفته

□   یک بار در هفته یا بیشتر

□   یک بار در روز یا بیشتر

۱۰. اجرای فرائض دینیتان چه مقدار برای شما اهمیت دارد؟

اصلا" اهمیت ندارد				کاملا" اهمیت دارد
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵

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ام ام اف اس

در هنگام زنگ تفریح، همکلاسی کودکتان به او میگوید که اجازه ندارد سوار تاب شود و او را به شدت از تاب پرتاب میکند. کودک شما به زمین می افتد وصورت و زانوی وی زخم می شود.وقتی که شما به دنبال وی میروید، در حالی که ناراحت است و اشک میریزد آن چه را که اتفاق افتاده است برای شما تعریف میکند و میگوید که دیگر نمیخواهد به مهد کودک برود.شما به او چه میگویید؟

لطفا" بر اساس آنچه **اکثر موارد** به کودک خود میگویید پاسخ دهید:

همیشه اینگونه میگویم ٥	اغلب اینگونه میگویم ٤	بعضی اوقات اینگونه میگویم ٣	به ندرت اینگونه میگویم ٢	هیچگاه اینگونه نمیگویم ١	
					١. به فرزندم میگویم که به این مسائل اهمیت ندهد و با هم دوست بمانند.
					٢. به فرزندم میگویم ناراحت نباشد زیرا دوستش قصد نداشته او را از عمد هل بدهد.
					٣. به فرزندم میگویم که با همکلاسیش دوست بماند تا همکلاسی های دیگربه او "نی نی کوچولو"و لوس نگویند.
					٤. به فرزندم میگویم این کودک بی ادب است و از او دوری کند.
					٥. به فرزندم میگویم فراموش کند زیرا زخم و دردش به زودی خوب می شود.
					٦. به فرزندم میگویم اگر همکلاسیش عذرخواهی کرد فراموش کند و با او دوست باشد.
					٧. به فرزندم میگویم که سزاوار است همکلاسیش تنبیه شود زیرا کار اشتباهی انجام داده است.
					٨. به فرزندم میگویم با معلم صحبت کند تا همکلاسیش را آنطور که باید و شاید تنبیه کند.
					٩. به فرزندم میگویم که گریه نکند و برای کودکی که به او صدمه زده دعا بخواند.
					١٠. به فرزندم میگویم از خودش دفاع کند و همین طوربدون هیچ عکس العمل نایستد.

</div>

کاملا موافقم ٥	موافقم ٤	نظری ندارم ٣	مخالفم ٢	کاملا مخالفم ١	
					۱۱. به فرزندم میگویم که ناراحت و عصبانی نباشد تا معلمش بگوید که اوپسر/دختر خوبی است.
					۱۲. به فرزندم میگویم اگر اشتباه همکلاسیش را بپذیرد،خدا از او خشنود می شود.
					۱۳. به فرزندم میگویم خوش قلب باشد و بداند که بعضی از بچه ها نمی دانند که چگونه درست رفتار کنند.
					۱۴. به فرزندم میگویم که با هم آشتی کنند و دوست بمانند.
					۱۵. به فرزندم میگویم که عصبانی نباشد زیرا خدا می خواهد که از ما که خوش قلب باشیم.
					۱۶. به فرزندم میگویم عصبانی نباشد و با هم دوست باشند.
					۱۷. به فرزندم میگویم که فراموش کند و از آن کودک بخواهد که به نوبت تاب بازی کنند.
					۱۸. به فرزندم میگویم خشمگین نباشد تا احساس بد نداشته باشد.
					۱۹. به فرزندم میگویم دیگر با کودکی که او را هل داده دوست نباشد.