

## PERSONALITY FACTORS AND FORGIVENESS AS PREDICTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigated personality factors and forgiveness as predictors of psychological well being among undergraduate students. A total of 284 participants comprising 144 females (51%) and 140 males (49%), within the age range of 19 to 26 years, ( $M=22.18$ ;  $SD= 1.79$ ). They were selected making use of simple random sampling techniques, from the population of undergraduate students from the Faculty of Management Sciences ( $N= 131$ ; 46%) and Faculty of Education ( $N=153$ ; 54%), Enugu State University of Science and technology (ESUT). A 44-items Big Five Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992); 18 items Heartland Forgiveness Scale (Thompson et al., 2005) and 18-item psychological wellbeing scale (Ryff, 1989) were used in the study. Correlational design was adopted while Hierarchical Multiple Regression result revealed that personality factors (Openness,  $\beta = .57$ ,  $t = 8.43$ , at  $P > .01$ ; Conscientiousness,  $\beta = .39$ ,  $t = 3.53$ , at  $P > .01$ ; Agreeableness,  $\beta = .21$ ,  $t = 1.90$ , at  $P > .05$ ; Neuroticism,  $\beta = -.37$ ,  $t = -8.01$ , at  $P > .01$ ) significantly predicted psychological wellbeing. While Extraversion ( $\beta = .08$ ,  $t = .70$ , at  $P < .05$ ) did not significantly predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students. Also, forgiveness (self,  $\beta = .26$ ,  $t = 3.00$ , at  $P > .01$ ); others ( $\beta = .36$ ,  $t = 3.80$ , at  $P > .01$ ); and situations ( $\beta = .37$ ,  $t = 3.22$ , at  $P > .05$ ) significantly predicted psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students. The findings were discussed in view of literature reviewed and recommendations were made.

**Keywords:** Personality, Forgiveness, Psychological wellbeing, Undergraduate, Students

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background to the Study

Well-being is one of the most important goals which individuals strive for. Although the concept of well-being is important in all stages of life, it is most important in young adults, a category to which university students belong. University students face demands of academic challenges, financial pressures, and the need for career decisions, which act as stressors that have the potential for creating significant psychological distress (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1979). It is therefore imperative to look into the issue concerning the psychological well-being of university undergraduate, and to ascertain those factors that can either improve or hinder its development. The personality of the individual is crucial and the most distinctive feature of any individual. Personality refers to the enduring styles of thinking and behaving when interacting with the world. It is the unique and relatively stable qualities that characterize an individual's behaviour across different situations over a period of time. Since personality is a core factor which determines our reactions and adjustments, psychological-well-being during such a stressed phase as young adults should be studied within its perspective.

It has consistently been found to be a strong predictor of well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). The Dynamic Equilibrium model (Headey & Wearing, 1992) asserts that individuals have a distinct average amount of well-being that is determined by his personality. According to them, people with extraverted personalities, for example, are more likely to experience certain events as compared to those who are most introverted. These events, in turn, affect one's baseline level of psychological wellbeing. The Dynamic Equilibrium Model suggests that the individual will return to their baseline level as the circumstances normalize (Diener, Oishi & Lucas, 2003).

Also, another factor that is associated with psychological wellbeing is forgiveness. We are social species, surrounded by and connected to others: relationships give our lives meaning and sustenance as we experience wellbeing (Aristotle, 350 BCE. 2009; Clark & Grote, 2013;



Aronson & Aronson, 2018; Murray & Holmes, 2011). As humans, we are bound at some point to slight, disappoint, hurt, and even betray the people in our lives; be they family, close friends, or acquaintances (Fincham et al., 2004; Keiningham et al., 2010). And yet, these relationships typically endure, continuing past such transgressions. Individuals constantly interacting with each other in society may conflict by falling into disagreements from time to time. As a result of that, they may avoid from making contact with each other or they would like to get even with the other person. Instead of these, they would prefer forgiveness as an option (Satıcı, 2016). Forgiveness which has recently become a topic of interest in many areas is commonly defined as an individual willingness to give up negative and harmful feelings towards himself/herself and others, and leaves those negative feelings to positive emotions (Capan & Arıcıoglu, 2014; McCullough, Pargament & Thoresen, 2000).

As they focus on the positive, they are healthfully capable of coping with the hazardous situation and can easily adapt to new situations. Consequently, it also ensures to increase the resilience of forgivers (Capan & Arıcıoglu, 2014). In terms of psychological science, it is realized that forgiveness is related to many psychological areas in the last two decades (Bilekli, 2016). Also, there are extensive researches on the positive effects of forgiveness for the individual (Hall & Finchman, 2005). Exline and Baumeister (2000) asserted that forgiveness is greatly helpful in terms of physical and mental for the person who forgives. In addition, it gives the person psychological and mental maturity and contributes to the recent development of life skills (Hope, 1987). The fact that it affects both people physically and psychologically shows that this concept is an important source of psychological power. That's why some researchers suggest that the concept of forgiveness is needed to be investigated for the literature of psychology in our society (Tunca & Durmus, 2018).

