



# **Forgiveness among Public Sector Workers: A Predictive Study of Employee Resilience, Emotional Intelligence and Loneliness at Work**

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## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author OTM designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors ISE and UCE managed the analyses of the study. Author UCE managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The gains of organizational wellbeing and productivity have been challenged by workers disposition especially the heart of forgiving one another within the workplace. The present study investigated forgiveness among public sector workers: a predictive study of employee resilience, emotional intelligence and loneliness at work. Participants in the study were made up of non-academic staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University. They comprise of 78 males (43.09%) and 103 females (56.91%) with a mean age of 39.77 years and a standard deviation of 7.9 years and age ranges from 28 -65 years. Four different instruments were used to measure the four variables; Resilience, Loneliness, Emotional Intelligence and Forgiveness. The Rye's Forgiveness Scale was used to measure forgiveness among the participants; Wagnild and Young' Resilience scale (WYRS) was used to measure resilience; UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS) was used to measure loneliness while Wong's Emotional Intelligence scale (WEIS) measured the participants' emotional

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intelligence. The design adopted for this study is the correlational design and the statistical method used is the multiple regression technique. The results of the hypotheses tested showed that there is insignificant relationship between resilience and forgiveness ( $\beta=.052$   $p>.05$ ), the regression results shown in Table 2 show that there is insignificant relationship between loneliness and forgiveness ( $\beta=.030$ ,  $p>.05$ ), there was also a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and forgiveness ( $\beta= .500$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and the overall significance of the effect as shown in Table 3 showed that there was an overall significance between forgiveness and the selected predictors  $F(3,177)= 3.126$ ,  $p<.05$ . It was however recommended that Personnel Managers should inculcate improvement in psychological factors like emotional intelligence in their personnel training agenda so as to improve the individuals' tendency to forgive coworkers in the workplace.

*Keywords: Forgiveness; employee resilience; emotional intelligence; loneliness.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the course of our interaction in our different endeavors of life, there is every tendency that people will act in accordance with their own biological, psychological and even socioeconomic makeup. The combination of these varied ways of life is known as individual differences. Being aware of this reality, individual differences will always mean that in daily interaction with each other people will always disagree with each other. In the process of these disagreements people will always hurt each other. When wrongs are committed against a person, the normal course of action is to retaliate or revenge. McCullough [1] observed that conflicts at work and offenses among coworkers happen in organizational settings nearly everywhere, every day. People tend to respond to offenses with negative behaviors such as avoiding contacts with the offender or seeking revenge which may worsen the relationship. Kelley and Waldron [2] also added that damaged relationships among coworkers after offenses in turn affect the normal operations and productivity of an organization. Unforgiving individuals within an organization and/or an unforgiving organizational culture in general can result in lower levels of performance at all levels.

It is however sad to note that un-forgiveness is fast becoming a norm among workers in Nigerian organizations. Coworkers who are meant to work together to achieve organizational objectives are increasingly turning against each other, thereby jeopardizing the effectiveness of others and productivity of the firm through their unending cycle of retaliation. Some workers intentionally carry out their duties negligently all in a bid to sabotage the efforts of the offending coworkers. Malicious activities have also been observed in organizations leading to individualism and clique forming within organizations which has been the

cause of under-productivity in the workplace. All these negative organizational outcomes does not mean well for enterprising organizations. For instance, Stone [3] opined that the costs of not forgiving have an enormous impact at each level of a system, because employees separate themselves sometimes leading to ineffective job performance and/or leaving the organization. Stone [3] also noted that an organizational culture that does not promote forgiveness will be engaged in negative and destructive politics which will eventually decrease an organization's effectiveness. Lending credence to Stone [3] opinion, Jonathan [4] warned that un-forgiveness also has long-lasting health implications. According to Jonathan [4], he found that un-forgiveness was related to some chronic illnesses. Un-forgiveness in the work place is so critical that its consequences go beyond the walls of the organization. Some of the aggrieved employees even carry their grudges to their homes and families in which case, there could be transfer of aggression.

