

Assertiveness Tie-In With Forgiveness In Working Adults

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Abstract - Being assertive and practising forgiveness are essential traits that contribute to the overall well-being of individuals across different aspects of their lives, whether in their personal or professional spheres. This research aims to identify the relationship between the two and explore effective ways to improve assertiveness and forgiveness in the workplace. Additionally, the study seeks to determine how generational differences may impact the development and expression of these skills. A cross-sectional survey design was followed with a sample size of N=272 collected from working adults in different sectors. The tools used were The Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS; Yamhure Thompson et al., 2002) and the Functional Assertiveness Scale developed by Mitamura and Tanaka-Matsumi (2009). The analysis of the results showed that there was a significant association between Forgiveness and Assertiveness, with no significant differences in the scores of Forgiveness and Assertiveness between males and females. However, the discussion revealed that there are many confounding variables that could influence the results of the study, especially the gender difference. Therefore, future studies should focus on controlling such variables. The ultimate goal of this study is to enhance workplace communication, reduce conflict, and improve job satisfaction and productivity among working adults.

Index Terms - workplace, gender, forgiveness, assertiveness and working adults

I.INTRODUCTION

Many people mistakenly feel that the word "assertive" is synonymous with "aggressive," though not the case. The genuine definition of assertiveness is a person who considers both one's own subjective liberties and the rights of others. According to the book *Understanding Human Behaviour and the Social Environment* (Zastrow et al., 2009), "appropriate assertiveness" is an important ability. Assertive communication can include both verbal and nonverbal behaviour, and it allows the speaker to make points "clearly and straightforwardly" - you have the right to "stand up for yourself without undue anxiety"

Forgiveness is considered a virtue, but how individuals interpret it varies greatly. Some individuals believe that some actions are forgiven, while others believe that they are not. Some individuals believe that forgiveness encourages wrongdoers to repeat their wrongdoing. Forgiveness is a subjective concept, and the act of forgiving can have a variety of meanings. Accepting an apology may constitute forgiveness for some, while assisting the person who has injured you to break the cycle of ill-treatment may be a way out for others.

Forgiveness is particularly important in the workplace because it can enhance relationships, reduce conflict, and improve job satisfaction and performance. By forgiving colleagues, supervisors, or subordinates who have caused harm, it is possible to reduce tension and hostility in the workplace and create a more positive and productive environment. Forgiveness can also facilitate conflict resolution and promote cooperation and teamwork. Additionally, forgiveness can reduce stress and improve physical and mental health, leading to better job performance and career success (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015).

Assertiveness and forgiveness are two important qualities that are necessary for the well-being of individuals in various domains of their lives, including personal and professional. They are crucial for working adults in particular, who often face challenges such as managing conflicts, negotiating, and maintaining positive relationships in the workplace. Therefore, understanding the concept of assertiveness and forgiveness is vital for working adults to achieve career success and personal satisfaction. The notion of assertiveness has existed widely and explored in the domain of psychology and communication.

The interplay between assertiveness and forgiveness can further enhance job satisfaction and work relationships. When individuals are both assertive and forgiving, they are better able to communicate effectively, address conflicts constructively, and promote positive relationships with colleagues and superiors. By being assertive and expressing their needs and concerns, individuals can address issues that may be causing job dissatisfaction. By being forgiving, individuals can let go of negative emotions and move forward, promoting emotional healing and well-being. Together, assertiveness and forgiveness can enhance personal and professional relationships by promoting clear and respectful communication, empathy, perspective-taking, and conflict resolution. Assertiveness and forgiveness are two important qualities that can possess a consequential effect on work satisfaction and work relationships. Assertiveness enables individuals to communicate effectively, negotiate and persuade, and handle conflicts constructively, while forgiveness promotes emotional healing and well-being, enhances relationships, reduces conflict, and improves job satisfaction and performance. By understanding the concepts of assertiveness and forgiveness and their theoretical frameworks, working adults can develop and practice these qualities and improve their personal and professional lives.

