

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN RESENTMENT, PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AND FORGIVENESS IN INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION

ЗВ'ЯЗОК ОБРАЗИ, ПСИХОЛОГІЧНОЇ ПРУЖНОСТІ ТА ПРОЩЕННЯ В МІЖСОБОВІЙ ВЗАЄМОДІЇ

The article presents the results of a theoretical and empirical study of the peculiarities of the relationship between resentment, psychological resilience, and forgiveness in interpersonal interaction. The following research methods were used: the author's research questionnaire "Diagnostics of Attitudes Toward Forgiveness, Life and Military and Political Events"; the questionnaire "Scale of Deep Readiness for Forgiveness"; the methodology "Decision to Forgive Scale"; the methodology "Emotional Forgiveness Scale"; the methodology "Diagnostics of Interpersonal Unforgiveness in Close Relationships"; the author's methodology "Diagnostics of Psychological Resilience of Personality". The article presents the results of an empirical study involving 938 people, including the following target groups: male and female civilians, wives of active combatants, and internally displaced women. It is found that stronger negative correlations between resentment and psychological resilience are present in internally displaced women and wives of active combatants compared to other groups of respondents. The study revealed pronounced significant positive correlations between psychological resilience and emotional forgiveness. It was found that a particularly strong positive significant relationship between resentment and the desire for revenge is present in civilian men and internally displaced women. In all four groups of respondents, there were clearly expressed significant inverse correlations of resentment with emotional forgiveness. The more resentment is expressed by internally displaced women, wives of active combatants, civilian women, and civilian men, the less psychological resilience is expressed. In all four groups of respondents, there were clearly expressed significant positive correlations between psychological resilience and emotional forgiveness. The less resentment is expressed by civilian women, internally displaced women, wives of active combatants, and civilian men, the more they are characterized by readiness to forgive the situation and emotional forgiveness. In civilian women, internally displaced women, and wives of active combatants, there are clearly expressed significant inverse correlations between resentment and readiness for self-forgiveness, readiness for forgiveness of another in interpersonal interaction, and forgiveness by decision.

Key words: *resentment, forgiveness, emotional forgiveness, forgiveness by decision, readiness to forgive, psychological resilience, desire for revenge.*

У статті представлено результати теоретико-емпіричного дослідження особливостей зв'язку образи, психологічної пружності та прощення в міжособовій взаємодії. Застосовано такі методи дослідження, як авторська дослідницька анкета «Діагностика ставлення до прощення, життя і воєнно-політичних подій»; опитувальник «Шкала глибинної готовності до пробачення»; методика «Шкала рішення пробачити»; методика «Шкала емоційного прощення»; методика «Діагностика міжособового непростення в близьких стосунках»; авторська методика «Діагностика психологічної пружності особистості». Наведено результати емпіричного дослідження, в якому взяли участь 938 осіб, серед яких були такі цільові групи: цивільні особи чоловічої та жіночої статі, дружини активних учасників бойових дій, внутрішньо переміщені жінки. Встановлено, що сильніші негативні кореляційні зв'язки образи з психологічною пружністю наявні у внутрішньо переміщених жінок та дружин активних учасників бойових дій, порівняно з іншими групами респондентів. Виявлено явно виражені значущі позитивні кореляційні зв'язки психологічної пружності з емоційним прощенням. Виявлено, що особливо сильно виражений позитивний значущий зв'язок образи з прагненням до помсти наявний у цивільних чоловіків та внутрішньо переміщених жінок. В усіх чотирьох групах респондентів виявлено явно виражені значущі зворотні кореляційні зв'язки образи з емоційним прощенням. Чим більшою мірою у внутрішньо переміщених жінок, дружин активних учасників бойових дій, цивільних жінок, цивільних чоловіків виражена образа, тим меншою мірою у них виражена психологічна пружність. В усіх чотирьох групах респондентів виявлено явно виражені значущі позитивні кореляційні зв'язки психологічної пружності з емоційним прощенням. Чим меншою мірою у цивільних жінок, внутрішньо переміщених жінок, дружин активних учасників бойових дій, цивільних чоловіків виражена образа, тим більшою мірою вони характеризуються готовністю до прощення ситуації, емоційного прощення. У цивільних жінок, внутрішньо переміщених жінок, дружин активних учасників бойових дій виявлено явно виражені значущі зворотні кореляційні зв'язки образи з готовністю до самопрощення, готовністю до прощення іншого в міжособовій взаємодії і прощенням за рішенням.

Ключові слова: *образа, прощення, емоційне прощення, прощення за рішенням, готовність до прощення, психологічна пружність, прагнення до помсти.*

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Problem statement. Interest in the issues of forgiveness in interpersonal interactions and resentment is growing due to aspects of improving the quality of life, in particular personal and family, as well as psychological well-being.