Laurent [5] found that when employees failed to forgive co-employees, there was a lack of personal and team productivity that led to aggressive and passive-aggressive behavior on the part of the individual. Stone [3] wrote that the costs of not forgiving have an enormous impact at each level of a system, because employees separate themselves sometimes leading to ineffective job performance and/or leaving the organization. As a result forgiveness becomes a necessary trait for employees in their work place if the organization is to progress. According to Aquino, Grover, Goldman and Folger [6], Forgiveness should be an important concern of both organizational theorists and practicing managers because it is a way for individual to repair damaged workplace relationships and overcome debilitating thoughts and emotions resulting from interpersonal injury. Forgiveness,

a cognitive, emotional and behavioral response to interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict is important to social harmony. There is scarcity of research work that has studied the relationship between loneliness and forgiveness of self. These studies have shown that individuals who feel lonely or rejected are less forgiving of oneself [7-9]. These studies have only managed to examine the connection between loneliness and forgiveness of oneself and not the general forgiveness. Adak and Ray [10] and Jonathan [4] did examine loneliness and forgiveness howbeit in ageing people in Kolkata, India and North Texas respectively. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there has been no recent study on loneliness and forgiveness carried out in Nigeria. This dearth of literature in this regard, creates the need to for new research that will examine how loneliness can be used to predict forgiveness in employees at their workplace in Nigeria.

This research work will examine forgiveness in the workplace as predicted by employee resilience, emotional intelligence and loneliness at work. These selected variables are psychological variables that are expected to determine forgiveness in workers. The choice of psychological variables is as a result of the fact that several processes have to go on psychologically before a person decides to forgive. This can be seen in the assertions of the Social-Psychological theory of McCullough [11]. Resilience would capture how employees would forgive or not forgive in order to forge ahead of difficult situations; emotional intelligence will mirror how employees react to wrongs based on their ability to understand emotions; and loneliness will reflect how workers use forgiveness to maintain desired relationships or how the negative effects of loneliness can propel retaliation. Based on these aforementioned facts, these concepts Forgiveness, Resilience, emotional intelligence and loneliness will be distinctively examined, with key interest on the relationship they share with un-forgiveness.

### 1.1 Forgiveness

Pingleton [12] defined forgiveness operationally as relinquishing the right to retaliate subsequent to injury. He stated that forgiveness: recognizes, anticipates and attempts to mitigate against the *lex talionis*, or law of the talon – the human organism's universal, almost reflexive propensity for retaliation and retribution in the face of hurt and pain at the hand of another. The most

common understanding of forgiveness involves some aspect of release or letting go over time. The release may focus on anger, shame, record of wrongs and resentment. Forgiveness is among several warmth-based virtues. Its avoidance or acceptance has physical, psychological, spiritual and social impacts. Forgiveness leads to physical and psychological health through improved positive mood and interpersonal relationships [13]. The absence of forgiveness contributes to psychological tension and may reduce the levels of psychological well-being. Failure to forgive others to whom one feels a strong commitment elicited reduced levels of life satisfaction and self-esteem as well as higher levels of other negative effects [13].

### 1.2 Resilience

Resilience originates from the Latin word *resiliens*, which refers to the pliant or elastic quality of a substance [14]. Masten (2005) defines resilience as a class of phenomena characterized by good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation of development. Rutter [15], a psychiatric risk researcher, states that the term is used to describe the positive tone of individual differences in people's response to stress and adversity. Jonathan [4] identified the term as the ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune. Perry [16] defines resilience as the capacity to face stressors without significant negative disruption in functioning.

Research has shown that resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary. People commonly demonstrate resilience in their everyday lives. Resilience is not a trait people have or do not have. It involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. So many factors contribute to building resilience. Some of them include determination, religion, emotional stability, support, etc [17].

### 1.3 Loneliness

Paplaou and Perlman [18] studied several definitions of loneliness and found that all have three elements in common: First, loneliness is a result of deficiencies in a person's social relations. Second, it is a subjective feeling, not synonymous with isolation. It is possible to feel lonely together with many people or to be alone without feeling lonely. Third, the feeling is negative and unpleasant. They therefore defined loneliness as the unpleasant experience that

occurs when a person's network of social relationships is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively. This includes situations in which the number of existing relationships is smaller than is considered desirable or admissible, as well as situations where the intimacy one wishes for has not been realized.