### **Statement of the Problem**

God has created each and every person unique. Everyone has different patterns of thinking, feeling and behaviour. Therefore, each person may behave differently even in similar situation. Basically, it depends on personality traits, a person has born with. By maintaining unique personality traits and characteristics people live in this world successfully and build healthy interpersonal relationships. Some personality traits help people to build and maintain warm relationship with others. They might forgive others and ignore their mistakes easily and whole heartedly. Hence, forgiving one's self/others is a way of smoothing social relationships and maintaining one's wellbeing. Personality traits have a strong relationship with the level of forgiveness. People with different personality traits have different level of forgiveness that depends on how a person thinks about other persons and the situations. So it is interesting and important to explore personality traits and forgiveness as predicts of psychological wellbeing particularly among universality students.

Hence, the study intends to answer these pertinent questions:

Will personality factors predict psychological wellbeing among university students?

Will forgives predict psychological wellbeing among university students?

### **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

#### **Theory of Psychological Wellbeing (Ryff, 1985)**

Psychological well-being is a term which has different meanings to different people. Well-being has been defined as a dynamic state characterized by a reasonable amount of harmony between an individual's abilities, needs and expectations, and environmental demands and opportunities (Levi, 1987). In general terms, it can be defined as the subjective feeling of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life's experiences and of one's role in the world of work, sense of achievement, utility, belongingness and no distress, dissatisfaction or worry etc. It emphasizes positive characteristics of growth and development.



Ryff, (1995) gave a multidimensional model of well-being which included six distinct components of positive psychological functioning. In combination these dimensions encompass a breadth of wellness that includes positive evaluations of oneself and one's past life despite the awareness of their limitations (Self-Acceptance), a sense of continued growth and development as a person (Personal Growth), the belief that one's life is purposeful and meaningful (Purpose in Life), the possession of quality relations with others (Positive Relations with others), the capacity to manage effectively one's life and surrounding world (Environmental Mastery), and a sense of self-determination (Autonomy). Each dimension of Ryff's psychological well-being model reflects different challenges that individuals face in their lives.

### **Big Five Personality Theory (Costa & Mc Crae, 1992)**

The findings resulted in five traits. These Big Five traits are also referred to as the 'Five Factor Model' (Costa & Mc Crae, 1992) and as the Global Factors of personality (Russell & Karol, 1994). The Big Five Factors are Openness (is a general appreciation for art, adventure, unusual ideas, and imagination), Conscientiousness (tendency to show self discipline, act dutifully and aim for achievement), Extraversion (characterized by positive emotions and the tendency to seek the company of others), Agreeableness (tendency to be compassionate and cooperative. Individuals high on this trait are considerate, friendly, generous, helpful, trustworthy, caring, warm and willing to compromise their interests with others) and Neuroticism (tendency to experience negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, fear etc).

### **Theory of Forgiveness (Worthington, 2003)**

Researchers who study forgiveness have used many theoretical understandings of the construct. Most agree that forgiveness is complex (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). It involves cognitive (Flanigan, 1992), affective (Malcolm & Greenberg, 2000), behavioural (Gordon, Baucom, & Snyder, 2000), motivational (McCullough, Sandage, & Worthington, 1997), decisional (DiBlasio, 1998), and interpersonal (Baumeister, Exline, & Sommer, 1998) aspects. Researchers do not agree about which aspects are most important.

Worthington (2003) has proposed that two types of forgiveness exist – decisional and emotional forgiveness. Decisional forgiveness is a behavioural intention statement that one will seek to behave toward the transgressor like one did prior to a transgression. One decides to release the transgressor from the debt (Baumeister et al., 1998; DiBlasio, 1998). One might grant decisional forgiveness and still be emotionally upset, cognitively oriented toward angry, anxious, or depressive rumination, and motivationally oriented toward revenge or avoidance. However, in some cases, decisional forgiveness could trigger emotional forgiveness. The second type of forgiveness is called emotional forgiveness. Worthington and his colleagues have defined forgiveness as rooted in emotions (Worthington & Wade, 1999; Worthington, 2000; Worthington Berry, & Parrott, 2001), which affect motivations. They theorize that people who are offended or hurt experience an injustice gap, which is described as the difference between the way one would prefer a transgression to be fully resolved and the way they perceive the situation currently (Exline et al., 2003). The injustice gap widens as subsequent events aggravate the person or narrows as subsequent events mitigate the injustice. Magnitude of the injustice gap is hypothesized to be inversely proportional to ease of forgiving and directly proportional to unforgiveness.