Many people face significant challenges, including depression, anxiety, aggression, cognitive impairment, isolation, and insomnia.

Our consideration of forgiveness does not extend to crimes against humanity and other serious crimes that require just punishment.

Forgiveness in interpersonal interactions has gained particular importance due to its positive correlation with psychological well-being [4; 26; 40; 43].

The problem of the relationship between resentment and forgiveness has attracted the attention of researchers, especially in the context of psychological resilience and psychotherapeutic practice. Certain psychotherapeutic approaches demonstrate the benefits of forgiveness in interpersonal interaction, such as acceptance and responsibility therapy, which focuses on trauma. Some psychotherapeutic approaches focus directly on promoting forgiveness [3; 13; 18].

Over time, the pain caused by a situational insult can ease or intensify, which determines the level of life satisfaction [31].

Studying the characteristics of resentment is an important source of understanding the processes of forgiveness and unforgiveness. Determining the specifics of the relationship between resentment, readiness for forgiveness, and psychological resilience is an essential source of understanding psychological well-being.

The purpose of the article: determining the characteristics of the relationship between resentment, forgiveness in interpersonal interaction, and psychological resilience.

Presentation of the main research material. There are very different views among scholars on the conceptualization of forgiveness.

Scholars R. Enright, E. Gassin, C. Wu [15], T. Baskin, R. Enright [7], E. Worthington, N. Wade [43], S. Freedman, T. Zarifkar [18] suggest that forgiveness is distinct from certain other related constructs, such as pardon, indulgence, apology, forgetting, or reconciliation.

Forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciliation, trust, or release [14].

Forgiveness is characterized by a prosocial change in motivation, in which a person's behavior is conditioned by the presence of suppression of destructive motivation [24]. According to M. McCullough and his colleagues [25], forgiveness is a set of motivational changes that make a person, first, less motivated to take revenge against a partner who violates the relationship; second, less motivated to maintain alienation from the offender; and third, more motivated to reconcile and benevolently treat the offender, despite his or her abusive actions.

Forgiveness without necessarily forgetting or justifying the offense involves intentionally changing how the victim thinks, feels, and acts toward the offender [34]. Forgiveness is defined as the willingness to give up just resentment, condemnation, or revenge against an offender [38].

Some scholars define forgiveness as a state caused by the psychological process of liberation from resentment, negative thoughts, in particular condemnation of the transgression, and replacing them with positive emotions and thoughts [8]. Forgiveness is a conscious decision by an individual to let go of negative emotions and the desire for revenge [16]. L. Thompson and colleagues [39] defined forgiveness as the release of negative attitudes towards the offender. Forgiveness is an internal act of renouncing anger, resentment, and the desire for revenge against the offender [6].

Researcher F. Hidalgo [20] suggests that forgiveness is defined as the willingness to give up one's right to be offended, to hold negative judgments, and to behave indifferently toward the offender. In forgiveness, a person overcomes negative affect, harsh judgments, and negative behavior toward the person who caused the offense, and replaces them with more positive emotions, positive thoughts, and positive behavior [35].

S. Amaya [5] views forgiveness as a process of emotional change and overcoming resentment.

Forgiveness involves the willingness to see the resentment and the offender in a broader context, as well as the release of negative emotions such as anger, hatred, sadness, resentment, etc. [40; 43]. J. North [30] believes that forgiveness should be viewed as overcoming negative effects and judgments about the offender.

In general, it can be stated that forgiveness is usually associated by researchers with a decrease in motivation for avoidance, vengeful behavior, and an increase in motivation for benevolent behavior towards the offender. It is advisable to consider forgiveness as a dynamic process that occurs in the context of social interaction.

According to the scientist R. Enright [14], for forgiveness there must be an awareness of actual or, sometimes even, illusory insult, damage, pain. N. Verbin [41] notes that forgiveness is impossible if the victim does not experience humiliation and insults – due to both excessively low self-esteem and excessively high.

It is necessary to distinguish between situational resentment as a state and resentment as a stable personality trait.

A. Buss, A. Durkee [9] define resentment as envy and hatred towards others for real and imagined actions. For some scholars, resentment represents hostile vengeful moods [19; 29]. Other researchers understand resentment as a form of anger that does not necessarily include a motivation for revenge [22]; the experience of resentment appears as a factor of adaptability [2].

At the same time, some researchers consider resentment as a form of emotional protest in response to the wrongness of an act and to confirm the moral significance of the victim [21]. Resentment is also defined as an infantile reaction of an individual or an entire social group to allegedly unfair treatment by significant others, to their action or inaction in response to neglect and humiliation [1].