Thus loneliness is seen to involve the manner in which the person perceives, experiences and evaluates his or her isolation and lack of communication with other people [19]. This definition of loneliness conceptualizes loneliness as a multidimensional phenomenon. Three dimensions are distinguished. The first concerns the feelings associated with the absence of an intimate attachment, feelings of emptiness or abandonment. This so-called 'deprivation' component is the core of the concept. The second component refers to the time perspective (do people interpret their loneliness situation as being hopeless or as changeable and treatable; do they blame others or themselves for the situation they are in?). The third component involves different types of emotional aspects such as sorrow, sadness and feelings of shame, guilt, frustration and desperation [19].

#### **1.4 Emotional Intelligence**

According to Salovey and Mayer [20] emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. Baron [21] defines emotional intelligence as an array of non-cognitive (emotional and social) capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures. Hein [22] explained that emotional intelligence involves knowing how to separate healthy from unhealthy feelings and how to turn negative feelings into positive ones. He went further to describe it as the innate potential to feel, use, communicate, recognize, remember, learn from, manage, understand and explain emotions.

According to Gretchen [23] Emotions are involved in everything people do: every action, decision and judgment. Emotionally intelligent people recognize this and use their thinking to manage their emotions rather than being managed by them.

### **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

#### **1.5.1 Social-psychological theory of forgiveness [24]**

The study hinges on the Socio-Psychological theory (SPT) of Forgiveness propounded by McCullough and his associates in 1998; as well as Bar-On's Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence. The study hypothesizes that certain psychological factors are responsible for the level of forgiveness among Civil servants in their workplace. For instance, the social-cognitive/affective nature was one of the factors that, according to the SPT determine forgiveness. This factor can be linked with the emotional intelligence used in the study as it relates to the way the injured or offended worker thinks and/or feels about the offense and the coworker who caused it. In other words, the offended civil servants may feel empathy and/or compassion towards the offending coworkers, may make cognitive judgments in regard to the offender's culpability in the offense, may have perceptions of intentionality by the offender and severity of the offense, and may choose to reflect about the offense and the offending coworker in such a way as to cause distress.

Other Psychological factors used in this study include loneliness and resilience. The SPT also makes provisions for such variables in the assertion that agreeableness, levels of reasoning about forgiveness, attitudes towards revenge, ways of responding to anger and, religious beliefs are determining factors of forgiveness. Civil servants who are resilient are expected to be more forgiving as they seek to find their way out of the stress associated with the hurt and the consequences of un-forgiveness.

Bar-On's Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence has several tenets that can be used to explain emotional intelligence, loneliness and success in the work place. Bar-On found that individuals with higher than average E.Q.'s are in general more successful in meeting environmental demands and pressures and deficiency in emotional intelligence can mean a lack of success and the existence of emotional problems. This implies that civil workers that are more intelligent should record higher success rate at their work-place by establishing good rapport with co-workers. The interpersonal component of Bar-On's Mixed Model comprises interpersonal relationships emphasizing on the ability of establishing and maintaining mutually

satisfying relationships. This sub-component tends to strike a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and loneliness; just as the Cognitive Theory of Loneliness predicts that loneliness is perpetuated by way of a self-fulfilling prophecy in which poor social skills result in unsatisfactory personal relationships that in turn result in negative self-attributions that lead to further social isolation and relationship dissatisfaction. Therefore, lonely individuals have poor social and interpersonal skill which emotionally intelligent people have in abundance. Therefore if emotionally intelligent civil servants are more forgiving, the lonely ones will be far less forgiving.

### 1.6 Study Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. Resilience would significantly predict forgiveness among workers.
2. Loneliness would significantly predict forgiveness among workers.
3. Emotional intelligence would significantly predict forgiveness among workers.
4. Resilience, loneliness and emotional intelligence would jointly predict forgiveness among workers.

