

The Predictive Power of Undergraduates' Personality Traits and Self-Esteem Regarding Their Forgiveness

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not the undergraduates' personality traits and self-esteem predict their forgiveness. The study was conducted using a descriptive research designed as a relational survey method. The study group consists of 323 undergraduates, of whom 250 (77.2 %) are female and 73 (22.5%) are male. The Adjective Based Personality Scale (ABPT), developed by Bacanlı, İlhan and Arslan (2009), "Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale", developed by Rosenberg (1965) and adapted to Turkish by Çuhadaroğlu (1986), and "Heartland Forgiveness Scale", developed by Thompson, Snyder and Hoffman (2005) and adapted to Turkish by Bugay and Demir (2010), were used for data collection procedure. The results indicate that the undergraduates' five-factor personality traits and self-esteem are correlated with their forgiveness levels. In addition, the undergraduates' personality traits of openness, neuroticism and extraversion predict their forgiveness levels.

Key Words: Forgiveness, Self-Esteem, Personality, Traits

1. Introduction

As the specialists in education and citizens, we feel we are obliged to make a choice with regard to what kind of youth we wish to raise. Which is to choose: the youth with a high level of forgiveness or a youth having a high level of vengeful and punitive attitudes? (Bozgeyikli, 2001; Kesici and Yalçın, 2016). It is the expectations of parents to rear their children with some positive and desired traits, and the concept of forgiveness is one of these positive traits. It is thought that identification of variables predicting young individuals' forgiveness traits is important in increasing their forgiveness level (Kesici, Yalçın and Kavaklı, 2016; Aslan and Kesici, 2016). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the correlations between undergraduates' personality traits, self-esteem and their forgiveness levels and find out whether undergraduates' personality traits and self-esteem predict their forgiveness or not.

We can define personality as a collection of consistent behaviors emanating from the individual himself/ herself and as intra-personality processes. One of the points that need to be stressed here is that personality should have a consistent appearance. In other words, behaviors arising from personality traits are almost always observable. A second point that needs to be stressed involves intra-personality processes. What is meant by intra-personality processes is that they encompass all of the cognitive, emotional and instinctive processes that influence an individual's behaviors and emotions (Burger, 2006). McCrea and Costa (1985) explored personality in terms of its structure and permanence (continuity). Initially, they were interested in its extraversion and neuroticism dimensions but as a result of their study, they concluded that personality had five factors. Numerous views have been proposed with regard to personality until today. It can be argued that the five-factor personality theory brings together and integrates different views about personality. It has been maintained that the dimensions of neuroticism, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience could be the fundamental dimensions of personality and they have been put to test through intercultural studies (McCrea and John, 1992; McCrea and Costa, 1996). When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that there are studies that investigated personality traits and forgiveness and demonstrated that personality traits and forgiveness are correlated. In studies conducted on undergraduates, it was revealed that, of the big five-factor personality traits, agreeableness and neuroticism were correlated with forgiveness (Brose et al., 2005; Neto, 2007; Wang, 2008). Walker and Gorsuch (2002), on the other hand, reported that there was a negative and significant correlation between the neuroticism sub-dimension of the five-factor personality trait and forgiveness of others but a positive and significant correlation between the extraversion sub-dimension and forgiveness of self.

Ego or sense of self can be defined as an individual's perception of themselves and the whole of their perceptions with regard to themselves, their ideas and thoughts. Self-esteem, on the other hand, can be defined as the positive and negative attitudes that an individual exhibit with respect to self. In short, it can be argued that self-esteem is composed of an individual's emotions concerning the concept of self (Rogers, 1959; Rosenberg, 1965; Efiltili and Çıkılı, 2017). If an individual's perceptions regarding the concept of their own self are negative, then one can say that their self-esteem is low whereas if their perceptions are positive, then one can say that their self-esteem is high. When the matter is considered within the scope of this study, it can be thought that forgiveness tendencies of individuals with high or low self-esteem may vary. It can be conceived that since individuals with low self-esteem may have more negative perceptions about themselves, their tendency to forgive themselves will be lower while individuals with higher self-esteem may have higher forgiveness tendencies towards themselves and other individuals. Indeed, studies conducted in this regard indicate that self-esteem is correlated with forgiveness (Hall and Fincham, 2005; Brown and Phillips, 2005; Eaton et al., 2006). Strelan (2007) reported that there was a

positive and significant correlation between forgiveness of self and forgiveness of situation sub-dimensions of forgiveness and self-esteem. It was emphasized that there was an especially strong correlation between forgiveness of self and self-esteem.