Forgiveness is a multidimensional structure consisting of emotions, thoughts, and behaviours towards one's self, others and situation. In other words, it consists of three sub-dimensions which are forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others and situations (Capan & Aricioglu, 2014). Forgiveness of self is feeling self-love and respect for himself or herself after doing something wrong. In other words, it is identified that an individual as an offender loves and respects oneself by Capan and Aricioglu (2014). It is defined as an individual's forgiveness



of self, feeling positive emotions such as compassion and merciful rather than negative emotions such as anger, guilt and desire for self-punishment (Hall & Fincham, 2005; Enright, 1996). Forgiveness of others is defined as giving up negative feelings to the offender (Hall & Fincham, 2005). Forgiveness of situation is stated that negative emotions are given up depending on whether the circumstances are under the control of the individual or not (Thompson, et al., 2005).

## **Empirical Review**

### **Personality Factors and Psychological Wellbeing**

Studies have shown various correlations among personality characteristics and psychological wellbeing in meta-analytic review (Anglim, Horwood, Smillie, Marrero & Wood, 2020; Steel, Schmidt, Bosco, & Uggerslev, 2019; Steel, Schmidt, & Shultz, 2008). Similarly, Reza, Mobarakeh, Juhari, Yaacob, Redzuan, and Mobarakeh, (2015) discovered a significant negative connection between psychological wellbeing and neuroticism personality trait, meanwhile, agreeableness and extraversion personality traits positively related with psychological wellbeing. The authors further reported among Iranian students that, psychological wellbeing significantly showed no interactions with openness to experience and conscientiousness personality traits. Also, Ullah, (2017) found out that neuroticism trait negatively predict psychological wellbeing, meanwhile openness, conscientiousness and extraversion traits positively predicted psychological well-being; however, agreeableness did not predict psychological wellbeing. Additionally, Bello, (2016) discovered that dimensions of big-five personality traits jointly predict psychological health, with neuroticism independently predicts psychological health and extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness having no significant prediction on psychological health. Meanwhile, Anglim and Grant, (2016); Meléndez, Satorres, Cuiño, & Reyes, (2019), and Sun, Kaufman, and Smillie, (2018) documented a significant relationship in the domains of FFMP and psychological wellbeing.

Personality traits are often considered the strongest individual predictors of emotional wellbeing, and the Big Five model of personality is the most commonly used (Steel, Schmidt & Shultz 2008). Within this model, relationships have been found between all five traits and measures of wellbeing, although these relationships differ by trait, and conception of wellbeing. Meta-analyses have revealed neuroticism to be the strongest predictor of negative affect and life satisfaction, and extraversion the strongest predictor of positive affect. The other three personality traits, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness are also related to wellbeing, but the strength of the relationship and the relative importance of each trait are less consistent and vary by measure of wellbeing (Steel, Schmidt & Shultz 2008; DeNeve, & Cooper, 1998; McCrae, & Costa, 1991). There has been less research on the relationship between personality traits and psychological wellbeing and flourishing. Overall, neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness are stronger predictors than agreeableness and openness (Anglim, & Grant 2016; Grant, Langan-Fox, & Anglim, 2009). Studies in children and young people have mainly focused on the personality traits of neuroticism and extraversion and on emotional wellbeing and report similar relationships to those in adult populations (Lampropoulou, 2018; Suldo, Minch, & Hearon, 2015).

Hafnidar (2013) conducted a research to identify relationship between five factor of personality and forgiveness Results of study indicated that agreeableness was much positively linked to forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others. Likewise, extraversion and conscientiousness was also positively correlated to forgiveness. Wang (2008) conducted a study in order to identify correlation between forgiveness and big five personality factors on Taiwanese college students. And result of study indicated that agreeableness and neuroticism were significantly related to forgiveness measure. Al -Sabeelah, Alraggad and Ameerh, (2014) conducted a research on personality traits and level of forgiveness on 450 Jordanian university





students. The results of study showed a positive and a significant correlation between personality traits and level of forgiveness other than neuroticism. Rangcanadhan and Todorov (2010) have administered a self-report questionnaire on 59 participants, suggesting that personality traits have a great impact on the decision related to forgiveness