## 2. METHODS

The design adopted for this study is the correlation design and the statistical method used is the multiple regression technique. The Participants in the study were made up of non-academic staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University. They comprise of 78 males (43.09%) and 103 females (56.91%) with a mean age of 39.77 years and a standard deviation of 7.9 years and age ranges from 28 -65 years. The participants were drawn using a systematic and convenient sampling, where participants were selected using one (1) as  $n^{\text{th}}$  case. Having used '1' as the  $n^{\text{th}}$  case, the selected units used for the study are Bursary unit, Admissions, Registrar's office, Works and Transport unit and Deputy Vice Chancellors' offices. Completed copies of the questionnaire were returned by the participants and accordingly, used by the researchers. The highest educational qualification obtained from the participants was Ph.D while the lowest educational qualification attained was the B.Sc. 126 participants (69.61%) of the participants are married while the remaining 55 participants are unmarried. Four different instruments were used to measure the four variables; Resilience,

Loneliness, Emotional Intelligence and Forgiveness. The Rye's Forgiveness Scale was used to measure forgiveness among the participants; Wagnild and Young' Resilience scale (WYRS) was used to measure resilience; UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS) was used to measure loneliness while Wong's Emotional Intelligence scale (WEIS) measured the participants' emotional intelligence.

### 2.1 Rye's Forgiveness Scale (RFS)

Rye's Forgiveness Scale (RFS) was developed by Rye [25]. The instrument comprises 15 items having response pattern ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree Sample items in the RFS include; "I wish good things to happen to the person who wronged me", "I have been able to let go of the anger toward the person who wronged me". The questionnaire is scored using a 5 point Likert scale: ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agreed. Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, are reversely scored. Sample reverse items include; "I Can't stop thinking about how I was wronged by this person," and "I feel hatred each time I think about the person who wronged me." Rye [25] tested the internal consistency and reliability of the RFS and obtained a Cronbach Alpha of .75 and a test retest reliability of  $r=.71$ . For its use with non-academic staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, the researcher conducted a pilot study with 50 participants who were workers of Ministry of Health at the secretariat complex, Awka. The result indicated a Cronbach alpha of .93 and .73 for test retest reliability. The instrument was thus adopted for the study.

### 2.2 Wagnild and Young's Resilience Scale (WYRS)

The Wagnild and Young's Resilience Scale (WYRS) was developed by Wagnild and Young [26] and was designed to measure the level of resilience of each participant. The questionnaire is a 25-item questionnaire which has a seven (7) response pattern ranging from Disagreestrongly to Agree strongly: 1 for Disagree strongly, 7 for agree strongly. None of the questionnaire items were inversely score. Some of the questionnaire items in the WYRS include; "when I make plans I follow through with them", "My belief in myself gets me through hard time" and "When I'm in difficult situations I can usually find my way out". Wagnild and young [26] tested the internal consistency and reliability of the WYRS and obtained a Cronbach Alpha of .91 and a test

retest reliability of  $r=.84$ . For its use with non-academic staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, a pilot study was conducted with 50 participants who were workers of Ministry of Health at the secretariat complex, Awka. The result indicated a Cronbach alpha of .85 and .76 for test retest reliability. This indicated that the scale is reliable for the present study.

### 2.3 UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS)

The UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS) developed by Russell, Papeleu and Ferguson [27] is a 20-item questionnaire designed to measure loneliness traits in the participants. The questionnaire required participants to indicate how frequently they experienced certain feelings of loneliness and isolation as contained in the questionnaire. The instrument has a 4-response pattern with a 3 point Likert scale. The responses and their scores are as follows; 3 for often, 2 for Sometimes, 1 for Rarely and 0 for never. Items 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, 19, 20 are inversely scored. Some items in the ULS questionnaire includes; "How often do you feel that you lack companionship?", "How often do you feel alone?" and "How often do you feel close to people?" ULS tested the internal consistency and reliability of the ULS and obtained a Cronbach Alpha of .89 and a test retest reliability of  $r=.71$ . For its use with non-academic staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, the researcher conducted a pilot study with 50 participants who were workers of Ministry of Health at the secretariat complex, Awka. The result indicated a Cronbach alpha of .88 and .83 for test retest reliability. This indicated that the scale is reliable for the present study.