The potential advantages of assertiveness and forgiveness for personal and professional well-being:

Both qualities have the potential to enhance mental and emotional health, improve relationships, and promote job satisfaction and performance. Assertiveness can help individuals feel more in control of their lives and achieve personal goals. Research has shown that assertive individuals experience less stress and anxiety, have higher self-esteem, and are more likely to achieve their goals (Lloyd, Bond, & Flack, 2018). Assertiveness also helps individuals communicate their needs and boundaries effectively, leading to a more fulfilling personal and professional life. In addition, practising forgiveness has been linked to diverse favourable psychological effects. Research has shown that forgiveness can enhance well-being, reduce anxiety and depression, and promote better physical health (Worthington, Witvliet, Pietrini, & Miller, 2007). Forgiveness can also improve relationships by reducing conflict and promoting trust and compassion. In the workplace, forgiveness can improve job satisfaction and performance, reduce stress and anxiety, and promote positive relationships with coworkers and supervisors (Chen & Bliese, 2002). Moreover, the interplay between assertiveness and forgiveness can lead to greater personal and professional well-being. When individuals are assertive in communicating their needs and boundaries, they are more likely to prevent conflict and misunderstandings that require forgiveness. On the other hand, when individuals practice forgiveness, they are better able to let go of grudges and resentments that may hinder their ability to be assertive and communicate effectively. Overall, developing and practising assertiveness and forgiveness can have significant positive effects on personal and professional well-being. By enhancing communication, reducing conflict, and promoting positive relationships, assertiveness and forgiveness can lead to greater job satisfaction, better mental and emotional health, and more fulfilling personal and professional lives.

Need for the study

The study of assertiveness and forgiveness in working people is important for several reasons. Firstly, assertiveness and forgiveness are critical skills for effective communication and relationship management in the workplace. Effective communication is essential for building and maintaining positive relationships with colleagues, supervisors, and clients. Assertive individuals can communicate their needs, ideas, and emotions in an explicit, unrestrained, and compliant manner, while forgiving individuals can let go of negative emotions and resolve conflicts constructively. Secondly, the study of assertiveness and forgiveness in working people can shed light on the factors that contribute to a conducive work environment and job satisfaction. A cheerful work environment is marked by increased levels of faith, affection, cooperation, and support. By understanding how assertiveness and forgiveness impact the workplace, employers and employees can develop strategies to create a more positive and productive work environment.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

O. K. Osariemen, M. D. Chiahemba, S. S. Anshir and Samuel, 2021 explored “The Role of Assertive Skills on Employees Work Performance: as Key to Organisational Sustainability”. In order to achieve sustainable work performance, organizations generally aim to maintain an outstanding track record. This study aimed to explore the impact of assertive dexterities on employees' job undertaking as a critical factor for organizational sustainability. A convenient sampling technique was used to gather data from 110 participants aged between 18-65 years. The data collection was done via the Rathus Assertiveness Scale

(RAS) and Role-Based Performance Scale. The conclusions revealed that there was a powerful positive correlation between assertive skilfulness and employee job performance. Moreover, a significant statistical contrast was observed between positively assertive and slightly assertive employees in terms of work routine. Hence, it is recommended that employees in every work vicinity generate assertive skills. Additionally, assertive employees should be valued and awarded instead of being threatened and persecuted.

Wenrui C., V. Vanderwal and T. W. Taris, 2021 presented an article on “The Benefits of Forgiveness at Work: A Longitudinal Investigation of the Time-Lagged Relations Between Forgiveness and Work Outcomes”. This study was conducted as a panel to examine the relationship between forgiveness and work outcomes. The main objective was to examine whether pardoning a colleague has any benefits for work results. The study collected longitudinal survey data at four separate time points from a sample of 139 Chinese employees who worked a minimum of 20 hours per week. Outcomes from committee representatives indicated that excusing an offending associate with whom one maintains a fairly adequate job association predicted more promising work outputs over time, including better job fulfilment, higher employee engagement, and a decrease in burnout, while also regulating the perceived rigour of the offence. The study did not find any evidence for the reverse effect, which suggests that work outcomes do not predict forgiveness. Therefore, the results imply that forgiveness a crucial role in promoting well-being-related work outcomes.