### **Forgiveness and Psychological Wellbeing**

The previous theoretical and empirical studies suggested the aids of forgiveness as improved wellbeing (Krause & Ellison, 2003; Orcutt, 2006; Toussaint & Jorgensen, 2008; Witvliet, Ludwig, & Bauer, 2002). Forgiveness has been vastly significant to many health-related issues and medical conditions, both direct and indirect effects are labeled when discussing the latent impact of forgiveness and unforgiveness on health (Worthington, et. al, 2001; Worthington & Scherer, 2004; Worthington, Miller et.al (2007). An experimental study conducted by Karremans, Van Lange, Ouwerkerk, and Kluwer (2003) on adults where they manipulated forgiveness and measured its effects on wellbeing. The findings show that forgiveness displayed in marital relationships characterized by strong interpersonal commitment was connected with satisfaction with life, positive emotions, decreased negative emotions, and high self-esteem. The study further reveals that inability to forgive in such relationships leads to frustration and tension which may play mediating role between anger and forgiveness. Similarly, in other, cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, forgiveness has been linked with enhanced interactive relationships between the forgiver and the transgressor (Karreman & Van Lange, 2004; McCullough et al., 1998; Tsang, McCullough, & Fincham, 2006).

In addition to its noticeable noteworthy aids, forgiveness is also positively associated with psychological wellbeing (Brown, 2003; Freedman & Enright, 1996; Karremans et al., 2003; Poloma & Gallup, 1991). The link of forgiveness to these two sets of consequences may be more than coincidental: Perhaps forgiveness obtains its association with psychological wellbeing precisely because forgiveness helps people maintain and restore close relationships (Karremans et al., 2003). Forgiveness is also accompanying with better mental health functioning, both generally (Rippentrop, 2005; Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2007; Webb et al., 2011) and in relation to specific symptoms such as depression (Toussaint, Williams, Musick, & Everson-Rose, 2008; Wohl, DeShea, & Wahkinney, 2008), diagnosed psychiatric conditions (Toussaint & Cheadle, 2009a), suicidal behaviour (Hirsch, Webb, & Jeglic, 2012), and substance use (Lawler-Row et al., 2008; Walker, Ainette, Wills, & Mendoza, 2007; Webb et al., 2011). Witvliet and McCullough (2007) and Witvliet et. al., (2009) addressed that potential pathways by which forgiveness may impact health in the emotion perspective. Forgiveness may influence health by assisting emotional regulation through relieving stress, decreasing negative coping responses, and accumulative affirmative emotional responses. They also reconnoitered the association and intervention-based research relating to forgiveness with health and relationship and manipulation-based studies concerning forgiveness to health and well-being outcomes. Forgiveness looks to result in better emotional functioning, as greater levels of forgiveness have been associated to less anger, hostility, and aggression (Carson et al., 2005; Hernandez et al., 2009; Lawler-Row et al., 2008), less negative affect (Lawler et al., 2005), less mood disturbance (Friedman et al., 2007), and less rumination (McCullough, et.al., 2007; Stoia-Caraballo et al., 2008; Ysseldyk et al., 2007).

To conclude, persons who are able to forgive seem to have better interactive operational (Burnette, Davis, Green, Worthington, & Bradfield, 2009; Lawler et al., 2005; Solomon, Dekel, & Zerach, 2009; Toussaint & Jorgensen, 2008; Webb et al., 2011), to be more indication greater satisfaction with life and psychological wellbeing (Lawler Row, 2010; Toussaint & Friedman, 2009; Webb et al., 2017). A number of studies have studied the effect of forgiveness interventions on mental health variables which addressed that these interferences perform to effectively rise forgiveness and diminish unforgiveness (Hansen, et.al., (2009); Harris et al.,



(2006); Wade and Meyer, (2009), as well as improve mental health functioning and have led to in significant reductions in negative emotions, inclosing feelings of depression, Lin et al., (2004), anxiety and stress (Harris et al., 2006; Lin et al, 2004). Studies reveal that psychological wellbeing is closely related to forgiveness and empathy. Raj et al., (2016) investigated the impacts and indicators of practicing forgiving behavior. The results reveal that individual's religiosity, empathy, positive emotional state and perspective taking are the indicators of forgiving behaviour. Moreover, forgiving behaviour increases physical and psychological wellbeing, ability to handle challenges and self-acceptance.

### **Hypotheses**

These hypotheses were tested in the study. They are:

Personality factors (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) will significantly predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students.

Forgiveness (Self, Others, Situation) will significantly predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students.

### **METHOD**

#### **Participants**

A total of 284 participants comprising 144 females (51%) and 140 males (49%), within the age range of 19 to 26 years, mean age of 22.18 and a standard deviation of 1.79. They were selected making use of simple random sampling techniques, from the population of undergraduate students from of Faculty of Management (N= 131; 46%) and Faculty of Education (N=153; 54%), Enugu State University of Science and technology (ESUT).

