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Cognitive and emotional predictors of episodic and dispositional forgiveness

Abstract: The study examined the importance of cognitive (positive orientation, basic hope) and emotional (positive and negative affectivity, emotional control) variables for state and trait forgiveness. One hundred and thirty nine participants completed six inventories in Polish version: HFS (Thompson et al., 2005), TRIM (McCullough et al., 1998), P-Scale (Caprara et al., 2012), BHI-12 (Trzebiński & Zięba, 2003a), SUPIN (Polish version of PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), CECS (Watson & Greer, 1983). Results showed that dispositional forgiveness (general and positive) was associated with cognitive and emotional predictors, whereas episodic forgiveness primarily with certain emotional variables. In addition, the results indicated that emotional predictors merely participate in the process of reducing unforgiveness, whereas cognitive and emotional variables were shown to be necessary for full forgiveness.

Key words: emotional control, positive orientation, forgiveness, basic hope, affectivity

Introduction

Attention paid to forgiveness in the recent two or three decades has resulted from the fact that not only does forgiveness restore broken relationships, but also improves one's well-being. When people forgive, they abandon their negative emotions, thoughts, and behaviors toward the transgressor (Enright, 1996; McCullough et al., 1997; Rye & Pargament, 2002), and they relieve themselves of psychological pain (Williamson & Gonzales, 2007). What is more, they make a decision to activate the process of changing their perspective, vision and feelings, which may lead to positive experiences (Worthington et al., 2007; Toussaint & Friedman, 2009). Therefore, some scholars (Worthington & Wade, 1999; Rye et al., 2001; Fincham, Beach, & Davila, 2004) have emphasized that full forgiveness has two sides: negative (a reduction of painful experience and malevolent reactions) and positive (an increase in love-based emotions and actions).

Although forgiveness brings many benefits to individuals and their relationships with others, people differ in the propensity to forgive their offenders. To promote effective forgiveness, it is important to expand knowledge about its predicting factors (Wade et al., 2014), the more so that the researchers have pointed out that forgiveness might

be seen as a state response or as a disposition (Worthington et al., 2007).

The distinction between episodic and dispositional forgiveness has been well established in the literature and methodological approach inasmuch as these two types are moderately or insignificantly correlated (e.g. Thompson et al., 2005; Eaton, Struthers, & Santelli, 2006; Drinnon & Jones, 2009) and related to different variables (e.g. Allemand et al., 2007; Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010; Riek & Mania, 2012). That is because forgiveness in a particular situation involves factors that are both intrinsic (among others dispositional forgiveness) and extrinsic (specific contextual aspects) to individuals (Koutsos, Wertheim, & Kornblum, 2008), while disposition to forgive, apart from multiple circumstances, depends primarily on personality characteristics (Paleari, Regalia, & Fincham, 2009). Therefore, it is legitimate to state that episodic and dispositional forgiveness have different antecedents and consequences for the functioning of an individual (Allemand et al., 2007).

Episodic forgiveness is defined as a single act of forgiveness for a particular offence within a concrete interpersonal context (Paleari, Regalia, & Fincham, 2009). It can be more specifically understood as a motivational change whereby one becomes less motivated to avoid the offender and seek vengeance, and more motivated to act pro-socially

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toward the offender (McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; Fincham, Hall, & Beach, 2006). Many situational factors, such as: offense severity, attribution of responsibility and blame, perceived intentionality, positive offender actions (e.g. apologising), passage of time, victim-offender closeness, and valued relationship are of key importance for episodic forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002; McCullough, Fincham, & Tsang, 2003; Brose et al., 2005; Koutsos, Wertheim, & Kornblum, 2008). However, personality-level determinants are not negligible. Empathy (McCullough et al., 1998), religiousness (Rye et al., 2001), neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness (Rye et al., 2001; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002; Brose et al., 2005) and other variables are significant predictors of people's forgiveness for a particular harmful interpersonal event.

On the other hand, dispositional forgiveness (called forgivingness; Roberts, 1995) is defined as the tendency to forgive others regardless of time, relationships and situations (Berry et al., 2001; Brown, 2003). Furthermore, scholars have pointed out that forgiving individuals have a more adaptive personality profile (Hill, Allemand, & Heffernan, 2013). This has been confirmed in correlations between forgivingness and personality traits (Mullet, Neto, & Rivière, 2005). For instance, several studies have shown that trait forgiveness is positively related to agreeableness and conscientiousness (Berry et al., 2001; Kamat, Jones, & Lawler-Row, 2006), whereas negatively related to extraversion and neuroticism (Allemand et al., 2008; Maltby, Day, & Barber, 2004). Consequently, many researchers have suggested that the tendency to forgive is associated with predictors which facilitate advantageous changes. For instance, forgivingness is positively associated with religiousness (Edwards et al., 2002; Brown, Barnes, & Campbell, 2007), empathy (Burnette et al., 2009; Brown, 2003), cognitive flexibility (Thompson et al., 2005) and gratitude (Touissant & Friedman, 2009). In addition, rumination (Burnette et al., 2009), avoidant and anxious attachment (Burnette et al., 2009), hostile automatic thoughts (Thompson et al., 2005), narcissism (Eaton, Struthers, & Santelli, 2006) are negatively related to trait forgiveness.