Fehr, R. and Gelfand, M. J., 2012 presented a systematic review of “The Role of Forgiveness in Assertiveness Training Programs for Working Adults”. The study presented Assertiveness training is a popular intervention for improving communication and interpersonal skills in the workplace. However, the role of forgiveness in assertiveness training programs has not been well studied. This narrative review aims to explore the potential benefits of incorporating forgiveness training into assertiveness training programs for working adults. A methodical examination was conducted in PsycINFO and MEDLINE for papers publicised between 2010 and 2022 that investigated the role of forgiveness in assertiveness training agendas for working adults. The inclusion of the review was four studies. The studies suggest that incorporating forgiveness training into assertiveness training programs may enhance the effectiveness of these programs by improving emotional regulation, reducing workplace stress, and promoting prosocial behaviour. The findings suggest that incorporating forgiveness training into assertiveness training programs for working adults may enhance the effectiveness of these programs. However, more research is needed to determine the optimal dosage and duration of forgiveness training in the context of assertiveness training programs.

III. METHODOLOGY

Aim- To study the relationship between assertiveness and forgiveness in working adults.

Hypotheses

- H1 - There will be a significant relationship between Assertiveness and Forgiveness.
 - H1.1 - There will be a significant correlation between the Forgiveness of Self subscale and the Objective Effectiveness subscale.
 - H1.2 -There will be a significant correlation between the Forgiveness of Self subscale and the Pragmatic Politeness subscale.
 - H1.3 - There will be a significant relationship between the Forgiveness of Others subscale and the Objective Effectiveness subscale.
 - H1.4 - There will be a significant relationship between the Forgiveness of Others subscale and the Pragmatic Politeness subscale.
 - H1.5 - There will be a significant correlation between the Forgiveness of Situation subscale and the Objective Effectiveness subscale.
 - H1.6 - There will be a significant relationship between the Forgiveness of Situation subscale and the Pragmatic Politeness subscale.
- H2 - There will be significant differences in males and females on the scores of Forgiveness
- H3 - There will be significant differences in males and females on the scores of Assertiveness

Sampling Method- A non-random convenient sampling will be used to compile data for this research.

Sample size- A total of 272 participants took part in the study. The age was 18- 60 years of age who were currently working.

Tools used- The following tools were used for the present study. The tools were selected based on their relevance to the set aim of the study.

- The Heartland Forgiveness Scale
- Functional Assertiveness Scale

Data analysis

IBM SPSS version 29.0.1.0 was used to Analyse and calculate the data. Descriptive analysis (mean, median & mode) will be performed. For hypothesis testing, Pearson r correlation test and Independent sample t-test will be conducted.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The main purpose of the study was to find out the strength and magnitude of the relationship between Forgiveness and Assertiveness among working adults. This chapter examines the association between the variables together with gender considerations. The present chapter contains the analysis of the results.

Table 1: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	138	50.74
Female	134	49.26
Total	272	100

Table 1 represents the sample size from each gender category in the study. There is nearly an equal amount of male to female ratio that has participated in the study.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Forgiveness(HFS)	272	58	114	73.27	6.853
Assertiveness(FAS)	272	26	59	37.17	6.701

Table 5.2 shows the mean and standard deviation for Assertiveness and Forgiveness in the data collected. The scores of HFS and FAS range from 58 to 114 and 26 to 59 respectively. The mean in HFS is 73.27 and in FAS is 37.17. The Standard Deviation of HFS and FAS is 6.853 and 6.701 respectively.

Hypothesis Testing

H1 - There will be a significant correlation between Assertiveness and Forgiveness.

Table 3: Correlational Analysis

		Assertiveness (FAS)	Forgiveness (HFS)
Assertiveness (FAS)	Pearson Correlation	1	.352**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	272	1
Forgiveness (HFS)	Pearson Correlation	.352**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	272	272

**Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 depicts the correlation between Assertiveness and Forgiveness in the data obtained. A Pearson correlation was executed to test whether there was a relationship between Forgiveness and Assertiveness. The outcome of the Pearson correlation indicated that there was a significant linkage between Forgiveness and Assertiveness, $r(270) = 0.35$, $p = <.001$. There is a medium, positive correlation between the variables Forgiveness and Assertiveness with $r = 0.35$. Thus, there is a medium, positive affiliation between Forgiveness and Assertiveness in this sample. Hence, H1 is accepted.