#### **Instrument**

##### **Big Five Inventory (BFI; Costa & McCrae, 1992)**

Big five inventory is a 44-items inventory designed by Costa and McCrae (1992) to assess personality from five-dimensional perspectives which are distinct from one another. The five sub scales are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. It is administered individually or in group after establishing adequate rapport with the clients. The young and the semi-illiterates' clients are helped to carry out the instructions. There are no right or wrong answer and no time limit for completing BFI. Direct scoring is used for all the items. The value of the number shaded in each item is added to obtain the clients score in each of the subscales. Items 1-8 measures extraversion; items 9-17 measures agreeableness; items 18-26 measures conscientiousness, items 27-34 measures neuroticism while items 35-44 measures openness. Costa and McCrae (1992) obtained convergent validity coefficient of .75 while Umeh (2004) obtained divergent validity coefficient of .05 = extraversion; .13 = agreeableness; .11 = conscientiousness; .39 = neuroticism and .24 = openness with University Maladjustment Scale (UMS) (Kleinmuntz, 1961). Also, Umeh (2004) provided norm for Nigeria samples using 60 participants (Extraversion, M= 28.45, F=27.10; Agreeableness, M= 29.75, F=24.74; Conscientiousness, M= 29.10, F=27.60; Neuroticism, M= 23.43, F=24.48 and Openness, M= 38.07, F=35.18). For the current study a reestablished Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .56, .61, .59, .74, and .69 were obtained for extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness respectively, using 40 undergraduate students from the Department of Psychology, Caritas University Enugu.

##### **Heartland Forgiveness Scale (Thompson, Snyder, Hoffman, Michael, Rasmussen & Billings, 2005)**

The scale which was developed by Thompson et al., (2005) has 18 items with 7 point scale. The scale has three sub-dimensions as forgiveness of others, forgiveness of self and



forgiveness of situation. Forgiveness of Self Subscale are items, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6; forgiveness of Others Subscale are 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12; while forgiveness of Situations Subscale are 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. In order to obtain the total score for the forgiveness self subscale; add together the scores for items 1 to 6; for the forgiveness of others subscale, total score for items 7 to 12 will be added while the forgiveness of situation, total score for items 13 to 18 will be added. In the validity and reliability studies about the test shows that Heartland Forgiveness Scale's correlation as self, other, the situation is .72, .73, .77 and .83. The Turkish form of the scale (Bugay & Demir (2010a) Cronbach  $\alpha$  was .81. The value was found for the forgiveness of self, as .64, for the forgiveness of others as .79, for the forgiveness of a situation as a .76. Descriptive and Confirmatory Factor Analysis values for Turkish sample were found to be sufficient. For the current study a reestablished Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .76, .84 and .70 were obtained for forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others and forgiveness of situation respectively, using 40 undergraduate students from the Department of Psychology, Caritas university Enugu.

### **Psychological Well Being Scale (Ryff, 1989)**

Psychological well-being scale is an eighteen (18) self-report scale designed to measure psychological well-being. (Ryff, 1989). The instrument consists of six sub-scales (with three items in each sub-scale): (a) Autonomy, (b) Environmental mastery, (c) Personal growth, (d) Positive relationships with others, (e) Purpose in life, and (f) Self-acceptance. "The autonomy dimension assesses self-determination, independence, and an internal locus of control. The environmental mastery dimension measures one's ability to manipulate and control complex environments. The personal growth dimension measures one's needs to actualize and realize one's potentials. The positive relationships with other's dimension assess the ability to love, trust, and establish deep relationships with others. The purpose in life dimension is to measure one's sense of direction and goals. Participants were made to respond on a 6-point scale that ranges from "strongly agree" (1) to "strongly disagree" (6). The following items are reverse: 1,5,9,10,12,13,15,18. Higher scores indicate higher psychological well-being within the respective dimension. The internal consistency reliability coefficients as reported by Ryff (1989) ranges from .86 to .93 for the six sub-scales. For the current study a reestablished Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .61 was obtained using 40 undergraduate students from the Department of Psychology, Caritas University Enugu.

### **Procedure**

A total of 328 copies of the research instruments were administered by the researcher within a period of 4 weeks to the target population. The administration of the instrument took the form of group testing in their respective class rooms. The researcher introduced herself to the students in their respective classes and informed them what the research is all about, that the project is purely for knowledge purpose. There was no time limit and correct or wrong answers to the items of the instruments. However, out of the number distributed 301 copies were collected while 284 copies (94%) correctly filled were scored and analysed whereby 19 copies (6%) were discarded.

### **Design and Statistics**

The design for the study is correlational design. Therefore, the statistics for the study was Hierarchical Multiple Regression to help the researcher account for the contribution of each of the dimensions of personality factors (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism openness) and each of the dimensions of forgiveness (forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others, forgiveness of situations) on psychological wellbeing.