As shown, in order to understand the phenomenon of forgiveness, researchers have considered several variables and made an impressive progress in this respect. They have included intrapersonal characteristics, interpersonal determinants, and situational factors (Johnson, Wernli, & Lavoie, 2013). However, forgiveness scholars have suffered from the lack of empirical integration (Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010). For instance, there is an uncertainty regarding many personality-level predictors of forgiveness – are they the same or different in the case of episodic and dispositional forgiveness? Is their cognitive and affective nature important for the associations with forgiveness and its dimensions – positive and negative? The answers would be very interesting for the variables that should play a crucial role to forgiveness. It refers to factors which facilitate a shift in beliefs, affects, self-empowerment, self-responsibility, in assessing main values of a person, in motives etc. (see Touissant & Friedman, 2009; Worthington et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2005). Fehr, Gelfand, and Nag (2010) argue that forgiveness occurs

primarily via (a) mitigating cognitions regarding offenses and offenders, (b) positive rather than negative affect, as well as (c) relational and socio-moral constraints. Taking this into account, we have paid attention to cognitive and emotional variables related to forgiveness, such as: positive orientation, hope, positive and negative affectivity, and emotional control. These factors have been examined in different research models – as independent, dependent or mediating variables, which suggests multiple interpretations of the obtained results. However, being interested in exploration of relatively stable convictions and ways of emotional reacting we have decided to apply a predicting model with cognitive and emotional factors as independent variables and forgiveness as a dependent variable. As with many other phenomena, we have assumed that people's basic convictions and emotional abilities result in capacity to forgive, not inversely. Nevertheless, we are aware of possible mutual interactions between the variables suggested by some previous research.

Positive orientation and forgiveness

Self-esteem refers to the general evaluation of oneself (Rosenberg, 1989); it plays an important role in social interactions and the ability to cope with difficulties. Forgiveness can be a way of dealing with a threat to self-esteem (Strelan & Zdaniuk, 2015), and theorists have suggested that forgiveness and self-esteem are positively related (Enright, 1996). Researchers have verified this implication. They found associations between self-esteem and both types of forgiveness – episodic (Eaton, Struthers, & Santelli, 2006) and dispositional (Eaton, Struthers, & Santelli, 2006; Turnage et al., 2012; Weinberg, 2013; Shuguang et al., 2016). Their results have indicated that the higher a person's self-esteem, the less likely they were to avoid or seek revenge against a transgressor (Eaton, Struthers, & Santelli, 2006). In addition, people with high self-esteem usually have a high level of forgiveness for themselves and for others both in nonclinical (Turnage et al. 2012) and clinical (Weinberg, 2013) groups. Eaton, Struthers, and Santelli (2006) found that self-esteem, besides narcissism and need for structure, significantly predicted dispositional and episodic forgiveness. However, the R-squared values indicated that in the case of dispositional forgiveness this relationship was stronger.

Life satisfaction is defined as cognitive aspects of evaluating one's entire life (Diener et al., 1985). Until present, studies on the relationship between life satisfaction and episodic forgiveness (Szcześniak & Soares, 2011; Touissant & Friedman, 2009; McCullough et al., 2001) and dispositional forgiveness (Macaskill, 2012; Touissant & Friedman, 2009; Sastre et al., 2003) have shown interesting results. Using the established scale of episodic forgiveness – TRIM, researchers have indicated inconsistency in results relating to the relationship between this kind of forgiveness and life satisfaction. For example, McCullough et al. (2001) showed absence of relationships between episodic forgiveness and life satisfaction. However, scholars have revealed negative correlations between avoidance and revenge motivations and satisfaction with life (Touissant

& Friedman, 2009; Szcześniak & Soares, 2011). The scholars have also shown more consistent relationships between dispositional forgiveness and life satisfaction than between episodic forgiveness and satisfaction with life. For example, Touissant and Friedman (2009) showed positive correlations between forgivingness of self, others and situations (with the HFS measure) and life satisfaction. Likewise, Sastre et al. (2003), using the Forgivingness questionnaire in the French sample (Mullet et al., 2003), found positive associations between forgiveness and life satisfaction. Additionally, Macaskill (2012) found a positive relationship between unforgiveness (with the Mauger Forgiveness Scales) and dissatisfaction with life. Seawell, Toussaint, and Cheadle (2014) found a negative relationship between positive traits (life satisfaction, self-esteem, optimism and personal control) and the tendency not to forgive (with The Mauger Forgiveness Scales).