Forgiveness can be defined as the replacement of negative feelings felt by an individual towards a person who unjustly hurt, offended or wounded them with more positive feelings. The most important point that needs to be highlighted with respect to the concept of forgiveness is that in order to be able to talk of real forgiveness, there has to occur, as can be understood from its definition, a real change in emotions (Enright, 1996). It can be argued that when an individual relinquishes negative feelings like vengeance, spite, hatred and anger and adopts positive feelings such as tolerance, compassion, love and respect, then forgiveness takes place (Deniz, Kesici and Sümer, 2008; Kesici, 2008; Kesici et al., 2016). Identification of the variables affecting the aforementioned tendency of forgiveness is extremely important in raising a youth that is equipped with the quality of forgiveness. Individuals' personality traits and their self-esteem were taken, within the scope of this study, to be variables that could affect forgiveness.

The problem of this study is to determine whether or not the personality traits of undergraduates and their self-esteem predict their forgiveness. The answers to the following questions will come out in the study:

- Are undergraduates' personality traits and self-esteems correlated with their forgiveness?
- Do undergraduates' personality traits and self-esteems predict the forgiveness of self-sub-dimension of forgiveness?
- Do undergraduates' personality traits and self-esteems predict the forgiveness of situation sub-dimension of forgiveness?
- Do undergraduates' personality traits and self-esteems predict the forgiveness of others sub-dimension of forgiveness?

2. Method

2.1. The Research Model

In this study, the relational survey method, a kind of general survey method, was used. The relational survey method is a research approach which aims to determine whether or not there is variation between more than one variable and if there is, then the degree of the change.

2.2. The Research Group

The research group of this study consists of students attending Konya Necmettin Erbakan University, Ahmet Keleşoğlu Education Faculty. 323 undergraduates were included in the study, of whom 250 (77.2 %) were female while 73 (22.5 %) were male. The participants took part in the study on a voluntary basis.

2.3. Data Collection Instruments

Personality Test Based on Adjectives: Adjective Based Personality Scale (ABPT), which was prepared bearing on the five-factor personality theory, was developed by Bacanlı, İlhan and Aslan (2009). In the factor analysis which was performed to determine the construct validity of the scale, 40 adjective pairs were determined in order to measure five different personality dimensions (extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, openness to experience and agreeableness). In order to determine the criterion-related validity of the scale, Trait Anxiety Inventory, Negative-Positive Affect Scale, Sociotropy Scale and The Response to Conflict Scale were used. It was found that the scale was at a medium significance level compared with the scales used for convergent validity. The internal consistency coefficients of the sub-dimensions of the scale varied between .73 and .89. It was reported that the internal consistency coefficient was calculated to be .89 for extraversion, .88 for conscientiousness, .87 for agreeableness, .80 for openness to experience, and .73 for neuroticism. The results obtained indicate that the scale is valid and reliable (Bacanlı, İlhan and Aslan, 2009).

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was developed by Rosenberg (1965). It is one of the self-esteem scales that is commonly used in the relevant literature to measure self-esteem. The validity and reliability of the scale for Turkish was conducted by Çuhadaroğlu (1986) and the validity rate was calculated to be .71. Test-retest was performed to determine the reliability of the scale. As a result of this, the reliability coefficient of the Turkish version of the scale was found to be .75. The scores obtained from the scale vary between 10 and 40 (Saygın, 2008).

Heartland Forgiveness Scale: Heartland Forgiveness Scale was developed by Thompson, Snyder and Hoffman (2005) to measure individuals' forgiveness tendencies. This is a 7-point Likert-type scale consisting of 18 items. The scale has three sub-dimensions, namely forgiveness of self, forgiveness of situation and forgiveness of others. As a result of studies conducted to measure the validity and reliability of the scale, the test-retest coefficient was calculated to be .83 for forgiveness of self-sub-dimension, .72 for forgiveness of others sub-dimension, .73 for forgiveness of situation sub-dimension and .77 for total score. Cronbach α coefficients were reported to be .75, .78, .79 respectively and .86 for the total score. Moreover, a significant relationship was found between the scale and the scales used to calculate the criterion-related validity. According to this, forgiveness was in a negative correlation with rumination, hostility and vengeance (Thompson et al., 2005).