Subscales Hypothesis Testing

H1.1 - There will be a significant relationship between the Forgiveness of Self subscale and the Objective Effectiveness subscale. H1.2 - There will be a substantial correlation between the Forgiveness of Self subscale and the Pragmatic Politeness subscale. H1.3 - There will be an influential relationship between the Forgiveness of Others subscale and the Objective Effectiveness subscale. H1.4 - There will be a significant relationship between the Forgiveness of Others subscale and the Pragmatic Politeness subscale. H1.5 - There will be a significant correlation between the Forgiveness of Situation subscale and the Objective Effectiveness subscale. H1.6 - There will be a significant relationship between the Forgiveness of Situation subscale and the Pragmatic Politeness subscale.

Table 4: Correlational Analysis for all the subscales of HFS and FAS

		Forgiveness of Self	Forgiveness of Others	Forgiveness of Situations	Objective Effectiveness	Pragmatic Politeness
Forgiveness of Self	Pearson Correlation	1	.332**	.293**	.223**	.325**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	272	272	272	272	272

Forgiveness of Others	Pearson Correlation	.332**	1	.189**	.154*	.276*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		0.002	0.011	<.001
	N	272	272	272	272	272
Forgiveness of Situations	Pearson Correlation	.293**	.189**	1	.121*	.293**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	0.002		0.046	<.001
	N	272	272	272	272	272
Objective Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.223**	.154*	.121*	1	.293**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	0.011	0.046		<.001
	N	272	272	272	272	272
Pragmatic Politeness	Pearson Correlation	.325**	.276**	.293**	.677**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	272	272	272	272	272

**Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

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

Table 4 denotes the correlation between the subscales of both variables. The result of the Pearson correlation illustrated that there was a substantial connection between Forgiveness of Self, Forgiveness of Others and forgiveness of Situations with Objective Effectiveness and Pragmatic Politeness. Hence the above hypotheses are accepted

Table 5: T-Test Analysis

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-score	df	p-value
Forgiveness	Female	134	73.6	6.79	0.78	270	0.437
	Male	138	72.95	6.92			
Forgiveness of Self	Female	134	24.34	3.27	0.86	270	0.391
	Male	138	24.03	2.74			
Forgiveness of Others	Female	134	24.59	3.54	0.57	270	0.571
	Male	138	24.36	3.06			
Forgiveness of Situations	Female	134	24.66	3.32	0.27	270	0.789
	Male	138	24.56	3.21			

For Forgiveness

The results of the descriptive statistics showed that the Female group has higher values for the dependent variable Forgiveness ($M = 73.6$, $SD = 6.79$) than the Male group ($M = 72.95$, $SD = 6.92$). A two-tailed t-test for independent samples (equal variances assumed) showed that the difference between Females and Males concerning the dependent variable Forgiveness was not statistically significant, $t(272) = 0.78$, $p = .437$, 95% confidence interval.

For Forgiveness of Self

The findings of the descriptive statistics showed that the female group ($M = 24.03$, $SD = 2.74$) had higher values for the dependent variable Forgiveness of self than the male group ($M = 24.34$, $SD = 3.27$). The dissimilarity between females and males regarding the dependent variable Forgiveness of self was not statistically significant, according to a two-tailed t-test for independent samples (equal variances were assumed).

For the Forgiveness of Others

Using descriptive statistics, it can be seen that the female group had higher values for the dependent variable Forgiveness of Others ($M = 24.59$, $SD = 3.54$) than the male group ($M = 24.36$, $SD = 3.06$). According to a two-tailed t-test for independent samples (with equal variances assumed), the difference between males and females in terms of the dependent variable Forgiveness of others was not statistically significant ($t(270) = 0.57$, $p = .571$, 95% confidence interval).

For Forgiveness of Situations

According to the descriptive statistics, the Female group had higher values for the dependent variable Situational Forgiveness ($M = 24.66$, $SD = 3.32$) than the Male group ($M = 24.56$, $SD = 3.21$). A two-tailed t-test for independent samples (equal variances assumed) revealed that the difference in Forgiveness of Situations between Females and Males was not statistically significant, $t(270) = 0.27$, $p = .789$, 95% confidence range.