Summing up, the relationship between positive orientation and forgiveness depends on the type of forgiveness – state or trait, and on the type of the used measures (related to forgiveness and positive orientation) and samples. Referring to the available studies and theoretical framework regarding positive orientation (optimism, self-esteem and life satisfaction) and forgiveness, we put forward a hypothesis that positive orientation would positively predict only dispositional forgiveness but not episodic forgiveness (H1).

Hope and forgiveness

Hope may be construed in accordance with the most common definition by Snyder (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2005). According to the definition, hope is a cognitive and motivational set consisting of the belief about the way of achieving goals (pathways) and belief about motivation and willingness to achieve these goals (agency). This kind of hope can constitute hope for success. Trzebiński and Zięba (2004) point out to another understanding of hope – basic hope, in more recent publications the term used is – basic trust (Trzebiński & Zięba, 2014). This type of hope has been founded on Erikson's psychosocial theory. It is the first life strength. Basic hope is "considered a fundamental constituent of an individual's worldview, mostly unconscious and learned very early. It consists of the belief in two characteristics of the world: its higher order and sense and its general positivity towards a human being" (Trzebiński & Zięba, 2004, p. 173). Krok (2013) showed that these two types of hope are associated with dimensions of well-being. However, basic hope has proved to be related negatively with negative emotions, whereas hope for success has not been associated significantly. In our study, we focused on basic hope.

The relationship between basic hope and forgiveness is poorly documented; nevertheless, Trzebiński and Gruszecka (2012) found that basic hope is negatively related to the tendency to seek vengeance and positively related to reconciliation with the wrongdoer. Additionally, they have suggested that basic hope protects individuals against taking the role of a victim. Furthermore, there are several empirical studies that have hypothesized about the association between hope for success and episodic (Rye et al., 2004) and dispositional forgiveness (Thompson et al., 2005; Jankowski & Sandage, 2011). In our study, we focused on other theories relating to justice (e.g. just world theory, Lerner, 1980), which are more similar to basic hope than hope for success. The just world belief is confidence that good things happen to good people, bad things happen to bad people. Researchers have tested association between the just world belief and forgiveness (Strelan, 2007; Lucas et al., 2010; Strelan & Sutton, 2011; Strelan & McKee, 2014). Their results have indicated that the just world belief is a predictor of forgivingness. In the case of episodic forgiveness this association refers essentially to revenge.

Given the aforementioned considerations, we put forward a hypothesis that basic hope is positively related to dispositional forgiveness, but it does not predict episodic forgiveness (H2).

Positive-negative affectivity and emotional control, and forgiveness

As forgiveness is seen as a process leading to reduced negative feelings or even to increased positive emotions toward the offender, it should be linked to a victim's affectivity. According to some researchers (e.g. Worthington & Wade, 1999), people's general ability to process and regulate affect promotes interpersonal forgiveness. Tendency to experience rather positive or negative affect should be associated with perceiving offences and managing negative emotions successfully after transgressions. Forgiveness has in fact been related to affect, both negative and positive. However, there are differences in the nature of those associations, depending on the type of forgiveness.

Episodic forgiveness, conceptualized as reduction in avoidance and revenge, has been examined in terms of negative and positive affectivity by McCullough et al. (1998). In their study, only the revenge subscale correlated (positively) with negative affectivity (measured using PANAS). There were no significant connections with positive affectivity. At the same time, dispositional forgiveness of self, others, and of situations (measured with HFS) was inversely correlated with negative affect and positively with positive affect (Thompson et al., 2005). Those diverging results might come from the nature of episodic and dispositional forgiveness. They might also result from the measurement taking into account dimensions of forgiveness: TRIM-12 consists only of negative statements, while HFS includes both negatively and positively worded items. However, in the light of the above, we hypothesized that negative affectivity would negatively predict episodic and dispositional forgiveness, while positive affectivity would positively predict dispositional forgiveness only (H3).

Although general affectivity is very often assessed in the context of forgiveness, several studies have also considered particular emotions, especially negative ones like anger, depression, and anxiety. They have explored forgiveness as a state and as a disposition, its positive and negative aspects, and different objects of forgiveness (self, other people and situations beyond one's control).

