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A comparison of forgiveness across two cultures: Lebanon and the United States

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A COMPARISON OF FORGIVENESS ACROSS TWO CULTURES:
LEBANON AND THE UNITED STATES

An Abstract of a Thesis
Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Arts in Education

Zeina Yousof
University of Northern Iowa
July 2010

ABSTRACT

Research suggests that the propensity to forgive expressed by societies is often influenced by the cultural orientation of the society. Collectivistic societies tend to express a higher level of willingness to forgive than individualistic societies. This study examined how two samples of different cultural orientations, Lebanese and American, define forgiveness and express their feelings, thoughts and behavior towards a specific offender who has hurt them in the past. In addition to that, the willingness to forgive of the two samples was measured. Measurement instruments for this study consisted of the Enright Forgiveness Inventory and the Willingness to Forgive scale. These two protocols were administered to 200 students at the Lebanese American University in Beirut, Lebanon and 141 students at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, USA.

Results suggest that the student sample at the University of Northern Iowa demonstrated a higher level of willingness to forgive and of actual forgiveness towards a specific offender, compared to the student sample at the Lebanese American University, thus scoring higher on both instruments. The study also considered the effects of educational level and religious affiliation on the willingness to forgive and actual forgiveness which demonstrated no effect. Details regarding how the two samples defined forgiveness and how their definitions compare with each other and with experts' definitions are discussed thoroughly in the scope of this thesis.

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This Study by: Zeina Yousof

Entitled: A Comparison of Forgiveness Across Two College Students in Lebanon and the United States

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

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To my mother and father,

It is because of you that I am here...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

An unforgiving 20th century has passed by to bring about world wars, ethnic conflicts and dictatorial power that caused much violence, animosity and killing among humankind. Wounds more psychological than physical prevailed individuals who lived to experience the aftermath of the unforgiving century. One way to overcome conflict and heal these wounds is through forgiveness- a complex human phenomenon experienced mostly by the offended and sometimes by the offender after an injury takes place (So, 2004). The term aims towards resolving conflicts, providing internal peace and restoring harmony in humanity. This is done in order to promote a coherent and loving community. Both an art in its practice and a science in its clinical interventions (Worthington, 2005), forgiveness has been under theoretical and empirical research for the past three decades (Enright & Coyle, 1998; Enright & The Human Development Study Group, 1991; Freedman, Enright & Knuston, 2005).

Prior to the 1980s forgiveness was mostly embedded in religion and philosophy and looked upon as a blessed act carried out by righteous people. Major world religions, for as long as they have existed, encourage forgiveness among humanity in order to bring about spiritual and emotional benefits to individuals (McCullough, Pargament & Thoresen, 2000). According to the world's major religions, when individuals forgive, they are imitating God, thus associating themselves with the divine (McCullough et al.,

2000). To sustain this point three major religions are studied and different quotes from the holy books are cited that pertain to forgiveness. The three major religions and the books referred to are; Judaism (the Torah), Christianity (the New Testament) and finally Islam (the Quran). As stated in the Torah of Judaism, a wronged person is religiously obliged to forgive an offender who apologizes and tries to rectify the action, "It is forbidden to obdurate and not allow yourself to be appeased. On the contrary, one should be easily pacified and find it difficult to become angry. When asked by an offender for forgiveness, one should forgive with a sincere mind and a willing spirit...forgiveness is natural to the seed of Israel" (Mishneh Torah, Teshuvah 2:10). In the New Testament of Christianity, we find that Jesus spoke of the importance of forgiveness as a characteristic of a Christian. The verse "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven" is found in Luke 6:37 and implies that granting forgiveness is directly linked to being forgiven in the Hereafter. As for the Quran of Islam, we find that Allah, God in Arabic, is described as the "most merciful," "most forgiving," "most compassionate," and the "releaser" who releases the believers from punishment as a result of sins and mistakes. Repentance is often required for forgiveness from the divine, for example the sin of worshiping any but one God. Yet in the case of human forgiveness, both to forgive and to be forgiven are important teachings in Islam. In fact, human forgiveness is often associated with being forgiven from the divine, a concept seen previously in Christianity. Allah in the Quran says to the believers: "Let not those among you who are endued with grace and amplitude of means resolve by oath against helping their kinsmen, those in want and those who migrated in

the path of Allah. Let them forgive and overlook. Do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? Indeed Allah is most-forgiving, most Merciful.” (Al-Nur 24:22).

Thus we see that all three religions address forgiveness in their holy books and seem to associate forgiveness among mankind in the world with forgiveness from the divine in the hereafter, almost as though forgiving fellow humans is a command from the divine.

It was not until the 1980s that the topic of forgiveness began to be examined from a psychological perspective. Ever since, scientific studies on forgiveness have been on the rise and forgiveness has been studied in relation to many social, cognitive and biological factors (McCullough et al., 2000; Worthington, 2005).

Robert Enright, a professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Wisconsin Madison was among the first to explore and write extensively on the science of forgiveness as a process and an intervention. Enright’s basic crux for forgiveness is that it involves replacing negative thoughts, actions and feeling with more positive ones. He also proposed an interpersonal model including twenty units for people who wish to pursue forgiveness as an intervention while emphasizing the importance that the forgiver freely and willingly chooses this option. Following that, the literature on forgiveness showed an increase in research on forgiveness as a clinical intervention, the psychology and development of forgiveness towards others and the self and cross cultural comparisons on the perception of forgiveness. This is not to negate that for thousands of

years the importance and usefulness of forgiveness has been realized with incidents of conflict as a conflict resolution approach (So, 2004).

Diverse streams of literature on psychological inquiry on forgiveness exist and many of them examine clinical and educational interventions regarding the association of forgiveness and physical, mental and spiritual health (Al-Mabuk, Enright & Cardis, 1995; Coyle & Enright, 1997; Freedman & Chang, 2010; Freedman & Enright, 1996; Freedman, Enright & Knuston, 2005; Lawler-Row & Reed, 2007; McCullough & Worthington, 1995; Wade, Johnson & Meyer, 2008). As stated earlier, Enright was the first to develop interventions on forgiveness. Worthington and his group later worked on psycho-educational interventions among groups of people (Worthington, 2005).

Forgiveness has also been used with a variety of populations who have experienced different kinds of hurt such as incest survivors (Freedman & Enright, 1996), elderly women (Hebl & Enright, 1993), parentally love-deprived college students (Al-Mabuk, Enright, & Cradis, 1995), men hurt by their partner's abortion (Coyle & Enright, 1997), victims of spousal abuse (Reed & Enright, 2006), individuals who have anger towards ex-spouse (Rye et al., 2005), substance abusers (Lin, Mack, Enright, Krahn, & Baskin, 2004), at-risk adolescents (Freedman, 2008; Gambaro, 2002), and terminally ill cancer patients (Hansen, 2002) .

Despite the fact that little empirical research investigates forgiveness within cultural variables, the literature on this area has been on the rise especially during the last

decade. Some examine forgiveness in a single culture (Azar, Mullet & Vinsonneau, 1999; Azar & Mullet 2001; Azar & Mullet 2002; Sandage, Hill & Vang, 2003), while others compare forgiveness in two cultures, how each culture goes about forgiving and how willing are they to forgive in hurtful situations (Kadiangandu, Mullet & Vinsonneau, 2001; Paz, Neto & Mullet, 2008; Suwartono, Prawasti & Mullet, 2007), and a few others examine forgiveness from a cultural perspective (Sandage, Hill & Vang 2003; Sandage & Williamson, 2005). Cross cultural comparisons have taken place mostly across countries of different cultural orientations, collectivistic orientations such as Congo, Lebanon, and individualistic orientations such as France, Western Europe. Sandage and Williamson (2005) highlighted the effect of cultural orientation on models of forgiveness. In their work, they identified three approaches that researchers choose to adopt when conducting empirical research on culture and forgiveness, one of which was adapted in this thesis. It is the approach that involves cross-cultural comparisons of samples from two or more different cultural, ethnic, or racial groups on measures of forgiveness. This method supplies direct information on similarities and differences across cultures and sometimes within a single nation if the comparison is among different ethnic or religious groups in one nation. For example, Azar and Mullet (2001) compare forgiveness schemas between a sample of Muslim and Christian Lebanese in one study.

Statement of the Problem

The present research was designed to add to the literature on cross-cultural comparisons regarding the definition and application of forgiveness. Differences and similarities in the way forgiveness is defined among two cultures were examined. In addition, scales measuring the willingness to forgive were given to the two samples, each from a different culture. The two samples were degree enrolled university students in two different parts of the world. The first sample was 200 students at the Lebanese American University in Beirut, Lebanon and the second was 141 university students at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, USA. Willingness to forgive and the definition of forgiveness of the two samples were measured among various dimensions such as; educational level, cultural orientation and religion.

Significance of the Problem

This research aims towards adding knowledge and information to the literature of how individuals from different cultures define forgiveness. Since the research has been conducted in two different countries with two different culture orientations, we are able to provide a perspective on the differences and similarities in the way the two cultures define forgiveness. The research also illustrates any difference or similarity in the willingness to forgive among the samples of the two cultures. Furthermore, some independent variables are also investigated in this research and these include the effect of age and educational level on the willingness to forgive. Individuals were given the option

of writing down their religion and this would constitute as one more independent variable that will be investigated in relation to one's willingness to forgive.

Definition of Terms

Some crucial variables have been investigated in this thesis and these variables may have slight variations in definitions. For this reason, the definitions that we adopted as we investigated this research and analyzed results are provided.

Forgiveness

It seems that a consensual agreement on the definition of forgiveness is hard to establish among all researchers in the field (Worthington, 2005) and slight alterations in the definitions of forgiveness exist between one researcher and another. For the scope of this thesis, the definition provided by Subkoviak, Enright, and Wu (1992) will be adopted and they define forgiveness as:

The overcoming of resentment toward an offender, not by denying ourselves the right to such feelings, but by endeavoring to view the offender with benevolence, compassion and even love, while recognizing that he or she has abandoned the right to them. The important points of this definition are as follows: (a) one who forgives has suffered a deep hurt, thus showing resentment, (b) the offended person has a moral right to resentment, but overcomes it nonetheless, (c) a new response to the other accrues, including compassion and sometimes love, (d) this loving response occurs despite the realization that there is no obligation to love the offender (p.3).

Baskin and Enright (2004) state that forgiveness is an individual decision, one's choice, and should not be forced upon anyone. In fact, Enright, Freedman and Rique (1998) fear

that individuals who have been forced to forgive may fall into pseudo-forgiveness rather than genuine forgiveness. Enright also views forgiveness as a process and expresses this idea with the twenty unit process model that he developed along with the Human Development Study Group in 1991. The model is not to be viewed as a “rigid, step-like sequence, but a flexible set of processes with feedback and feed-forward loops” (Enright, Freedman & Rique, 1998, p.12).

Holmgren, a forgiveness therapy advocate, highlights four core conditions to the definition of forgiveness (Holmgren, 1993). The first is that an individual has to be hurt either physically, emotionally, socially, psychologically, etc. Enright and the Human Study Group (1991) state that the injury must be a deep and long lasting one. The second condition, according to Holmgren (1993), is that there has to be a person(s) responsible for the injury. She does not place importance on whether or not there was an intention by the offender to injure (Enright & the Human Study Group, 1991). The third condition that Holmgren identifies is the willful change of negativity of the injured towards the injurer, thus eliminating resentment, desire for revenge and negative affect. North (1987) was one of the first researchers to emphasize the importance of the injured to actively choose forgiveness as an option. The final condition that Holmgren (1993) identifies is the replacement of negative elements with positive elements by the injured and accepting the humanity and value of the offender as a person. This would include examining the offender’s background and trying to see their action from another perspective. It would

also include an affective, cognitive and behavioral change towards the offender such as replacing feelings of hatred with respect and compassion.

Sometimes highlighting what forgiveness is not provides individuals with a clearer and more distinct definition of the term. Forgiveness is not a passive act. It is not a decrease in anger as a result of passing time. It is not pardoning or excusing nor is it reconciling with the offender. In fact, Freedman (2008) states that forgiveness can occur from a safe place while not restoring the relationship when re-injury is likely to happen. Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) make an important distinction between forgiveness and reconciliation in which they state that while reconciliation involves restoring a relationship and requires participation from both the victim and the offender, forgiveness on the other hand requires victim participation only. Freedman and Chang (2010) have also made a clear distinction between forgiveness and reconciliation by stating that forgiveness is a thing that a person does on his/her own, but reconciliation is something that is influenced by actions from both the offended and the offender. Forgiveness does not involve forgetting, condoning and or being selfish (Enright & the Human Development Study Group; 1991, Freedman, Enright & Knuston, 2005; McGary, 1989).

Culture

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2003) give “culture” the following definition: “Belief systems and value orientations that influence customs, norms, practices and social institutions, including psychological processes (language, caretaking practices, media, educational systems) and organizations” (p.380).

Worthington (2005) states that the APA’s definition of culture suggests that, forgiveness models, therapies and definitions are influenced by cultural and contextual dimensions. It might be the practice of one culture that forgiveness is sought from the tribe leader or the person of highest status in a group rather than the person injured. A good example would be the response of the Amish people toward the school shooting that took away five Amish girls’ lives in Pennsylvania in 2006. The entire Amish community forgave the murder and his family. This was because older people in the community reminded the rest that they should not think evil of this man and that he stands before a just God now. Another reason they forgave is because it is in Amish culture that grudges are let go and it was what Jesus did after all (Amish School Shooting, 2010). Despite the influence of culture on the forgiveness process, there is little empirical research on cultural and contextual variable in relationship to forgiveness (Sandage, Hill, & Vang, 2003).

Collectivism and Individualism

Collectivism (C) and Individualism (I) are two cultural constructs that have been researched in many studies and many fields such as sociology, anthropology and

psychology. These two terms define certain characteristics of personality and aspects of interpersonal and intergroup behaviors (Ayash-Abdo, 2001). The way value orientation predominates among individuals of a culture is how societies are labeled either as collectivist societies or individualistic societies. Collectivistic countries are typically countries of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, the Pacific and Latin America (Ayyash-Abdo, 2001; Triandis, Brislin & Hui, 1988). Hofstede (1980) says the following about collectivism “pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive ingroups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty” or “the subordination of the individual to the goals of a collective” (Hui & Triandis, 1986, p. 245). Such cultures place importance on group harmony rather than the satisfaction and the interest of individuals. Individualism, on the other hand, is a cultural orientation that is dominantly found in western, Northern Europe and in North America (Triandis et al., 1988) and is defined as “the habit or principle of being independent and self-reliant: self-centered in feeling or conduct; egoism” (Jewell & Abate, 2001, p. 865) or “the subordination of the goals of the collectivities to individual goals” (Hui & Triandis 1986, p. 245).

Research Questions and Hypothesis:

Based on the introduction above, this thesis set forth the following questions to be studied and examined:

1. What are some similarities and differences in the definition of forgiveness provided by a sample of students attending the Lebanese American University in Beirut, Lebanon and a sample of students attending the University of Northern Iowa in Iowa, United States of America? How do these definitions compare to expert's definitions on forgiveness?
2. Using the Enright Forgiveness Inventory and Willingness to Forgive scale for measurement purposes, how does actual forgiveness and willingness to forgive among individuals compare in the samples of the two cultures?
3. What is the effect of education level on one's willingness to forgive and actual forgiveness?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter examines the literature on forgiveness research. It will provide an overview on the literature in the following areas; the developmental nature of forgiveness; the process model of forgiveness that is described by Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000); benefits of forgiveness; forgiveness as a clinical intervention; characteristics of societies based on cultural orientation; forgiveness in cultures; and trends in forgiveness based on religion, age and educational level reached. This chapter will specifically summarize the literature on cross-cultural trends in forgiveness since this thesis is a cross-cultural comparative study.

The Developmental Nature of Forgiveness

It was probably Piaget who first described forgiveness from a developmental eye (McCullough et al., 2000). Even though what he wrote on that was about three-fourths of a page in his *Le Judgement moral chez l'enfant* (McCullough et al., 2000), he clearly states that forgiveness is a state of “ideal reciprocity” (Piaget, 1965), which can be expressed as “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Thus, the statement implies that one should forgive others because he/she has been previously forgiven (McCullough et al., 2000). As a result, Piaget expects that forgiveness will not be understood by individuals before late childhood.

Another person who talked about the “moral development of forgiveness” was Enright. He and his group published the first empirical study on the moral development of forgiveness (Enright, Santos & Al-Mabuk, 1989). In their article they conducted forgiveness interviews on 59 subjects who were in 4th, 7th and 10th grade, college and adulthood. These interviews assessed six stages of forgiveness development, Rest’s DIT measure of justice development, and religiosity. Results showed that a strong trend between age, forgiveness and justice. The more religious a person is, the higher the forgiveness stage they are in. This study was replicated with 60 subjects and the same results were found. Another article on the topic was published by Enright and his Human Development Study Group in 1991 in which they introduced the twenty unit process model. The developmental model they introduced was based on the Kohlbergian justice system model (Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991) with slight alterations. The work was supported by the preceding empirical study carried out by Enright, Santos and Al-Mabuk in 1989 (Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991).