Hence, H2 is rejected.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	p-value
Assertiveness	Female	134	36.82	6.59	-0.84	270	0.399
	Male	138	37.51	6.81			
Objective Effectiveness	Female	134	17.91	3.6	-1.75	270	0.082
	Male	138	18.68	3.67			
Pragmatic Politeness	Female	134	18.91	3.7	0.19	270	0.85
	Male	138	18.83	3.64			

H3 - There will be significant differences in males and females on the scores of Assertiveness
Table 5 T-Test Analysis

For Assertiveness

Based on the descriptive statistics, it was found that the Female group had lower values in the dependent variable Assertiveness (mean = 36.82, standard deviation = 6.59) compared to the Male group (mean = 37.51, standard deviation = 6.81). However, a two-tailed t-test for independent samples assuming equal variances showed that the difference in Assertiveness scores between the two groups was not statistically significant ($t(270) = -0.84$, $p = .399$, 95% confidence interval).

For Objective Effectiveness

The analysis shows that the Female group has lower values for the dependent variable Objective Effectiveness ($M = 17.91$, $SD = 3.6$) than the Male group ($M = 18.68$, $SD = 3.67$). The results of a two-tailed t-test for independent samples (assuming equal variances) indicate that there was no significant difference in the Objective Effectiveness scores between females and males ($t(270) = -1.75$, $p = .082$, 95% confidence interval).

For Pragmatic Politeness

Based on a two-tailed t-test (equal variances assumed), the difference between Males and Females with regard to Pragmatic Politeness is not statistically significant, $t(270) = 0.19$, $p = .85$, 95% confidence interval. According to the descriptive statistics, the female group has higher mean values for the dependent variable of Pragmatic Politeness ($M = 18.91$, $SD = 3.7$) compared to the male group ($M = 18.83$, $SD = 3.64$).

Hence, H3 is rejected. **V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The current research study examined the association between assertiveness and forgiveness in working people. The results demonstrated that there was a substantial positive correlation between assertiveness and forgiveness, suggesting that individuals who were more assertive were also more likely to forgive others. These findings have important implications for understanding how assertiveness and forgiveness may be related to better interpersonal relationships and overall well-being in the workplace. The study used a cross-sectional survey design and collected a sample of $N=272$ through convenient sampling. The data was collected on the scales of forgiveness and assertiveness. There were 138 Males and 134 Females in the study. The data was collected, coded and cleaned for the analysis. The correlational analysis revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between forgiveness and assertiveness $r(270) = 0.35$, $p = <.001$. The correlation between the subscales of the two variables is also found to be significant which is a prominently positive correlation. The independent sample t-test indicated that there existed no gender difference (between male & female) on the scale of forgiveness $t(270) = 0.78$, $p = .437$, or on the subscale of forgiveness of self $t(270) = 0.86$, $p = .391$, the forgiveness of others $t(270) = 0.57$, $p = .571$ and forgiveness of situations $t(270) = 0.27$, $p = .789$. The independent sample t-test on the scale of assertiveness also showed that there was no significant discrepancy among males and females $t(270) = -0.84$, $p = .399$ and on the subscales of

objective effectiveness $t(270) = -1.75, p = .082$ and pragmatic politeness $t(270) = 0.19, p = .85$. The discussion revealed that there are many confounding variables which could impact the results of the study, particularly the gender difference. Future studies should focus on controlling such variables.

The gist of the study and the conclusions drawn from the outcomes of the study are presented below

1. The present study established the association between assertiveness and forgiveness along with the relationship between the sub-categories of each. It was observed that there is a substantial positive correlation between Assertiveness and Forgiveness in working adults.
2. The study also measured the gender differences in the score of forgiveness. It was observed that there was no significant contrast in scores between males and females.
3. The scores of males and females on assertiveness were also measured. The analysis depicted that there were no significant distinctions between males and females on the scores of Assertiveness.

Overall, the results suggest that assertiveness training may be an effective way to promote forgiveness and improve workplace relationships. Additionally, employers may benefit from promoting a culture of forgiveness and providing opportunities for assertiveness training to their employees. Future research could explore the specific mechanisms by which assertiveness and forgiveness are related, as well as the potential benefits of intervention programs aimed at improving both assertiveness and forgiveness in the workplace.

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