In the process of forgiveness, the emotional trauma that arose as a result of the offense tends to be appropriately transformed [27]. In our opinion, the offense should be considered as a negative emotional state, experienced as injustice and helplessness, arising from the inconsistency of expectations and the actual behavior of the subjects of interaction, in situations that have personal significance.

Offensiveness as a stable personality trait is characterized by a tendency to experience offense even in situations with minimal inconsistency of expectations and the offender's actual behavior. Unlike situational offense, offensiveness as a personality trait has a more significant impact on interpersonal relationships.

Our empirical study was conducted during 2023–2025. Our empirical study involved male civilians (226 males: 119 young and 107 middle-aged); female civilians (372 females: 198 young and 174 middle-aged); wives of active combatants (114 females: 58 young and 56 middle-aged); and female internally displaced persons (226 females: 117 young and 109 middle-aged).

We used the following research methods: 1) the author's research questionnaire "Diagnostics of Attitudes Toward Forgiveness, Life, and Military and Political Events"; 2) the questionnaire "Scale of Deep Readiness

for Forgiveness" (Thompson et al., 2005); 3) the methodology "Decision to Forgive Scale" (Davis et al., 2015); 4) the Emotional Forgiveness Scale (Worthington et al., 2007); 5) the methodology "Diagnosis of interpersonal unforgiveness in close relationships" (McCullough et al., 1998); 6) the author's methodology "Diagnostics of Psychological Resilience of Personality".

Based on the correlation analysis using Spearman's correlation coefficient, we identified the peculiarities of the relationship between resentment and psychological resilience, the decision to forgive, emotional forgiveness, readiness for self-forgiveness, forgiveness of others in interpersonal interaction, and forgiveness of the situation in civilian men and women, wives of active combatants, and internally displaced women. The results are presented in Table 1.

Internally displaced women, wives of active combatants, civilian women, and civilian men showed clearly expressed significant negative correlations of psychological resilience with resentment (respectively, p ranged from -0,31 to -0,50, $p < 0,01$), which indicate that the more resentment they have, the less psychological resilience they have. Such correlations are stronger among internally displaced women and wives of active combatants compared to other groups of respondents.

At the same time, clearly expressed significant positive correlations between psychological resilience and emotional forgiveness were found in all four groups of respondents (respectively p ranging from 0,30 to 0,33, $p < 0,01$) (see Table 2).

Psychological resilience is a dynamic construct that changes in response to contextual changes.

In our opinion, psychological resilience should be considered as an integrative property of the individ-

Table 1

Correlation analysis: the connection between resentment and psychological resilience and forgiveness

Indicators	Civilian men	Civilian women	Wives of active combatants	Internally displaced women
Willingness to forgive oneself	-0,227*	-0,341**	-0,336**	-0,317**
Willingness to forgive another in interpersonal interactions	-0,201*	-0,362**	-0,318**	-0,305**
Willingness to forgive the situation	-0,323**	-0,349**	-0,329**	-0,332**
Forgiveness by decision	-0,241*	-0,358**	-0,331**	-0,347**
Emotional forgiveness	-0,328**	-0,402**	-0,413**	-0,442**
Psychological resilience	-0,307**	-0,353**	-0,438**	-0,502**
The desire for revenge	0,673**	0,453**	0,299**	0,543**

Note: * – significance level $p < 0,05$; ** – significance level $p < 0,01$.

Table 2

Correlation analysis: the relationship between psychological resilience and decisional and emotional forgiveness

Indicators	Civilian men	Civilian women	Wives of active combatants	Internally displaced women
Forgiveness by decision	0,199*	0,283*	0,261*	0,224*
Emotional forgiveness	0,304**	0,312**	0,329**	0,332**

Note: * – significance level $p < 0,05$; ** – significance level $p < 0,01$.

ual, which is manifested in the ability to maintain a stable level of psychological and physical functioning in critical situations, to overcome such situations without persistent disorders, and to successfully adapt to adverse changes.

In civilian women, internally displaced women, wives of active combatants, and civilian men, clearly expressed significant inverse correlations between resentment and willingness to forgive the situation were found (respectively p ranging from -0,32 to -0,35, $p < 0,01$).

In the three groups of respondents – civilian women, internally displaced women, and wives of active combatants – there were clearly expressed significant inverse correlations of resentment with readiness for self-forgiveness (respectively, p ranged from -0,32 to -0,34, $p < 0,01$), readiness to forgive another in interpersonal interaction (respectively, p ranges from -0,31 to -0,36, $p < 0,01$) and forgiveness by decision (respectively, p ranges from -0,33 to -0,36, $p < 0,01$).