As described by North (1987), a forgiver knows that the wrongdoer has no right to compassion, but forgiveness is given nonetheless. This statement seems to act as a basis for the five stages of forgiveness that were introduced by Enright and his Human Development Study Group (1991), for they identified these stages based on the reasons behind an offended person forgiving the offender. The first stage is “Revengeful Forgiveness” in which a person only forgives if he/she can punish the offender to a

similar degree of the pain or hurt that was inflicted upon them. “Restitutional or Compensational Forgiveness” is the second stage and the difference between it and the first stage is that the offended here might forgive to relieve him/herself from a sense of guilt resulting out from withholding forgiveness. The third stage of forgiveness development is labeled as “Expectational Forgiveness.” In this stage, the offended forgives because of pressure from others in the society- usually from people of higher status. The fourth stage is labeled as “Lawful Expectational Forgiveness,” where the offended forgives because of laws that guide justice such as religious or philosophical laws. The fifth stage is when an offended forgives to restore social harmony in society and views forgiveness as an effort to maintain peaceful relationships. This stage is labeled as “Forgiveness as Social Harmony.” The final stage in forgiveness development is known as “Forgiveness as Love” and it requires the offended to forgive unconditionally because this act promotes a true sense of care and love among individuals. As mentioned earlier, these stages are based on the Kohlbergian stages of justice. Briefly, these are six stages as well, the first being “Punishment and Obedience Orientation” in which the hurt individual perceives that justice should be held by the person who can punish. According to Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) “Relativist Justice” is the second stage in Kohlberg’s (1976) six stages of justice development and it states that a sense of reciprocity develops within the victim something like help me and I will help you. The third stage is “Good Boy/Girl Justice.” Here the victim relates with a group, so whatever a group census is what is right. Societal laws come into the picture as an indication of what is right and what is wrong in stage four

which is “Law and Order Justice.” The fifth stage in the justice system is when the victim still cherishes societal laws but realizes that some of these laws are unjust and so strives to work within the system towards a fair change. This stage is called “Social Contract Orientation.” The final stage in the system according to Kohlberg (1976) is “Universal Ethical Principle Orientation” and here the victim realizes that their sense of justice is based on whatever maintains rights for all individuals. Conscious comes into play here in determining what will be acceptable when two view points are present. Enright, Santos and Al-Mabuk (1989) found that the first two stages portray what 9-10 year old participants viewed as an appropriate consequence for forgiveness to be considered. This means that young participants feel it is legitimate to grant forgiveness to an offender in two scenarios; the first is that a similar consequence happens to the offender thus causing him/her a similar degree of pain, second the offended feels guilty about withholding forgiveness from the offender. The first two stages involve a distortion of forgiveness for it meshes with justice (Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991). Stage three is the stage that 15-16 year old participants identified with and selected as a legitimate reason to consider forgiveness. In this stage, the participants feel that forgiveness takes place only after pressure from society is inflicted upon the individual who is offended. College students and adults identified stage four as a state where forgiveness would be legitimate. Here too is a preceding condition to forgiveness such as religious obligation to forgive. These preceding conditions disappear in stages five and six. However, in stage five, we see that a condition following forgiveness is expected and that is social harmony (Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991). It is only

in stage six that true forgiveness is bestowed upon an offended as a sign of love and acceptance and no condition is sought after or before forgiveness. Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) reports that: “most subjects showed evidence of two or more stages in their thinking.”

The Process Model of Forgiveness

Forgiveness has been defined by Enright as a *process* that occurs differently with each individual and does not happen overnight. Since this thesis adopts Enright’s views on forgiveness, the process model will be briefly discussed. In his process model, Enright combined cognitive, affective and behavioral factors, since all are involved in forgiveness (Freedman et al., 2005). The process model of forgiveness can occur in 20 units and is not seen as a “rigid, step like sequence, but a flexible set of processes with feedback and feed-forward loops” (Enright et al., 1998, p. 12). People may skip some units while others may need to go back and work through some previous units. This reinforces the fact that individuals forgive differently and the difference can be very much attributed to each individual’s previous experiences and role models (Freedman et al., 2005).

Four phases make up the 20 unit model, units 1-8 fall within the first phase which is the *uncovering phase*. This is when the injured person explores and gains insight onto how the injustice committed towards him/her has affected his/her life. Freedman et al. (2005) state that this phase allows the injured to experience both the pain and the reality

of the injury and how it affected him/ her. They add that this insight is necessary to motivate the injured to seek some change and realize that previous ways of coping with the injury were not effective in reducing the pain.

Units 9-11 make up the second phase which is known as the *decision phase*. In this stage the injured makes the decision to forgive, after having explored the idea and the process of forgiveness. Freedman and Enright (1996) affirm that the injured at this stage only makes a cognitive decision to forgive, even though he/she may not feel forgiving at the time. It is the job of the process model to help him/her reach the forgiving stage.

The *work phase* is the third phase in the forgiveness process model and it includes units 12-15. The injured starts “seeing the offender in new light” (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000) or perhaps understanding the background of the injurer or where the injurer came from to better understand why the injury could have taken place (Freedman et al., 2005). This results in a positive affect towards the injurer, the self and the relationship (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). Freedman et al. (2005) point out that in units 13 and 14 the injured starts feeling empathy and compassion towards the injurer and this is a result of the reframing that the injured goes through, be it towards the injurer or the context of the injury.

The final phase in the forgiveness process model is the *outcome phase* or the *deepening phase* and this represents the last four units of the model, units 16-20. It is in this stage that the injurer gains insight that he/she is not alone (Enright et al., 1998). It is

in this phase that the injured offers the injurer the gift of forgiveness (Freedman et al., 2005) after having examined some or all of the following; finding meaning in one's own suffering, realizing that one previously needed others' forgiveness, knowing that one is not alone and there are others who are ready to help, realizing a new purpose in one's own life as he/she becomes more settled and becoming aware of affective transformation of one's own self and towards the injurer (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) pointed out that forgiveness is affected by two factors: the severity of the injury and the relationship between the injured and the injurer before the offense. The deeper the injury is and the greater the more involved a person is with the injurer the harder it is to forgive (Mullet, Neto & Riviere, 2005).

Other than the process model developed by Enright et al. (1991), there are two other basic models of forgiveness; one was developed by McCullough, Worthington and Rachal (1997) and the other was developed by McCullough and Worthington in 1995 (Freedman et al., 2005). Freedman et al. (2005) articulated that the three basic models require the injured who experienced a deep hurt from an injurer to focus on the hurt and the injurer.

Benefits of Forgiveness

To forgive is a powerful choice that individuals themselves make. "The media in both print and documentaries have realized the importance of forgiveness for emotional wellbeing" (Freedman & Chang, 2010). Mental health counselors support the use of

forgiveness as a therapeutic tool because of the benefits associated with forgiving, such as decreases in anger and resentment and letting go of the desire of revenge” (Freedman & Chang, 2010). Victimized individuals often have higher levels of anxiety, depression, irritability, fatigue, and loss of confidence and self-esteem (Enright & Rique, 2000). Findings have supported the hypothesis that the more forgiving a person is, the less anxiety, depression and/or anger he/she has because of the hurt (Coyle & Enright, 1997). In addition to that, negative feelings within one’s self decrease when one forgives and positive feelings and well being increase.

Forgiveness as an Intervention

While forgiveness is *not* the only way to heal after being injured, “it is *one* way to heal and effectively decrease anger and resentment” (Freedman et al., 2005, p.400). The first empirical intervention that used forgiveness as a goal was done by Hebl and Enright in 1993 (Freedman et al., 2005). Prior to this study, all previous reports on forgiveness interventions were based on anecdotes and/or case study reports (Hebl & Enright, 1993). Hebl and Enright’s program ran for 8 weeks and was geared towards elderly women with miscellaneous hurts. The objective was to have the elderly women be able to forgive the person who caused them a deep hurt after going through the forgiveness process model by Enright and his Development Study Group (1991). A control group was also present in which the group discussed several topics that were suggested by the participants during the first session. It was seen that the experimental group, the one that was exposed to and worked with the forgiveness process model had a significantly higher forgiveness profile

compared to the control group, which had not discussed forgiveness at all. Yet, it was also found that both groups experienced a significant decrease in anxiety and depression when pretest and posttest results were compared. This was the beginning of the pathway towards using forgiveness as an intervention among individuals who suffered from deep hurts by other individuals.

Following that, practical and theoretical research on forgiveness as therapy or intervention has been taking place. Wade, Johnson, and Meyer (2008) state that forgiveness therapy includes two important components. The first is the reduction or the elimination of negative feelings, thoughts and behaviors associated with a specific hurt. The second component is the increase in “positive, prosocial feelings, thoughts and behaviors” (Wade et al., 2008). He explains that an increase in positive experience might come through feelings of compassion towards the offender or seeing where the offender came from, and these two ideas fall coherent with Enright’s thoughts on forgiveness. Holmgren (1993) would also agree on these ideas on forgiveness. Wade adds that another form of increase in positive experience is through engaging in conversation with the offender about the offense. Enright would say that this would be acceptable on the condition that the offender is in a condition where he/she cannot hurt the injured person anymore, i.e.: a safe environment is what Enright would stress.

Worthington (2005) reviewed all the work and described the content of treatments using forgiveness therapy or interventions. He reported that in almost every intervention, significant time and effort was put into helping clients “understand, express and explore

their reactions to the hurt” (Wade et al., 2008, p. 89). Again, Enright referred to forgiveness as a “process.” Two types of treatments were prevalent in the studies on forgiveness intervention, the first worked on having the client identify their own reaction to the hurt, which is then processed in a safe and accepting atmosphere with the therapist. The second type of treatment that was used was developing cognitive and affective empathy towards the offender. Exploring the offender’s background and possible reasons that led to the offense are ways of developing cognitive and affective empathy with the offender.. Empty chair techniques, letter writing, journaling and group role plays are ways of how the victim explores the background of the offender, context of the offense and possible reasons why the offender engaged in the hurtful action (Wade et al., 2008).

Baskin and Enright (2004) describe three basic forgiveness intervention models that have been developed so far. The first is by Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) and it includes 20 units that are divided into four phases. It is what is known as the “process model” and has been discussed earlier in the chapter. The second model is by McCullough, Worthington and Rachal (1997) and the third is by McCullough and Worthington (1995) in which the model aims at having the client reach forgiveness within a one hour intervention session.

How Society Defines Forgiveness

In their article, Freedman and Chang (2010) examined the understanding of the psychology of forgiveness among a sample from the “general population.” Their aim

was to collect more data for mental health counselors, educators and researchers in order for them to effectively assist individuals who are interested in forgiving others. Freedman and Chang (2010) confirmed what previous researchers have found on lay people's understanding of forgiveness, it is diverse and incomplete. Enright et al. (1998) argue that the general population must be given forgiveness education and must be taught that forgiveness is always an option that can be practiced. "A well defined concept of forgiveness can reduce misconceptions and increase the will to forgive, and as current studies illustrate, the injured party's will to forgive is an important motivating factor in forgiveness" (Freedman & Chang, 2010, p. 9).

In Freedman and Chang's study sixteen honor students who were enrolled in an introductory course of the Psychology of Interpersonal Forgiveness in a small Midwestern university created an interview protocol with the help of the professor and selected participants whom they would conduct the interview with. Participants were asked questions that explored their understanding on forgiveness, their personal views on the subject and their experiences with it. After grouping and coding the answers that were given by the participants on the definition of forgiveness Freedman and Chang categorized the responses into seven categories; 53 % mentioned letting go -of anger and ideas of revenge; 20 % mentioned moving on -putting it behind you, in the past; 18% mentioned not holding a grudge, not blaming the person, not reminding the person; 18%brought up forgetting; 16% mentioned second chance, reconciliation, 8% pointed out

recognizing the humanity in the other and 2% mentioned apologies, showing remorse with words, not holding another person accountable.

In addition to the above findings, Freedman and Chang (2010) found that 89% of their sample recognized that there is a difference between forgiveness and reconciliation and 11% did not. "Thirty-five percent thought that the injured could choose to forgive the offender without getting back together, and 35% also responded that reconciliation was an ideal state following forgiveness" (Freedman & Chang, 2010). Twenty-six percent of the sample saw that forgiveness is a one-sided act while reconciliation involves both parties. Twenty percent said that reconciliation could be carried out by the injured without having forgiveness take place and 6 % of the sample thought reconciliation was more spiritual than forgiveness.

Another study that examined laypersons view of forgiveness and what motivates these views was carried out by Younger, Piferi, Jobe and Lawler (2004). The two samples used were community members (older people) and university undergraduates. It was found that for the sample of community members "letting go of negative affect" was most frequently mentioned upon being asked to define forgiveness, whereas the undergraduate sample defined forgiveness as "acceptance, dealing with the event, getting over it" (Younger et al., 2004). Some findings that the authors found were that 25 % of the undergraduates and 16% of the community members saw that reconciliation meant forgiveness. It was also found that the undergraduates stated that they would forgive mainly because "the relationship was too important to give up." The two primary reasons

that motivated individuals in both samples of Younger et al. (2004) to forgive were to maintain an important relationship or feel better emotionally. The authors stated that the idea of offering forgiveness as a gift to both the offender and oneself (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000) was “noticeably lacking” in both groups.

Similar to one of the finding of Younger et al. (2004), Kanz (2000), found that in his sample of 155 college students, an obvious integration between the idea of forgiveness and reconciliation was present among the sample. He also noted that his sample expressed that forgiveness may cause emotional problems which is another idea that does not fall in harmony with what previous researchers have found regarding forgiveness. On the other hand, Kanz’s sample did agree that forgiveness leads to less anger and that an apology is not a prerequisite for forgiveness. They also expressed that forgetting the hurt is not necessary when one chooses to forgive and that forgiving is not a weakness.

Forgiveness in the Cultural Context

Several studies on the effect of context and culture on forgiveness have been conducted in the past decade but fewer cross-cultural studies on the process and propensity to forgive have taken place (Paz et al., 2008). Many of these studies were among countries of different cultural orientations, typically countries of individualistic orientations vs. countries of collectivistic orientations. Studies on forgiveness in different cultural contexts include; findings from different communities in the Middle Eastern

country of Lebanon (Azar & Mullet, 2001; Azar & Mullet, 2002; Azar, Mullet & Vinsonneau, 1999;), a Congo-France comparison (Kadiangandu, Mullet & Vinsonneau, 2001), forgiveness in the Hmong culture (Sandage, Hill & Vang, 2003), a Southern Asia and Western Europe comparison (Suwartono, Prawasti & Mullet, 2007), and a China and Western Europe comparison (Paz, Neto & Mullet, 2008). Perhaps the objective of such comparisons seems to explore how individuals of each cultural orientation are shaped, and what are their values, norms, practices and attitudes towards relationships among individuals and groups. This context would then be used to better understand how people view the process of forgiveness in that culture.

Cultural researchers and psychologists are examining and understanding cultural practices in order to realize ways of coping with interpersonal conflict among societies (Sandage & Williamson, 2005). Sandage and Williamson (2005) also explain that some societies exhibit communal forgiveness (collectivistic cultures) in which the decision to forgive stems out from a group- usually a group leader and the objective behind forgiveness is usually to preserve social harmony. This is done typically through religious teachings and practices and intergenerational family meditation. Some cultures, typically collectivistic cultures tend to view forgiveness as a communal decision that restores harmony among groups. This was a typical finding of Sandage et al. (2003) when forgiveness in the Hmong culture was examined.

Societies of individualistic cultural orientation tend to emphasize the “I” consciousness, autonomy, emotional independence, right to privacy, financial security,

individual initiative, need for specific friendship, pleasure seeking and universalism (Hofstede, 1980). Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi and Yoon (1994) define societies of cultural orientation as ones who focus on the “we” consciousness, emphasize group solidarity, emotional independence, collective identity, sharing, duties and obligations, particularism, group decisions and need for stable and predetermined friendship. Social harmony, common good towards a common fate, interdependency and nurturance are what prevail in collectivistic societies, while autonomy, self direction, freedom of choice, privacy and uniqueness are characteristics that are encouraged in individualistic societies (So, 2004).

Regarding the practice of forgiveness, individuals from individualistic societies often practice “self forgiveness” since the emphasis is on self and one is free from the authority of fellows in society. The goal of forgiveness in an individualistic culture is personal well-being for the forgiver (Sandage & Williamson, 2005). In contrast, an individual from a collectivistic society would think less of him/herself and more about the duty of maintaining social harmony among the members of the society. This is because many times an offense or a loss of face is viewed as a loss of face for several people rather than to one individual (Sandage & Williamson, 2005).

Sandage and Williamson (2005) report three types of approaches to study forgiveness and culture. The first is cross cultural psychological research within a particular cultural domain outside the United States to test the validity of previously developed forgiveness models in the United States. This type shows aspects of

forgiveness that might be universal but it might not take into account the difference in cultural contexts and meanings. The second type is through cross cultural psychological research that compares samples from two or more different cultural, ethnic or racial groups on forgiveness measures (Sandage & Williamson, 2005). This type of approach may also compare two groups in the same society thus highlighting similarities and differences not only across cultures but also between groups of the same society. This is the type of comparison that this thesis is adopting as it compares the willingness to forgive among two student samples from two universities, one in Beirut, Lebanon and another in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The third approach identified by Sandage and Williamson (2005) is one that uses general categories of qualitative methods used by anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists to attempt to understand forgiveness in relation to social and cultural aspects. The main advantage of this approach is that the nature of it requires that the researcher works within close proximity to the cultural communities being studied.

Azar and colleagues (Azar & Mullet, 2001,2002; Azar, Mullet & Vinsonneau, 1999) examined the propensity to forgive among a sample of Lebanese and different religious communities within the sample. Their first study (Azar et al., 1999) included 48 subjects from three different sects of Christian communities in Beirut, Lebanon (Maronites, Orthodox and Catholic). Stories of a harmful act against a child in the Lebanese civil war were read to the participants and participants had to indicate their level of forgiveness. The subjects were not necessarily ones who were hurt, their rating

was based on what they think of the situation. The stories were manipulated of four dimensions; religious proximity to the participant (Muslim or Christian), absence or presence of apologies for the offense, cancellation of consequences of the harmful act, and the degree of intent which indicated the presence or absence of intention. In their study, Azar et al. (1999) found that the social factor that showed a strong effect on the propensity to forgive was the educational level of the participant. "Better educated people have declared themselves much more prone to forgive than less educated people...From their point of view, the offender, regardless of religion, was also a victim" (Azar et al., 1999). They expressed concerns on how to rehabilitate the person rather than punish him/her. On the other hand, less educated people were unable to detach themselves from the consequence of the committed act thus worried more about how to carry out justice. This brings up a key element of forgiveness and that is that forgiveness does not cancel justice from taking place, but involves letting go of negative emotions, behaviors and thoughts towards the offender on the part of the injured. One could sense from the description that these two concepts are being confused and this only makes it harder for individuals to forgive. The authors also found that cancellation of consequences, lack of intention to harm and the presence of apologies helped in receiving forgiveness. The effect of religious proximity on forgiveness was very subtle and appeared in the Orthodox community mainly. An important finding from Azar et al. (1999) is that the cancellation of consequences and the apologies factors mattered less to more educated participants than less educated ones. Also, it appeared that women were more affected by

the factor of consequence than men. The authors attribute this to the emotional proximity of women to their children especially at times of sickness.