## RESULT

**Table 1**

Zero order correlation coefficient matrix showing relationship Personality Factors and Forgiveness as predictors of Psychological Wellbeing among Undergraduate Students

	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>Age</b>	22.18	1.79	1										
<b>Gender</b>	.51	.50	.10	1									
<b>Openness</b>	38.85	5.57	.10	.37**	1								
<b>Conscientiousness</b>	33.20	6.79	-.01	.41**	.76**	1							
<b>Extraversion</b>	29.50	6.80	.11	.19**	.61**	.83**	1						
<b>Agreeableness</b>	33.80	6.78	.04	.29**	.56**	.85**	.90**	1					
<b>Neuroticism</b>	14.45	5.08	.12**	-.01	-.25**	-.38**	-.49**	-.42**	1				
<b>Self</b>	30.30	5.05	-.13*	.13*	.55**	.51**	.50**	.51**	-.45**	1			
<b>Others</b>	30.46	4.84	-.09	.02	.51**	.45**	.49**	.49**	-.62**	.83**	1		
<b>Situation</b>	30.89	4.89	-.07	.21**	.63**	.55**	.49**	.53**	-.51**	.89**	.88**	1	
<b>PWB</b>	84.20	14.22	.19**	.25**	.59**	.48**	.52**	.47**	-.49**	.56**	.68**	.68**	1
<b>Coefficient Of Determinant (<math>r^2</math>)</b>				<b>.06</b>	<b>.35</b>	<b>.23</b>	<b>.27</b>	<b>.22</b>	<b>.24</b>	<b>.31</b>	<b>.46</b>	<b>.46</b>	

\*\* $P < .01$ , Bold are relevant coefficient for research hypothesis

The result shows that personality factors (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) correlated significantly with psychological wellbeing (see Table 1). Table 1 shows that correlation coefficients is, Openness,  $r = .59$ ,  $P > .01$ ,  $r^2 = .35$ ; Conscientiousness,  $r = .48$ ,  $P > .01$ ,  $r^2 = .23$ ; Extraversion,  $r = .52$ ,  $P > .01$ ,  $r^2 = .27$ ; Agreeableness,  $r = .47$ ,  $P > .01$ ,  $r^2 = .22$ ; and Neuroticism,  $r = -.49$ ,  $P > .01$ ,  $r^2 = .24$ .

On the other hand forgiveness (Self, Others, Situation) correlated significantly with psychological wellbeing (see Table 1). Table 1 shows that correlation coefficients is, Forgiveness of Self,  $r = .56$ ,  $P > .01$ ,  $r^2 = .31$ ; Forgiveness of Others,  $r = .68$ ,  $P > .01$ ,  $r^2 = .46$ ; Forgiveness of Situation,  $r = .68$ ,  $P > .01$ ,  $r^2 = .46$ .

**Table 2: Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Psychological Wellbeing (N=284)**

	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3	
	$\beta$	$t$	$\beta$	$t$	$\beta$	$t$
<b>Age</b>	.17	2.90*				
<b>Gender</b>	.24	4.12**				
<b>Openness</b>			.57	8.43**		
<b>Conscientiousness</b>			.39	3.53**		
<b>Extraversion</b>			.08	.70		
<b>Agreeableness</b>			.21	1.90*		
<b>Neuroticism</b>			-.39	-8.01**		
<b>Self</b>					.26	3.00*
<b>Others</b>					.36	3.80**
<b>Situation</b>					.37	3.22*
<b>R</b>	.30		.73		.80	
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	.09		.53		.64	
<b><math>\Delta R^2</math></b>	.09		.44		.11	
<b>F</b>	14.12(2,281)		52.15(5,276)		26.53(3,273)	

Note \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

Results of the hierarchical multiple regression for the test of the first factors of psychological wellbeing is shown in the Table 1 above. The variables were entered in stepwise models. The demographic variable (age) in the Step 1 of the regression analysis and it





significantly predicted psychological wellbeing Age,  $\beta = .17$ ,  $t = 2.90$ ,  $p > .05$ . Also, the demographic variable (Gender) significantly predicted psychological wellbeing. Gender,  $\beta = .24$ ,  $t = 4.12$ ,  $p > .01$ . Hence, the demographic variable (Age and Gender) serves as control variables in the study and that is why they are keyed in step 1

In step 2, personality factors (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) was entered. Openness ( $\beta = .57$ ,  $t = 8.43$ , at  $P > .01$ ); Conscientiousness, ( $\beta = .39$ ,  $t = 3.53$ , at  $P > .01$ ); Agreeableness ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $t = 1.90$ , at  $P > .05$ ) and Neuroticism ( $\beta = -.37$ ,  $t = -8.01$ , at  $P > .01$ ) significantly predicted psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students, While Extraversion ( $\beta = .08$ ,  $t = .70$ , at  $P < .05$ ) did not significantly predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students. The contribution of personality factors in explaining the variance in psychological wellbeing was 44% ( $\Delta R^2 = .44$ ).