Significant negative correlations between resentment and emotional forgiveness are most pronounced (see Table 1). In internally displaced women, wives of active combatants, civilian women, and civilian men, there were clearly expressed significant inverse correlations of resentment with emotional forgiveness (respectively, p ranged from -0,33 to -0,44, $p < 0,01$).

In our opinion, by distinguishing between decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness, researchers emphasize the different roles of emotions and cognitions in these processes.

Decisional forgiveness is viewed by scholars as an act of will and an intentional choice. Forgiveness by decision refers to the behavioral intention to eliminate revenge [42] or to resume behavior to maintain the relationship while maintaining a personal dislike of the offender [11; 25].

Decisional forgiveness is also seen as the cognitive release of resentment, bitterness, and the need for revenge and includes an intellectual dimension [17] and modifies a person's intentions about their behavior toward the offender, including the motivation for revenge and avoidance [16]. Decisional forgiveness controls people's behavioral intentions, while emotional forgiveness replaces negative, unrelenting emotions with positive, other-oriented emotions [12]. Forgiveness by decision is defined by scholars as a statement of behavioral intentions aimed at reducing negative behavior and, if possible and appropriate, restoring positive behavior toward the offender. Nevertheless, even when making a sincere decision to forgive, a person may still feel emotionally unrelenting, such as angry, outraged, and resentful. Some researchers point out that forgiveness by decision, while it may reduce hostility and lead to reconciliation, does not necessarily reduce stress responses [42].

Emotional forgiveness is mainly viewed by scholars as the replacement of negative emotions with positive ones, such as empathy, love, and compassion

[42]. Emotional forgiveness is characterized by an emotional intrapersonal process that results in the replacement of negative, unrelenting emotions with more positive, other-oriented ones [43].

Emotional forgiveness involves rethinking the offensive event. A key characteristic of emotional forgiveness is the replacement of negative emotional experiences with positive ones towards the offender.

Our study also found that in all four groups of respondents, resentment is significantly positively related to the desire for revenge (respectively, p ranges from 0,30 to 0,67, $p < 0,01$). This positive significant relationship is especially pronounced among civilian men ($p = 0,67$, $p < 0,01$) and internally displaced women ($p = 0,54$, $p < 0,01$) (see Table 1).

Resentment can cause distrust and alienation. Foreign studies emphasize that insults most often lead to distancing and minimizing contact with the offender.

Although resentment is not always toxic, it can transform into intense anger and hostility. A stronger resentment can lead to a desire to take revenge and punish the person responsible for the offense. It has been found that often even close people in a situation of resentment contribute to the escalation of aggression and violence [23]. The offended person has a pronounced social isolation and revenge attitude, which contribute to the preservation of resentment and prevent forgiveness [36].

When a person forgives, he or she renounces the offense and stops letting the past offense influence his or her attitude toward the offending person. It takes courage to get rid of the intense resentment caused by an injustice [28]. Forgiveness allows us to get rid of resentment and hatred [37]. Once the hurt is removed, forgiveness can follow [33].

The ability to forgive yourself for past hurts can lead to a decrease in shame and guilt, and can increase kindness and compassion for yourself [10].

Some studies have shown that resentment usually persists until complete forgiveness, which may never occur [32]. It can be assumed that forgiveness is characterized by its own specific mechanisms.

According to our research, the more pronounced the level of resentment, the stronger the individual desire for revenge, and the lower the level of readiness to forgive. In our opinion, a decrease in resentment and the desire for revenge will increase the motivation to forgive. Emotional forgiveness is positively and significantly associated with psychological resilience, as well as with the individual's ability to overcome resentment and revenge.

Conclusions from the conducted research.

Thus, in different groups of respondents, differences were found in the structure of correlations between resentment and psychological resilience, the desire for revenge, forgiveness by decision, emotional forgiveness, readiness for self-forgiveness, readiness for forgiveness of another, and readiness for forgiveness of the situation.

The more resentment is expressed by internally displaced women, wives of active combatants, civilian women, and civilian men, the less psychological resilience they have. Stronger negative correlations between resentment and psychological resilience are observed among internally displaced women and wives of active combatants compared to other groups of respondents.

In all four groups of respondents, there are clearly expressed significant positive correlations between psychological resilience and emotional forgiveness.

The less resentment civilian women, internally displaced women, wives of active combatants, and civilian men have, the more they are characterized by readiness to forgive the situation and emotional forgiveness.

In all four groups of respondents, resentment is significantly positively associated with the desire for revenge. This positive significant relationship is especially pronounced in civilian men and internally displaced women.

In the future, we plan to continue researching the psychological factors of emotional forgiveness and forgiveness by decision.

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