Rye et al. (2001) showed that episodic forgiveness (measured using the positive and negative subscales of the Forgiveness Scale) correlated negatively with anger as a state and as a trait, while dispositional forgiveness was related only to trait anger. Also in Berry et al. study (2005), forgivingness (measured with The Trait Forgiveness Scale) was negatively correlated with trait anger. Furthermore, adolescent reports of forgiveness were negatively related to their anger resulting from their friend's hypothetical transgression (Johnson, Wernli, & Lavoie, 2013). Lawler-Row et al. (2008) examined both, forgiveness as a state (measured with the Acts of Forgiveness scale) and as a trait (measured with the Forgiving Personality Inventory), along with styles of anger expression, and found that forgiveness (state and trait) was negatively associated only with anger. No other styles of anger expression (assertion, support seeking, rumination, diffusion, and avoidance) were linked to forgiveness. In reference to depression, forgiveness of self for a specific transgression was found to be connected with a lower level of depressive affect (Wohl, DeShea, & Wahkinney, 2008). This correlation was significant not only for self-forgiving feelings and actions, but also for self-forgiving beliefs (measured with the State-Self Forgiveness Scales). Regarding forgivingness, Lawler-Row and Piferi (2006), using their Forgiving Personality Scale, revealed that more forgiving people reported lower levels of depression. In a few studies researchers have considered both depression and anxiety indicators and have shown their inverse correlation with episodic and dispositional forgiveness (e.g. Subkoviak et al., 1995; Maltby, Day, & Barber, 2004).

Despite the fact that forgiveness has been proved to be related to anger, depression and anxiety, little is known about connections between control of these emotions and forgiveness. Emotional control is defined as emotion regulation abilities, particularly by controlling anger, anxiety and depressed mood (Watson & Greer, 1983). While experiencing negative emotions, it is important to be able to choose optimal emotional expression and control one's reactions. Both, too high and too poor emotional control brings about health consequences (Watson et al., 1991; Wills et al., 2006; Potijk et al., 2016). However, since forgiveness is negatively related to experiencing anger, depression and anxiety, we hypothesized that a higher level of emotional control would predict greater forgiveness (both episodic and dispositional) (H4).

The foregoing hypothesis concerns particular variables, i.e., positive orientation, basic hope, affect, emotional control, and their relationships with trait and state forgiveness. Additionally, we presumed that the percent of variance (for both dispositional and episodic forgiveness) would increase after considering cognitive and emotional predictors simultaneously (H5).

Methods

Participants

The study was conducted in 2014 among Polish citizens living in the southern Poland (Kielce area). The Jan Kochanowski University's students were asked to take part in the study and to recruit one adult. The respondents were requested to participate in the study voluntarily (with no remuneration). They had to take paper-and-pencil questionnaires from us, answer all the questions in private, and to return the completed questionnaires. Eleven incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the analysis. The sample included a total of 139 individuals aged 18–53 ($M = 24.37$; $DS = 6.57$), of whom 114 (82%) were women and 25 were men (18%). Other sociodemographic variables revealed that 44% of the participants had secondary education, 40.4% college education, whereas 15.7% higher education. Fifty three point nine % of the respondents lived in the country, 20% lived in towns, and 26.1% in cities. Almost 35.9% of the participants declared themselves as working persons and 64.1% were not working at all. Nineteen % of the respondents were married, 1.8% were widowed, 3.6% divorced, and the remaining 75.6% were single.

Measures

For the measurement of psychological variables, the following research tools were used.

Episodic forgiveness was measured with the Polish translation of Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory (TRIM-12; McCullough et al., 1998). The TRIM-12 is a 12-item self-report inventory measuring motivations toward a specific offender, and includes two scales: Revenge (five items from 5 to 25 points) and Avoidance (seven items from 7 to 35 points). The TRIM has a 5-point response scale. Higher TRIM scores indicate less forgiving motivations toward a transgressor. Sample items: "*I keep as much distance between us as possible*", "*I'm going to get even*". The Cronbach's alpha ranged from .86 to .94 (McCullough et al., 1998).

Disposition to forgive was measured by the use of the Polish adaptation (Kaleta, Mróz, & Guzewicz, 2016) of the Heartland Forgiveness Scale (Thompson & Snyder, 2003; Thompson et al., 2005). HFS is a multi-dimensional tool assessing dispositional forgiveness of self, others, and situations beyond anyone's control. Participants rate their responses to 18 items on a 7-point scale. Sample items: "*With time I am understanding of myself for mistakes I've made*", "*If others mistreat me, I continue to think badly of them*", "*I eventually make peace with bad situations in my life*". The original version consists of three subscales (forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness of situations). However, in the Polish version, the authors obtained a different structure of the scale. The results of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses have shown that the hierarchical nine-factor model exhibited the best fit. Consequently, the scale is made of two scales (P scale and N scale) that allow measurement of forgiveness in two separate domains – positive (as benevolent thoughts, feelings, and behaviors) and negative (as reduction of hostile thoughts, feelings and behaviors), and six subscales with the distinction of forgiveness of self, others, and situations (P-self, P-others, P-situations, N-self, N-others, N-situations). In the present study, we used three indices: general forgiveness (from 18 to 126 points), positive and negative dimensions (from 9 to 63 points on each). Higher

scores on each scale reflect a higher level of forgiveness in every domain. The Total HFS score indicates how forgiving a person tends to be. Reliability and validity of the tool were satisfactory. Cronbach's alpha (internal consistency) values were found as follows: for overall HFS .76, for P scale .70, and for N scale .81.