In step 3, forgiveness (Self, Others, Situations) was entered. From table 2 above, all the dimensions of forgiveness, forgiveness of self ( $\beta = .26$ ,  $t = 3.00$ , at  $P > .01$ ); forgiveness of others ( $\beta = .36$ ,  $t = 3.80$ , at  $P > .01$ ); and forgiveness of situations ( $\beta = .37$ ,  $t = 3.22$ , at  $P > .05$ ) significantly predicted psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students, The contribution of personality factors in explaining the variance in psychological wellbeing was 11% ( $\Delta R^2 = .11$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The finding of this study revealed that the hypothesis tested which stated that “personality factors (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) will significantly predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students” was accepted. This means that personality factors (Openness, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) significantly predicted psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students. This is based on the fact that the alternate hypothesis stated was accepted. However, there is an existing prediction between personality factors (Openness, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) and psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students. This shows that personality factors were found to predict positively in relation to psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students. Hence, undergraduate students that scored high on personality factors were observed to experience high psychological wellbeing. Also, undergraduate students that experience low psychological wellbeing tend to score low on personality factors. On the other hand extraversion personality factor did not predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students.

Personality traits are often considered the strongest individual predictors of emotional wellbeing, and the Big Five model of personality is the most commonly used (Steel, Schmidt & Shultz 2008). Within this model, relationships have been found between all five traits and measures of wellbeing, although these relationships differ by trait, and conception of wellbeing. Meta-analyses have revealed neuroticism to be the strongest predictor of negative affect and life satisfaction, and extraversion the strongest predictor of positive affect. The other three personality traits, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness are also related to wellbeing, but the strength of the relationship and the relative importance of each trait are less consistent and vary by measure of wellbeing (Steel, Schmidt & Shultz 2008; DeNeve, & Cooper, 1998; McCrae, & Costa, 1991). The current study found out the extraversion did not predict psychological wellbeing while the remaining four dimensions predicted psychological wellbeing with neuroticism indicating a negative prediction. Other studies have shown various correlations among personality characteristics and psychological wellbeing in meta-analytic review (Anglim, Horwood, Smillie, Marrero & Wood, 2020; Steel, Schmidt, Bosco, & Uggerslev, 2019; Steel, Schmidt, & Shultz, 2008). Similarly, Reza, Mobarakeh, Juhari, Yaacob, Redzuan, and Mobarakeh, (2015) discovered a significant negative connection between psychological



wellbeing and neuroticism personality trait, meanwhile, agreeableness and extraversion personality traits positively related with psychological wellbeing.

In addition, Ullah, (2017) found out that neuroticism trait negatively predict psychological wellbeing, meanwhile openness, conscientiousness and extraversion traits positively predicted psychological well-being; however, agreeableness did not predict psychological wellbeing. Additionally, Bello, (2016) discovered that dimensions of big-five personality traits jointly predict psychological health, with neuroticism independently predicts psychological health and extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness having no significant prediction on psychological health. Meanwhile, Anglim and Grant, (2016); Meléndez, Satorres, Cujiño, & Reyes, (2019), and Sun, Kaufman, and Smillie, (2018) documented a significant relationship in the domains of FFMP and psychological wellbeing.

Also, the second hypothesis tested which stated that “forgiveness (Self, Others, Situations) will significantly predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students” was accepted. This means that forgiveness significantly predicted psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students. This is based on the fact that the alternate hypothesis stated was accepted. However, there is an existing prediction between forgiveness and psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students. This shows that forgiveness was found to predict positively in relation to psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students. Hence, undergraduate students that scored high on all the dimensions of forgiveness were observed to experience high psychological wellbeing. On the other hand undergraduate students that experience low psychological wellbeing tend to score low on all the dimensions of forgiveness.

The previous theoretical and empirical studies suggested the aids of forgiveness as improved wellbeing (Krause & Ellison, 2003; Orcutt, 2006; Witvliet, Ludwig, & Bauer, 2002; Worthington, Berry, & Parrot, 2001). Forgiveness has been vastly significant to many health-related issues and medical conditions, both direct and indirect effects are labeled when discussing the latent impact of forgiveness and unforgiveness on health (Worthington, et.al, 2001; Worthington & Scherer, 2004; Worthington, Miller et.al (2007)]. An experimental study conducted by Karremans, Van Lange, Ouwerkerk, and Kluwer (2003) on adults where they manipulated forgiveness and measured its effects on wellbeing. The findings show that forgiveness displayed in marital relationships characterized by strong interpersonal commitment was connected with satisfaction with life, positive emotions, decreased negative emotions, and high self-esteem.