### 2.4 Wong's Emotional Intelligence Scale (WEIS)

The Wong's Emotional Intelligence Scale (WEIS) was developed by Wong and Law [28] the instrument is a 16-item questionnaire designed to measure the participants' level of emotional intelligence. Sample questions include; "I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions" (Regulation of Emotion), "I always know whether or not I am happy" (Self-Emotion Appraisals), "I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others" (Others' Emotion Appraisals), and "I always tell myself I am a competent person" (Use of Emotion). Each item is answered on a -point Likert scale that ranges from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Wong and Law [28] tested the internal consistency and reliability of the WEIS and obtained a Cronbach Alpha of

.89 and a test retest reliability of  $r=.73$ . For its use with non-academic staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, the pilot study for the questionnaire was conducted with 50 participants also with workers of Ministry of Health at the secretariat complex, Awka. The result indicated a Cronbach alpha of .81 and .88 for test retest reliability. Therefore, the instrument was adopted for the main study.

### 2.5 Design and Statistics

The study is a survey research with correlational design. Accordingly, multiple regression was used as the appropriate statistics to test the study hypotheses.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Summary of the Findings

The analyses were conducted using the regression method and results of the analysis were interpreted on the basis of the regression coefficient and the probability values. The findings of the study are therefore summarized as follows;

Resilience did not significantly predict forgiveness among civil servants. Thus the hypothesis one which states that resilience would significantly predict forgiveness among civil servants was not accepted. Therefore, resilience is not a significant predictor of forgiveness among workers.

The findings also showed that Loneliness did not predict forgiveness among civil servants as the hypothesis which states that loneliness would significantly predict forgiveness among workers was not accepted.

Also, emotional intelligence was found to positively and significantly predict forgiveness among workers. Thus the hypothesis which states that emotional intelligence would significantly predict forgiveness among workers was accepted. Therefore, civil servants with higher emotional intelligence tend to forgive more.

All the selected factors (resilience, loneliness and emotional intelligence) are significant in predicting forgiveness in civil servant as the hypothesis which states that resilience, loneliness and emotional intelligence would jointly predict forgiveness among civil servants was accepted.

**Table 1. Mean and standard deviation for resilience, emotional intelligence loneliness and forgiveness score of the respondents**

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Resilience	181	133.36	23.01
Emotional Intelligence	181	67.55	6.45
Loneliness	181	26.44	7.03
Forgiveness	181	67.41	4.38

**Table 2. Regression results between forgiveness and the selected predictors**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	42.669	3.385		12.606	0.000
Resilience*Forgiveness	0.010	0.014	0.052	0.723	0.471
Loneliness*Forgiveness	0.019	0.043	0.030	0.435	0.664
Emotional Intelligence*Forgiveness	0.339	0.046	0.500	7.457	0.000

**Table 3. Regression results between f-statistic of the regression model**

Model	R-squared	Df	F	Sig. (2-tailed)
Regression	0.267	3177	3.126	0.000

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The study tested four hypotheses. The first hypothesis stated that resilience would significantly predict forgiveness among workers. From the results of the multiple regression analysis, the hypothesis was not accepted even though the regression coefficient was positive therefore the findings revealed that resilience insignificantly predicts forgiveness among workers. This implies that the level of resilience of civil servants would not significantly determine their forgiveness. This finding correlates with the findings of Majid, Narges and Hamid, (2016) who found a positive relationship between resilience and forgiveness, however in chronic pain patients. Majid et al. (2016) actually observed that the relationship moved both ways. According to them, individuals use forgiveness as a coping mechanism (resilience) and in the same way, individuals that are more resilient, forgive more. Anderson (2006) also had similar findings when he examined the relationship between resilience and forgiveness. He found that individuals who were more resilient were more forgiving. However, unlike the findings of these studies the relationship was insignificant.

The second hypothesis stated that loneliness would significantly predict forgiveness among workers. From the results of the multiple regression analysis, the hypothesis was also not

accepted. The regression coefficient was positive also showing that loneliness insignificantly contributes forgiveness among workers. The finding is against the researchers expectation coined from the assumptions of the cognitive approach to loneliness. The finding also negates the findings of Adak and Ray [10] who studied loneliness and forgiveness in elderly people. According to Adak and Ray [10], lower level of loneliness boosts forgiveness in old age. It also goes against the findings of Jonathan [4] who found that forgiveness was negatively associated with loneliness in the student samples.