The scale was adapted to Turkish culture by Bugay and Demir (2010). Cronbach α internal consistency coefficient of the Turkish version of the scale was found to be .64 for the forgiveness of self sub-scale, .79 for forgiveness of others sub-scale and .76 for forgiveness of situation sub-scale. Cronbach α for the whole of the scale, on the other hand, was calculated to be .81. Afterwards, the psychometric features of the scale were investigated by Bugay, Demir and Delevi (2012) on a larger sample and compatibility of the original 3-factor version of the scale with the Turkish sample was tested, as a result of which confirmatory factor analysis values were found to be at a sufficient level.

2.4. Data Analysis

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used in the study to determine the relationship between the undergraduates' personality traits and self-esteems and their forgiveness. The stepwise technique of the multiple regression analysis was used in order to determine how much of the variance the undergraduates' personality traits and self-esteems predicted with regard to their forgiveness.

3. Findings

In this section, the findings that were obtained as a result of the statistical analyses of the data collected in accordance with the aim of the study.

Table 1. Correlation between Undergraduates' Self-Esteems, Personality Traits and their Forgiveness

	Forgiveness of Self	Forgiveness of Situations	Forgiveness of Others
Extraversion	,232**	,147**	,284**
Agreeableness	,145**	,093	,234**
Conscientiousness	,181**	,126*	,230**
Neuroticism	,117*	-,015	,099
Openness to Experience	,281**	,196**	,317**
Self-Esteem	,530**	-,064	,388**
** p <.01 *p<.05			

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that there is a positive correlation at a low level of significance between the personality trait of extraversion and forgiveness of self, forgiveness of situation and forgiveness of others sub-dimensions of forgiveness ($r = .232, p < .01, r = .147, p < .01, r = .284, p < .01$).

A positive correlation at a low level of significance was found between the personality trait of agreeableness and forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others sub-dimensions of forgiveness ($r = .145, p < .01, r = .234, p < .01$). On the other hand, no significant correlation was found between the personality trait of agreeableness and forgiveness of situation sub-dimension of forgiveness ($r = .093, p > .05$).

A positive, low-level significant correlation was found between the personality trait of conscientiousness and forgiveness of self, forgiveness of situation and forgiveness of others sub-dimensions of forgiveness ($r = .181, p < .01, r = .230, p < .01, r = .126, p < .05$).

On the other hand, a positive, low level significant correlation was found between the personality trait of neuroticism and forgiveness of self-sub-dimension of forgiveness ($r = .117, p < .05$), whereas no significant correlation was found between the personality trait of neuroticism and forgiveness of situation and forgiveness of others sub-dimensions of forgiveness ($r = -.015, p > .05, r = .099, p > .05$).

A positive and low-level significant correlation was found between the personality trait of openness to experience and forgiveness of self and forgiveness of situation sub-dimensions ($r = .281, p < .01, r = .196, p < .01$). On the other hand, a positive correlation at a medium-level of significance was found between the personality trait of openness to experience and forgiveness of others sub-dimension ($r = .317, p < .01$).

A positive correlation at a medium level of significance was found between self-esteem and forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others sub-dimensions of forgiveness ($r = .530, p < .01, r = .388, p < .01$). However, no significant correlation was found between self-esteem and forgiveness of situation sub-dimension of forgiveness ($r = -.064, p > .05$).

Table 1. Variables Predicting Forgiveness of Self Sub-Dimension

Model	B	S.E.	β	t	p
Constant	11,595	1,550		7,483	,001
Self-Esteem	,541	,049	,533	11,122	,001
R=,533 R ² =,285 R ² (Adj)=,282 F=123,693 p=,001					
Constant	9,879	1,759		5,615	,001
Self-Esteem	,505	,051	,499	9,828	,001
Openness to Experience	,067	,033	,103	2,026	,044
R=,542 R ² =,294 R ² (Adj)=,289 F=64,515 p=,001					

A: Self-Esteem

B: Self-Esteem, Openness to Experience

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that self-esteem and the openness to experience personality trait are important predictors of forgiveness of self sub-dimension of forgiveness ($p < .001$). Self-esteem accounts for 28.2 % of the total variance concerning forgiveness of self sub-dimension of forgiveness. Self-esteem and openness to experience personality trait together explain 28.9 % of the total variance related to forgiveness of self sub-dimension of forgiveness.

Table 3. Variables Predicting Forgiveness of Others Sub-Dimension

Model	B	S.E.	β	t	p
Constant	17,994	2,098		8,576	,001
Openness to Experience	,185	,049	,209	3,777	,001
R=,209 R ² =,044 R ² (Adj)=,041 F=14,264 p=,001					
Constant	21,757	2,432		8,945	,001
Openness to Experience	,293	,061	,330	4,832	,001
Neuroticism	-,259	,088	-,202	-2,956	,003
R=,265 R ² =,070 R ² (Adj)=,064 F=11,679 p=,001					
Constant	26,436	2,990		8,840	,001
Openness to Experience	,339	,062	,382	5,422	,001
Neuroticism	-,260	,087	-,203	-2,994	,003
Self-Esteem	-,209	,079	-,152	-2,641	,009
R=,301 R ² =,091 R ² (Adj)=,082 F=10,262 p=,001					
Constant	24,645	3,055		8,067	,001
Openness to Experience	,298	,064	,336	4,637	,001
Neuroticism	-,324	,090	-,253	-3,601	,001
Self-Esteem	-,235	,079	,172	-2,971	,003
Extraversion	,157	,064	,162	2,450	,015
R=,329 R ² =,108 R ² (Adj)=,096 F=9,322 p=,001					

A: Openness to Experience

B: Openness to Experience, Neuroticism

C: Openness to Experience, Neuroticism, Self-Esteem

D: Openness to Experience, Neuroticism, Self-Esteem, Extraversion

When Table 3 is examined, it is observed that personality traits of openness to experience, neuroticism and extraversion and self-esteem are important predictors of forgiveness of others sub-dimension of forgiveness ($p < .001$). The openness to experience personality trait explains 4.1 % of the total variance belonging to forgiveness of others sub-dimension of forgiveness. Personality traits of openness to experience and neuroticism together explain 6.4 % of the total variance belonging to forgiveness of others sub-dimension of forgiveness. Personality traits of openness to experience and neuroticism and self-esteem explain 8.2 % of the total variance belonging to forgiveness of others sub-dimension. Personality traits of openness to experience, neuroticism and extraversion and self-esteem explain 9.6 % of the total variance belonging to forgiveness of others sub-dimension.

Table 4. Variables Predicting Forgiveness of Situation Sub-Dimension

Model	B	S.E.	β	t	p
Constant	14,230	1,826		7,794	,001
Self-Esteem	,424	,057	,327	7,404	,001
R=,387 R ² =,150 R ² (Adj)=,147 F=54,813 p=,001					
Constant	10,473	2,039		5,136	,001
Self-Esteem	,347	,060	,317	5,818	,001
Openness to Experience	,147	,038	,208	3,826	,001
R=,434 R ² =,188 R ² (Adj)=,183 F=35,927 p=,001					
Constant	12,804	2,233		5,735	,001
Self-Esteem	,346	,059	,316	5,857	,001
Openness to Experience	,213	,047	,302	4,573	,001
Neuroticism	-,160	,065	-,156	-2,464	,014
R=,451 R ² =,204 R ² (Adj)=,196 F=26,368 p=,001					
Constant	11,286	2,275		4,961	,001
Self-Esteem	,324	,059	,296	5,487	,001
Openness to Experience	,178	,048	,253	3,734	,001
Neuroticism	-,214	,067	-,210	-3,197	,002
Extraversion	,133	,048	,172	2,791	,006
R=,473 R ² =,223 R ² (Adj)=,213 F=22,158 p=,001					

A: Self-Esteem

B: Self-Esteem, Openness to Experience

C: Self-Esteem, Openness to Experience, Neuroticism

D: Self-Esteem, Openness to Experience, Neuroticism, Extraversion

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that self-esteem and personality traits of openness to experience, neuroticism and extraversion are important predictors of forgiveness of situation sub-dimension of forgiveness ($p < .001$). Self-esteem explains 14.7 % of the total variance belonging to forgiveness of situation sub-dimension of forgiveness. Self-esteem and openness to experience together explain 18.3 % of the total variance belonging to forgiveness of situation sub-dimension of forgiveness. Self-esteem and personality traits of openness to experience and neuroticism together explain 19.6 % of the total variance belonging to forgiveness of situation sub-dimension of forgiveness. Self-esteem and personality traits of openness to experience, neuroticism and extraversion together explain 21.3 % of the total variance belonging to forgiveness of situation sub-dimension of forgiveness.

4. Discussion

Studies conducted with regard to young people's forgiveness trait has been on the increase recently. When the relevant literature is reviewed, one can see that there are studies indicating that there is a correlation between self-esteem and forgiveness (Hall and Fincham, 2005; Brown and Phillips, 2005; Eaton et al., 2006). Moreover, one can also see studies concerning personality traits and forgiveness (Walker and Gorsuch, 2002; Brose et al., 2005; Neto, 2007; Wang, 2008). Therefore, since this study investigated the relationship between forgiveness and both personality traits and self-esteem, the findings obtained are believed to be useful for young people who we are trying to equip with the quality of forgiveness. In this study, the correlations between personality traits and self-esteem and forgiveness (of self, others and situation) were investigated and we discussed the results obtained with respect to how much of the variance, concerning forgiveness, (of self, others and situation) personality traits and self-esteem could predict.

As a result of the study, it was found that there is a positive and significant correlation between the personality trait of extraversion and forgiveness of self, others and situation. It is observed that the research findings of Brose et al. (2005) are in conformity with this result and that it supports this finding. The fact that a positive correlation was found between young people's personality trait of extraversion and their forgiveness of self, others and situation indicates that the personality trait of extraversion is related to forgiveness and that especially when individuals make a mistake, young people who contact those individuals ignore the mistakes and forgive them. In particular, if individuals do not forgive themselves, they fail to communicate and maintain communication, which is an indication of extraversion (Kavaklı, Yalçın and Kesici, 2016; Yalçın and Kesici, 2016; Sahin, 2016). If an extroverted individual accuses others, then it can be said that s/he will avoid communication and in time give it up totally. Consequently, s/he will have punished both themselves and others. This may be the reason why the trait of forgiveness increases as the quality of extraversion increases.

As a result of this study, a positive and significant correlation was found between the personality trait of agreeableness and forgiveness of self and others. When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that there are studies indicating existence of a relationship between agreeableness and forgiveness (Brose et al., 2005; Neto, 2007; Wang, 2008). It can be said that findings of those studies support our result. Discovery of correlation between the personality trait of agreeableness and forgiveness of self and others can be explained with reference to the fact that individuals exhibiting the personality trait of agreeableness are flexible people. If individuals are flexible, then, they can better tolerate the mistakes made by the self and others. This may explain why one forgives self and others when the personality trait of agreeableness increases.

As a result of this study, a positive and significant correlation was found between the personality trait of conscientiousness and forgiveness of self, situation and others. This result can be explained with reference to the fact that individuals' trait of forgiveness enables them to notice their gains and losses. If individuals possess a high level of conscientiousness, it can be said that the possibility of their noticing the positive gains brought by these relationships is also high. However, it can be thought that when individuals do not take initiative and instead avoid taking responsibility, then they may not be able to establish a healthy communication and thus punish both themselves and others. This may explain why people's forgiveness increases as their conscientiousness level increases.

The findings obtained from our study indicated that there was a positive but low-level correlation between the personality trait of neuroticism and forgiveness of self. It is observed that this finding is in contradiction with the findings of some studies in the relevant literature (Walker and Gorsuch, 2002; Brose et al., 2005; Neto, 2007). Individuals with the personality trait of neuroticism may experience an intense feeling of regret when they do not forgive and begin to accuse themselves. Therefore, it can be thought that individuals with the personality trait of neuroticism need this quality of forgiveness in order to free themselves of these feelings of regret and guilt. They may dispose of this feeling of guilt through the relationships they establish and thus forgive themselves. This may explain why forgiveness of self-increases as the personality trait of neuroticism increases.

As a result of this study, a positive and significant correlation was found between the personality trait of openness to experience and individuals' forgiveness of self, situation and others. It may be conceived that when they suffer from unfavorable conditions, individuals who are open to new experiences may regard the individuals they meet, the situation they are in or forgiveness of self as an opportunity, be more willing to forgive and be more inclined to forgive. This may explain why individuals' quality of forgiveness of self, others and situation increases as their personality trait of openness to experience increases (Izgar, Gürsel, Kesici and Negiş, 2004; Özyeşil, Deniz and Kesici, 2013).

It was found in the study that individuals' self-esteem was correlated with forgiveness of self and others. When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that this finding is similar to the findings of other studies (Hall and Fincham, 2005; Eaton et al., 2006; Strelan, 2007). In particular, a significant correlation was found between self-esteem and forgiveness of self. Strelan (2007), too, reported a significant correlation between self-esteem and forgiveness of self in his study. This finding seems to be in support of the finding of this study.

It was found that individuals' self-esteems and their personality trait of openness to experience predicted forgiveness of self. Gündüz (2014) reported that self-esteem was the most important predictor of forgiveness of self. This result is seen to be in support of the finding of this study. When this result obtained from the study is examined, it is observed that the most important predictor of forgiveness of self is self-esteem. It can be said on the basis of this result that individuals with high self-esteem have high levels of forgiveness of self. It can be argued that individuals with high levels of self-esteem regard themselves as valuable people and therefore the possibility of their forgiveness of self is high due to the value they attach to themselves. It can also be maintained that individuals having the personality trait of openness to experience may be inclined to forgive.

It was found that individuals' personality traits of openness to experience, neuroticism, self-esteem and extraversion predicted forgiveness of others. When the studies conducted in this regard are examined, it is seen that there are studies indicating existence of a correlation between forgiveness of others and self-esteem (Alpay, 2009; Gündüz, 2014). Individuals with the personality trait of openness to experience may be thought to be more willing to forgive others. It can also be conceived that individuals with the personality trait of extraversion may be more inclined to forgive and that individuals with personality trait of neuroticism may be willing to forgive others so as to be able to cope with this situation.

It was found that individuals' self-esteem and their personality traits of openness to experience, neuroticism and extraversion predicted forgiveness of situation. It can be deduced that individuals with high levels of self-esteem may assess the problems and conflicts around them differently. They may exert an effort to solve the problems arising from the situation. They may feel that the arising mistakes have not occurred because of them or others; they may also think optimistically that those mistakes could be eliminated, that they need to take initiative to eliminate them and that they may eliminate them by showing up their strengths. In this frame of mind, they may think that the situation they are in is not a disaster, that it may happen to anyone and therefore they forgive the situation (Kesici et al., 2016). In addition to self-esteem, if individuals also possess the personality trait of openness to experience, they may develop tolerance towards different situations from different points of view. With this tolerance, it can be said that by showing each different experience may bring gains to them, they may evaluate each different situation within its own context, prefer internal attribution to external attribution and evaluate the situation objectively (Bozgeyikli, 2010; Kesici, 2015).

In conclusion, it can be said that increasing individuals' self-esteems may contribute to the development of their forgiveness trait. Given the influence of parents on their children, it can be argued that parents' attitudes substantially affect individuals' self-esteems and personality traits (Osman and Bozgeyikli, 2015; Kesici et al., 2016). Therefore, in order to be able to raise a youth with high levels of forgiveness quality, families, teachers and the society need to cooperate. In particular, awareness should be raised in families, teachers and the society that there need not be a punishment for every mistake.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

As a result of this study, it was found that individuals' personality trait of extraversion was in a positive and significant correlation with forgiveness of self, others and situation. It was further found that the personality trait of agreeableness was in a positive and significant correlation with forgiveness of self and others. The personality trait of conscientiousness was in a positive and significant correlation with forgiveness of self, situation and others. It was determined that the personality trait of neuroticism was in a positive and significant correlation with forgiveness of self. A positive and significant correlation was found between the personality trait of openness to experience and forgiveness of self, situation and others. Also, a positive and significant correlation was determined between self-esteem and forgiveness of self and others.

It was found that self-esteem and the personality trait of openness to experience were predictors of forgiveness of self. It was determined that self-esteem, openness to experience, neuroticism and extraversion were predictors of forgiveness of others. Moreover, personality traits of openness to experience, neuroticism, extraversion and self-esteem were predictors of forgiveness of situation.

Young people should focus on forgiveness rather than errors committed by individuals while they are interacting with their environment. The more extroverted individuals are, the more interaction they will be engaged in, so they should be inclined towards forgiveness. In order to increase the trait of forgiveness, young individuals need to be flexible instead of rigid. Individuals should act proactively to forgive by not exaggerating when an error is made with regard to an incident. When young people commit an error, they should be patient rather than impulsive and hasty. Individuals should develop a different point of view concerning errors related to themselves, others and incidents that took place. They should adopt the manner of healthy and grown-up people in the face of errors rather than being punitive. Young people should be aware of their weaknesses and strengths. They should be forgiving rather than punitive in order to make their weaknesses stronger and to be able to further improve their strengths.

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