In addition to its noticeable noteworthy aids, forgiveness is also positively associated with psychological wellbeing (Brown, 2003; Freedman & Enright, 1996; Karremans et al., 2003; Poloma & Gallup, 1991). The link of forgiveness to these two sets of consequences may be more than coincidental: Perhaps forgiveness obtains its association with psychological wellbeing precisely because forgiveness helps people maintain and restore close relationships (Karremans et al., 2003). Forgiveness is also accompanying with better mental health functioning, both generally (Rippentrop, Altmaier, Chen, Found, & Keffala, 2005; Ryan & Kumar, 2005; Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2007; Webb et al., 2011) and in relation to specific symptoms such as depression (Toussaint, Williams, Musick, & Everson-Rose, 2008; Wohl, DeShea, & Wahkinney, 2008), diagnosed psychiatric conditions (Toussaint & Cheadle, 2009a), suicidal behaviour (Hirsch, Webb, & Jeglic, 2012), and substance use (Lawler-Row et al., 2008; Walker, Ainette, Wills, & Mendoza, 2007; Webb et al., 2011). Thus, based on the outcome of the current study undergraduate students who are able to forgive seem to have better interactive operational, more indication greater satisfaction with life and psychological wellbeing. Amongst the factors brought out as significant predictors of well-being, neuroticism, conscientiousness, openness and agreeableness are foremost. In other words, undergraduate



students who forgive and who are not high on neuroticism, but are high on conscientiousness, openness and agreeableness are likely to experience psychological well-being.

### **Implications of the Finding**

The finding of the present study revealed that personality factors (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) and forgiveness (Self, Others, Situations) predicted psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students, apart from neuroticism that yielded a negative prediction while extraversion did not predict any significant outcome. Based on this finding, it is recommended that periodic screening and counseling sessions should be conducted to evaluate undergraduate students psychological health and intervention programme that involves psychological evaluation of undergraduate students personality should be carried out in order to identify those who are neurotic. Programmes should be organised for those high on neurotic tendencies to help teach them on how to respond to life stressors. The government and nongovernmental organization who are focused on young adults health and behaviour must make rigorous efforts towards the promotion of undergraduate students psychological health and discourage negative affects and risky behaviours. The mass media and social network platforms should also be used to as medium to advocate undergraduate student psychological health.

Also, the findings of the present study will be beneficial for religious leaders, teachers, parents, mental health professionals, and trainers. This finding could be useful in creating a positive environment, especially for undergraduate students in the course of their perilous period of personality development. And have contributed to the efforts to understand factors that are associated with well-being of undergraduate students. High Institutions counseling services should not ignore the role of forgiveness and personality factors on health and wellbeing. Subsequently, Psycho-educational programmes can be provided for students within the choice of counseling services to enhance happiness.

Further, Forgiveness enhances personal growth and reaps many positive benefits in terms of enhancing physical and psychological well-being and it's not only reduces the emotional distress accompanying with past hurts and offenses but enhanced more gratification and fulfillment in letting things go could be used to enhance optimal functioning in an individual. This finding also have significant implications as they help one to have an understanding of the effects of forgiveness on mental health which could further be pragmatic toward the cultivation and practicing of forgiveness. Moreover, these findings will facilitate the theorists to develop interventions and theories on enhancing forgiveness and increasing psychological wellbeing; both independently and by combining both variables together.

### **Limitations for Further Study**

One major shortcoming of the study was that the study is limited to only undergraduate students from a public university while private universities and master level students were not included in research because of limited time period. The sample should be taken from diverse type of population in order to improve the generalize ability of research.

Also, it is somewhat difficult to generalize the finding as sample included only 284 undergraduate students out of myriad of undergraduates in Enugu State.

### **Suggestions for Further Study**

Due to above limitations it was suggested that all the private universities and master level students should be included in further research. Other factor related to psychological wellbeing is also worth significant for studying personality factors and forgiveness. Future researchers



should endeavour to examine the determinants of personality factors and forgiveness in romantic and nonromantic cross-sex friendships in young adults. The researcher also, suggests that future researcher should increase the sample size of the current study in order to cross validate the outcome of the present study.

In conclusion, the finding elucidated that personality factors (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) predicted psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students.

Also, the finding explicated that forgiveness (Self, Others, Situations) observed to significantly predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduate students.

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