The third hypothesis which says that emotional intelligence would significantly predict forgiveness among workers was confirmed as the regression results showed. The relationship was also found to be positive with a positive regression coefficient obtained. By implication, individuals that are more emotionally intelligent are more likely to forgive and this is very significant. This finding matches the researcher's expectation along with the findings of Panah, Shariff and Entezar (2011) who found a positive significant relationship between emotional intelligence and forgiveness in married couples. Cathy (2008) also found that forgiveness is one of the traits that are domicile in emotionally intelligent individuals. An emotionally intelligent civil servant is able to examine various emotions and understand them. Such a civil servant assimilates his emotions as well as the emotions

of others, thereby making him or her to be able to understand the wrongdoers' reasons for wrongdoing and therefore forgiveness becomes easier for such a civil servant.

Finally, the fourth hypothesis stated that Resilience, emotional intelligence and loneliness would jointly predict the forgiveness among workers. The hypothesis was also accepted. The selected variables, resilience, emotional intelligence and loneliness significantly predict forgiveness in civil servants. If an organization is to thrive therefore; or if a civil servant is to effectively perform his or her task, these psychological factors cannot be overlooked. Just as Susan, Scott, & Suzanne (2012) found that forgiveness was significantly related to productivity in the workplace. This study however was not without limitations, but prominent among the limitations that the researchers encountered was the fact that the participants were at first reluctant in responding to the questionnaires.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers therefore come to a conclusion that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of forgiveness in civil servants. Therefore, emotionally intelligent civil servants are also more forgiving than those who are not emotionally intelligent. On the other hand, resilience and loneliness are not significant in predicting forgiveness among civil servants. In other words, forgiveness has very little to do with the civil servant's level of resilience or feeling of loneliness. Emotionally intelligent individuals are not controlled by their emotions, rather they control their emotions. Also, from this study, it could be deduced that resilient individuals do not necessarily have a higher tendency to forgive. Resilience involves trying to cope or forge ahead in the face of adversity. In other word, a resilient individual will use whatever means necessary. Therefore, it implies that a resilient civil servant may choose to forgive or not to forgive depending on which decision helps him or her cope with stressful situations. Furthermore, Loneliness was also found to insignificantly predict forgiveness. In conclusion, the decision to forgive is not very dependent on a person's feeling of loneliness. On the other hand, lonely civil servants might forgive because they want to maintain as many relationships as they can get.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

It can be deduced from the findings of the study that a person who has mastery of his or her emotions will definitely be more forgiving. Emotionally intelligent individuals are not controlled by their emotions, rather they control their emotions. Another implication of the findings of the study is that resilient individuals do not necessarily have a higher tendency to forgive. Resilience involves trying to cope or forge ahead in the face of adversity. In other word, a resilient individual will use whatever means necessary. Therefore, it implies that a resilient civil servant may choose to forgive or not to forgive depending on which decision helps him or her cope with stressful situations. Furthermore, Loneliness was also found to insignificantly predict forgiveness. Thus, the decision to forgive is not very dependent on a person's feeling of loneliness. On the other hand, lonely civil servants might forgive because they want to maintain as many relationships as they can get.

## 7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following are the limitations of the study;

1. Only one university was used for this study and this may make the generalization of the study to other similar universities difficult. However, the researchers are advising that more research in similar areas should be directed at increasing the sample size and scope to other institutions alike and as well include more participants and tertiary institutions.
2. The research work is only as true as the participants' responses. It is possible that the participants were in haste and thus hurriedly couldn't report their true feelings.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers made the following recommendations based on the findings of the study:

1. Personnel Managers should inculcate improvement in psychological factors like emotional intelligence in their personnel training agenda so as to improve the individuals' tendency to forgive coworkers in the workplace.
2. Forgiveness should be encouraged in the work place by all parties so as to build a



friendly atmosphere and increase productivity.

3. Organizations that seek high rate of productivity should search out and employ emotionally intelligent staff. Interview questions should test the emotional intelligence of the job applicant.

### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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