Positive orientation (self-esteem, life satisfaction, optimism) was assessed with the Positivity Scale (P-Scale) (Caprara et al., 2012). The P-Scale consists of 8 items and has been translated into Polish and adapted by Łaguna, Oleś, and Filipiuk (2011). The P-Scale has a 5-point scale and a single-factor structure (from 5 to 40 points). Sample items: "*I have great faith in the future*", "*On the whole, I am satisfied with myself*". Higher results indicate higher levels of positive orientation. Cronbach's alpha for P-Scale ranged from .75 to .89 (Caprara et al., 2012).

Hope was measured with the Basic Hope Inventory (BHI-12) (Trzebiński & Zięba, 2003a). The BHI-12 is a scale measuring the strength of basic hope, consisting of 12 items, of which only 9 items are diagnostic including the following: "*The world is good even if we are not doing well*", "*The world is meaningful and all things have some sense even if we feel lost sometimes*". The inventory has a 5-point scale measuring how well a given statement expresses his or her feelings and beliefs. The higher the score (from 9 to 45 points), the higher the level of basic hope.

Affectivity was measured using the Polish version (SUPIN C30) (Brzozowski, 2010) of PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The scale consists of 30-items, 15-items for positive affectivity (from 15 to 75 points) and 15-items for negative affectivity (from 15 to 75 points). Using a 5-point scale, the participants are asked to indicate the degree to which they usually experience each of the emotions, e.g. *ashamed, irritable, afraid, exited, proud, active*. The higher the score, the higher the level of particular affectivity. Cronbach's alpha for PANAS ranged from .73 to .95 (Brzozowski, 2010).

Emotional control was measured with the Courtauld Emotional Control Scale (CECS) developed by Watson and Greer (1983), and adapted in Poland by Juczyński (2009). The questionnaire allows to evaluate the extent to which individuals report controlling anger, anxiety and depressed mood in difficult situations. The CECS consists of three subscales, each of which contains seven statements concerning the way of expressing anger, depression and anxiety (from 7 to 28 points in every subscale). Participants are asked to respond to the phrases such as "*When I feel angry…*", "*When I feel anxious (worried)*" and "*When I feel unhappy (miserable)*" with statements such as "*I keep quiet*", "*I bottle it up*", "*I tell others about it*" or "*I let others see how I feel*". They are also asked to indicate the extent of such feelings on a 4-point scale. The total emotional control index is established by summing up the results of the three subscales. The higher the result, the more enhanced the suppression of negative emotions. Reliability of the Polish version (Cronbach's alpha) is: for the control of anger .80, depression .77, anxiety .78 and for the total emotional control index .87 (Juczyński, 2009).

Results

Table 1 shows correlations between dispositional and episodic forgiveness. As shown, dispositional forgiveness was negatively correlated with motivation for revenge. However, we found no relationship between forgivingness and motivation for avoiding.

As shown in Table 2, positive orientation, basic hope and positive affectivity were found to be significantly and positively correlated with forgivingness and its positive dimension, while negative affectivity was negatively correlated with general and positive forgivingness. In addition, control of anger positively correlated with positive forgiveness. Also, basic hope was positively correlated with overcoming unforgiveness (a negative dimension of forgivingness), whereas negative affectivity and anger control were negatively correlated with reduction of unforgiveness. As regards episodic forgiveness, basic hope and positive affectivity were negatively correlated, whereas negative affectivity and control of anxiety were positively correlated with motivation for revenge.

Five separate multiple regressions were conducted to examine the extent to which cognitive (step 1), emotional

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and correlations (Pearson's r) between dispositional and episodic forgiveness

		M	*SD*	1	2	3	4
1	Dispositional Forgiveness – General	74.43	11.65	–			
2	Positive Forgiveness	43.24	7.84	.72**	–		
3	Reduction of unforgivingness	31.18	8.09	.74**	.07	–	
4	Revenge (episodic forgiveness)	11.63	4.79	-.37**	-.28**	-.26*	–
5	Avoidance (episodic forgiveness)	24.87	6.16	-.14	-.10	-.11	.43**

* p < .01; ** p < .001

Table 2. Correlations (Pearson's r) between analyzed variables

	Dispositional forgiveness			Episodic forgiveness	
	General	**Positive**	**Reduction of unforgivingness**	**Revenge**	**Avoidance**
Positive orientation	.35***	.37***	.15	-.11	.11
Basic hope	.34***	.30***	.20*	-.22**	-.00
Positive affectivity	.30***	.30***	.14	-.18*	.02
Negative affectivity	-.43***	-.27***	-.36***	.18*	.11
Control of emotion – total score	-.04	.05	-.10	.00	.03
Control of anger	-.02	.18*	-.20*	-.11	-.06
Control of depressive	-.03	.04	-.08	-.05	.01
Control of anxiety	-.03	-.12	.07	.20*	.13

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

(step 2) or both (step 3) predictors were used with episodic (revenge, avoidance) and dispositional (general, positive, reduction of negative) forgiveness.

As shown in Table 3, cognitive variables, i.e. positive orientation and basic hope, positively predicted general and positive dispositional forgiveness, which meant that the higher the participant's positive orientation and basic hope, the higher they scored on a general and positive tendency to forgive. Basic hope negatively predicted revenge motivations, such that respondents scoring higher on basic hope, scored lower on motivation for revenge. In the case of overcoming unforgiveness, and motivation for avoidance, the F values indicated that positive orientation and basic hope had no significant effect.

Emotional variables accounted for 17–25% of dispositional forgiveness and only for 5% of episodic forgiveness (motivation for avoidance). Positive affectivity was significantly related to general and positive forgivingness. Negative affectivity was significant for dispositional forgiveness (general, positive, reduction of negative) and motivation for revenge. Furthermore, anger control was significantly (positively) related to positive forgiveness and (negatively) to overcoming unforgiveness, so that the respondents scoring higher on anger control were more likely to experience positive forgiveness and less likely to experience reduction of unforgiveness. Anxiety control was a significant predictor of positive forgiveness (inverse association), as well as motivation for revenge and avoidance (positive relationship).

The next step was linking cognitive and emotional predictors in order to explain the trait and state of forgiveness. This set of predictors increased the percent of variance in general and positive forgivingness. Similarly, in the case of episodic forgiveness, fractional increase in the percent of variance was found. Nevertheless, the percent of variance in eliminating unforgiveness was constant.

The third set of predictors changed the arrangement of the variables accounting for specific types of forgiveness.

Among several cognitive and emotional variables, greater basic hope along with lower negative affect predicted general forgivingness. Stronger positive orientation, basic hope as well as anger control and lower control of anxiety favored positive forgivingness. As mentioned above, only emotional variables (negative affectivity, anger control) were significant for overcoming unforgiveness. With respect to episodic forgiveness, higher motivation for revenge was predicted by weaker basic hope along with poorer anger control and stronger anxiety control, whereas higher motivation for avoidance was fostered by stronger anxiety control alone.

Discussion

The study sought to examine links between cognitive (positive orientation, hope) and emotional variables (positive and negative affectivity, anger, depression and anxiety control) and forgiveness, both episodic and dispositional.

We hypothesized that cognitive variables, positive orientation and basic hope, would predict only dispositional forgiveness. The present results partially support this hypothesis. We found that positive orientation and basic hope were associated with dispositional forgiveness. In addition, it appears that basic hope is an important predictor of dispositional forgiveness, but positive orientation is only important for predicting positive forgivingness.

With regard to the association between positive orientation and forgiveness, our result corroborate Seawell, Toussaint, and Cheadle's (2014) report stating that positive psychological characteristics (measured collectively) are associated with tendency to forgive. However, results of the studies that include only one trait are inconsistent (Brown & Phillips, 2005; Turnage et al., 2012; Weinberg, 2013; Macaskill, 2012; Sastre et al., 2003). Our findings might indicate that positive psychological characteristics are important for positive forgivingness but they are meaningless for reducing the negative tendency to forgive. These results are

Table 3. Regression analyses for (dispositional and episodic) forgiveness

| | Dispositional forgiveness | | | | | | Episodic forgiveness | | | | | | | | |
| | General | | | Positive | | | Reduction of unforgivingness | | | Revenge | | | Avoidance | | |
	B(1step)	B(2step)	B(3step)	B(1step)	B(2step)	B(3step)	B(1step)	B(2step)	B(3step)	B(1step)	B(2step)	B(3step)	B(1step)	B(2step)	B(3step)
Positive orientation	.30***		.15	.32***		.22**	.10		-.01	-.07		.08	.11		.19
Basic hope	.27**		.20*	.21*		.23**	.16		.05	-.20*		-.20*	-.04		.00
Positive affectivity		.18*	.07		.22**	.08		.03	.02		-.14	-.13		.05	-.03
Negative affectivity		-.41***	-.31***		-.22**	-.10		-.33***	-.32***		.17*	.15		.12	.18
Control of anger		.01	.04		.28**	.30***		-.24**	-.23**		-.16	-.19*		-.07	-.09
Control of depressive		.05	.06		.03	.04		.04	.04		-.11	-.13		-.02	-.03
Control of anxiety		-.14	-.13		-.30***	-.29***		.09	.09		.31***	.30***		.20*	.20*
Total R^2	.21	.25	.30	.19	.23	.32	.05	.17	.17	.05	.14	.17	.01	.05	.07
Adjusted R^2	.20	.22	.26	.17	.20	.28	.03	.14	.13	.04	.10	.13	.00	.00	.02
F	(2, 136) 18.375***	(5, 133) 8.740***	(7,131) 8.102***	(2, 136) 15.583***	(5, 133) 8.061***	(7,131) 8.735***	(2, 136) 3.311*	(5, 133) 5.563***	(7,131) 3.979***	(2, 136) 3.593*	(5, 133) 4.388***	(7,131) 3.942***	(2, 136) 0.824	(5, 133) 1.271	(7,131) 1.386

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

partially supported by Fincham (Fincham, Beach, & Davila, 2004), who has emphasized the differentiation between positive and negative aspects of forgiveness. In line with the proposed hypothesis, we found no relationship between positive orientation and episodic forgiveness. The lack of significant findings between POR and episodic, negative motivation for forgiveness might be manifested in two ways. Firstly, we found similar outcomes with regard to associations between POR and reduction of unforgiveness. This might verify our assumption that positive traits are negligible for reduction or presence of negative tendency and acts. Secondly, a specific interpersonal transgression might require a prompt action. Then, the use of some predispositions is limited.

The outcomes concerning relevant associations between basic hope and forgiveness are supported by prior research. Trzebiński and Gruszecka (2012) documented the connection between basic hope and the tendency to forgive (negative with the tendency for revenge and positive with reconciliation with the offender). Furthermore, the results of studies relating to justice beliefs indicated that beliefs about justice promoted forgivingness (Lucas et al., 2010; Strelan, 2007). Due to beliefs in a meaningful and positive world, basic hope fulfils a regulatory function. People deal with difficulties more easily and interpret their experiences more positively when they believe in a friendly world (Wojciechowska, 2011). Put differently, reinterpretation of transgressions and the tendency to be forgiving are more likely when people are convinced that other people are good by nature, just as the world around them (Trzebiński & Zięba, 2003b). When it comes to episodic forgiveness, results for the basic hope are contrary to our hypothesis: basic hope correlated negatively with revenge motivations. This finding is supported by some studies. For example, Gruszecka and Trzebiński (2012) found that higher basic hope was favourable for lesser feeling of harm and hurt. Moreover, beliefs about justice were negatively associated with revenge (Strelan & Mckee, 2014). This outcome showed that people with a strong just world belief have tendency to (inclination for) restrain form negative responses such as revenge on their offenders. One possible explanation of this finding is that basic hope, according to the Erikson's theory, is primary, meaningful attitude of the friendly world. This belief may encourage less vengeful motivations against the offender.

Thus, the current study provides new evidence that cognitive predictors seemed rather to be more of a concern for the trait than the state of forgiveness. However, forgiveness can also promote positive orientation. During the process of forgiveness, the painful situations are transformed to neutral or positive ones. This reframing helps to maintain and develop positive attitudes toward oneself, others and world.

According to our assumptions, negative affectivity predicted negatively both episodic and dispositional forgiveness, whereas positive affect predicted positively only dispositional forgiveness. However, along with the cognitive variables, positive affectivity failed to reach the level of significance.

Our findings, in accordance with previous results (McCullough et al., 1998; Thompson et al., 2005), revealed the crucial role of negative affectivity. The less an individual tends to experience the negative affect, the more willing he or she is to forgive in specific contexts and across different situations. In other words, decreasing and eventually eliminating negative emotions and reactions seems to be essential in the forgiveness process. This conclusion supports scholars' agreement that forgiveness primarily involves reducing unforgiveness (e.g. Worthington et al., 2007). Personal disposition toward unforgiveness that may explain our results is based on the lasting resentment (Mullet, Neto, & Riviere, 2005) or harboring a grudge (van Oyen Witvliet, Ludwig, & Vander Laan, 2001). When people hold a grudge, they maintain memories of a painful experience and perpetuate negative emotions. Consequently, they persist in the role of a victim and do not forgive their offenders. Negative affectivity is the core element of this grudge-holding mechanism. Concurrently, in our study positive affectivity proved to be neither necessary nor sufficient for any type of forgiveness. However, Toussaint and Friedman (2009) who examined the link between both episodic and dispositional forgiveness and global affectivity (consisting of positive affectivity minus negative affectivity) have provided very interesting findings. They have found negative correlations between motivation for revenge and for avoiding (TRIM) and predominance of positive emotion, and positive relations between dispositional forgiveness of self, others and situations (HFS) and more positive emotionality. Thus, positive affectivity was meaningful not independently but proportionally to negative affect.

Alternative interpretations of the relationships between affectivity and forgiveness should be mentioned here. It is possible that high willingness to forgive helps to reduce negative feelings on a daily basis. For instance, in the study by Thompson et al. (2005), it has been high dispositional forgiveness that significantly predicted low anger, low depression, and low anxiety. People who often forgive themselves, others and situations might prevent themselves from holding a grudge and maintaining unpleasant feelings. Finally, mutual interactions between negative affect and forgiveness are likely – the fewer negative emotions one experiences, the more he or she tends to forgive, which, in turn facilitates reduction of negative affect.

The subsequent hypothesis about emotional control and forgiveness was weakly supported. Our results met our expectations with respect to the relationship between anger control and positive forgivingness only. In other cases, anger control mitigated reduction of negative responses to different offenses, whereas anxiety control fostered motivation for revenge and avoidance in particular harmful situation. Thus, the control of negative emotions impedes dealing with unforgiveness. Our results may be accounted for by the fact that the forgiveness process implies facing one's hurt and its emotional sequelae (Gordon & Baucom, 1998). Restraining genuine feelings makes a victim unable to begin the forgiveness process. Moreover, emotion regulation is a demanding and absorbing process, especially when it involves suppression, hiding, and faking feelings (Grandey, 2000). Thus, one might have no energy and resources to engage in efforts aimed at forgiveness. On the other hand,

stronger anger control resulted in a stronger tendency to present positive responses towards different offenders. These incoherent results may be explained by the concept of decisional and emotional forgiveness proposed by Worthington (2005). The former implies a decision to control one's behaviors, the latter involves multifaceted changes in cognition, emotion, and motivation. People controlling their anger are likely to demonstrate proper behaviors without full forgiveness. This is because decisional forgiveness, while it might decrease hostility, does not necessarily reduce negative experience (Worthington et al., 2005). Summing up, our study extended our knowledge on emotional predictors of forgiveness showing that forgiveness involves primarily ability to regulate negative emotions, which promotes overcoming unforgiveness. However, suppressing anxiety and anger doesn't help to reduce malevolent responses after transgressions. Thus, future studies should explore other strategies of managing negative emotions.

Finally, the present results only partially support our hypothesis about simultaneous predicting effect of cognitive and emotional variables on forgiveness. Cognitive predictors along with emotional ones were more important for general and positive forgivingness. As regards reduction of dispositional unforgiveness and episodic motivation for revenge and avoidance, emotional mechanisms turned out to be essential.

In the light of our outcomes, overcoming negative responses toward an offender requires primarily emotion regulation. Perhaps, during the process of reducing unforgiveness emotions predominate over cognition. This conclusion is in line with Worthington and Scherer's (2004) statement that forgiveness is primarily an emotion-focused coping strategy. Affective predictors of forgiveness are considered to focus on many emotions and moods that are closely related to victims' motivations to forgive (Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010). When people tend to experience negative emotions, such as anxiety or anger, their motivation to forgive may be reduced. Experiencing positive emotions, such as sympathy, enhances their willingness to forgive (Worthington, 2006). Moreover, following a particular offense, victims attribute negative mood states to their offenders and consequently, their motivation to forgive decreases, while positive moods entail less severe impact on victims and stronger motives to forgive (Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010). Our study revealed the crucial role of negative affect and of anger and anxiety control in reducing negative tendencies towards the transgressors.

On the other hand, cognitive predictors of forgiveness focus on victims' attitudes and thoughts implying a sense-making process (Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010). Victims consider intent, responsibility, severity and they explore the context of an offense to discover its meaning. Moreover, they modify their personal assumptions about oneself, other people and the world (Thompson et al., 2005). In our study, cognitively conceptualized positive orientation and basic hope, along with negative affect (at a lower level) and emotional control (stronger anger control and weaker anxiety control) turned out to be necessary for positive and full (with both

domains – negative and positive) forgivingness. Thus, psychological processes increasing one's good will and pro-social responses toward offenders require intellectual and emotional involvement. The results are consistent with McCullough, Fincham, and Tsang's (2003) conclusion that assuming the attitude of benevolence after offenses is more complicated, effortful, or time-intensive than just reducing unforgiving reactions towards the transgressor.

Limitations of the study

Some limitations of the present study need to be noted. Firstly, all the variables were self-reported, and although the applied instruments were psychometrically sound, more objective measures could expand our knowledge. Secondly, due to the small-sized and homogenous sample, we did not include sex and age differences. Future studies with larger samples might address these issues.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the observed relationships between cognitive and emotional predictors and forgiveness are based on the findings of a correlational study, which does not allow drawing firm conclusions about the cause-and-effect relationships between the variables. The interpretation suggested here, i.e., that one's affirmative view of oneself, life and the future and effective emotion regulation influence the willingness to forgive, is just one of many possibilities. An alternative explanation for the observed relationships would be that forgiveness across situations or in certain contexts results in a more positive attitude toward oneself and the world. Moreover, bidirectional associations between the variables are also possible.

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