The same study was carried out by Azar and Mullet in 2001 but to Muslim Lebanese of three Muslim sects; Sunni, Shiite and Druze. The same findings were found in this study as the previous study. In addition, it was observed that the Shiite, Druze and Sunni Muslims demonstrated the same willingness to forgive as the Orthodox, Maronite and Catholics Christians. There was no indication of the score was.

In 2002, Azar and Mullet carried out a third study on forgiveness among Muslim and Christian Lebanese. This time the sample size was 240 participants from the six different communities stated above, Sunni, Shiite and Druze Muslims and Catholic, Maronite and Orthodox Christians. Thirty eight statements that related to forgiveness in general or in specific circumstances were read to the participants. The results indicated that the Druze were less likely to disregard obstacles to forgiveness. Participants who attended places of worship regularly were more likely to discount possible obstacles towards forgiveness. In general the samples expressed a consensus over the idea that forgiveness is a better way to deal with hurt or harmful situations than revenge.

Individualism and collectivism were also examined in relation to the forgiveness process in a cross-cultural comparison among French and Congolese sample (Kadiangandu et al., 2001). In their study, Kadiangandu and colleagues found that the Congolese sample claimed to be more forgiving and less vengeful than the French

sample. Differences among the two cultures' sensitivity to circumstances was also observed. Elderly and middle aged Congolese were much more sensitive to circumstances, which included apologies from the offender, invitation to forgive by close relations, cancellation of harm and good mood of the offended. Thus an inverse relationship was observed unlike the direct relationship between the French sample and sensitivity to circumstances. The authors explained this observation to be due to the probability that the elderly are more traditional and less educated. This falls in collaboration with the findings of Azar et al. (1999) that states that "Better educated people have declared themselves much more prone to forgive than less educated people...From their point of view, the offender, regardless of religion, was also a victim." Another interesting observation that Kadiangandu and colleagues found was that among the Congolese sample, those who attended church and those who did not, did not differ as much in their willingness to forgive as did French participants who did and did not attend church. This was explained by the fact that the overall willingness to forgive was higher in the Congolese than the French sample in the first place. These findings were declared after the two samples completed a willingness to forgive questionnaire that contains a number of statements referring to attitudes about forgiveness.

A study that yielded similar results to the previous one was among a sample of Indonesian students, and a sample of French students (Suwartono et al., 2007). The study involved 126 undergraduate Indonesian students and 203 French students from Toulouse and the surrounding region. A forgiveness questionnaire that measures the willingness to

forgive was given to all participants. The results found that the same factorial structure (lasting resentment, sensitivity to circumstances and willingness to forgive) that was evidenced in European samples was present in the Indonesian sample. This result is consistent with what Azar and Mullet (2002) found. It was also evident that willingness to forgive and sensitivity to circumstance were higher among the more collectivistic culture, which is the Indonesian sample in this case, and lasting resentment was lower than the more individualistic culture, which was the French sample in this case. This finding falls coherent with what Kadiangandu et al. (2001) found. The findings regarding religious involvement or tradition in relation with willingness to forgive was very slight. Thus there was no trend within religious affiliation or religiosity on how willing the participants are to forgive. This finding is consistent with what Mullet et al. (2003) found regarding religiosity.

It seems that the studies that have been examined in this paper have mostly reported that religious involvement and its relation to forgiveness is very slight (Kadiangandu et al., 2001; Suwartono et al., 2007). McCullough and Worthington (1999) reviewed work that investigated self reports on forgiveness among religious people and found a discrepancy between how much they say they are forgiving and what research reports as findings. "Religious people appear convinced that they *should be* forgiving people. However, at the level of individual offenses, religious involvement seems to play at best a small role in determining who will and will not forgive" (McCullough & Worthington, 1999). As a result, McCullough and Worthington (1999) introduced four

potential explanations for the contradiction. The first is of social desirability might want religious people to appear more forgiving, even if it is not true. The second reason could be due to the constructs and scales used to measure forgiveness and religiosity. They could be ones that might prevent religious variables and forgiveness variables from correlating highly. The third reason could be due to “the distal location of religion in the causal chain leading to forgiveness” (McCullough & Worthington 1999) and the final reason is attributed to recall bias that make the connection between religious involvement and forgiveness vague.

Collectivism and Individualism in Lebanon and the United States

With the emergence of globalization, individuals from different societies have been interacting with one another thus carrying over thoughts, values and practices to one another. For example, there are immigrants from all over the world who reside in the United States. Many of them come from parts of the world where collectivistic cultural orientations hold applicable. This integration of individuals from different backgrounds has been evident in research done on minority groups in the USA, such as African Americans and Asian Americans (Hook, Worthington & Utsey, 2009). The typical cultural orientation in the United States remains individualistic. Hook et al. (2009) report a finding from a research study that indicates that European Americans generally scored lower in collectivism than did samples from Asia, Africa, South America, the Middle East, central and Western Europe.

Since part of the research conducted in this thesis took place in Cedar Falls, Iowa, where most inhabitants are long time immigrants from the Scandinavian country, it is assumed that they will hold an individualistic cultural orientation.

The other part of the research sample took place in Beirut, Lebanon. Since it is a country in the Middle East, one can instantly predict that individuals from that part of the world would hold more collectivist orientations than individuals from Iowa.

Ayyash-Abdo (2001) examined the cultural orientation of 517 students in several universities in Lebanon. She wanted to examine whether individuals from the multi-lingual country, Lebanon, would hold true to what is thought would be their cultural orientation. The results she found were that language plays a primary role in individuals' orientations; respondents who used the country's native language, Arabic, as the primary way to communicate were consistently more collectivist in nature than those who used a second language such as English or French in their dialogue and daily life. With this finding she suggests that Lebanon is a "multi-lingual society where both worldviews (I & C) coexist" (Ayyash-Abdo, 2001). Ayyash-Abdo explained this finding to be in corroboration to findings of Kashima and Kashima (1998). "Countries in which the language spoken allows pronouns to be dropped show a lower level of individualism" (Ayyash-Abdo, 2001). In both the English and French language, the use of subject pronouns is obligatory. The Arabic language on the other hand allows the pronouns "I" to be dropped. This reduces the predominance of the speaker's person.

Another finding of Ayyash-Abdo (2001) that is worth mentioning is the fact that in her sample, religion played as another potential contributor to the cultural orientation of the individual. She found that Muslims appeared to be more collectivistic than Christians and this could be explained by the fact that most Muslims are practitioners of their religion and often go to places of worship more than Christians (Ayyash-Abdo, 2001).

Current Research

This thesis examines how a sample of students from the Lebanese American University in Beirut, Lebanon and a sample of students from the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, USA define forgiveness. It will compare the results to the above findings and will use the seven categories developed by Freedman and Chang (2010) to categorize participants' responses.

Azar et al. (1999), Azar and Mullet (2001), and Azar and Mullet (2002), found that willingness to forgive was of equal propensity among both Muslim and Christian participants in their research on forgiveness in Lebanon. This thesis will investigate if the same result is observed in this research, since the protocols given to the participants of this research included a question that asks the participant to identify his/her religion. This investigation will only be conducted on the Lebanese sample, for the American sample only includes participants of the Christian faith.

In addition to the above findings, Azar and Mullet (1999) found that the older the individual is and the more education he/she received, the more forgiving they are. This finding was also observed in the study by Kadiangandu et al., (2001). These factors will also be investigated in this research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This research examines the willingness to forgive and actual forgiveness among two student samples in two different countries using two instruments of measurement, the Willingness to Forgive scale by Hebl and Enright (1993), and the Enright Forgiveness Inventory, which measures actual forgiveness toward an offender- by Subkoviak et al. (1992). The purpose is to compare how the scores on these two instruments compare in the case of each sample. Another purpose of this research was to examine how the two samples define forgiveness and compare them with one another and to the definition provided by Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000).

Subjects

Two subsets of student populations from each country were targeted as the samples for this research. Enrolled university students at either one of two universities, the Lebanese American University and the University of Northern Iowa were the general student category that was targeted. Within each of the identified populations two kinds of student participants were sought, participants who were at the entry level of college (freshman or sophomore) and others who were at the Masters level.

The sample from the Lebanese American University consisted of 200 participants, 100 of the 200 were at the entry level of college (freshman or sophomore) and 100 were

at the graduate level of college (Masters). One hundred and two of the 200 participants were males and 98 were females. The sample from the University of Northern Iowa consisted of 141 participants, 67 of the 141 participants were either in their freshman or sophomore year and 74 of the 141 participants were at the Masters level of college. Twenty five of the 141 participants were males and 116 were females. This is because the classes that the administrator went in to administer the protocols were mainly education, counseling and psychology classes, where enrollment is often females.

All participants were over 18 years of age. The mean age of the participants at LAU was 22 and the mean age for participants at UNI was 23. Participants of the Lebanese American University completed the protocols in Spring and Summer 2009 semesters, while participants of the University of Northern Iowa completed the protocols in the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 semesters. The native language of Lebanon is Arabic and the native language of the United States is English. Both samples were given English protocols to complete in order to come up with the findings. It is worthy to note here that all participants from the Lebanese American University are fluent speakers of English. This is proven by the fact that the university is an American affiliated university and English is used as both the language of instruction and the curriculum at the university.

Participating students at the Lebanese American University were from several eclectic majors. These include computer science, business, education, psychology, journalism, interior design, graphic design and political science. Unlike the diversity of students in the Lebanese American University sample, participating students at the

University of Northern Iowa were either getting a degree in education, psychology or leisure, youth and human service.

Instruments

To assess how forgiving the subjects were and how willing to forgive were they, two instruments were used in this study, the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (Subkoviak et al., 1992) and the Willingness to Forgive Scale (Hebl & Enright, 1993).

The Enright Forgiveness Inventory

The Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI) is an objective measure of the degree to which a person forgives another who has hurt them deeply or unfairly. Developed by Enright and his Human Development Study Group, it is a measure that is consistent with Enright's definition on forgiveness. The Enright Forgiveness Inventory consists of 60 items, three subscales of 20 items each. Each subscale assesses a single domain of the following: Affect, Behavior and Cognition. Each of the three subscales has 10 positive items and 10 negative items that are randomly mixed. Thus, the positive affect subscale is assessing whether positive affect is present toward the offender. Two examples assessing positive affect are "I feel warm towards him/her" and "I feel kindness towards him/her." Two examples assessing negative affect are "I feel hostile towards him/her" and "I feel negative towards him/her." "Regarding the person, I do or would avoid" and "Regarding the person, I do or would ignore" are two examples illustrating negative behavior. Two

examples that illustrate positive behavior are “Regarding the person, I do or would help” and “Regarding the person, I do or would lend him/her a hand.” Examples of the final subscale include “I think he/she is evil” and “I think he/she is wretched.” These two are examples illustrating negative cognition towards the offender. However the following the next two examples illustrate positive cognition towards the offender “I think he or she is worthy of respect” and “I think he or she is a good person.” An additional six items follow the 60 items in which items 61-65 are present for construct validity and they measure pseudo-forgiveness (false or fake forgiveness where denial or condonation is often present). A 6 point Likert scale is used for each of the items, Strongly Disagree 1, Disagree 2, Slightly Disagree 3, Slightly Agree 4, Agree 5 and Strongly Agree 6. The final question on the Enright Forgiveness Inventory is item 66 and it is an independent scale that is called the “1-Item Forgiveness scale” (Enright & Rique, 2000). This item asks the participant about the extent that they have forgiven the individual they rated on the scale. A 5-point scale that ranges from 1=Not at all to 5=Complete Forgiveness is what participants use to rate their response. This last question can be used separately from the inventory (Enright & Rique, 2000) and in this thesis a correlation between the total score on the inventory will be compared to the last question on the scale.

All 60 items on the Enright Forgiveness Inventory are used to score the scale. All “positive affect,” “positive behavior” and “positive cognition” are scored as follows: “Strongly Agree” is scored as 1, “Disagree” is scored as 2, “Slightly Disagree” is scored as 3, “Slightly Agree” is scored as 4, “Agree” is scored as 5, “Strongly Agree” is scored

as 6. As for the items that measure “negative affect,” “negative behavior” and “negative cognition” the scores are reversed so as to have “Strongly Agree” score as 6, “Disagree” score as 5, “Slightly Disagree” score as 4, “Slightly Agree” scored as 3, “Agree” score as 2, “Strongly Agree” score as 1. The last five items that measure pseudo-forgiveness (items 61-65) are not included in the total score of the Enright Forgiveness Inventory. .

The Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI) has been examined in five different countries and cultures and it has demonstrated strong internal consistency and construct validity (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). This has nothing to do with the fact that what forgiveness means varies from one culture to another, an idea that Enright and Fitzgibbons expressed (2000). The authors have also found that in spite of these differences all cultures demonstrated a strong correlation between the last question on the Enright Forgiveness Inventory and the total score of the scale.

Scores on the Enright Forgiveness Inventory can range from 60 (a low degree of forgiveness) to 360 (a high degree of forgiveness). Even though participants were encouraged not to skip any items on the scale, some participants from both universities did, but mostly ones from the Lebanese American University (LAU). If the case were that participants omitted a question, the score of that question was scored as zero.

The Willingness to Forgive Scale

This scale gives an estimate of how much an individual is willing to consider forgiveness as an option and as a problem solving or a coping strategy. It is a sixteen item scale made up of hypothetical situations involving an injury. The individual chooses one solution out of ten given choices of how to deal with the situation. Fifteen items address five categories of injurers; boss, friend, significant other, family member or a stranger. Three degrees of hurt are presented for each hypothetical situation: mild, severe and very severe. The individual is asked to make three decisions for each hypothetical situation; “first response” how they deal with the situation initially after the shock is over, “ending response” how they deal with the problem after a period of time has passed and “preferred response” the solution that sounds best to them regardless of whether they would carry it out or not. An example of a hypothetical situation with a mild injury by a significant other is “Your significant other lies to you to get out of doing some chores.” Suppose the individual selects 3 first response, 2 ending response, and 7 preferred response. The person’s first response after the initial shock would be to get even (3), possibly lying to get out of chores in the future. The person chooses to occupy his/her mind in another way (2) in the end. The person’s preference of dealing with the situation (which is not used by the person) is to forgive his/her significant other (7).

Question number sixteen is the last question on the Willingness to Forgive scale, where the individual is asked to recall the most recent incident where a person unjustly treated him/her. Questions such as how long ago did it happen, who was the offender and

a brief description of the offense are asked. Subjects are then asked how long it took them to get over the incident. Finally, the individual is asked to use the ten solutions to state their “first response,” “ending response,” and “preferred response” of the incident that they just mentioned.

The first fifteen items on the Willingness to Forgive scale are used for scoring purposes. A score is derived for the “ending response” subscale by adding all cases where forgiveness was chosen. The same holds for the “preferred response” subscale. A maximum score of either subscale is fifteen (high willingness to forgive) and a minimum score is zero (low willingness to forgive).

Al-Mabuk (1990), illustrated the validity of the Willingness to Forgive scale when he found significant differences between the experimental and the control group on both the ending and the preferred responses. This result was acquired following an intervention on forgiveness with parentally love deprived college students. He also found a correlation between choosing forgiveness as the preferred response and low depression scores.

Testing Procedure

The following description of the testing procedure constitutes what occurred in both university settings. A following section describes specifications that occurred in each setting.

Before the participants were tested, classes that had high enrollment in one of the two educational levels of college (entry level and graduate level) were identified.

Permission was granted from classroom professors to take up 30-45 minutes of class time in order to administer the protocol in class. The professor was informed that he/she had to leave the room when the researcher walked in to administer the protocol. This was done in order to prevent any feeling of coercion from the professor upon the students.

Some administrations took place during the last 45 minutes of class, while others took place during the first 45 minutes of class. If the case was that the administration took place during the last 45 minutes of class then the professor left the classroom and did not return. If the other situation was the case, then the professor returned after 40-45 minutes to class, when all students who agreed to complete the protocols had finished and were in class. Each student was given a packet of materials in a large brown envelop that included a form that invites them to participate in the research if they are at least 18 years of age, the two protocols, and a sheet asking for gender, educational level at university, religion, age and the participant's definition of forgiveness.

The research was described to students as a study that measures attitude towards a hurtful person. The term forgiveness was not mentioned when explaining the research. This was done in order to prevent any bias that may stem out of knowing that the scales measure willingness to forgive and actual forgiveness.

The form that invites the students to participate in the research was given to help students make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. It explained participant rights, included a description of the research, how long it would take to complete the protocol, name of advisor and contact information of the both the advisor and the University of Northern Iowa. This form was read aloud to students before students chose whether or not to participate. Students were told that they did not have to participate in the study if they did not want to. Students were given the opportunity to ask questions about the research or the protocol before and during the administration. Nowhere on the protocol were participants required to provide contact information, therefore completed protocols were completely anonymous. Informed consent forms were not given signed by students and this was to affirm that their identity could not be identified through any means. Students told that if they wish to participate then they could complete the protocols inside the large brown envelop and this would count as an informed consent of what they were submitting. Participants who wished to participate in the research were asked to complete the protocols individually and not ask for peer's advice or opinions.

If the administration was taking place towards the end of the class period then students were told that those who chose to participate may go ahead and complete the protocols and those who chose not to could either wait quietly in the classroom till the period was over or could leave the class. In both cases, students kept the materials in the envelope and placed it on a desk in front of the class. If the administration took place

towards the beginning of the class and the professor was to return in 40 minutes time to the class then students who chose not to participate could leave and come back at that time.

Administration in Lebanon

Completion of the protocol took approximately 25- 45 minutes. Since English is not the native language in Lebanon and the protocols were in English, participants were told that if they had a query regarding question or word comprehension they could ask the administrator (the author). A focus group made up of two undergraduate students, two graduate students and the administrator was conducted to identify the most common questions or queries that participants might face. Based on the results of the focus group, a time estimate for administering the protocol and the most frequent queries were noted. As a result, the administrator prepared word translations not only for the words that were asked about by the focus group but for all the words in the Enright Forgiveness Inventory and some of the Willingness to Forgive scale.

About 25% of the sample at the Lebanese American University (LAU) had questions regarding precise meaning of words. These words were: hostile, repulsed, resentment, bitter, put him/her down, be biting when talking with him/her, wretched, condemn and significant other. When clarifications or translations were made for participants they were made in a noncommittal way so that responses did not get influenced. It is important to note that most questions regarding word meaning or task

comprehension came from undergraduate participants. In addition to that some students wanted some clarification on how to answer the protocols. The most frequent question on the Enright Forgiveness Inventory was: “Do I choose one word from each batch and complete the statement above?” As for the Willingness to forgive scale, a common question was regarding the permissibility of selecting the same solution to one or more of the responses in one question.

Administration in Iowa

Completion of the protocol took somewhere between 25- 40 minutes. Students were told that if they have questions, they could ask the administrator. None of the participants from the student sample in the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) had questions regarding word comprehension. This was possibly because all participants are English native speakers. As for task completion, few students asked if it was okay to select the same solution for two or more of the responses on the Willingness to Forgive scale. This was the same question that some students from the Lebanese American University (LAU) asked. One interesting observation while administering the protocols is that undergraduate students on average took less time to complete the protocols than graduate students.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Based on the research questions stated in the first chapter, two kinds of data were analyzed, quantitative and qualitative data. For this reason, this chapter will be divided into two sections. The first section will analyze the responses of the question that asked participants to write down their definition of forgiveness, while the second part will discuss analyses run on the quantitative part of the research and the results it yielded.

Qualitative Data and Results

The following section will present the data for the qualitative question of the protocol that asked participants to write down their definition on forgiveness. The data was coded into various categories in order to develop profiles of how the samples of the two populations define and understand forgiveness. Since participants were allowed to explain their definition of forgiveness through multiple words and ways, percentages of the categories for the question may exceed 100%. Many of the categories such as “moving on,” “not holding a grudge,” “forgetting,” and “preserving a relationship” were adopted from Freedman and Chang’s (2010) article. Additional categories were created to fit the responses of the student participants.

Seven categories were identified as the common themes that student participants from both universities and both educational levels referred to upon defining forgiveness:

forgetting and putting behind, maintaining a relationship or reconciling, decreasing negative affect, increasing positive affect, not holding a grudge, accepting the offender or the situation and apologizing. The categories that were created to fit the responses of the participating students were more than the seven above. All categories will be discussed below with relevance to which group stated them and their frequency.

Responses of Participants from the Lebanese American University

The themes that participating students at LAU referred to in their response to the open ended question “Write down your definition of forgiveness?” were 20 themes. Not all participants answered this question. In fact, 12.5% (25 of 200) of the entire sample at LAU left this question unanswered.

The most frequent definition, reported by 43.5% (87 of 200) of LAU’s student sample involved some mention of forgetting or putting behind. A graduate student from the sample said: “Forgiveness is to forget a bad act that a specific person did to you. And to not remember this action in any situation so let this be erased from your life.” A response from an undergraduate student was: “Forgiveness is when you decide to let go and forget all the ways a person might have hurt you or caused you any emotional suffering.” The previous definitions given are examples of when students thought forgiveness meant to forget, however 12.6% (11 of 87) of the student sample who mentioned forgetting or putting the incident behind made a distinction between forgetting and forgiving. For example, one graduate student said “You might forgive this person

without forgetting what he/she did.” Another undergraduate student said “Although the saying says “forgive and forget,” my version is “forgive but never forget.”

The second most frequent definition reported by 14.5% (29 of 200) of the sample involved some mention of reconciliation, maintaining a relationship or starting a new page. One graduate student at LAU reported that “It’s when two people decide that the situation isn’t as important for their friendship/relationship to break down.” Another graduate student said “Forgiveness means that we are able to live with the person who hurt us without even thinking about the problem that caused the hurt. Every time I see the person who hurt me I will not remember that he hurt me.” An undergraduate in the student sample at LAU stated “It is when you just talk to a person who hurt you normally as before and become intimate even if this hurt is big or affected you badly.” Another undergraduate student referred to it as “starting all over.” One individual of the 200, 0.5% of the entire sample, said the following about the relationship between reconciliation and forgiveness “Forgiveness is regaining the old relations with the person who hurt you, which makes it impossible.” Thus, we see that this individual is confusing forgiveness and reconciliation and thus feels that because reconciling is impossible, forgiveness is impossible as well.

The third most common theme that emerged in the definition of forgiveness involved some mention of examining the background of the offender, the context of the offense, accepting the person for who he/she is or accepting the situation and was reported by 10% (20 of 200) of the sample. An example of a statement said by a graduate

student at LAU that went under this category is “When you put yourself in other people’s shoes and try to understand what they’re going through.” Another statement that was also said by a graduate student was “It is the only way for a person to live a peaceful life. Many people hurt you, but you have to forgive them because you are a person that also does mistakes and if you don’t forgive people and treat them well they won’t appreciate you.” This individual also recognized that forgiveness benefits the person engaging in it. An undergraduate student at LAU reported that forgiveness is to “Accept what the other person did.”

Nine percent (18 of 200) of the sample’s response included some mention to an increase in positive affect when engaging in forgiveness. These responses sometimes referred to an increase in positive views or attitude for one’s own self “To forgive is to find peace within yourself to continue living peacefully and to find it and live it with others” or an increase in positive attitude towards the offender “wish the other person goodness and luck in his life.” These were both statements from graduate students. Undergraduates students at LAU were like the graduates, in the sense that they referred to an increase in positive affect within one’s self and for one’s self and an increase of positive affect towards the offender. A statement by an undergraduate student that illustrates both views is “Forgiveness is when you find peace with yourself and with the person you are forgiving.”

Following the 9% of the increase in positive affect, comes the 8% (16 of 200) of decrease in negative affect that was reported by the sample. A graduate student reported:

“When someone has hurt you deeply either physically or more importantly psychologically, at the end of the day you think and decide that you’d be better off without hatred in your heart and what that person has done is now in the past and life will go on whether we like it or not so it’s better to live in peace with oneself than hold hatred in your heart unless the hurt was collateral. For example, incidents regarding family members being physically hurt, in that case it is very hard to forgive.”

In the definition above we also see an exception being made to when one can “be better off without hatred” and that is that the consequence is not collateral. Like the increase in positive affect, students also identified two dimensions to a decrease in negative affect. The first is for one’s own self and the other is directed at the offender. An undergraduate student mentioned that “Forgiveness means leaving all the resentment, hate, abhor, loath and negative feeling in the past.”

A mention of religion when asked to define forgiveness was present among 5.5% (11 of 200) of the sample. “Forgiveness is a nice feature that all religions call us to abide by it and act on it” is what a graduate student reported. An undergraduate student said “My definition of forgiveness cannot be yet defined because I am still working on it to be the same forgiveness that every prophet had to his tribe.” However, 1.8 % (2 of 11) of the group that mentioned religion when asked about forgiveness either said that they cannot forgive because they are not holy “I never forgive because I can never forget. We are not Jesus!” or that despite the fact that they were taught religion through their environment (including place of worship), they feel that they are not convinced to carry it out. “Forgiveness to me is everything. I have been taught since a child that forgiveness is very important. This has been taught to me by many institutions in life such as church, family,

school.. however, from my experience, I never applied that. Especially when it comes to application, all what I learned goes away. I probably am not convinced” reported one graduate student.

Two other categories expressed by an equal percentage, 3% (6 of 200) of sample, were the revenge factor related to forgiveness and not holding a grudge. “The best way is not seeking revenge or getting even” is what one person said about revenge. Another person at LAU said the following about not holding a grudge anymore “Forgiveness is when you don’t hold a grudge against someone after they’ve done something to hurt you.”

Another 3% (6 of 100) of the sample at LAU mentioned that forgiveness was non-existent. Statements included “Does not exist” and “That word does not exist in my dictionary! I don’t know what it means! And I don’t want to know!”

About 2.5% (5 of 200) of the sample at LAU mentioned something about the factor of apology. All participants who mentioned apology thought it was an important prerequisite for forgiveness to occur. “The only time when I think about forgiveness is when the person who hurt me really showed me a deep apology; and that is what happened to me. When I see my friend who hurt me, I remember all the good times we spent together but I cannot forgive her because she did not even think about saying “sorry.”

Both undergraduate and graduate students mentioned the affect of intention of the offender when considering forgiveness. Intention was something which Azar et al., (1999) found as a factor among the Lebanese population when considering forgiveness. Two and a half percent (5 of 200) of the population mentioned intention when defining forgiveness and an example of one mention is "Forgiveness is being able to get past an unintentional mistake by a loved one – a mistake you know will not be repeated" was what a graduate student reported. To one graduate student, the presence or absence of intention did not impact his forgiveness process. He decided that he will forget any person who hurts him intentionally or unintentionally. "It is the art of forgetting any person who hurt you intentionally or unintentionally."

Categories such as the consequence of repeating the hurtful act, an increase in positive behavior, getting over the situation and forgiveness being something that should be earned were all themes that were mentioned in very low percentages (<2%) within the sample. Another 18 % of the sample's definitions fell into a category called other and most of these statements did not define forgiveness such as "Forgiveness is the ability to forgive someone even if he did something bad toward you" or statements that said miscellaneous things such as "Forgiveness is not an easy thing to do, but it can be done if studied in all ways including the feelings of the person."

Undergraduate student participants at LAU. Since examples of statements given by undergraduate students were given in the descriptions above, this section will state the percentages of each category expressed by only undergraduate student participants at LAU. The data will be presented in a Table 1.

Table 1

Categories and Percentage Mentioned by Undergraduate Students at LAU

Category	Count of Students
Forgetting, letting go, putting behind	38% (38 of 100 participants)
Other	20% (20 of 100 participants)
Blank	15% (15 of 100 participants)
Reconciliation, maintaining a relationship, opening a new page	13% (13 of 100 participants)
Increase in positive affect	11% (11 of 100 participants)
Role of religion	6% (6 of 100 participants)
Decrease in negative affect	6% (6 of 100 participants)

(table continues)

Category	Count of Students
Factor of apology	4% (4 of 100 participants)
Examining context of offense, background of offender, accepting the situation or the offender or recognizing humanity in the other	4% (4 of 100 participants)
Non-existent	3% (3 of 100 participants)
Increase in positive behavior	3% (3 of 100 participants)
Effect of repeating the act	3% (3 of 100 participants)
Effect of intention	2% (2 of 100 participants)
Earning forgiveness	1% (1 of 100 participants)
A disease	1% (1 of 100 participants)
Not holding a grudge	1% (1 of 100 participants)

Graduate student participants at LAU. Since examples of statements given by graduate student were given in the descriptions above, this section will state the percentages of each category expressed by only graduate student participants at LAU. The data will be presented in a Table 2.

Table 2

Categories and Percentage Mentioned by Graduate Students at LAU

Category	Count of Students
Forgetting, letting go, putting behind	49% (49 of 100 participants)
Examining context of offense, background of offender, accepting the situation or the offender or recognizing humanity in the other	16% (16 of 100 participants)
Other	16% (16 of 100 participants)
Reconciliation, maintaining a relationship, opening a new page	16% (16 of 100 participants)
Decrease in negative affect	10% (10 of 100 participants)
Blank	10% (10 of 100 participants)
Increase in positive affect	7% (7 of 100 participants)
Factor of revenge	6% (6 of 100 participants)
Role of religion	5% (5 of 100 participants)
Not holding a grudge	4% (4 of 100 participants)
Increase in positive behavior	3% (3 of 100 participants)
Effect of intention	3% (3 of 100 participants)

(table continues)

Category	Count of Students
Cancellation of consequence	1% (1 of 100 participants)
Effect of repeating the act	1% (1 of 100 participants)
Getting over it, moving on	1% (1 of 100 participants)
Earning forgiveness	1% (1 of 100 participants)
Factor of apology	1% (1 of 100 participants)

Responses of Participants from the University of Northern Iowa

The themes that participating students at UNI referred to in their response to the open ended question “Write down your definition of forgiveness?” were 13 categorized themes. Not all participants answered this question. In fact, 3.5% (5 of 141) of the entire sample at UNI left this question unanswered.

The most frequent definition, reported by 20.5% (29 of 141) of UNI’s student sample involved some mention of getting over it or moving on. A graduate student from the sample said: “Forgiveness is when you put someone’s words or actions behind you in order to move on from the situation.” An undergraduate student said “Being able to get over what you/someone else has done. Moving forward, not looking back at what happened with negative feelings, being ok with things, moving on as if it hadn’t happened, just learning from it.”

The second most frequently mentioned theme was forgetting, letting go or putting behind you with 17.7% (25 of 141) of the students defining forgiveness in this way. Typical responses from both educational levels were of the following “To completely let go of what the person did to you” and “To let go of the hurt another person has caused you and not to let it bother when the thought of what happened comes about.” However, some participants, 1.2% (3 of 25) of the participants who mentioned this theme stressed the difference between forgiving and forgetting to state that “You can forgive without forgetting!”

With 14.1% (20 of 141) of the participants mentioning reconciliation, maintaining a relationship and starting new, this category was the third highest mentioned. One student thought that forgiveness was “To allow a person the same treatment and respect as he/she has before the incident which caused the hard feelings occurred.”

Examining the context of offense, background of offender, accepting the situation or the offender or recognizing humanity in the other was a theme that was mentioned by 5.6% (8 of 141) of the sample at UNI. “Accepting what they did and why and trying to understand” and “Understanding that none is perfect and everyone makes mistakes” were typical statements provided by students about this theme.

Seven and nine tenth percent (10 of 141) of the sample at UNI mentioned an increase in positive affect when asked to define forgiveness. Similar to the participating students from LAU, UNI students also recognized two dimensions to an increase in

positive affect, one is for one's own self, and another is towards the perpetrator. "To continue to love everyone as you love yourself despite what might have happened" is an example of a statement that addresses positive affect towards the offender. "Is to be at peace with one's feelings towards another's actions" is a statement by another participant, where we see that the two sides are addressed- feelings of one's self and feelings towards the offender.

Nine percent (13 of 141) of the sample mentioned not holding a grudge towards the offender anymore as one way to forgive. A graduate participant said "Forgiveness is one's willingness to allow others to hurt them and not hold a grudge or be spiteful towards them after being hurt." Another undergraduate student said "Forgiveness is not to hold ill feelings towards someone because of something they did."

A decrease in negative affect was mentioned by 12.1% (17 of 141) of the sample at UNI. This theme was only mentioned by undergraduate student participants and not any graduate students. "Being able to accept when someone has wronged you and not feel any resentment toward this person" and "Feelings of anger and hate toward the person have dwindled" are two typical statements of what was included this category.

One theme that students from the UNI sample identified clearly was that forgiveness is something that one does for one's own benefit. This theme was only expressed by graduate students. Four percent (3 of 74) of the graduate sample at UNI reported this theme and typical statements looked like the following "Forgiveness means

to forgive the person who has done wrong to you not necessarily for their sake but to let go of the burden for your well being. “Hating” someone is only really damaging to yourself and not the other person” reported a graduate student.

Six and one third percent (9 of 141) of the sample reported definitions that were put under the category of other because they were either mentioned once or were general statements. Examples include “Truly forgiving them in your heart and mind,” “Forgiving someone for what they did to hurt you” and “Be able to be humble towards them.”

Other categories such as abstaining from revenge, pardoning, and the factor of apology were mentioned but in percentages that were about 2.5% and less.

Undergraduate student participants at UNI. The next section will state the percentages of each category expressed by only undergraduate student participants at UNI. The data will be presented in a Table 3.

Table 3

Categories and Percentage Mentioned by Undergraduate Students at UNI

Category	Count of Students
Forgetting, letting go, putting behind	28.3% (19 of 67 participants)
Reconciliation, maintaining a relationship, opening a new page	16.4%(11 of 67 participants)
Getting over it, moving on	14.9%(10 of 67 participants)
Decrease in negative affect	13.4% (9 of 67 participants)
Examining context of offense, background of offender, accepting the situation or the offender or recognizing humanity in the other	13.4%(9 of 67 participants)
Not holding a grudge	6%(4 of 67 participants)
Other	6%(4 of 67 participants)
Factor of apology	4.4%(3 of 67 participants)
Increase in positive affect	4.4%(3 of 67 participants)
Blank	3% (2 of 67 participants)

Graduate student participants at UNI. This section will state the percentages of each category expressed by only graduate student participants at UNI. The data will be presented in a Table 4.

Table 4

Categories and Percentage Mentioned by Graduate Students at UNI

Category	Count of Students
Getting over it, moving on	25.7% (19 of 74 participants)
Not holding a grudge	13.5% (10 of 74 participants)
Examining context of offense, background of offender, accepting the situation or the offender or recognizing humanity in the other	13.5% (10 of 74 participants)
Forgetting, letting go, putting behind	12% (9 of 74 participants)
Reconciliation, maintaining a relationship, opening a new page	12% (9 of 74 participants)

(table continues)

Category	Count of Students
Increase in positive affect	12% (9 of 74 participants)
Other	6.8% (5 of 74 participants)
Benefit for the offended	4% (3 of 74 participants)
Blank	4% (3 of 74 participants)
Pardoning	1.3% (1 of 74 participants)
Factor of apology	1.3%(1 of 74 participants)
Factor of revenge	1.3% (1 of 74 participants)

In summary, we see that one category that was mentioned by both graduate and undergraduate Lebanese students when asked to define forgiveness was religion. This theme was completely absent among the UNI sample. In addition to that, some student participants from LAU expressed that forgiveness was either non-existent or impossible to engage in. Again, this theme was absent among the sample at UNI. While moving on seemed to be the most frequently mentioned theme in the UNI student sample, forgetting or letting go was the most frequently mentioned theme at LAU. Finally, it is worth noting that student samples from UNI recognized that forgiveness, if engaged in, often benefits the forgiver, although the student sample at LAU did seem to recognize that forgiveness is an increase in positive feelings regarding one's self, but did not specifically identify forgiveness as a benefit for the forgiver.

