



ELSEVIER

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

SCIENCE @ DIRECT®

Personality and Individual Differences 37 (2004) 147–156

PERSONALITY AND
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

www.elsevier.com/locate/paid

Does spirituality add to personality in the study of trait forgiveness? ☆

Mark M. Leach *, Russell Lark

Department of Psychology, University of Southern Mississippi, Box 5025, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5025, USA

Received 14 November 2002; received in revised form 22 July 2003; accepted 24 August 2003

Available online 14 October 2003

Abstract

Forgiveness has historically been considered a theological construct and has only recently received significant empirical study outside of the professional religion literature. Much of the recent study by psychologists has looked at the relationship between personality and forgiveness. Recent evidence indicates that personality plays a strong role in the study of forgiveness, but the literature has been limited. This study sought to determine whether spirituality, as measured by the Spiritual Well-Being Scale and the Spiritual Transcendence Scale, accounted for a significant portion of the variance beyond that of personality in the study of dispositional forgiveness. Results using multiple regression models indicated that spirituality explained a significant amount of the variance but was contained primarily in only one factor. Additionally, forgiveness of others was significantly correlated with all of the spirituality subscales whereas forgiveness of self was related to only one subscale. The two spirituality instruments showed some overlap but appear to be measuring different facets of spirituality. Results are discussed in light of self and other forgiveness motivations.

© 2003 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Trait forgiveness; Spirituality; Five-factor model; Transcendence

1. Introduction

Forgiveness has traditionally been understood as a theological construct within the realm of the majority of the world's major religions. It has been viewed as a necessary component to better

☆ This article is based on a project in partial fulfillment of the Masters degree by the second author, under the direction of the first author.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1-601-226-4177; fax: +1-601-266-5580.

E-mail address: m.leach@usm.edu (M.M. Leach).

spiritual health, and cultures have traditionally associated forgiveness with a religious or transcendent meaning in order to modulate revenge and social injustices (Newberg, d'Aquili, Newberg, & deMarici, 2000). Clinicians have long acknowledged that forgiveness is a difficult concept for clients to grasp, and there has been debate over the merits of forgiveness, particularly in areas such as a parent who abused their child. It has been only recently that behavioral scientists have begun to study the construct and its processes, with Gartner (1992) identifying forgiveness as an essential research goal for both religionists and psychologists.

It has become evident that the study of forgiveness as a viable psychological, neuropsychological, theological, interpersonal, and geopolitical construct has gained increased empirical attention over the past two decades (Brose, Rye, Lutz, & Ross, 2002; McCullough, 2000; McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000a; Worthington & Wade, 1999). Veenstra (1992) surveyed several writings related to the construct of forgiveness, and noted that definitions differed from author to author. No agreed upon definition of forgiveness exists (Worthington, 1998), but most researchers now concur with Enright and Coyle (1998) that forgiveness is different from closely related constructs such as pardoning, condoning, excusing, and reconciliation. McCullough et al. (2000a) defined forgiveness as “intraindividual, prosocial change toward a perceived transgressor that is situated within a specific interpersonal context” (p. 9). Readers will note though that the definition focuses on individual change within a specific context. Forgiveness can be considered on multiple levels, from those interpersonal incidents that are contextualized to a dispositional, trait form that transcends individual injustices. Much has been written describing various contexts in which research participants do or do not forgive in specific situations, and the literature is overwhelmingly dominated by studies analyzing the forgiveness of another person for a past transgression. For example, Enright and his colleagues (Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991, 1996; Enright, Eastin, Golden, Sarinopoulos, & Freedman, 1992) constructed an empirically based developmental approach in which research participants are asked to describe a specific event in which they were emotionally pained and asked to answer a series of questions about the hurting event. Several researchers have used this empirical approach to answer interpersonal forgiveness questions, often within the five-factor model (FFM) framework. The FFM, consisting of the five superordinate personality factors of neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, has been established as a useful means of studying forgiveness, and a significant portion of the forgiveness variance found in the literature is often accounted for by personality factors. For example, the FFM factors of extraversion and agreeableness are consistently positively related to forgiveness, and Neuroticism is negatively correlated (e.g. Brose et al., 2002). Similarly, Symington, Walker, and Gorsuch (2002) found that neuroticism and agreeableness were significantly related to various forgiveness dimensions, and stated that personality may play a significant role in the study of situational forgiveness.

Another approach that has gained little, but growing attention is considering forgiveness as a decontextualized trait, an approach that forgiveness theorists say is in need of greater examination (McCullough, 2000; Walker & Gorsuch, 2002; Worthington & Wade, 1999). As a trait, people are asked to respond to whether they consider themselves to be forgiving individuals, both of themselves and others, regardless of specific situations. The use of dispositional measures to evaluate forgiveness, sometimes called forgivingness, “assess a general response style that transcends individual offenses or even individual relationships” (p. 72; McCullough, Hoyt, & Rachal,

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات