



*Original Contribution*

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## RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TYPE D PERSONALITY AND FORGIVENESS

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The aim of the current study was to determine if there are significant differences between individuals with and without a Type D personality for forgiveness. **Methods:** One hundred and fifty-nine Iranian college students participated in the study. **Results:** Independent t-test showed that individuals with and without a Type D personality did not differ in terms of forgiveness. **Conclusions:** The findings provide the evidence that Type D personality was not related to forgiveness.

**Key words:** Type D personality, forgiveness, negative affectivity

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the topic of forgiveness has attracted increased attention from psychology researchers. The implications of the rapidly accumulating evidence related to forgiveness are strikingly consistent: forgiveness seems adaptive from both intrapsychic and interpersonal perspectives. More specifically, using a variety of mental health indices (using measures of depression, anxiety, somatic symptoms, social dysfunction, anger, well-being, stress, happiness) forgiving thoughts, cognitions and behaviors are associated with indices of better mental health, and failure to forgive is associated with poorer mental health (1, 2). However, these findings don't tend to be linked to research that seeks to establish a theoretical context for these relationships between forgiveness, and mental health, rather treating forgiveness as an individual difference variable. One area may provide a theoretical context to understand the relationship between forgiveness and mental health variables;

personality. The relationship between personality and mental health has been well established. Using both three and five-factor models of personality (3, 4), research suggests that foremost, neuroticism, among clinical and non-clinical samples, is associated with poorer mental health; including negative affect (5) anxiety (6) a dispositional factor for depression (7). Further, within the three-factor model there is evidence to suggest that extraversion is related to subjective well-being, happiness, positive affect and optimistic traits, and psychoticism is thought to represent some emotional disturbance (8, 9).

There is a growing body of psychological literature devoted to studying personality factors and forgiveness. But relationship between personality types and forgiveness need to be addressed. This study focused on Type-D personality type from personality types. More recently, there has been resurgence in the interest in personality as a risk factor in the long-term prognosis of cardiac patients with the introduction of the "distressed" personality type or type-D (10). Developed by Denollet, type-D refers to individuals who simultaneously experience high level of negative affectivity (NA) and high level of social inhibition (SI). In other words, type-D individuals are thought to experience negative emotions and inhibit the

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expression of these emotions in social interactions, suggesting that it is not merely the presence of NA that should be considered as a risk factor but also how an individual copes with his or her negative emotions.

The aim of this study was to answer the following question:

1-Are there significant differences between individuals with a Type D personality and individuals without a Type D personality for forgiveness?

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### ***Participants***

One hundred and fifty-nine college students from university of Mohaghegh ardabili completed questionnaires for this study. Forty-nine percent of these were men, 50% were women. Their ages ranged from 18-to 26 years ( $M=21.10$ ,  $SD=2.26$ ). none were married. All participants were unpaid volunteers.

With reference to assessment of Type D personality, 10 is the cut-off for both scales. Subjects are classified as Type D if both negative affectivity is greater than or equal to 10 and social inhibition is greater than or equal to 10 ( $n=54$ ), and subjects are classified as non-Type D personality if both negative affectivity and social inhibition are greater than or equal to 10 ( $n=104$ )

### ***Measures***

#### ***Type-D personality***

Type-D was assessed using the DS14 (10). It is a 14-item measure answered on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (false) to 4 (true), consisting of two subscales assessing the NA and SI components of type-D. participants who score highly on both NA and SI using a cutoff point of  $>10$  on both scales are classified as having a type-D personality (10). Both subscales were internally consistent in the current study (Cronbach's  $\alpha=.87$  and  $.86$  for NA and SI, respectively).

#### ***Dispositional forgiveness***

The four-item Tendency to Forgive Scale (11) was used to assess individual differences in the tendency to engage in forgiving thoughts or behaviors across situations. Higher scores reflected a greater propensity to forgive others ( $\alpha=.73$ )

### ***Procedure***

The students were invited to participate during a class session in a study of relationships, and told that they would complete a questionnaire about themselves and their relationships with other people. The questionnaires were administered in groups ranging in size from 8 to 20 during the first semester 2008. Students were informed that participation was voluntary, and responses were confidential. The participation rate was 100%. After completing the questionnaire participants were debriefed. The average length of time needed to complete the study was approximately 15 min.

## **RESULTS**

Independent t-test revealed that subjects with a Type D personality ( $M=11.83$ ,  $SD=2.68$ ) and subjects with a non-Type D personality ( $M=11.95$ ,  $SD=2.47$ ) did not differ in terms of forgiveness.

## **DISCUSSION**

Individuals who are high in both negative affect (NA) and social inhibition (SI) have a Type D personality. So far, numerous studies have pointed to forgiveness being related to indicators of psychological adjustment. Correlational studies have shown that forgiveness is negatively associated with negative affect (12).

Although, individuals with a Type D personality have high negative affectivity, and forgiveness was negatively associated with negative affect, but this study revealed that No statistically significant differences were found between individuals with and without a Type D personality for forgiveness. In other words, Type D personality was not related to forgiveness.

Denollet et al. (2006) showed that social inhibition is a distinctly different psychological construct than negative emotions and that inhibition modulates the impact of these emotions on prognosis (13). More specifically, it was the interaction between inhibition and negativity that predicted the composite endpoint of death.

Therefore, it appears that for examining relationship between Type D personality and forgiveness, in addition to negative affect, attention should be paid to social inhibition.

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