Quantitative Data and Results

Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and Pearson's correlation were used to summarize the data. Inferential statistics such as 2-sided independent t-test, 2-sided paired t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to compare the means of different groups in the study. All of the statistical tests were conducted at 0.05 alpha significance level. Graphical tabulations are also present to aid in providing a visual demonstration of the results reported. All analyses and results resulted from scoring and running tests on the two protocols that were given to participants, the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI) and the Willingness to Forgive scale (WTF). While the WTF measures one's willingness to forgive for a number of hypothetical situations, the EFI measures one's actual forgiveness towards a specific offender who recently hurt the individual.

The Enright Forgiveness Inventory

Differences in the EFI mean scores between the two samples. The purpose of this analysis was to check if there was a difference between the scores on the EFI between the student participants at the University of Northern Iowa and the student participants at the Lebanese American University. A statistical test called the Welch two-sample t-test was carried out to compare the means of the two groups. The difference between the mean EFI scores among LAU ($M = 203$, $SD = 58$) and UNI ($M = 259$, $SD = 58$) students is 56 points and is statistically significant; $t(302) = -8.8$, $p = 0.000$. Table 5 summarizes the findings.

Table 5

Enright Forgiveness Inventory Mean Scores of the Two Samples

<u>LAU (N = 200)</u>	<u>UNI (N = 141)</u>
Mean = 203	Mean = 259
SD = 58	SD = 58
$t(302) = -8.8$ p-value = 0.000	

To visualize the results, box plots are generated for both groups. We can see that the variance of the EFI scores for both groups is the same, and the UNI boxplot is higher than the LAU boxplot. (See Figure 1.)

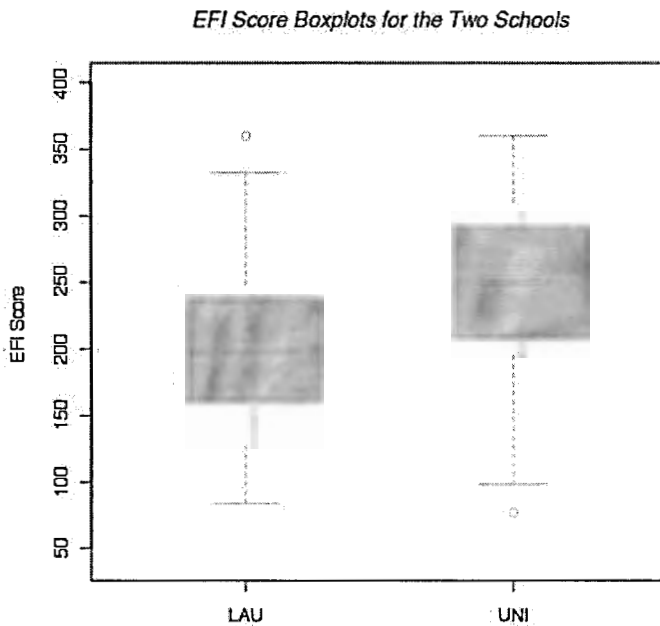


Figure 1. Enright Forgiveness Inventory Mean Scores of the Two Samples

Difference in EFI mean scores among males in the two samples. The purpose of this analysis was to check for a difference in the mean EFI score of male participants of both universities. A statistical test called the Welch two-sample t-test was run to compare the means of the two groups. The difference between the mean EFI scores among LAU male ($M = 199$, $SD = 60$) and UNI male ($M = 266$, $SD = 53$) students is 67 points and it is statistically significant; $t(40.7) = -5.4$ $p = 0.000$. Table 6 summarizes the findings.

Table 6

Difference in EFI Mean Scores among Males in the Two Samples

<u>LAU Males(N = 102)</u>	<u>UNI Males (N = 25)</u>
Mean = 199	Mean = 266
SD = 60	SD = 53
$t(41) = -5.4$ $p\text{-value} = 0.000$	

To visualize the results, box plots were generated for both groups. (See Figure 2.)

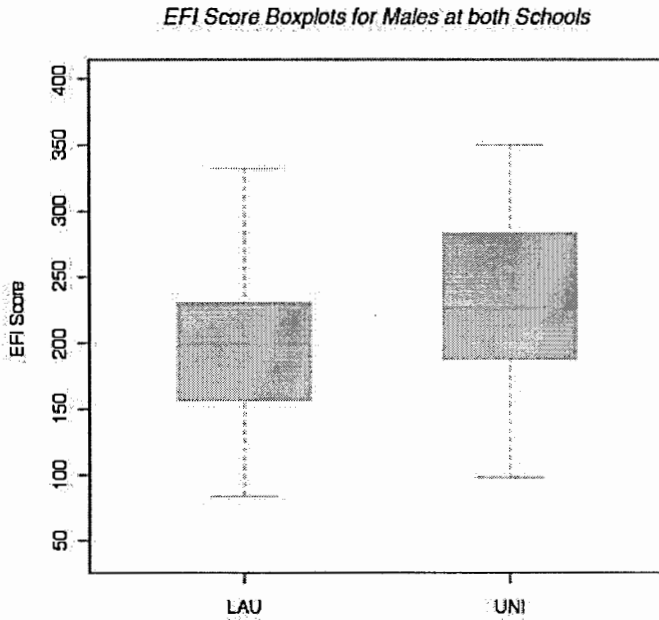


Figure 2. Difference in EFI Mean Scores among Males in the Two Samples.

Difference in EFI mean scores among females in the two samples. The purpose of this analysis was to check if there was a difference in among female students in both universities based on the mean EFI scores of both schools. To do this, we ran the Welch two-sample t-test to compare the means of the two groups. We can see that the difference between the mean EFI scores among LAU female ($M = 206$, $SD = 56$) and UNI female ($M = 258$, $SD = 59$) students is 52 points and is statistically significant; $t(209) = -6.4$ $p=0.000$. Table 7 summarizes the findings.

Table 7

Difference in EFI Mean Scores among Females in the Two Samples

<u>LAU Females (N = 98)</u>	<u>UNI females (N = 116)</u>
Mean = 206	Mean = 258
SD = 56	SD = 59
 t(209)= -6.4 p-value = 0.000	

To visualize the results, box plots were generated for both groups. (See Figure 3.)

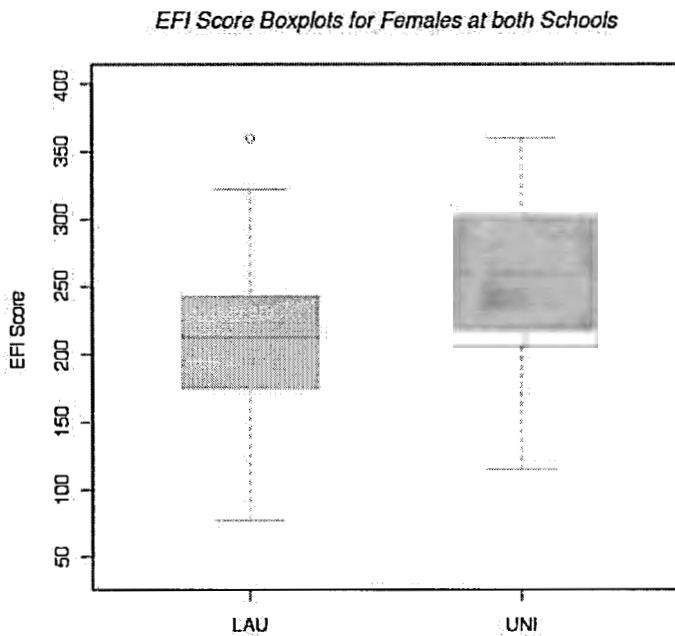


Figure 3. Difference in EFI mean scores among Females in the Two Samples

Difference in EFI among male and female LAU students. The purpose of this analysis was to check if there was a difference between males and females at the Lebanese American University students regarding their mean scores on the EFI. To do this, we used the Welch two-sample t-test to compare the means of the two groups. We can see that the difference between the mean EFI scores among LAU female ($M = 206$, $SD = 56$) and LAU male ($M = 199$, $SD = 60$) students is not statistically significant; $t(197) = -0.82$ $p = 0.4$. Table 8 summarizes the findings.

Table 8

Difference in EFI among Male and Female LAU Students

<u>LAU Females (N = 98)</u>	<u>LAU Males (N = 102)</u>
Mean = 206	Mean = 199
SD = 56	SD = 60
$t(197) = -0.82$ $p\text{-value} = 0.4$	

To visualize the results, box plots for both groups were generated. (See Figure 4.)

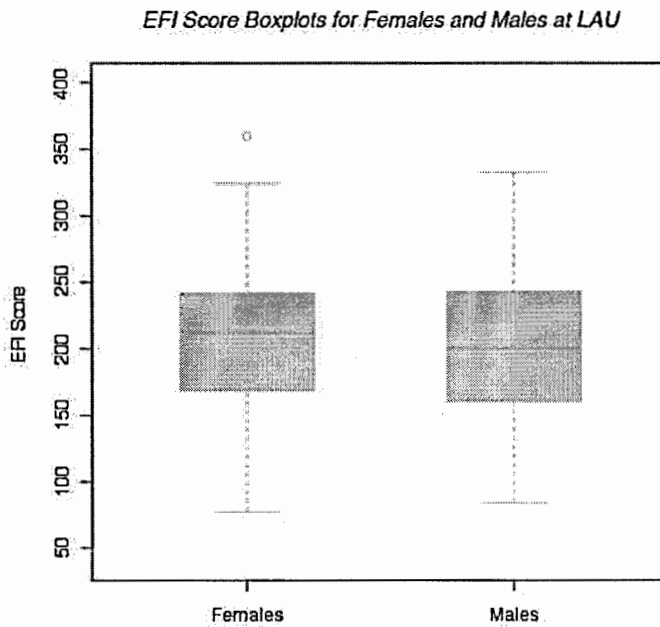


Figure 4. Difference in EFI among Male and Female LAU students

Difference in EFI among male and female UNI students. The purpose of this analysis was to check if there was a difference between male and female participants at the University of Northern Iowa regarding the mean of their EFI scores. To do that, the Welch two-sample t-test was run to compare the means of the two groups. We can see that the difference between the mean EFI scores among UNI female ($M = 257$, $SD = 59$) and UNI male ($M = 266$, $SD = 53$) students is not statistically significant; $t(38) = 0.72$; $p = 0.47$. Table 9 summarizes our findings.

Table 9

Difference in EFI among Male and Female UNI students

<u>UNI Females (N = 116)</u>	<u>UNI Males (N = 25)</u>
Mean = 257	Mean = 266
SD = 59	SD = 53
 t(38)= 0.72 p-value = 0.47	

To visualize the results, box plots for both groups were generated. (See Figure 5.)

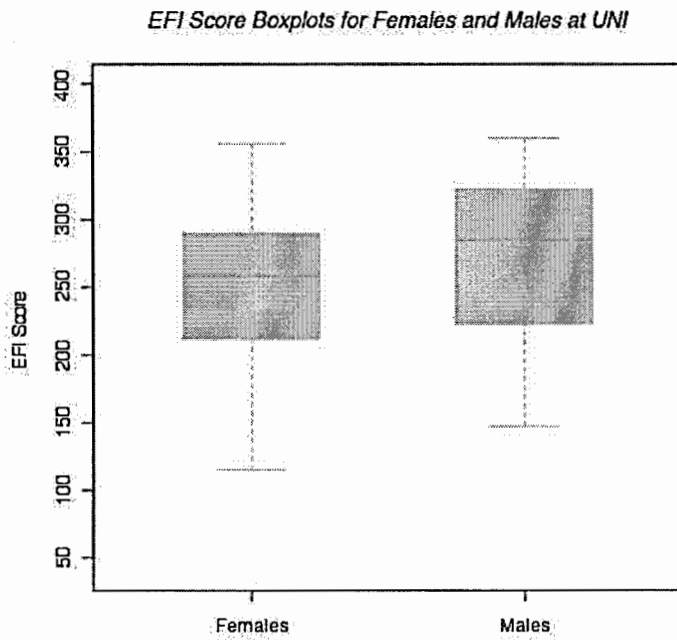


Figure 5. Difference in EFI among Male and Female UNI students

Difference in EFI among LAU graduate and undergraduate students. The purpose of this analysis was to check if there was a difference in the EFI scores between graduates and undergraduates at the LAU. We ran the Welch two-sample t-test to compare the means of the two groups. We see that the difference between the mean EFI scores among LAU undergraduates ($M = 204$, $SD = 56$) and LAU graduates ($M = 201$, $SD = 60$) students is not statistically significant; $t(195.8) = 0.32$; $p = 0.74$. Table 10 summarizes our findings.

Table 10

Difference in EFI among LAU Graduate and Undergraduate Students

<u>LAU Undergraduates</u>	<u>LAU Graduates</u> (N
<u>(N = 100)</u>	<u>= 100)</u>
Mean = 204	Mean = 201
SD = 56	SD = 60
t(195.8)= 0.32	
p-value = 0.74	

To visualize the results, box plots were generated for both groups. (See figure 6.)

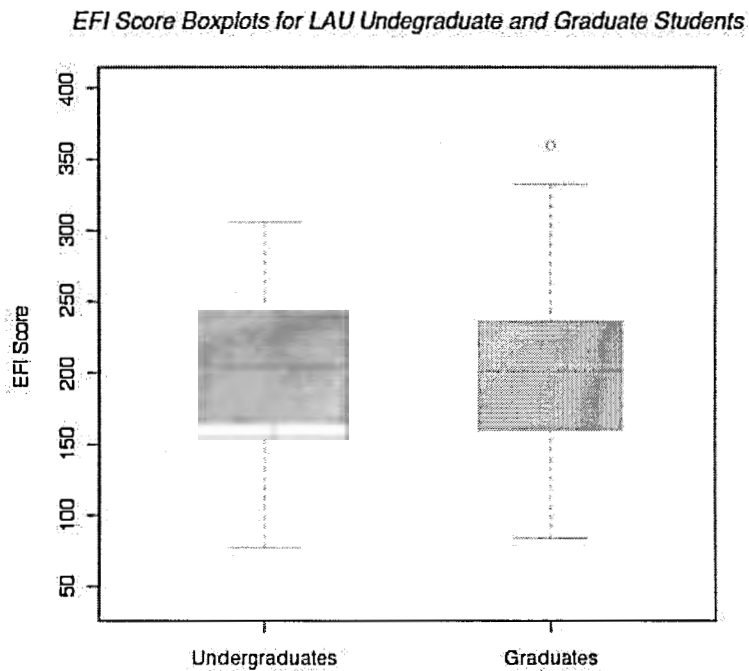


Figure 6. Difference in EFI mean scores among LAU graduate and undergraduate students

Difference in EFI among UNI graduate and undergraduate students. The purpose of this analysis was to check if there was a difference between graduates and undergraduates at the University of Northern Iowa regarding their actual forgiveness score based on the mean EFI scores. To do that, we ran the Welch two-sample t-test to compare the means of the two groups. We can see that the difference between the mean EFI scores among UNI undergraduates ($M = 253$, $SD = 53$) and UNI graduates ($M =$

264, SD = 61) students is not statistically significant; $t(138) = -1.09$; $p = 0.27$. Table 11 summarizes the findings.

Table 11

Difference in EFI among UNI Graduate and Undergraduate Students

<u>UNI Undergrads (N = 67)</u>	<u>UNI Graduates (N = 74)</u>
Mean = 253	Mean = 264
SD = 53	SD = 61
$t(138) = -1.09$	
$p\text{-value} = 0.27$	

To visualize the results, we generated box plots for both groups. (See Figure 7.)

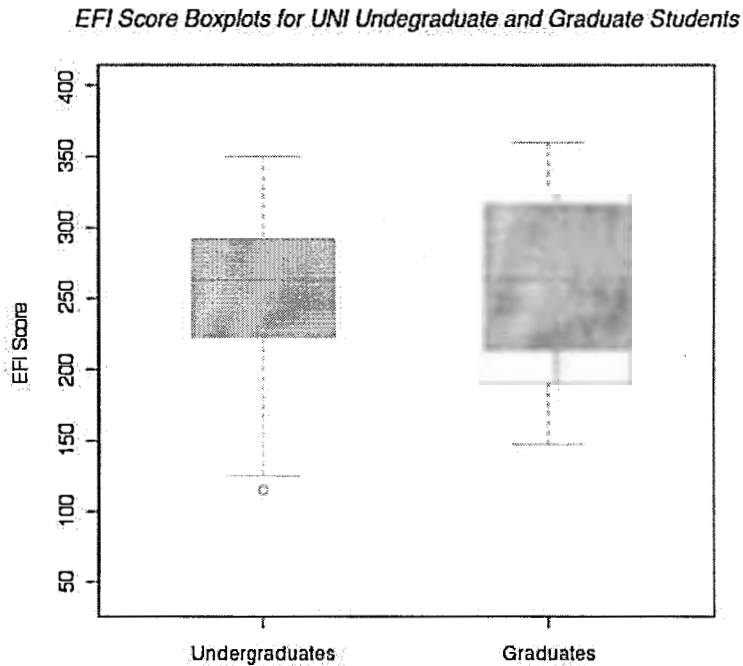


Figure 7. Difference in EFI among UNI graduate and undergraduate students

Differences in EFI mean scores between different religions at LAU. A One-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean EFI scores of participants of different religious affiliations (Muslims, Christians, Druze, Atheists and Other) at the Lebanese American University. There was no significant effect of religion on the EFI scores at the 0.05 alpha level; ($F = 0.06$, $p\text{-value} = 0.8$). Figure 8 provides a visual demonstration of the results.

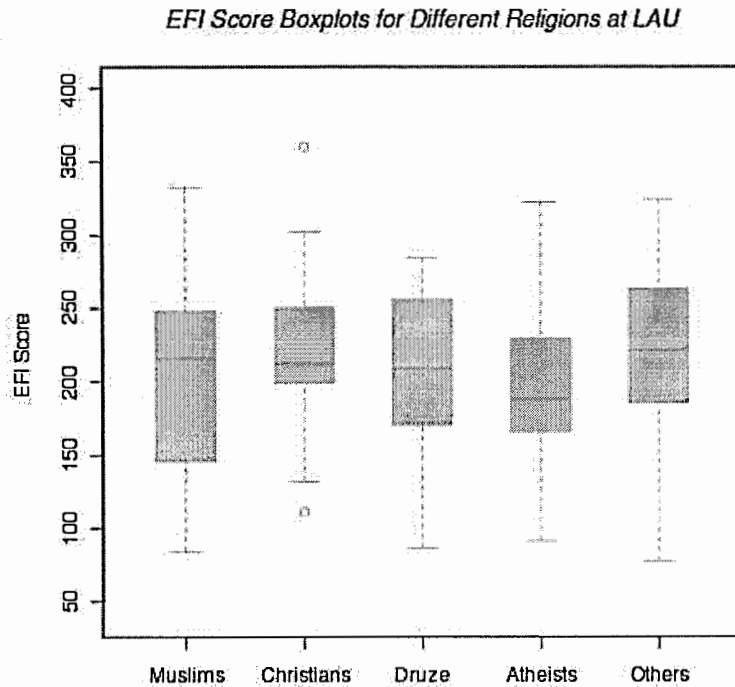


Figure 8. Difference in EFI among LAU participants of different religions

In other words, there was no statistically significant difference in the EFI scores for Muslims ($N = 87, M = 210, SD = 57$), Christians ($N = 28, M = 210, SD = 67$), Druze ($N = 11, M = 202, SD = 53$), Atheists ($N = 4, M = 248, SD = 77$), and others ($N = 5, M = 205, SD = 67$) among a sample of students at LAU. Sixty five participants at LAU left this question blank.

Willingness to Forgive Scale

Differences in “willingness to forgive” mean scores between the two samples. The purpose of this analysis was to check if there was a difference between student participants at the University of Northern Iowa and student participants at the Lebanese American University regarding the willingness to forgive based on the mean forgiveness scores of both universities. To do that, we ran the Welch two-sample t-test to compare the means of the two groups. Table 12 summarizes the findings.

Table 12

Differences in the WTF Mean Scores between the Two Samples

<u>LAU (N = 200)</u>	<u>UNI (N = 141)</u>
Mean = 2.8	Mean = 5
SD = 2.5	SD = 3.2
$t(260) = -6.7$ p-value = 0.000	

We see that the difference between the mean forgiveness scores among LAU

($M = 2.8$, $SD = 2.5$) and UNI ($M = 5$, $SD = 3.2$) students is statistically significant;

$t(260) = -6.7$, $p = 0.000$.

To visualize the results, box plots were generated for both groups. (See Figure 9.)

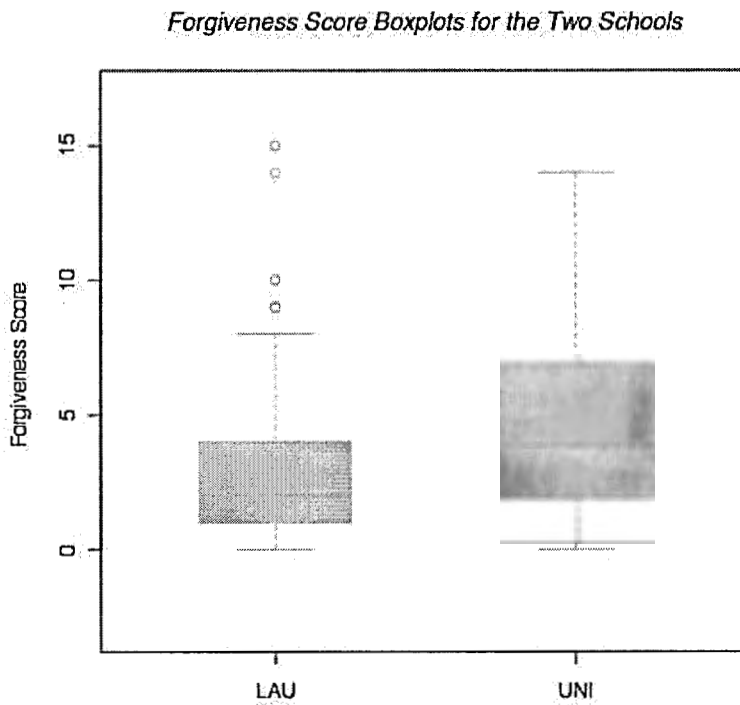


Figure 9. Differences in the WTF Mean Scores between the Two Samples

Differences between the ending response score and preferred response scores for LAU students. The purpose of this analysis was to compare the mean of the number of times that student participants at LAU chose forgiveness as the solution for the ending and preferred response. To do that, we ran Paired t-test to compare the means of the two groups. We can see that the difference between the mean preferred response scores ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 2.1$) and mean ending response ($M = 0.97$, $SD = 1.5$) is statistically significant; $t(199) = 4.5$, $p = 0.000$. This illustrates that students more often saw forgiveness as an ideal solution compared to their own ending solution Table 13 summarizes the findings.

Table 13

Differences between Ending and Preferred Response for LAU Students

<u>Preferred Response(N =</u>	<u>Ending Response(N =</u>
<u>200)</u>	<u>200)</u>
Mean = 1.8	Mean = 0.97
SD = 2.1	SD = 1.5
t(199)= 4.5	
p-value = 0.000	

To visualize our results, we generated box plots for both groups (See Figure 10.)

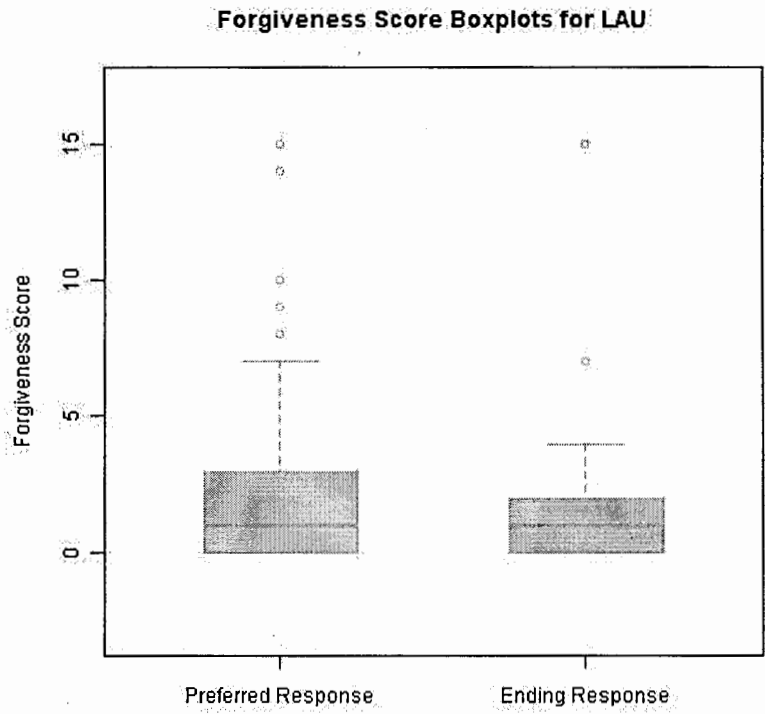


Figure 10. Differences between Ending Response and Preferred Response for LAU Students.

Differences between the ending response score and preferred response score for UNI students. The purpose of this analysis was to compare the mean ending and preferred response scores for students at UNI. To do that, we ran a Paired t-test to compare the means of the two groups. We can see that the difference between the mean preferred response scores ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 2.8$) and mean ending response ($M = 1.6$, $SD = 1.8$) is statistically significant; $t(140) = 5.4$, $p = 0.000$. Table 14 summarizes the findings.

Table 14

Differences between Ending and Preferred Response for UNI Students

<u>Preferred Response(N =</u>	<u>Ending Response(N =</u>
<u>140)</u>	<u>140)</u>
Mean = 3.3	Mean = 1.6
SD = 2.8	SD = 1.8
$t(140) = 5.4$ $p\text{-value} = 0.000$	

To visualize the results, box plots were for both groups. (See Figure 11.)

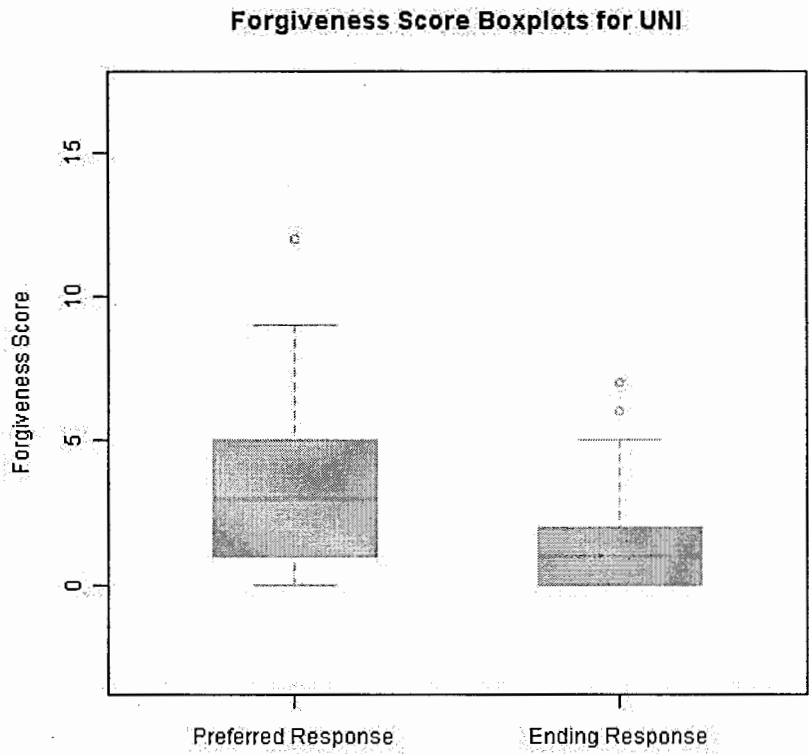


Figure 11. Differences between Ending Response and Preferred Response for UNI Students

Difference in willingness to forgive mean score among undergraduates at LAU and UNI. The purpose of this analysis was to check if there was a difference between undergraduate students at UNI and LAU regarding their willingness to forgive based on the mean score of how many times they chose forgiveness as a solution for either their preferred or ending responses. A Welch two-sample t-test was run to compare the means of the two groups. Table 15 summarizes our findings.

Table 15

Difference in Willingness to Forgive among Undergraduates at LAU and UNI

<u>LAU Undergrads (N=99)</u>	<u>UNI Undergrads (N = 67)</u>
Mean = 3	Mean = 4.4
SD = 2.8	SD = 2.9
t(136)= -3.1	
p-value = 0.0022	

We can see that the difference between the mean forgiveness scores among LAU undergraduates ($M = 3$, $SD = 2.8$) and UNI undergraduates ($M = 4.4$, $SD = 2.9$) students is statistically significant; $t(136) = -3.1$; $p = 0.0022$.

To visualize our results, box plots for both groups were generated. (See Figure 12.)

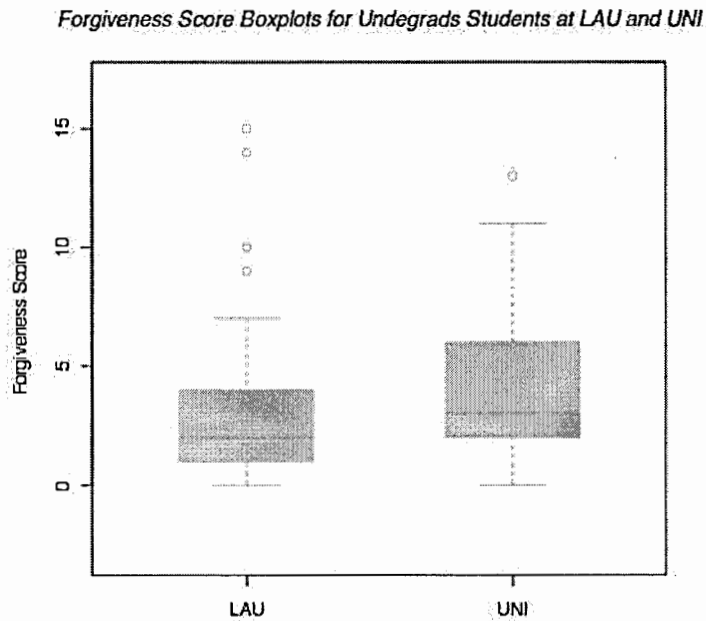


Figure 12. Difference in Willingness to Forgive among Undergraduates at LAU and Undergraduates at UNI

Difference in willingness to forgive among graduate students at LAU and UNI.

The purpose of this analysis was to check if there was a difference between graduate participants at UNI and graduate participants at LAU regarding their willingness to forgive based on the mean number that forgiveness was chosen as a solution in ending and preferred responses. We ran the Welch two-sample t-test to compare the means of the two groups. We can see that the difference between the mean Forgiveness scores among LAU graduates ($M = 2.5$, $SD = 2.3$) and UNI graduates ($M = 5.5$, $SD = 3.3$) students is statistically significant; $t(124) = -6.1$; $p = 0.000$. Table 16 summarizes the findings.

Table 16

Difference in Willingness to Forgive among Graduate at LAU and UNI

<u>LAU grads (N =100)</u>	<u>UNI grads (N = 74)</u>
Mean = 2.5	Mean = 5.5
SD = 2.3	SD = 3.3
$t(124) = -6.1$ $p\text{-value} = 0.0000$	

To visualize our results, we generated box plots for both groups. (See Figure 13.)

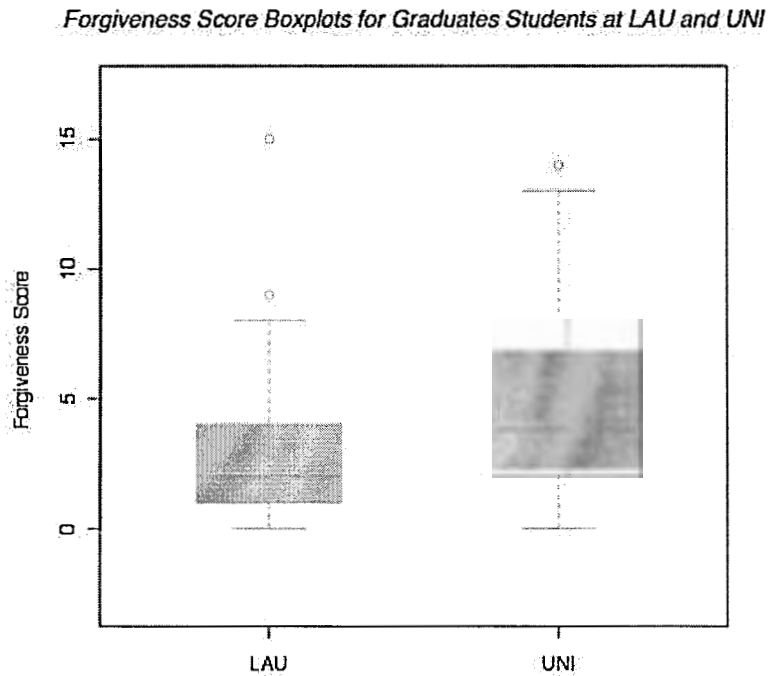


Figure 13. Difference in Willingness to Forgive among Graduate Students at LAU and UNI

Difference in willingness to forgive among LAU students. The purpose of this analysis was to check if there was a difference between graduates and undergraduates at the Lebanese American University regarding their willingness to forgive based on the

mean forgiveness scores. The Welch two-sample t-test was used to compare the means of the two groups. We can see that the difference between the mean Forgiveness scores among LAU undergraduates (M = 3, SD =2.8) and LAU graduates (M = 2.56, SD = 2.3) students is not statistically significant; $t(190) = 1.3$; $p=0.17$. Table 17 summarizes the findings.

Table 17
Difference in Willingness to Forgive among Graduate and Undergraduate Students at LAU

<u>LAU Undergrads (N = 99)</u>	<u>LAU Graduates (N = 100)</u>
Mean = 3	Mean = 2.56
SD = 2.8	SD = 2.3
$t(190)= 1.3$	
$p\text{-value} = 0.17$	

To visualize our results, box plots were generated. (See Figure 14.)

Forgiveness Score Boxplots for LAU Undergraduate and Graduate Studer

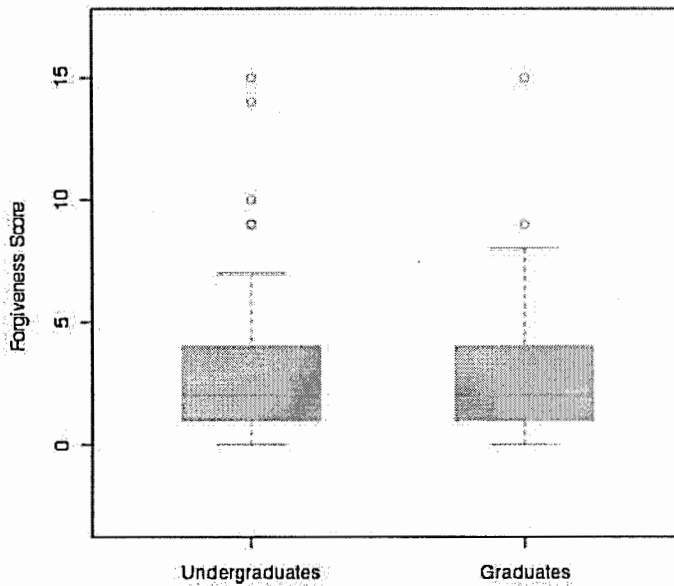


Figure 14. Difference in Willingness to Forgive among Graduate and Undergraduate Students at LAU

Difference in the willingness to forgive among UNI graduate and undergraduate students. The purpose of this analysis was to check if there was a difference between graduates and undergraduates at the University of Northern Iowa regarding their willingness to forgive based on the mean forgiveness scores. To do that, the Welch two-sample t-test to compare the means of the two groups. We can see that the difference between the mean Forgiveness scores among UNI undergraduates ($M = 4.4$, $SD = 2.9$) and UNI graduates ($M = 5.5$, $SD = 3.3$) students is not statistically significant; $t(138) = -$

1.8; $p = 0.06$, but the trend looks like graduates students could be more willing to forgive.

Table 18 summarizes our findings.

Table 18

Difference in the Willingness to Forgive among UNI Graduate and Undergraduate students

<u>UNI Undergrads (N = 67)</u>	<u>UNI Graduates (N = 74)</u>
Mean = 4.4	Mean = 5.5
SD = 2.9	SD = 3.3
t(138) = -1.8	
p-value = 0.06	

To visualize our results, we generated box plots for both groups. (See Figure 15.)

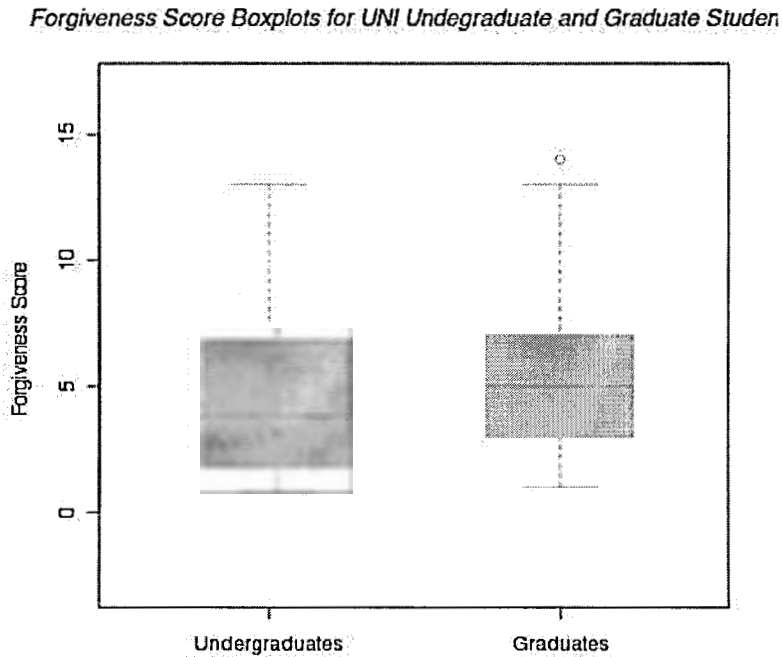


Figure 15. Difference in the Willingness to Forgive among UNI Graduate and Undergraduate students

Differences in “willingness to forgive” mean scores between different religions at LAU. A One-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean willingness to forgive scores for participants of different religious affiliations at LAU. There was no significant influence of religion on the willingness to forgive scores at the 0.05 alpha level; ($F = 0.61$, $p\text{-value} = 0.43$). In other words, there is no statistically significant difference regarding the willingness to forgive scores for Muslims ($M = 2.7$, $SD = 2.6$), Christians

($M = 2.8$, $SD = 2.4$), Druze ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 3.1$), Atheists ($M = 5.5$, $SD = 6.6$), and others ($M = 2$, $SD = 1.22$). See Figure 16.

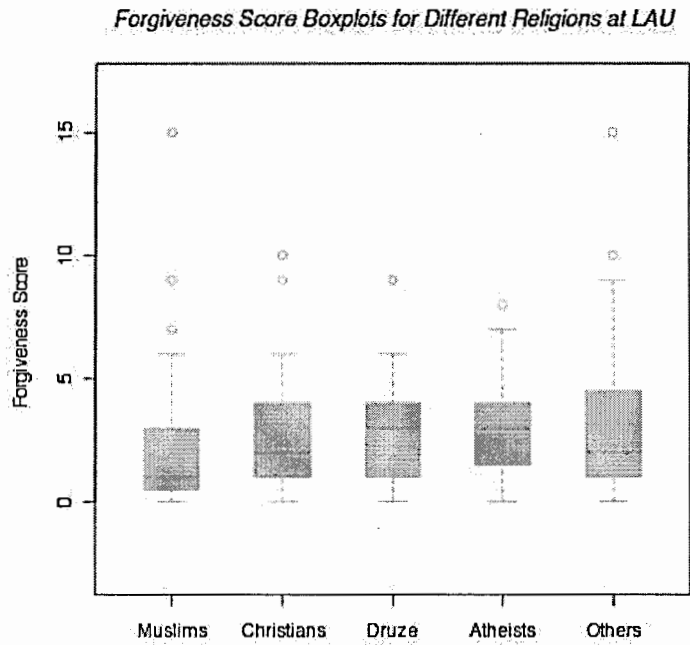


Figure 16. Differences in Willingness to Forgive Mean Scores between Different Religions at LAU

Correlations Between Scores

Table 19 presents calculated Pearson correlation coefficients between the scores of both protocols and this was found to be 0.24. A Pearson correlation was also calculated between the last item on the EFI, which asks the participants whether they have forgiven the offender, and the total EFI score. According to Subkoviak et al. (1992) the maximum correlation expected between the EFI total score and the last item on the EFI scale is 0.70. In our case, the correlation between the last item and the scores on the EFI for both UNI and LAU samples was found to be 0.57. The correlation found between the last item on the EFI and the EFI scores of the sample at LAU was 0.48, while the correlation between the last item and the EFI score at UNI was 0.68 (very close to Subkoviak's reported maximum correlation).

Table 19

Pearson correlation between scores

Correlations	EFI
Willingness to Forgiveness Score	0.24
Last Item on EFI (Both samples)	0.57
Last Item on EFI (LAU)	0.48
Last Item on EFI (UNI)	0.68

Frequencies

Table 20 provides information on the number of participants in each university, the corresponding student count for each religious affiliation within samples, and the total number of participants within each religious affiliation. Notice that student participants were mostly Muslims at LAU and student participants were Christians at UNI.

Table 20

*University * Religion Crosstabulation*

			Religion					Total
			Muslim	Christian	Druze	Atheist	Other	
Univ.	LA	Count	87	28	11	4	5	200
	U	% within School	43.5%	14%	5.5%	2.0%	2.5%	100.0%
	UNI	Count	0	105	0	2	14	141
		% within School	.0%	74.6%	.0%	1.4%	9.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	87	133	11	6	19	341

Table 21

*School * University Level Crosstabulation*

			University Level				Total
			Freshman	Sophomore	Graduate	Other	
School	LAU	Count	25	75	100	0	200
		% within School	12.0%	37.5%	50.0%	.0%	100.0%
	UNI	Count	2	65	74	0	141
		% within School	1.4%	46.1%	52.5%	.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	27	140	174	0	341
		% within School	7.9%	41.1%	51.0%	.0%	100.0%

Table 21 is a crosstabulation that presents the number of student participants in each educational level at both LAU and UNI. Notice that for both samples, the most undergraduate students were at the sophomore level . This was because students who were allowed to participate had to be either in their freshman or sophomore year or at the Master's level. Also note that the number of student participants at UNI is less than the number of student participants at LAU.

Table 22

*School * Gender Crosstabulation*

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
School	LAU	Count	102	98	200
		% within School	51.0%	49.0%	100.0%
	UNI	Count	25	116	141
		% within School	17.7%	82.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	127	214	341
		% within School	37.2%	62.8%	100.0%

Table 22 is another crosstabulation that presents the information on the gender distribution at both LAU and UNI. Note that almost equal numbers of males and females made up the student sample at LAU, unlike the student sample at UNI, which were dominantly females.

With the crosstabulations presenting the frequencies on gender distribution, religions and educational level of the two samples, the quantitative section of this chapter is concluded.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate how student samples from two different cultures, Lebanon and the United States, define forgiveness and how these definitions compare with each other and how they compare with the experts' definitions. Another purpose of this study was to compare the willingness to forgive and actual forgiveness among the two student samples using the Enright Forgiveness Inventory and the Willingness to Forgive scales. No previous research regarding a comparison on the two samples' definitions of forgiveness has been done nor has a comparison regarding the willingness to forgive and actual forgiveness has been examined among these societies. However, some work has been done regarding how populations define forgiveness (Freedman & Chang, 2010) and how willing to forgive are societies of different cultural orientations (Azar et al., 1999; Azar & Mullet, 2001; Azar & Mullet, 2002; Kadiangandu et al., 2001; Paz et al., 2008; Sandage & Williamson, 2005; Suwartono et al., 2007). The above references will be used to compare the findings of this study regarding defining forgiveness, willingness to forgive and actual forgiveness.

The study on the topic of forgiveness from a psychological and empirical view is relatively new - being about three decades old and since that time forgiveness has been studied in relation to many social, cognitive and biological factors (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Freedman et al., 2005; Worthington, 2005; McCullough et al., 2000).

This study is an attempt to add to the literature on forgiveness specifically, on the literature that cross-culturally examines and compares forgiveness.

The results of the research questions will be discussed next. It is important to note that if no citations exist for statements made about the Lebanese sample, that means they are anecdotes expressed by the author who is a citizen of the Lebanese Republic. The first question aspires to investigate how the two samples define forgiveness, how these definitions compare to each other and to experts' definitions.

The definition of forgiveness that was adopted by this thesis and used as an expert's definition to compare the definitions provided by the student samples is the one by Subkovaic, Enright, and Wu (1992). They define forgiveness as:

“The overcoming of resentment toward an offender, not by denying ourselves the right to such feelings, but by endeavoring to view the offender with benevolence, compassion and even love, while recognizing that he or she has abandoned the right to them. The important points of this definition are as follows: (a) one who forgives has suffered a deep hurt, thus showing resentment, (b) the offended person has a moral right to resentment, but overcomes it nonetheless, (c) a new response to the other accrues, including compassion and sometimes love, (d) this loving response occurs despite the realization that there is no obligation to love the offender” (p.3).

In addition to the above definition, Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) and Freedman and Chang (2010) have written on the distinction between forgiveness and reconciliation, saying that to forgive, one does not have to reconcile. Freedman (2008) makes it clear that forgiveness is not pardoning or excusing nor is it

reconciling with the offender. In fact, she states that forgiveness can occur from a safe place while not restoring the relationship when re-injury is likely to happen.

When examining student responses to the question that asked them to give their definition of forgiveness it was found that the most frequent definition that participants at the Lebanese American University mentioned was forgetting or letting go. Eighty seven participants of the 200 at LAU (43.5%) wrote about forgetting or letting go when asked about forgiveness. This result falls coherent with what Freedman and Chang (2010) found in their study of a sample of the general populations' definition of forgiveness. However, in this study we have grouped forgetting, letting go and putting behind into one category while Freedman and Chang (2010) did not. In their article, Freedman and Chang (2010) reported that 53% of their sample (26 out of 49 participants) mentioned letting go as a theme when defining forgiveness. The theme of forgetting, letting go or putting behind was the second most frequent theme among the sample of UNI students, with 25 participants (17.7%) mentioning it. This theme was also observed in 28% of the subject of the study conducted by Kearns and Fincham (2004). However, subjects in the study conducted by Kanz (2000) agreed that it is not necessary to forget or let go when you forgive someone. Expert's definition on forgiveness would agree on what the subjects of Kanz's (2000) study expressed regarding forgetting not being part of defining forgiveness. However, experts would not agree on what student participants in this research indicated regarding forgetting being part of forgiving. In fact, one of the experts in the field, Freedman (2008), says that forgiveness is not a passive act. Therefore it is

not something that occurs only with time and without any effort. Eleven of the 87 participants (12.6%) of the sample at LAU who mentioned forgetting, letting go or putting behind in this study recognized that one can forgive but not forget, thus making a distinction between the two. Three participants out of the 25 (1.2%) at UNI also stated that to forgive, you may choose not to forget. This is not a very high percentage and reflects the idea that students in the general population may believe that to forgive one has to forget and this is not the case.

As for the most frequent theme mentioned by the student sample at UNI, it was moving on or getting over it. Twenty nine of the 141 participants (20.5 %) at UNI mentioned that theme. Freedman and Chang (2010) found that 20% of their sample (10 out of 49 participants) mentioned moving on when asked to define forgiveness. This theme was almost extinct among the student sample at LAU, for only one individual of the 200 participants at LAU (0.5%) mentioned moving on or getting over it as a theme in forgiveness. The mentioning of this theme was one of the major differences observed between the definitions of forgiveness in the two samples for in the American sample it was one of the most frequently mentioned themes and in the other it was almost non-existent. Probably the theme of moving on was absent from the Lebanese sample and present in the American sample due to difference in language and expression of the two samples. In spite of that, it is worth mentioning that moving on signifies a more advanced step than forgetting or letting go, for forgetting or letting go are passive acts while moving on requires more effort.

Reconciliation, maintaining a relationship or starting a new page was the second most frequently theme mentioned theme in the sample of students at LAU. Twenty nine participants (14.5%) mentioned this theme with three of these 29 participants (1%) distinguishing between forgiving the offender and reconciling with them. This theme was the third most frequently mentioned theme in the student sample at UNI with seventeen of the 141 participants mentioning it (12.1%). Thus, the participants held similar views regarding the relationship of this theme with forgiveness. Several articles by many experts in the field including Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) and Freedman (2008) have distinguished between forgiveness and reconciliation. They have particularly stated that reconciliation is not always a consequence of forgiveness, especially when it is harmful to reconcile with the offender in cases where the offender can still hurt the victim. Experts have also mentioned that while reconciliation is an act that involves effort from both parties, forgiveness is something only the injured person can decide to do for him or her self. This theme of reconciliation was also evident in the following studies as well: Younger et al. (2004), Kanz (2000), Kearns and Fincham (2004) and Freedman and Chang (2010).

Examining the background of the offender, the context of the offense or recognizing the humanity of the offender was one of the dominant themes mentioned in both samples as well. This is one theme in which the experts in the field would encourage victims to do (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). Twenty participants (10%) of the 200 at LAU mentioned this theme in their definition, while 24 participants (17%) of the 141 that

constitute the sample at UNI mentioned this theme. This theme was also present in findings of the study that Freedman and Chang (2010) conducted on a sample of the general population. It made up 8 % of the responses (4 of 49 participants).

An increase in positive affect was yet another theme that was identified by both samples. Eighteen participants (9%) at LAU and ten participants (7%) at UNI mentioned this theme. Participants here noted two dimensions in increasing positive affect. The first was when an individual holds positive feelings in their heart for their own sake such as a better view of the world. The second dimension was when positive affect is shown to the offender such as wishing them well. This theme is one that is highly encouraged by Enright et al. (1998), and Enright and Fitzbibbons (2000). In fact, the authors say that feelings of resentment should be replaced with feelings of respect and sometimes love towards the offender for the mere reason that this person is a human being who deserves respect. Kearns and Fincham (2004) have also observed this theme when they examined the definition of forgiveness in their sample. The fact that participants recognized that an increase in positive affect can take two forms and that one of them is for one's own benefit and reflects that subjects recognize the value of forgiving for the forgiver. We hope that this brings individuals one step closer to learning more about forgiveness as an option at times of hurt.

Not holding a grudge towards the offender was another theme that was present among the two current samples and in other researchers' work. Thirteen participants of 141 participants (9.2%) at UNI and five of the 200 participants (2.5%) at LAU mentioned

this theme. This is also a theme that Freedman and Chang (2010), Kearns and Fincham (2004) and Kanz (2000) observed in their sample. It is possible that the difference in percentage of participants among LAU and UNI who mentioned this theme is due to difference in vocabulary used to express thoughts and ideas due to language difference.

A decrease in negative affect was another theme that came up when both samples defined forgiveness. Enright started his definition of forgiveness with the words “An overcoming of resentment...” and this is what this theme implies. Seventeen participants (12%) of the entire sample at UNI and 16 of the 200 participants (8%) at LAU mentioned this theme. It is important to note that with the two educational levels that the participating students fell within at UNI, only the undergraduates mentioned this theme. However, both undergraduates and graduates at LAU mentioned a decrease in negative affect when defining forgiveness. We have no explanation as to why this was the case. It could be due to pure chance that no graduate student mentioned the theme and that if we had used a larger sample, the theme would have come up.

Not seeking revenge was another theme that was mentioned by both samples, yet it was more evident in the sample of students at LAU. Six graduate students (3% of total sample) at LAU and one graduate student at UNI mention (0.7% of total sample at UNI) were the number of individuals who mentioned this idea. Again, this theme of not seeking revenge is one that matches with what researchers include in their definition of forgiveness and is one of the first steps in the forgiveness process. When examining the dynamics of the Lebanese population, we find that taking revenge or getting even with

the offender is a thought which Lebanese individuals often have when they get hurt. Often, vendetta is an element present among the Lebanese population- a notion which victims think of ways at getting back at the offender in a manner that causes more hurt to the offender. Perhaps, this is a reason why the theme of not taking revenge was mentioned mostly by the Lebanese sample when asked to define forgiveness. Maybe it is a way of expressing disagreement with the trend of seeking revenge or with the idea that forgiveness is a way to move beyond revenge. If this is the case, then this too is a positive indicator of a step closer towards understanding the true meaning of forgiveness.

A final theme that was mentioned by both samples talked about the factor of an apology. While some participants mentioned an apology as a prerequisite for them to forgive, others did not. Five participants of the 200 (2.5%) at LAU and four of the 141 (2.8%) participants at UNI mentioned the factor of an apology in their definition. However, what was interesting was that one person (who was the only graduate student who mentioned the factor of an apology) of the four at UNI recognized that an apology is not a prerequisite for forgiveness to take place. All other participants who mentioned "apology" expressed that it is an important prerequisite for them to forgive. Freedman et al. (2005) says that the idea that an apology is to precede forgiveness is an inaccurate view of forgiveness because apologies are not always offered and this would mean that the injured cannot forgive unless he/she receives something from the offender. Freedman (2008) also points out that if the victim awaits an apology from the offender in order to be able to forgive-thus let go of the resentment in one's heart- then the victim is allowing

him/herself to be controlled by the offender. The theme of an apology was also observed in the study by Freedman and Chang (2010).

One theme that was mentioned by three graduate students at UNI (2% of the total population) and by none of the students at LAU was the recognition that forgiveness benefits the offended. This theme falls coherent with studies done on the biological effects of forgiveness on the victim (Worthington, 2005; McCullough et al., 2000). It is possible here, that because the Americans tend to hold more individualistic cultural orientations, that they examine benefits and cons of any decision they make in relation to themselves. However, probably the Lebanese sample, being more collectivistic, thinks of forgiveness as a benefit for social harmony. It seems that the American sample was at least one step ahead in understanding true forgiveness, for they often mention moving on rather than forgetting when asked about forgiveness. They recognize that forgiveness helps the forger. Most likely, the American sample will think about advantages and disadvantages when making decisions and not just do as expected.

Other notable themes that emerged were forgiveness being intertwined with religion. This theme was only present among LAU student participants and not UNI participants. Eleven participants (5.5%) of the 200 at LAU mentioned this theme. However, two individuals of the 11 (1.8%) who mentioned religion when asked to define forgiveness expressed that in spite of the fact that they were taught to forgive through religion, they were not convinced that they have to, nor do they feel they are as holy as the religious people who forgave in the past. One could interpret the presence of this

theme among the Lebanese sample and absence of it in the American sample using what Sandage and Williamson (2005) described as “communal forgiveness.” Communal forgiveness is when individuals are encouraged to forgive through what they learn from religious teachings and practices and from religious leaders. This occurs a lot in collectivistic cultures. It is possible that Lebanese youth are raised in an environment where forgiveness is still looked upon from a theological perspective. It seems that religion in Lebanon plays an integral and more dominant role for the majority of the society. For example, morals, values and behaviors are often determined by religion in the Lebanese culture. One behaves and adopts values and opinions based on what religion preaches. Religion in Lebanon goes beyond these agents of moral and values to reach how the government responsibility is distributed. For example: the President of the Lebanese Republic has to be a Christian Maronite, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, the Head of the Parliament a Shiite Muslim. On the other hand, American youth, who come from an individualistic society, might have been raised to realize the importance of one’s choice and decision. They may be a culture that uses reasoning, conscious and own opinion more than religious preaching and thought in matters crucial to life. While laws in the United States are constitutional laws, many laws in Lebanon abide by religious laws. A good example of the difference in laws between the two countries is marriage. While marriage in United States can be performed in a civil ceremony, marriage in Lebanon is always religious. Thus, we see the difference in how the two cultures use religion when dealing with issues of life.

Another theme that was mentioned among the Lebanese sample but absent in the American one, was forgiveness being non-existent. This theme was mentioned by five participants (2.5%) of the total 200. Many of the statements said about the theme were similar to this one: "That word does not exist in my dictionary! I don't know what it means! And I don't want to know!" Another individual from the sample at LAU (0.5%) said that forgiveness is something that should be "earned." And another participant (0.5%) at LAU stated that "Forgiveness is a problem inside a good person. It is like a disease inside the heart that weakens the character of the forgiving person and echoes on his social life." All these themes were ones that were mentioned by participants from LAU only and by none of the participants at UNI.

After examining these differences, one could predict that the presence of descriptors such as "non-existent," "must be earned" and "a disease" mostly stem out from what individuals in the Lebanese society have gone through in their country. Lebanon is a country that passed through much internal and international disagreements, conflicts and wars, whether it was the civil war that lasted from 1975-1990 between Lebanese Muslims and Christians, the Israeli invasion in 1982, the continuous bombings that murdered leading political leaders and some civilians during 2005-2006, the July 2006 war with Israel, or the May 2008 conflict between Lebanese political parties that took away the lives of over eighty civilians. These factors could all be ones that have affected the Lebanese views and practices on forgiveness. Probably, the youth feel that too much has happened to be forgiven and the only way to resolve issues is to get even

with the offender or cut off the offender. Perhaps another reason why for some participants forgiveness was a word that they “do not have in the dictionary and don’t want to know” is because the sense of forgiveness in the Lebanese culture comes mostly through lecturers that can be sometimes didactic from family, holy places and leaders. When an individual feels that he/she is obliged to forgive, merely because of family, religious figures or leaders, then one feels that the only power they have is to refuse to oblige to what others want.

Azar et al. (1999) and Azar and Mullet (2001 & 2002) noted that the intent to harm and the cancellation of consequences of the injury were two factors which make a difference to Lebanese individuals when they decided whether an offender should be granted forgiveness or not. Six participants in the Lebanese sample (3%) mentioned either the factors of intentional injury or the effect of canceling the consequences of the hurt when deciding to forgive or not. Four participants (2%) mentioned that they would forgive only if the injury was unintentional, while only one individual said that intention did not matter in the case of forgiveness, for he would forgive in both cases. Only one individual talked about cancelation of consequences as a prerequisite to forgive. She said that she would forgive only if no collateral hurt was done to any of her family members.

The second question aimed at investigating if a difference in the willingness to forgive and/or actual forgiveness exists between the student sample at LAU and the student sample at UNI. Given previous research findings regarding forgivingness among societies of different cultural orientations that indicated that collectivistic cultures tend to

be more forgiving than individualistic cultures(Hook et al., 2009; Kadiangandu et al., 2001; Sandage et al., 2003; Sandage & Williamson, 2005; Suwartono et al., 2007), one speculates that scores of both scales would be higher among the student sample at LAU than the student sample at UNI. However, results came out otherwise. The student sample at the University of Northern Iowa in the USA scored significantly higher on both scales compared to the student sample at the Lebanese American University.

The discussion will start off with the results of the two samples on the Enright Forgiveness Inventory. An individual taking the EFI can score anywhere from 120 points, lowest level of actual forgiveness, to 360 points which indicates the highest level of actual forgiveness. The mean score of LAU's participating students was 203, while the mean score of UNI's participating students was 259 points. These differences in the mean scores were found to be statistically significant. Based on previous research, one would predict that the Lebanese sample would be more forgiving because of its cultural orientation. Yet, despite this prediction, no previous work measuring actual forgiveness or willingness to forgive using the two measures used in this study has been done on a sample of the Lebanese students. Azar et al. (1999), Azar and Mullet (2001), and Azar and Mullet (2002) have examined the propensity to forgive among a sample of the Lebanese population across a number of circumstances such as: intent to harm, cancellation of consequences, religious and social proximity to the offender and apologies from the offender. Different scenarios were read to subjects and subjects

indicated their view on the appropriateness of forgiveness in each scenario. However, the study did not include a scale that measures actual forgiveness or willingness to forgive.

EFI scores between participants of different and the same sex across the two universities were compared. When the EFI mean scores of LAU male participants were compared to the EFI mean scores of UNI male participants, we saw a mean score of 199 for LAU males and a mean score of 266 for UNI males. The difference between these results also proved to be statistically significant. When the EFI mean scores of LAU female participants were compared to the EFI mean scores of UNI female participants, we saw a mean score of 206 for LAU females and a means score of 258 for UNI females and this mean difference was statistically significant as well. Therefore we see that a cross comparison of the genders from the two samples yield statistically significant results. However, there was no difference when the sexes at the same university were compared. The same result was observed when we compared UNI males with UNI females.

Enright and Rique (2000) state that according to Subkoviak et al. (1992) the maximum correlation expected between the EFI total score and the last item on the EFI scale is .70. This is because a one-item test is less reliable than a longer one and the last item on the EFI is only one item. A correlation of 0.57 was found between the last question and total EFI for both samples, 0.68 was the correlation found between the last question of the EFI and the total EFI score for the sample at UNI, and 0.48 was the correlation found between the last question on the EFI and the total EFI score for the

sample at LAU. A correlation of 0.68 is one that is very close to 0.7 which is reported to be the highest possible correlation between the last question on the EFI and the total EFI scale. Therefore, the scores of the EFI closely reflect how forgiving students feel as reported on the one item question asking where one is in the forgiveness process.

Scores on the Willingness to Forgive Scale also indicated that the sample of students at UNI was more likely than the sample at LAU to choose option 7, which is to forgive, when asked about the ending and preferred response to the hypothetical situations. Like the difference in scores on the EFI scale between the two samples, differences in mean number of choosing forgiveness as the preferred or ending response among the sample at UNI was significantly higher than among the sample at LAU. The mean number of times participants chose to forgive as an ending or preferred response at LAU was 2.8 and for UNI it was 5. When graduate student responses at LAU were compared to graduate student responses at UNI, we also saw statistical significant difference in the mean scores, graduate LAU mean was 5.5 and graduate UNI mean was 2.5. A mean score of 3 was observed for undergraduate students at LAU and a mean score of 4.4 was observed for undergraduate students at UNI. These results were also statistically significant. One interesting result was there was a statistically significant difference among the mean number of times forgiveness was chosen as the ending or the preferred response in one sample. Specifically the mean number of times the student sample at LAU chose forgiveness as the ending response was 0.97, while the mean number of times they chose forgiveness as the preferred response was 1.8. These two

scores were statistically significant when compared with each other. The same holds true for the results of the sample of UNI students. We predict that this was the case because, individuals often realize that forgiveness is generally an ultimate preferred way of dealing with injury. Thus, the results suggest that students would prefer to be more forgiving and do see that forgiveness is something worthwhile to do. However, individuals also express that preaching is easier than practicing, therefore, one does not always practice what is probably the right thing to do but what one aspires to do.

To analyze why the results regarding which sample scored higher on actual forgiveness and willingness to forgive were inconsistent with what the literature predicts it is important to discuss two factors that could have probably influenced how the dynamics of the Lebanese society influenced results. The first reason could relate to what was mentioned earlier regarding the continuous chain of wars and conflicts that the Lebanese society or culture has passed through for over three decades now. This factor could be one that cultivates feelings of pain, loss, revenge, and sometimes animosity between individuals. When research has been done on other similar societies, such as China and Indonesia, and we want to predict results in Lebanon based on other findings, we need to examine the history of the country regarding social harmony, peace, wars and conflicts- especially those between the society themselves. Lebanon is not only a country that has faced international conflicts and wars, but many internal conflicts and wars between the Lebanese population each other as well. These were due to differences in religious views, sects, or even political affiliation.

The second factor that is worth mentioning concerns what Ayyash-Abdo (2001) found regarding the cultural orientation of the youth of Lebanon. Lebanon is a multi-lingual society where Arabic is the official language of the country, yet all government publications appear in both the Arabic and French language (Ayyash-Abdo, 2001). Also, all students in Lebanon are required to learn a second and sometimes a third language. (Ayyash-Abdo, 2001). These second and third languages are often English and French. There are three educational orientations in Lebanon and they start from elementary school and end at the level of university. Ayyash-Abdo (2001) reports these three educational orientations to be: "an Arabic one which culminates in the Lebanese and Arab universities, an Anglo orientation which culminates in the two American universities, and a French orientation which culminates in St. Joseph and Kaslik universities" (p. 506). Ayyash-Abdo wanted to examine the effect of the tendency to speak different languages on cultural orientation. She conducted a study to examine this effect on 517 college students from the universities stated above. Ayyash-Abdo (2001) found that most participants preferred to communicate using language that their university adopts as an educational orientation. She also found that subjects who preferred to communicate using the Arabic language were consistently more collectivistic than those who preferred to use the English or the French language while communicating. She attributed that to the fact that when English or French were learned by Arabic native speakers, the accessibility of private self cognitions were enhanced (the individual places more importance on him/herself as an individual than as part of a community). Thus,

individuals would think more as independent individuals than as an individual who is part of the community.

One of the two American universities in which an Anglo orientation culminates in, as stated by Ayyash-Abdo, is the university that this study sought participants from. As a result, one would predict that if tendencies towards cultural orientation were measured, it is possible that the sample expresses more of a tendency towards individualistic orientations than collectivistic orientations. This may explain why the Lebanese sample did not prove to be more forgiving than the American sample.

The third research question in this study was to examine the effect of age and educational level on actual forgiveness and willingness to forgive. Unfortunately, this research question was not able to be examined because there was little variation between the ages of participants in the two educational levels (freshman and sophomore vs. Masters) that were targeted. When statistical tests were run to examine differences between the educational levels of both samples, the results proved to be not statistically significant. Research done by previous researchers indicates that older and more educated individuals tend to be more forgiving than younger individuals (Azar et al., 1999). This is because they examine the context of the offense, the background of the offender and possible reasons of why the offender committed the injury. They also find ways of helping or rehabilitating the offender (Azar et al., 1999). This view falls consistent with what Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991, 1994) found on the developmental nature of forgiveness.

Significance of the Study

This study aimed at adding to the literature knowledge on how a student sample of the Lebanese population is compared to the student sample of the American population define forgiveness and whether there is a difference in how forgiving in the two samples are. Also, it is important to get insight on what the two samples mean when they say they forgive or do not forgive. Kearns and Fincham (2004) stated that “An important step in forgiveness research and assessment is to describe what people mean when they say they “forgive” or “do not forgive” and to compare these meanings to expert definitions of forgiveness” (p.839).

This study is also the first of its kind with respect to the protocols it used to compare willingness to forgive and actual forgiveness among the samples from the two cultures, Lebanon and the United States. Therefore, this study adds information to the literature not only on how the two samples scored but how do their scores compare to each other.

Finally, this study is an attempt to advocate for forgiveness education. As mentioned earlier, previous research indicates that cultures whose orientations are collectivistic tend to be more willing to forgive and tend to practice forgiveness more. Thus, one could possibly predict that the protocols given to the samples would yield results to indicate so that the student sample at LAU would score higher. On the contrary, the results indicated that the sample of students at UNI- a society with individualistic

cultural orientations- scored higher on both scales, meaning that they proved to be more willing to forgive and practiced forgiveness more when it came to actual situations. Since this result was explained by the fact that much violence and conflict, both internal or external, has been occurring in Lebanon for over three decades now then it is probably time to advocate for forgiveness education so that the population knows of this alternative to deal with hurt and conflicts.

Strengths of the Study

The research questions of this study were examined using a large number of student participants, 200 participants in Lebanon and 141 participants in the United States. Therefore, the above results are based on a subject number that is sufficient enough to make inference.

Another strength of this study is that both samples were given two testing protocols, the Enright Forgiveness Inventory that measures actual forgiveness and the Willingness to Forgive scale that measures willingness to forgive. Scores of UNI participants were higher than scores of LAU participants in both protocols, thus, the results are most likely accurate because of the homogeneity of scores on both protocols.

Limitations of the Study

A primary limitation of the study is that all participants from Lebanon attended a private university where the language of instruction is not Arabic-the native language of

the country- but English. It is an American university in which most students come from an upper socio-economic class due to the high tuition of the university. As a result, this creates a bias based upon ability to attend such a university be it due to education received at school or due to financial status. Therefore, the sample used is a subset of society and non-representative of the entire population and may be more similar to the American population than students from another university would be. As for the participants of Iowa, it is important to note that all participants were attending a medium sized university in a small Midwestern town and they might not be representative of the larger society. Both samples have non-equal numbers of males and females. Of the 141 participants at UNI only 25 of them were males (17.7 %). This is because all protocols were administered in education, counseling or psychology classes and the majority of these programs includes female enrollment. As a result, with regard to the UNI results, this research may be more representative of female views and understanding of forgiveness than male views and understanding. In addition to that, it could be that the results indicated that the American sample was more forgiving because there were much more females in the sample than males. If forgiveness is higher in females than males, then the result could be attributed to the gender distribution in the American sample.

Another limitation of this study is one that concerns the student sample at LAU only. Although all students at that university speak English very well, since the language of instruction is English and the university follows the American curriculum, and despite the fact that any participants were told that they could ask the administrator any question

regarding word or task comprehension, it would have been good to give the participants a choice between choosing an Arabic version of the protocols or an English version of it rather than providing them with the English version only. This is because the native language of Lebanese is Arabic and thus they might have had some difficulty in comprehending terms or tasks written in English. It would probably be best if participants were given a choice between protocols written in different languages and they would choose whatever they feel comfortable with.

One final limitation of the study is the use of college students in this study limits generalization of the results to the entire population.

Implications for Future Research

Since this research was unable to answer the third research question due to the very slight variation between the ages of the participants, it is encouraged that a replicate of this study be created but with greater age variations so that possible differences between ages could be predicted.

One suggestion for future research is to compare the scores acquired by participants on the EFI scale and the Willingness to Forgive scale with the way the participants define forgiveness. A possible trend in how high or how low scores are with how the participant defines forgiveness could be examined.

Another suggestion would be to conduct forgiveness education classes in both universities and give a pre and post forgiveness measure to participants to see how the education influences the post test results. This recommendation would be particularly useful to the Lebanese society, since Lebanon is a country with much internal conflict and disputes. Also, it is a country where many wars have taken place, be it civil wars or wars with other neighboring countries. Forgiveness education in this context would be a useful plan to pursue as a means of enlightening people to a different way of dealing with their hurt, loss and conflict.

A final suggestion would be to replicate this research in Lebanon and measure actual forgiveness and willingness to forgive among different religions and sects in the country. It would be interesting to have equal numbers of participants from all sects and religions in the country rate how practicing of their religion they are and have them take the EFI and the Willingness to Forgive scale to see how each group scores.

Conclusion

To sum up the findings of this study, it seems that through the analysis of the open ended question regarding the definition of forgiveness, the American sample was one step ahead of the Lebanese sample in defining forgiveness like experts. This was because the student sample at UNI recognized the fact that forgiveness benefits the person engaging in it and that forgiveness requires moving on- which is an active process. Regarding the definition of forgiveness provided by the student sample at LAU,

forgetting or letting go was the theme that was most frequently mentioned by the sample. This theme implies passivity and is one of the misconceptions on what forgiveness is. Other themes that were mentioned by the student sample at LAU were forgiveness being intertwined with religion and forgiveness being non-existent. These themes seem to place the understanding of forgiveness in the student sample at LAU one step farther from the understanding of forgiveness in the student sample at UNI and experts' definition and views on forgiveness.

In addition to that, the student sample at UNI scored higher in both the Enright Forgiveness Inventory which measures actual forgiveness toward an offender and the Willingness to Forgive scale which measures willingness to forgive, thus proving the student sample at UNI to be more willing to forgive and more forgiving in actual hurtful situations. Consequently, the Lebanese sample at LAU scored lower in both the Enright Forgiveness Inventory and the Willingness to Forgive scale, thus proving that the student sample at LAU is less willing to forgive and less forgiving in actual hurtful situations.

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